

Memoirs: 6. -- the Latter Days of His Ministry -- 160

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Robert Murray M'Cheyne's latter days of ministry reflect his struggles with personal trials, his commitment to evangelism, and his deep desire for personal holiness and the salvation of souls.

Scripture: Psalm 126:6, Isaiah 60:1, Matthew 11:28, John 4:34, John 7:38, Romans 6:14, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 2:14, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 7:25

Topics: "Faithfulness in Ministry", "The Urgency of Holiness"

Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne reflects on the latter days of his ministry, emphasizing his commitment to doing God's will despite personal trials and temptations. He shares his struggles with illness and the deep spiritual warfare he faced, yet finds solace in the presence of Christ and the support of fellow ministers. M'Cheyne's evangelistic efforts in England reveal his passion for souls, culminating in powerful sermons that left lasting impressions on his listeners. He expresses a longing for holiness and a desire to be a faithful servant, ultimately recognizing the urgency of his mission as he nears the end of his life. His final days are marked by a profound awareness of his mortality and a deep yearning for the eternal presence of Christ.

Transcript

CHAPTER 6

In The Latter Days of f His Ministry

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34

During the summer of 1842, he was exposed to several attacks of illness, experienced some severe personal trials, and felt the assaults of sore temptation. His own words will best express his state: "July 17-I am myself much tempted, and have no hope, but as a worm on the arm of Jesus." "Aug. 4 Often, often, would I have been glad to depart, and be with Christ. I am now much better in body and mind, having a little of the presence of my beloved, whose absence is death to me." The same month: "I have been carried through deep waters, bodily and spiritual, since last we met." It was his own persuasion that few had more to struggle with in the inner man. Who can tell what wars go on within?

During this season of trial, he was invited to form one of a number of ministers from Scotland, who were to visit the north of England, with no other purpose than to preach the glad tidings. The scheme was planned by a Christian gentleman, who has done much for Christ in his generation. When the invitation reached him, he was in the heat of his furnace. He mentioned this to the brother who corresponded with him on the subject, Mr. Purves of Jedburgh, whose reply was balm to his spirit: "I have a fellow-feeling with you in your present infirmity, and you know for your consolation that another has, who is a brother indeed. In all our afflictions, He is afflicted. He is, we may say, the common heart of His people, for they are one body; and an infirmity in the very remotest and meanest member is felt there and borne there. Let us console, solace, yea, satiate ourselves in Him, as, amid afflic

tions especially, brother does in brother. It is blessed to be like Him in everything, even in suffering. There is a great want about all Christians who have not suffered. Some flowers must be broken or bruised before they emit any fragrance. All the wounds of Christ send out sweetness; all the sorrows of Christians do the same. Commend me to a bruised brother—a broken reed—one like the Son of man. The Man of Sorrows is never far from him. To me there is something sacred and sweet in all suffering; it is so much akin to the Man of Sorrows." It was thus he suffered, and thus that he was comforted. He wrote back, agreeing to go, and added. "Remember me especially, who am heavy laden oftentimes. My heart is all of sin; but Jesus lives."

They set out for England. Mr. Purves, Mr. Somerville of Anderston, Mr. Cumming of Dumbarney, and Mr. Bonar of Kelso, formed the company. Their chief station was Newcastle, where Mr. Burns had recently been laboring with some success, and where he had seen "a town giving itself up to utter ungodliness a town where Satan's trenches were deep and wide, his wall strong and high, his garrison great and fearless, and where all that man could do seemed but as arrows shot against a tower of brass." But those who went knew that the Spirit of God was omnipotent, and that He could take the prey from the mighty.

They preached both in the open air, and in the places of worship belonging to the Presbyterians and to the Wesleyan Methodists. The defenders of the Sabbath cause were especially prepared to welcome Mr. McCheyne, whose tract on the Lord's Day has been widely circulated and blessed. Many were attracted to hear; interesting congregations assembled in the marketplace, and there is reason to believe many were impressed. A person in the town describes Mr. McCheyne's last address as being peculiarly awakening. He preached in the open air, in a space of ground between the Cloth Market and St. Nicholas' Church. Above a thousand souls were present, and the service continued until ten, without one person moving from the ground. The moon shone brightly, and the sky was spangled with stars. His subject was, "The Great White Throne" (Rev. 20:11). In concluding his address, he told them "that they would never meet again till they all met at the judgment seat of Christ; but the glorious heavens over their heads, and the bright moon that shone upon them, and the old venerable church behind them, were his witnesses that he had set before them life and death." Some will have cause to remember that night through eternity. (He later preached the same subject with equal impressiveness in the Meadows at Dundee. It was in the open air and the rain fell heavy, yet the dense crowd stood still to the end.)

His preaching at Gilsland also was not without effect; and he had good cause to bless the Lord for bringing him through Dumfriesshire on his way homeward. He returned to his people in the beginning of September, full of peace and joy. "I have returned much stronger, indeed quite well. I think I have got some precious souls for my hire on my way home. I earnestly long for more grace and personal holiness, and more usefulness."

The sunsets during that autumn were peculiarly beautiful. Scarcely a day passed but he gazed on the glowing west after dinner; and as he gazed he would speak of the Sun of Righteousness, or the joy of angels in His presence, or the blessedness of those whose sun can go no more down, until his face shone with gladness as he spoke. And during the winter he was observed to be particularly joyful, being strong in body, and feeling the near presence of Jesus in his soul. He lived in the blessed consciousness that he was a child of God, humble and meek, just because he was fully assured that Jehovah was his God and Father. Many often felt that in prayer the name "Holy Father" was breathed with special tenderness and solemnity from his lips.

His flock in St. Peter's began to murmur at his absence, when again he left them for ten days in November, to assist Mr. Hamilton of Regent Square, London, at his communion. But it was his desire for souls that thus led him from place to place, combined with a growing feeling that the Lord was calling him to evangelistic more than to pastoral labors. This visit was a blessed one; and the growth of his soul in holiness was visible to many. During the days of his visit to Mr. Hamilton, he read through the Song of Solomon at the time of family worship, commenting briefly on it with rare gracefulness and poetic taste, and yet rarer manifestation of soul-filling love to the Savior's person. The sanctified affections of his soul, and his insight into the mind of Jesus, seemed to have deeply affected his friends on these occasions.

Receiving, while here, an invitation to return by the way of Kelso, he replied:

"London, Nov. 5, 1842

"MY DEAR HORATIUS Our friends here will not let me away till the Friday morning, so that it will require all my diligence to reach Dundee before the Sabbath. I will thus be disappointed of the joy of seeing you, and ministering a word to your dear flock. Oh that my soul were new moulded, and I were effectually called a second time, and made a vessel full of the Spirit, to tell only of Jesus and his love! I fear I shall never be in this world what I desire. I have preached three times here; a few tears also have been shed. Oh for Whitfield's week in London, when a thousand letters came! The same Jesus reigns; the same Spirit is able. Why is He restrained? Is the sin ours? Are we the bottle-stoppers of these heavenly dews? Ever yours till glory.

"PS.-We shall meet, God willing, at the Convocation."

The memorable Convocation met at Edinburgh on November 17. There were five hundred ministers present from all parts of Scotland. The encroachment of the civil courts upon the prerogatives of Christ, the only Head acknowledged by our church, and the negligent treatment hereto given by the legislature of the country to every remonstrance on the part of the church, had brought on a crisis. The Church of Scotland had maintained, from the days of the Reformation, that her connection with the State was understood to imply no surrender whatsoever of complete independence in regulating all spiritual matters; and to have allowed any civil authority to control her in doctrine, discipline, or any spiritual act, would have been a daring and flagrant act of treachery to her Lord and King. The deliberations of the Convocation continued during eight days, and the momentous results are well known in this land.

Mr. McCheyne was never absent from any of the diets of this solemn assembly. He felt the deepest interest in every matter that came before them, got much light as to the path of duty in the course of the consultations, and put his name to all the resolutions, heartily sympathizing in the decided determination that, as a church of Christ, we must abandon our connection with the State, if our "Claim of Rights" were rejected. These eight days were times of remarkable union and prayerfulness. The proceedings, from time

to time, were suspended until the brethren again asked counsel of the Lord by prayer; and none present will forget the affecting solemnity with which, on one occasion, Mr. McCheyne poured out our wants before the Lord.

He had a decided abhorrence of Erastianism. When the question was put to him, "Is it our duty to refuse ordination to any one who holds the views of Erastianism?" he replied: "Certainly, whatever be his other qualifications." He was ever a thorough Presbyterian, and used to maintain the necessity of abolishing lay patronage, because first, it was not to be found in the word of God; second, it destroyed the duty of "trying the spirits"; third, it meddled with the headship of Christ, coming in between Him and his people, saying, "I will place the stars." But still more decided was he in regard to the spiritual independence of the church. This he considered a vital question; and in prospect of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, if it were denied, he stated at a public meeting, first, that it was to be deplored in some respects, viz., because of the sufferings of God's faithful servants, the degradation of those who remained behind, the alienation of the aristocracy, the perdition of the ungodly, and the sin of the nation. But, second, it was to be hailed for other reasons, viz., Christ's kingly offices would be better known, the truth would be spread into desolate parishes, and faithful ministers would be refined. And when, on March 7th of the following year, the cause of the church was finally to be pleaded at the bar of the House of Commons, I find him writing: "Eventful night this in the British Parliament! Once more King Jesus stands at an earthly tribunal, and they know Him not!"

An interesting anecdote is related of him by a co-presbyter, who returned with him to Dundee after the Convocation. This co-presbyter, Mr. Stewart, was conversing with him as to what it might be their duty to do in the event of the disruption, and where they might be scattered. Mr. Stewart said he could preach Gaelic, and might go to the Highlanders in Canada, if it were needful. Mr. McCheyne said, "I think of going to the many thousand convicts that are transported beyond seas, for no man careth for their souls."

We do not have many records of his public work after this date. Almost the last note in his diary is dated December 25: "This day ordained four elders, and admitted a fifth, who will all, I trust, be a blessing in this place when I am gone. Was graciously awakened a great while before day, and had two hours alone with God. Preached with much comfort on I Tim. 5:17, 'Let the elders that rule well,' etc. At the end of the sermon and prayer, proposed the regular questions; then made the congregation sing standing; during which time I came down from the pulpit and stood over the four men, then prayed, and all the elders gave the right hand of fellowship, during which I returned to the pulpit, and addressed them and the congregation on their relative duties. Altogether a solemn scene."

The last recorded cases of awakening, and the last entry in his diary, is dated January 6, 1843: "Heard of an awakened soul finding rest-true rest, I trust. Two new cases of awakening; both very deep and touching. At the very time when I was beginning to give up in despair, God gives me tokens of His presence returning."

He here speaks of discouragement, when God for a few months or weeks seemed to be withholding His hand from saving souls. If he was not right in thus hastily forgetting the past for a little, still this feature of his ministry is to be well considered. He entertained so full a persuasion that a faithful minister has every reason to expect to see souls converted under him, that when this was withheld, he began to fear that some hidden evil was provoking the Lord and grieving the Spirit. And ought it not to be so with all of us? Ought we not to suspect, either that we are not living near to God, or that our message is not a true transcript of the glad tidings, in both matter and manner, when we see no souls brought to Jesus? God

may certainly hide from our knowledge much of what He accomplishes by our means, but as certainly will He bring to our view some seals of our ministry, in order that our persuasion of being thus sent by Him may solemnize and overawe us, as well as lead us on to unwearied labor. Ought it not be the inscription over the doors of our Assembly and College halls: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His Knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14)?

About this time, in one of his manuscripts, there occurs this sentence: "As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder, that I might make all hear; or that I had a frame like iron, that I might visit every one, and say, 'Escape for thy life!' Ah, sinners! you little know how I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door."

He was never satisfied with his own attainments in holiness; he was always ready to learn, and quick to apply, any suggestion that might tend to his greater usefulness. About this time he used to sing a psalm or hymn every day after dinner. It was often, "The Lord's My Shepherd," etc.; or, "Oh May We Stand Before the Lamb!" etc. Sometimes it was that hymn, "Oh for a Closer Walk With God!" and sometimes the psalm, "Oh That I Like a Dove Had Wings!" A friend said of him. "I have sometimes compared him to the silver and graceful ash, with its pensile branches, and leaves of gentle green, reflecting gleams of happy sunshine. The fall of its leaf, too, is like the fall of his-it is green tonight and gone tomorrow, it does not sere nor wither."

An experienced servant of God has said, that, while popularity is a snare that few are not caught by, a more subtle and dangerous snare is to be famed for holiness. The fame of being a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of being learned or eloquent. It is possible to attend with scrupulous anxiety even to secret habits of devotion, in order to get a name for holiness .2 If any were exposed to this snare in his day, Mr. McCheyne was the person. Yet nothing is more certain than that, to the very last, he was ever discovering, and successfully resisting, the deceitful tendencies of his own heart and a tempting devil. Two things he seems never to have ceased from-the cultivation of personal holiness, and the most anxious efforts to save souls.

About this time he wrote down, for his own use, an examination into things that ought to be amended and changed. I subjoin it entirely. How singularly close and impartial are these researches into his soul! How acute is he in discovering his variations from the holy law of God! Oh that we all were taught by the same spirit thus to try our reins! It is only when we are thus thoroughly experiencing our helplessness, and discovering the thousand forms of indwelling sin, that we really sit as disciples at Christ's feet, and gladly receive Him as all in all! And at each such moment we feel in the spirit of Ignatius, "It is only now that I begin to be a disciple."

Mr. McCheyne entitles the examination of his heart and life "Reformation," and it begins with:

"It is the duty of ministers in this day to begin the reformation of religion and manners with themselves, families, etc., with confession of past sin, earnest prayer for direction, grace, and full purpose of heart. Mal. 3:3= He shall purify the sons of Levi.' Ministers are probably laid aside for a time for this very purpose.

"1. Personal Reformation.

"I am persuaded that I shall obtain the highest amount of present happiness, I shall do most for God's glory and

the good of man, and I shall have the fullest reward in eternity, by maintaining a conscience always washed in Christ's blood, by being filled with the Holy Spirit at all times, and by attaining the most entire likeness to Christ in mind, will, and heart, that is possible for a redeemed sinner to attain to in this world.

"I am persuaded that whenever any one from without, or my own heart from within, at any moment, or in any circumstances, contradicts this-if any one shall insinuate that it is not for my present and eternal happiness, and for God's glory and my usefulness, to maintain a blood-washed conscience, to be entirely filled with the Spirit, and to be fully conformed to the image of Christ in all things-that is the voice of the devil, God's enemy, the enemy of my soul and of all good-the most foolish, wicked, and miserable of all the creatures. See Prov. 9:17'Stolen waters are sweet.'

"1. To maintain a conscience void of offence, I am persuaded that I ought to confess my sins more. I think I ought to confess sin the moment I see it to be sin; whether I am in company, or in study, or even preaching, the soul ought to cast a glance of abhorrence at the sin. If I go on with the duty, leaving the sin unconfessed, I go on with a burdened conscience, and add sin to sin. I think I ought at certain times of the day-my best timesay, after breakfast and after tea-to confess solemnly the sins of the previous hours, and to seek their complete remission.

"I find that the devil often makes use of the confession of sin to stir up again the very sin confessed into new exercise, so that I am afraid to dwell upon the confession. I must ask experienced Christians about this. For the present, I think I should strive against this awful abuse of confession, whereby the devil seeks to frighten me away from confessing. I ought to take all methods for seeing the vileness of my sins. I ought to regard myself as a condemned branch of Adam-as partaker of a nature opposite to God from the womb (Ps. 51.)-as having a heart full of all wickedness, which pollutes every thought, word,

and action, during my whole life, from birth to death. I ought to confess often the sins of my youth, like David and Paul-my sins before conversion, my sins since conversion-sins against light and knowledge, against love and grace, against each person of the Godhead. I ought to look at my sins in the light of the holy law, in the light of God's countenance, in the light of the cross, in the light of the judgment-seat, in the light of hell, in the light of eternity. I ought to examine my dreams-my floating thoughts-my predilections-my often recurring actions-my habits of thought, feeling, speech, and action-the slanders of my enemies and the reproofs, and even banterings, of my friends-to find out traces of my prevailing sin, matter for confession. I ought to have a stated day of confession, with fasting-say, once a month. I ought to have a number of scriptures marked, to bring sin to remembrance. I ought to make use of all bodily affliction, domestic trial, frowns of providence on myself, house, parish, church, or country, as calls from God to confess sin. The sins and afflictions of other men should call me to the same. I ought, on Sabbath evenings, and on Communion Sabbath evenings, to be especially careful to confess the sins of holy things. I ought to confess the sins of my confessions-their imperfections, sinful aims, self-righteous tendency, etc.-and to look to Christ as having confessed my sins perfectly over His own sacrifice.

"I ought to go to Christ for the forgiveness of each sin. In washing my body, I go over every spot, and wash it out. Should I be less careful in washing my soul? I ought to see the stripe that was made on the back of Jesus by each of my sins. I ought to see the infinite pang thrill through the soul of Jesus equal to an eternity of my hell for my sins, and for all of them. I ought to see that in Christ's blood-shedding there is an

infinite over-payment for all my sins. Although Christ did not suffer more than infinite justice demanded, yet He could not suffer at all without laying down an infinite ransom.

"I feel, when I have sinned, an immediate reluctance to go to Christ. I am ashamed to go. I feel as if it would do

no good to go-as if it were making Christ a minister of sin, to go straight from the swine-trough to the best robe and a thousand other excuses; but I am persuaded they are all lies, direct from hell. John argues the opposite way: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father;' Jer. 3:1 and a thousand other scriptures are against it. I am sure there is neither peace nor safety from deeper sin, but in going directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is God's way of peace and holiness. It is folly to the world and the beclouded heart, but it is the way.

"I must never think a sin too small to need immediate application to the blood of Christ. If I put away a good conscience, concerning faith I make shipwreck. I must never think my sins too great, too aggravated, too presumptuous-as when done on my knees, or in preaching, or by a dying bed, or during dangerous illness-to hinder me from fleeing to Christ. The weight of my sins should act like the weight of a clock: the heavier it is, it makes it go the faster.

"I must not only wash in Christ's blood, but clothe me in Christ's obedience. For every sin of omission in self, I may find a divinely perfect obedience ready for me in Christ. For every sin of commission in self, I may find not only a stripe or a wound in Christ, but also a perfect rendering of the opposite obedience in my place, so that the law is magnified, its curse more than carried, its demand more than answered.

"Often the doctrine of Christ for me appears common, well known, having nothing new in it; and I am tempted to pass it by and go to some scripture more taking. This is the devil again-a red-hot lie. Christ for us is ever new, ever glorious. 'Unsearchable riches of Christ'-an infinite object, and the only one for a guilty soul. I ought to have a number of scriptures ready, which lead my blind soul directly to Christ, such as Isaiah 45, Rom. 3.

"2. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, I am persuaded that I ought to study more my own weakness. I ought to have a number of scriptures ready to be meditated on, such as Rom. 7, John 15, to convince me that I am a helpless worm.

"I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian-that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace-so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation-nearer than other men. This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet, it resists the spark; but when it becomes dry, it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart He deadens me to sin, so that, if lawfully called through temptation, I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh for a sense of this!

"I am tempted to think that there are some sins for which I have no natural taste, such as strong drink, profane language, etc., so that I need not fear temptation to such sins. This is a lie-a proud, presumptuous lie. The seeds of all sins, are in my heart, and perhaps all the more dangerously that I do not see them.

"I ought to pray and labor for the deepest sense of my utter weakness and helplessness that ever a sinner was brought to feel. I am helpless in respect of every lust that ever was, or ever will be, in the human

heart. I am a worm-a beast-before God. I often tremble to think that this is true. I feel as if it would not be safe for me to renounce all indwelling strength, as if it would be dangerous for me to feel (what is the truth) that there is nothing in me keeping me back from the grossest and vilest sin. This is a delusion of the devil. My only safety is to know, feel, and confess my helplessness, that I may hang upon the arm of Omnipotence.... I daily wish that sin had been rooted out of my heart I say, 'Why did God leave the root of lasciviousness, pride, anger, etc., in my bosom? He hates sin, and I hate it; why did He not take it clean away?' I know many answers to this which completely satisfy my judgment, but still I do not feel satisfied. This is wrong. It is right to be weary of the being of sin, but not right to quarrel with my present 'good fight of faith.' . . . The falls of professors into sin make me tremble. I have been driven away from prayer, and burdened in a fearful manner by hearing or seeing their sin. This is wrong. It is right to tremble, and to make every sin of every professor a lesson of my own helplessness; but it should lead me the more to Christ ... If I were more deeply convinced of my utter helplessness, I think I would not be so alarmed when I hear of the falls of other men ... I should study those sins in which I am most helpless, in which passion becomes like a whirlwind and I like a straw. No figure of speech can represent my utter want of power to resist the torrent of sin ... I ought to study Christ's omnipotence more: Heb. 7:25, 1 Thess. 5:23, Rom. 6:14, Rom. 5:9, 10, and such scriptures, should be ever before me ... Paul's thorn, II Cor. 12, is the experience of the greater part of my life. It should be ever before me ... There are many subsidiary methods of seeking deliverance from sins, which must not be neglected-thus, marriage, I Cor. 7:2; fleeing, I Tim. 6:11, I Cor. 6:18; watch and pray. Matt. 26:41; the word, 'It is written, It is written.' So Christ defended himself; Matt. 4. ... But the main defence is casting myself into the arms of Christ like a helpless child, and beseeching Him to fill me with the Holy Spirit. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' I John 5:4, 5-a wonderful passage.

"I ought to study Christ as a living Saviour more-as a Shepherd, carrying the sheep He finds-as a King, reigning in and over the souls He has redeemed-as a Captain, fighting with those who fight with me, Ps. 35 as one who has engaged to bring me through all temptations and trials, however impossible to flesh and blood.

"I am often tempted to say, How can this Man save us? How can Christ in heaven deliver me from lusts which I feel raging in me, and nets I feel enclosing me? This is the father of lies again! 'He is able to save unto the uttermost.'

"I ought to study Christ as an Intercessor. He prayed most for Peter, who was to be most tempted. I am on his breastplate. If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me.

"I ought to study the Comforter more-his Godhead, his love, his almightiness. I have found by experience that nothing sanctifies me so much as meditating on the Comforter, as John 14:16. And yet how seldom I do this! Satan keeps me from it. I am often like those men who said, They knew not if there be any Holy Ghost ... I ought never to forget that my body is dwelt in by the third Person of the Godhead. The very thought of this should make me tremble to sin; I Cor. 6 ... I ought never to forget that sin grieves the Holy Spirit-vexes and quenches Him ... If I would be filled with the Spirit, I feel I must read the Bible more, pray more, and watch more.

"3. To gain entire likeness to Christ, I ought to get a high esteem of the happiness of it. I am persuaded that God's happiness is inseparably linked in with His holiness. Holiness and happiness are like light and heat. God never tasted one of the pleasures of sin.

"Christ had a body such as I have, yet He never tasted one of the pleasures of sin. The redeemed, through all eternity, will never taste one of the pleasures of sin; yet their happiness is complete. It would be my greatest happiness to be from this moment entirely like them. Every sin is something away from my greatest enjoyment . . . The devil strives night and day to make me forget this or disbelieve it. He says, Why should you not enjoy this pleasure as much as Solomon or David? You may go to heaven also. I am persuaded that this is a lie-that my true happiness is to go and sin no more.

"I ought not to delay parting with sins. Now is God's time. 'I made haste and delayed not.' . . . I ought not to spare sins because I have long allowed them as infirmities, and others would think it odd if I were to change all at once. What a wretched delusion of Satan that is! "Whatever I see to be sin, I ought from this hour to set my whole soul against it, using all scriptural methods to mortify it-as the Scriptures, special prayer for the Spirit, fasting, watching.

"I ought to mark strictly the occasions when I have fallen, and avoid the occasion as much as the sin itself.

"Satan often tempts me to go as near to temptations as possible without committing the sin. This is fearful, tempting God and grieving the Holy Ghost. It is a deep laid plot of Satan.

"I ought to flee all temptation, according to Prov. 4:15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' . . . I ought constantly to pour out my heart to God, praying for entire conformity to Christ-for the whole law to be written on my heart . . . I ought stately and solemnly to give my heart to God-to surrender my all into His everlasting arms, according to the prayer, Ps. 31., 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit'-beseeching Him not to let any iniquity, secret or presumptuous, have dominion over me, and to fill me with every grace that is in Christ, in the highest degree that it is possible for a redeemed sinner to receive it, and at all times, till death.

"I ought to meditate often on heaven as a world of holiness-where all are holy, where the joy is holy joy, the work holy work; so that, without personal holiness, I never can be there . . . I ought to avoid the appearance of evil. God commands me; and I find that Satan has a singular art in linking the appearance and reality together.

"I find that speaking of some sins defiles my mind and leads me into temptation; and I find that God forbids even saints to speak of the things that are done of them in secret. I ought to avoid this.

"Eve, Achan, David, all fell through the lust of the eye. I should make a covenant with mine, and pray, 'Turn away mine eyes from viewing vanity.' . . . Satan makes unconverted men like the deaf adder to the sound of the gospel. I should pray to be made deaf by the Holy Spirit to all that would tempt me to sin.

"One of my most frequent occasions of being led into temptation is this-I say it is needful to my office that I listen to this, or look into this, or speak of this. So far this is true; yet I am sure Satan has his part in this argument. I should seek divine direction to settle how far it will be good for my ministry, and how far evil for my soul, that I may avoid the latter.

"I am persuaded that nothing is thriving in my soul unless it is growing. 'Grow in grace.' 'Lord, increase our faith.' 'Forgetting the things that are behind.' . . . I am persuaded that I ought to be inquiring at God and man what grace I want, and how I may become more like Christ . . . I ought to strive for more purity, humility, meekness, patience under suffering, love. 'Make me Christ-like in all things,' should be my constant prayer. 'Fill me with the Holy Spirit.'

2. Reformation in Secret Prayer.

"I ought not to omit any of the parts of prayer-confession, adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession.

"There is a fearful tendency to omit confession, proceeding from low views of God and his law, slight views of my heart and the sins of my past life. This must be resisted. There is a constant tendency to omit adoration, when I forget to whom I am speaking-when I rush heedlessly into the presence of Jehovah, without remembering His awful name and character-when I have little eyesight for His glory, and little admiration of His wonders. 'Where are the wise?' I have the native tendency of the heart to omit giving thanks. And yet it is specially commanded, Phil. 4:6. Often when the heart is selfish, dead to the salvation of others, I omit intercession. And yet it especially is the spirit of the great Advocate, who has the name of Israel always on His heart.

"Perhaps every prayer need not have all these; but surely a day should not pass without some space being devoted to each.

"I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, and then have family prayer, and breakfast, and forenoon callers, often it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This

is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ rose before day, and went into a solitary place. David says, 'Early will I seek Thee; Thou shalt early hear my voice.' Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre while it was yet dark. Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness; and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then, when secret prayer comes, the soul is often out of tune. I feel it is far better to begin with God to see his face first-to get my soul near Him before it is near another. 'When I awake I am still with Thee.'

"If I have slept too long, or am going an early journey, or my time is any way shortened, it is best to dress hurriedly, and have a few minutes alone with God, than to give it up for lost.

"But, in general, it is best to have at least one hour alone with God, before engaging in anything else. At the same time, I must be careful not to reckon communion with God by minutes or hours, or by solitude. I have pored over my Bible, and on my knees for hours, with little or no communion; and my times of solitude have been often times of greatest temptation.

"As to intercession, I ought daily to intercede for my own family, connections, relatives, and friends; also for my flock-the believers, the awakened, the careless; the sick, the bereaved; the poor, the rich; my elders, Sabbath school teachers, day-school teachers, children, tract-distributors-that all means may be blessed. Sabbath-day preaching and teaching; visiting of the sick, visiting from house to house; providences, sacraments. I ought daily to intercede briefly for the whole town, the Church of Scotland, all faithful ministers; for vacant congregations, students of divinity, etc.; for dear brethren by name; for missionaries to Jews and Gentiles-and for this end I must read missionary intelligence regularly, and get acquainted with all that is doing throughout the world. It would stir me up to pray with the map before me. I must have a scheme of prayer, also the names of missionaries marked on the map. I ought to intercede at large for the above on Saturday morning and evening from seven to eight. Perhaps also I might take different parts for different days; only I ought daily to plead for my family and flock. I ought to pray in everything. 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything ... by prayer and supplication, make your requests

known unto God.' Often I receive a letter asking to preach, or some such request. I find myself answering before having asked counsel of God. Still oftener a person calls and asks me something, and I do not ask direction. Often I go out to visit a sick person in a hurry, without asking his blessing, which alone can make the visit of any use. I am persuaded that I ought never to do anything without prayer, and, if possible, special, secret prayer.

"In reading the history of the Church of Scotland, I see how much her troubles and trials have been connected with the salvation of souls and the glory of Christ. I ought to pray far more for our church, for our leading ministers by name, and for my own clear guidance in the right way, that I may not be led aside, or driven aside, from following Christ. Many difficult questions may be forced on us for which I am not fully prepared, such as lawfulness of covenants. I should pray much more in peaceful days, that I may be guided rightly when days of trial come.

"I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted, and should be thus employed, if I can prevent drowsiness. A little time after breakfast might be given to intercession. After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God, if possible.

"I ought not to give up the good old habit of prayer before going to bed; but guard must be kept against sleep: planning what things I am to ask is the best remedy. When I awake in the night, I ought to rise and pray, as David and as John Welsh did.

"I ought to read three chapters of the Bible in secret every day, at least.

"I ought on Sabbath morning to look over all the chapters read through the week, and especially the verses marked. I ought to read in three different places; I ought also to read according to subjects, lives," etc.

He has evidently left this unfinished, and now he knows even as he is known. Toward the end of his ministry, he became peculiarly jealous of becoming an idol to his people; for he was loved and revered by many who gave no evidence of love to Christ. This often pained him much. It is indeed right in a people to regard their pastor with no common love (2 Cor. 9:14), but there is ever a danger ready to arise. He used to say, "Ministers are but the pole; it is to the brazen serpent you are to look."

The state of his health would not permit him to be laborious in going from house to house, whereas preaching and evangelistic work in general was less exhausting; but of course, while he was thus engaged, many concerns of the parish would be unattended to; accordingly his Session offered him a stated assistant to help him in his parochial duty. With this proposal he at once concurred. Mr. Gatherer, then at Caralstone, was chosen, and continued to labor faithfully with him during the remaining days of his ministry.

In the beginning of the year he published his Daily Bread, an arrangement of Scripture, that the Bible might be read through in the course of a year. He sought to encourage his people to meditate much on the written word in all its breadth. His last publication was, Another Lily Gathered, or the account of James Laing, a little boy in his flock, brought to Christ early, and carried soon to glory.

In the middle of January 1843, he visited Collace, and preached on 1 Corinthians 9:27: "A Castaway"-a sermon so solemn that one said it was like a blast of the trumpet that would awaken the dead. Next day he rode on to Lintrathen, where the people were willing to give up their work at midday, if he would come and preach to them. All this month he was breathing after glory. In his letters there are such expressions as these: "I often pray, Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made." "Often, often I would like to depart and be with Christ-to mount to Pisgah top and take a farewell look of the church below, and leave my body and be present with the Lord. Ah, it is far better!" Again: "I do not expect to live long. I expect a sudden call some day-perhaps soon, and therefore I speak very plainly." But, indeed, he had long been persuaded that his course would be brief. His hearers remember well how often he would speak in such language as that with which he one day closed his sermon: "Changes are coming; every eye before me shall soon be dim in death. Another pastor shall feed this flock; another singer lead the psalm; another flock shall fill this fold."

In the beginning of February, by appointment of the Committee of the Convocation, he accompanied Mr. Alexander of Kirkcaldy to visit the districts of Deer and Ellon districts over which he yearned, for Moderatism had held undisputed sway over them for generations. It was to be his last evangelistic tour. He exemplified his own remark, "The oil of the lamp in the temple burnt away in giving light; so should we."

He set out, says one who saw him leave town, as unclouded and happy as the sky that was above his head that bright morning. During the space of three weeks, he preached or spoke at meetings in twenty-four places, sometimes more than once in the same place. Great impression was made on the people of the district. One who tracked his footsteps a month after his death, states that sympathy with the principles of our suffering church was awakened in many places; but, above all, a thirst was excited for the pure word of life. His eminently holy walk and conversation, combined with the deep solemnity of his preachings, was especially felt. The people loved to speak of him. In one place, where a meeting had been intimated, the people assembled, resolving to cast stones at him as soon as he should begin to speak; but no sooner had he begun, than his manner, his look, his words, riveted them all, and they listened with intense earnestness; and before he left the place, the people gathered around him, entreating him to stay and preach to them. One man, who had cast mud at him, was afterward moved to tears on hearing of his death.

He wrote to Mr. Gatherer, February 14, "I had a nice opportunity of preaching in Aberdeen; and in Peterhead our

meeting was truly successful. The minister of St. Fergus I found to be what you described. We had a solemn meeting in his church. In Strichen, we had a meeting in the Independent Meeting-house. On Friday evening, we had two delightful meetings, in a mill at Crechie, and in the church of Clola. The people were evidently much impressed, some weeping. On Saturday evening we met in the Brucklay barn. I preached on Sabbath, at New Deer in the morning, and at Fraserburgh in the evening-both interesting meetings. Tonight we met in Pitsligo church. Tomorrow we trust to be in Aberdour; and then we leave for the Presbytery of Ellon. The weather has been delightful till now. Today the snow is beginning to drift. But God is with us, and He will carry us to the very end. I am quite well, though a little fatigued sometimes." On the 24th, he writes to another friend, "Today is the first we have rested since leaving home, so that I am almost overcome with fatigue. Do not be idle; improve in all useful knowledge. You know what an enemy I am to idleness."

Never was it more felt that God was with him than in this journey. The Lord seemed to show in him the meaning of the text, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Even when silent, the near intercourse he held with God left its impression on those around. His constant holiness touched the conscience of many.

Returning to his beloved flock on March 1, in good health, but much exhausted, he related the next evening at his prayer meeting, what things he had seen and heard. During the next twelve days he was to be found going out and in among his people, filling up, as his manner was, every inch of time. But he had been much weakened by his unceasing exertions when in the north, and so was more than ordinarily exposed to the typhus fever that was then prevailing in his parish, several cases of which he visited in his enfeebled state.

On March 5, the Sabbath he preached three times; and two days later, I find him writing to his father: "All domestic matters go on like a placid stream-I trust not without its fertilizing influence. Nothing is more improving than the domestic altar, when we come to it for a daily supply of soul nourishment." To the last we get glances into his soul's growth. His family devotions were full of life and full of gladness to the end. Indeed, his manner in reading the chapter reminded you of a man poring into the sands for pieces of fine gold, and from time to time holding up to you what he delighted to have found.

On the 12th he preached from Hebrews 9:15 in the forenoon, and Romans 9:22, 23, in the afternoon, with uncommon solemnity; and it was observed, both then and on other late occasions, he spoke with unusual strength on the sovereignty of God. These were his last discourses to his people in St. Peter's. That same evening he went down to Broughty Ferry, and preached on Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine," etc. It was the last time he was to be engaged directly in proclaiming Christ to sinners; and as he began his ministry with souls for his hire, so it appears that his last discourse had in it saving power to some, and that rather from the holiness it breathed than from the wisdom of its words. After his death, a note was found unopened, which had been sent to him in the course of the following week, when he lay in the fever. It ran thus: "I hope you will pardon a stranger for addressing to you a few lines. I heard you preach last Sabbath evening, and it pleased God to bless that sermon to my soul. It was not so much what you said, as your manner of speaking that struck me. I saw in you a beauty in holiness that I never saw before. You also said something in your prayer that struck me very much. It was 'Thou knowest that we love Thee.' Oh, sir, what would I give that I could say to my blessed Saviour, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee!'"

Next evening he held a meeting in St. Peter's, with the view of organizing his people for collecting in behalf of the Free Protestant Church-the disruption of the Establishment being now inevitable. He spoke very fervently; and after the meeting felt chilled and unwell. Next morning he felt that he was ill; but he went out in the afternoon to the marriage of two of his flock. He seemed, however, to anticipate a serious attack, for, on his way home, he made some arrangements connected with his ministerial work, and left a message at Dr. Gibson's house, asking him to come and see him. He believed that he had taken the fever, and it was so. That night he lay down on the

bed from which he was never to rise. He spoke little, but intimated that he apprehended danger.

On Wednesday, he said he thought that he would never have seen the morning, he felt so sore broken, and had got no sleep; but afterward added, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?" He seemed clouded in spirit, often repeating such passages as-"My moisture is turned into the drought of summer"; -"My bones wax old, through my roaring all day long." It was with

difficulty that he was able to speak a few words with his assistant, Mr. Gatherer. In the forenoon, Mr. Miller of Wallacetown found him oppressed with extreme pain in his head. Among other things they talked about on Psalm 126. On coming to the 6th verse, Mr. McCheyne said he would give him a division of it. 1. What is sowed-"Precious seed." 2. The manner of sowing it - "Goeth forth and weepeth." He dwelled upon "weepeth," and then said, "Ministers should go forth at all times." 3. The fruit - "Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing." Mr. Miller pointed to the certainty of it; Mr. McCheyne assented, "Yes-doubtless." After praying with him, Mr. Miller repeated Matthew 11:28, on which Mr. McCheyne clasped his hands with earnestness. As he became worse, his medical attendants forbade him to be visited. Once or twice he asked for me, and was heard to speak of "Smyrna," as if the associations of his illness there were recalled by his burning fever now. I was not at that time aware of his danger, even the rumor of it had not reached us.

Next day, he continued very ill in body and mind, until about the time when his people met for their usual evening prayer meeting, when he requested to be left alone for half an hour. When his servant entered the room again, he exclaimed, with a joyful voice, "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped." His countenance, as he said this, bespoke inward peace. After that he was observed to be happy; and at supper time that evening, when taking a little refreshment, he gave thanks, "For strength in the time of weakness-for light in the time of darkness-for joy in the time of sorrow-for comforting us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

On the Sabbath, when someone expressed a wish that he be able to go forth as usual to preach, he replied, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord"; and added, "I am preaching the sermon that God would have me to do."

On Tuesday (the 21st) his sister repeated to him several hymns. The last words he heard, and the last he seemed to understand, were those of Cowper's hymn, "Sometimes the Light Surprises the, Christian as He Sings." And then the delirium came on.

At one time, during the delirium, he said to his attendant, "Mind the text, I Cor. 15:58-'Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,' "dwelling with much emphasis on the last clause, "for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." At another time he seemed to feel himself among his brethren, and said, "I don't think much of policy in church courts; no, I hate it; but I'll tell you what I like, faithfulness to God, and a holy walk." His voice, which had been weak before, became very strong now; and often he was heard speaking to or praying for his people. "You must be awakened in time, or you will be awakened in everlasting torment, to your eternal confusion." "You may soon get me away, but that will not save your souls." Then he prayed, "This parish, Lord, this people, this whole place!" At another time, "Do it Thyself, Lord, for Thy weak servant." And again, as if praying for the saints, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me."

Thus he continued to be engaged, while the delirium lasted, either in prayer or in preaching to his people, and always apparently in happy frame, until the morning of Saturday the 25th. On that morning, while his kind medical attendant, Dr. Gibson, stood by, he lifted up his hands as if in the attitude of pronouncing the blessing, and then sank down. Not a groan or a sigh, but only a quiver of the lip, and his soul was at rest.

As he was subject to frequent sickness, it was not until within some days prior to his death that serious alarm was

generally felt, and hence the stroke came with awful suddenness on us all. That same afternoon, while preparing for Sabbath duties, the news reached me. I hastened down, though scarce knowing why I went. His people that evening met together in the church, and such a scene of sorrow has not often been witnessed in Scotland. It was like the weeping for King Josiah. Hundreds were there; the lower part of the church was full: and none among them seemed able to contain their sorrow. Every heart seemed bursting with grief, so that the weeping and the cries could be heard afar off. The Lord had most severely wounded the people whom He had before so unusually favored; and now, by this awful stroke of His hand, was fixing deeper in their souls all that his servant had spoken in the days of his powerful ministry.

Wherever the news of his departure came, every Christian countenance was darkened with sadness. Perhaps, never was the death of one, whose whole occupation had been preaching the everlasting gospel, more felt by all the saints of God in Scotland. Many of our Presbyterian brethren in Ireland also felt the blow to the very heart. He himself used to say, "Live so as to be missed"; and none that saw the tears that were shed over his death would have doubted that his own life had been what he recommended to others. He had not completed more than twenty-nine years when God took him.

On the day of his burial, business was almost suspended in the parish. The streets, and every window, from the house to the grave, were crowded with those who felt that a prince in Israel had fallen; and many a sinful man felt a secret awe creep over his hardened soul as he cast his eye on the solemn spectacle.

His tomb may be seen on the pathway at the northwest corner of St. Peter's cemetery. He has gone to the "mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense, till the day break and the shadows flee away." His work was finished! His heavenly Father did not have another plant for him to water, nor another vine for him to train; and the Savior who so loved him was waiting to greet him with His own welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But what is the voice to us? Has this been sent as the stroke of wrath, or the rebuke of love? "His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. Only this much we can clearly see, that nothing was more fitted to leave his character and example impressed on our remembrance forever than his early death. There might be envy while he lived; there is none now. There might have been some of the youthful attractiveness of his graces lost had he lived many years; this cannot be impaired now. It seems as if the Lord had struck the flower from its stem, before any of the colors had lost their bright hue, or any leaf of fragrance.

Well may the flock of St. Peter's lay it to heart. They have had days of visitation. "Ye have seen the right hand of the Lord plucked out of his bosom? What shall the unsaved among you do in the day of the Lord's anger?" "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!"

It has been more than once the lot of Scotland (as was said in the days of Durham) to enjoy so much of the Lord's kindness, as to have men to lose whose loss has been felt to the very heart-witnesses for Christ, who saw the King's face and testified of His beauty. We cannot weep them back; but shall we not call on Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, that before the Lord come, He would raise up men, like Enoch, or like Paul, who shall reach nearer the stature of the perfect man, and bear witness with more power to all nations? Are there not (as he who has left us used to hope) "better ministers in store for Scotland than any that have yet arisen"?

Ministers of Christ, does not the Lord call on us especially? Many of us are like the angel of the church of Ephesus: we have "works, and labor, and patience, and cannot bear them that are evil, and we have

borne, and for his name's sake we labor, and have not fainted"; but we want the fervor of "first love. " Oh how seldom now do we hear of fresh supplies of holiness arriving from the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3)-new grace appearing among the saints, and in living ministers! We become contented with our old measure and kind, as if the windows of heaven were never to be opened. Few among us see the lower depths of the horrible pit; few ever enter the inner chambers of the house of David.

But there has been one among us who, before he had reached the age at which a priest in Israel would have been entering on his course, dwelt at the Mercy seat as if it were his home-preached the certainties of eternal life with an undoubting mind-and spent his nights and days in ceaseless breathings after holiness, and the salvation of sinners. Hundreds of souls were his reward from the Lord, before he left us; and in him have we been taught how much one man may do who will only press farther into the presence of his God, and handle more skillfully the unsearchable riches of Christ, and speak more boldly for his God. We speak much against unfaithful ministers, while we ourselves are very unfaithful! Are we never afraid that the cries of souls whom we have betrayed to perdition through our want of personal holiness, and our defective preaching of Christ crucified, may ring in our ears forever? Our Lord is at the door. In the twinkling of an eye our work will be done. "Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days," until every one of Thy pastors be willing to impart to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, not the gospel of God only, but also his own soul. And oh that each one were able, as he stands in the pastures feeding Thy sheep and lambs, to look up and appeal to Thee: "Lord, Thou knowest all things! Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

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