

ONE DAY WHEN HEAVEN WAS FILLED WITH HIS PRAISES: Robert Murray

M'Cheyne 1813 – 1843.

John 15: 16: Dying He Saved Me:

1: The 19th century: 1805, Battle of Trafalgar. 1808, Horatius Bonar - 1889. 1810, Andrew Bonar – 1892. 1813, Jane Austin published *Pride & Prejudice*. 1814 Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*. William Burns 1815–1868. 1815, Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon died 1821. 1820, Cadbury established in Birmingham. C H Spurgeon, 1832-1892. Hudson Taylor, 1832-1904. 1836, Founding of Adelaide. 1837, Queen Victoria – 1901. 1837, Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*. 1837-9, Outbreaks of typhus & typhoid. 1843, The Disruption; Scottish church splits (450 ministers), church/state relations & patronage; formation of Free church. 1783-1844, Asahel Nettleton (US). 1846, start of 10-year Highland potato famine. 1792-1875 Charles Finney (US). **Composers;** 1810, Chopin born. Liszt, 1811-1886. Wagner, 1813. Fanny Crosby, 1824. Beethoven died, 1827. Brahms, 1833-1897. Elgar, 1857-1934. Debussy, 1862-1918.

2: A Lost Sinner: Robert Murray M'Cheyne born Edinburgh 1813; youngest of four. A sister Isabella died before his birth; two brothers, David & William; sister Elizabeth who kept house during his pastorate years. When recovering from illness aged 4, studied Greek alphabet, named and wrote letters on his slate. Following year at school, made fast progress in English and recitation. Catechetical exercises in Tron church, older folk remembered his clear & correct recitation of Psalms and Scripture passages, but not a believer; *having no hope and without God in the world*, Ephesians 2: 12. High moral standards but devoid of God; 'I indulged in all the amusing and beautiful pleasures of the world and didn't give a thought to sickness & suffering & death.' Keen on horse riding and gymnastics; dancing, parties, cards, etc. His household was 'religious' in a respectable & sincere way, including 'family worship,' but M'Cheyne would 'argue that he was brought up in an unconverted home'. Started High school in 1821 for six years. Family was wealthy, middle class, moral, religious, respectable, but without Christ. He had many traits of Christian character but ungodly, morally pure but a Pharisee. He himself regarded these as days of church-going ungodliness; 'lifeless morality'. Thought that self-improvement was the answer. His models were Greek heroes & his aims self-discipline, humility, improvement of mind. He entered Edinburgh University in 1827, aged 14; studied Classics; Latin, Greek, Philosophy, Rhetoric.

3: A Saved Believer: His brother David sank into depression and died 1831. Days before his death, David found peace through the blood of Jesus. 'Joy from the face of a fully reconciled Father above lighted up David's dying face' (Andrew Bonar). Robert saw that, and everything began to change. He kept the anniversary of his brother's death through the remainder of his own life. March 1832 change in his own heart while reading; *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, (Doctrine). 'The work which I think first of all wrought a saving change in me.' This changed the love of poetry into preaching; then, Jeremiah 23: 6 ... *the Lord our righteousness*. Summary of justification. Now condemned theatre, cards, dancing, some secular music & 'simpering tea parties.' Lifestyle changes brought mockery, etc. Kept up athletics & gymnastics, horse riding exercise. 'The system of religion was replaced with the person of Christ'. Commenced Edinburgh University Divinity Hall in 1831, a full course of study including Greek & Hebrew. Met Andrew Bonar (1810-1892) who went through the course with him & became friends for life.

Under academic direction of Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) who was converted after he entered ministry. He taught Moral Philosophy; emphasis of Holiness and evangelism, gospel of Christ crucified for sinners as the centre of holiness. Chalmers recruited M'Cheyne and others for ministry in Edinburgh slums; a world they had never seen. For first time he was exposed to hostility & depravity. He met with others every Saturday at 6: 30 am for Bible study. Together, they visited spiritually needy in poor areas of city and encouraged one another in pursuit of personal holiness; the characteristic of their future lives. They graduated in 1835; Bonar went south to Jedburgh and M'Cheyne to the west to assist in industrial parishes (Carron Ironworks) of Larbeat & Dunipace near Stirling. Often walked 12 miles [19 kms] on Sundays to conduct services.

4: Pastoral Ministry: In 1836 M'Cheyne was called to **St. Peter's Dundee**, major centre of whaling industry (full of smoke), Bonar began frequent visits. 1839 M'Cheyne, Bonar and other pastors visited Palestine for six months to check possible missionary work. In his absence, William Burns (1815-1868) preached at St. Peter's & revival broke, meetings each night over four months (China & Hudson Taylor). Revival spread & M'Cheyne came home to a revived church; also Bonar's church at Collace. During revival time, Isabella Dickson who married Andrew Bonar in 1848, was converted. Later told husband of first impressions of M'Cheyne. 'There was something singularly attractive about Mr M'Cheyne's holiness. It was not his matter nor his manner either that struck me; it was just the living epistle of Christ – a picture so lovely, I felt I would have given all the world to be as he was but knew all the time I was dead in sins.' -- RMM fixed the habit of living in constant communion with Christ. Developed Bible reading plan through OT, NT, Psalms twice a year. Also whole Bible in a month. Learned that you can read Bible and not commune with Christ; it is not automatic. 'As I was walking in the fields one day, that thought came with overwhelming power into my mind, that everyone I preached to would soon stand before the judgment-seat and be sent either to heaven or hell.' 'The seed of every sin known to man is in my heart'. (RMM)

Despite physical sports was not robust, weak heart & respiratory ailments. Awareness of death and his own frailty. Affected by tuberculosis five years before he died. His suffering and expectation of death produced intense focus on the Word and prayer. M'Cheyne died in 1843 from Typhus; buried in the St Peter's church yard. Dundee church turned to Andrew Bonar for comfort and he preached from Romans 8 the two following Sundays. A flat stone in the church cemetery had the weathered word ETERNITY written across it. M'Cheyne wanted every visitor to consider his eternal destiny while walking among the dead. Bonar lived for another fifty years; pastored at Collace until 1856, then in Glasgow until death.

M'Cheyne's conviction: 'Get your texts from God – your thoughts, your words, from God ... It is not great talents God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. **What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.**'

Jeremiah 17: 9 & 10. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins (mind), even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*