

Windows of Witness (Robert Murray McCheyne)

Quotations unless otherwise noted: *50 People Every Christian Should Know*, Warren Wiersbe, Baker Books 2009

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20

Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843) lived an abbreviated life of only 30 years. In this short span, however, he left a tremendous mark in this world for God. The foundation of God’s blessing on McCheyne’s life could be summed up in his own writing, when he stated, “It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.”

McCheyne was converted at the age of 18 and in the same year surrendered his life in dedication to the ministry of the gospel. McCheyne possessed a unique desire for complete dependence upon our Lord and withdrew himself for long hours in devotion, feeding daily upon the Word of God. The Lord placed Robert Murray McCheyne in Dundee, Scotland to pastor in 1836, where he would minister just under seven years, before his death on March 12 of 1843. “But in those few years, he made an impact on Scotland that is still felt...”

Robert Murray McCheyne’s life was characterized by dual qualities which were clearly honored by God. First, he carried a tremendous burden for purity in his own life. His passionate desire and prayer was, “Lord make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be.” McCheyne once received a letter from a complete stranger who, having visited the church, afterwards wrote, “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 of holiness that I never saw before.” In *The Memoirs and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne* (by Andrew Bonar), McCheyne writes, “I am persuaded that God’s happiness is inseparably linked in with His holiness.”

In parallel to his life of consecration, McCheyne prayed and longed to see the salvation of the lost. After 3 years of McCheyne preaching to the people of Dundee, the Lord visited the people there with great conviction. “Tears were streaming from the eyes of many, and some fell on the ground groaning, and weeping, and crying for mercy.” What joyful news and answer to prayer. On one occasion, upon receiving news that a sinner was converted after hearing him preach, McCheyne wrote, “The precious tidings that a soul has been melted down by the grace of the Savior...Lord, I thank Thee that Thou has shown me this marvelous working, though I was but an adoring spectator rather than an instrument.” McCheyne’s model of purity, prayer and ultimately praise to God is of great refreshing to our soul in this modern age.

What a privilege to glimpse, by pen, into the heart of a man greatly used of God, who regularly, and reverently acknowledged God as the Wellspring of all eternal workings and therefore the object of all of our worship.

My prayer is that the Lord might find such individuals among us who would be burdened in like manner as McCheyne, and that God would be thereby glorified in the church!

~ Pastor Tim Hodge