

amongst them in great power. Many were brought tearfully to repentance while others rejoiced in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and meetings for prayer and praise were held every evening in the following weeks as the awakening continued in the town. Thus it was that McCheyne came home to find that the revival he had so earnestly longed for, had already flooded through the people of Dundee and at the first prayer meeting he attended on the day of his return he claimed, "I do not think that I can speak a month in this parish without winning some souls." Before the awakening of 1839 he estimated that around sixty conversions had taken place during his ministry, but he wisely refrained from exaggerating the fruits of the revival and only claimed souls had been born again when there was undeniable evidence of new life. Besides the spiritual discernment he exercised, McCheyne recognized it was God's prerogative to command blessing or to withhold it. When objections were made by some to the cries of contrition and tears of repentance which arose from the congregation in his church, McCheyne answered with simplicity, "I felt no hesitation as to our duty to declare the simple truth impressively, and leave God to work in their hearts in HIS own way. If HE saves in a quiet way, I shall be happy; if in the midst of cries and tears, still I will bless His Name."

#### “A Wider Field”

McCheyne's resolution, to devote himself to the work at Dundee did not prevent him from playing a part in the wider field of evangelism in his day. The revival touched many places in Scotland and involved many ministers and preachers, most of whom were close associates of his. His life-long friend since student days was Alexander Somerville who was used by God in every spiritual awakening in Scotland for the next fifty years. In addition McCheyne found kindred spirits and co-workers in Andrew Bonar whose ministry at Collace ran parallel to McCheyne's at Dundee, and his elder brother Horatius, the noted preacher and gifted hymn-writer who was held in high regard for the depth of his spiritual insight. As God added more laborers to the harvest of souls, McCheyne and his friends faithfully supported in every way — William Burns at Kilsyth, John Milne at Perth, James Grierson at Errol, Robert MacDonald at Blairgowrie, James Hamilton at Abernyte and later Regent Square, London, Patrick Miller at Wallacetown, Daniel Cormick at Kirriemuir, and many others were empowered to proclaim the way of salvation. Through the ministries of such men a new chapter was written in the history of the Church of Scotland. Their message had one purpose, as Andrew Bonar wrote "...like Ahimaaz,

coming with all important tidings and intent on making these tidings known." McCheyne expressed the same longing when he wrote, "One thing always fills the cup of my consolation, that God may work by the meanest and poorest words as well as by the most polished and ornate — yea, perhaps more readily, that the glory may be all HIS own."

#### “How Much I Owe”

The revival greatly increased McCheyne's sense of the urgency of the Gospel and on one occasion he declared while preaching, "Brethren, if I could promise you that the door will stand open for a hundred years, yet it would still be your wisdom to enter in now. But I cannot answer for a year; I cannot answer for a month; I cannot answer for a day; I can not answer for an hour. All that I can answer for is, it is open now." McCheyne's sermons were characterized by his fidelity to scripture, the unfailing tenderness of his delivery and the deep sense of reverence for God which shone through all his life, all of which gave his preaching a most effective quality. He was fond of using short but direct appeals to his hearers, "If God spared not HIS own SON under the sin of another, how shall He spare thee under the weight and burden of thine own sin? If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

#### “With Christ on High”

The closing years of his life coincided with the Ten Years of Conflict over the power of lay patrons to make ministerial appointments. McCheyne never shrank from the struggle to assert the right of congregations to call their own pastors and he fully supported Thomas Chalmers in the events leading to the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland. He was one of the 427 ministers who resolved in November 1842, to separate from the Church if lay control was enforced, and when Parliament took the crucial decision in favor of state patronage in March 1843, McCheyne stated, "Once more KING JESUS stands at an earthly tribunal, and they know HIM not." Yet McCheyne was not to see the "Disruption" which followed. The next Sunday he preached his evening sermon on the text, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:1) which many were later to recall as a rich blessing to their souls. Two days afterwards he was struck down by the typhus epidemic raging in Dundee and as his life drew to a close he continued to plead for the souls of his congregation in his prayers. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1843, not yet thirty years old, McCheyne

went to be with his Lord and the vision of his best known hymn was realized.

“When I stand before the throne,  
Dressed in beauty not my own,  
When I see Thee as Thou art,  
Love Thee with unsinning heart.  
Then Lord, shall I fully know—  
Not till then—how much I owe.”



“Encouraging Verses  
for you children who  
are starting and going  
back to school this  
year! I hope you will  
read these verses and be inspired  
by God's Word and will for you in  
these next months of school.”



**(All Amplified)**

**Galatians 5:25 / Ephesians 4:15 /**

**Philippians 1:27, 4:13 / Colossians 3:10**

### BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS IN:

#### September



2<sup>nd</sup> - Lee Gorham & John Foster

5<sup>th</sup> - Andrew Kirby

6<sup>th</sup> - Luke Cordle

9<sup>th</sup> - Rocky Cordle III

13<sup>th</sup> - Liz Marcoux

23<sup>rd</sup> - Christian Kirby

27<sup>th</sup> - Frank Graves

29<sup>th</sup> - Bryan Marcoux

30<sup>th</sup> - Pastor & Mrs. Beth Anniversary

# NCO Kids Monthly News

September 2010

Robert Murray

McCheyne

1813 - 1843

#### “One Bought with a Price”

*Chosen not for good in me,  
Wakened up from wrath to flee,  
Hidden in the Savior's side,  
By the Spirit sanctified,  
Teach me Lord, on earth to show,  
By my love, how much I owe.*

Although few of McCheyne's hymns may be included in modern collections, there is one which has a place in the hearts of all Christians who know it, for its words speak with a clarity and truth that they will recognize in their own experience. It was but one of the gifts graciously allowed to him by God, that McCheyne could express in simple yet beautiful ways God's dealings with him. No finer example of this can be cited than the hymn, "When this passing world is done," the last verse of which was an apt testimony of McCheyne's conversion and spiritual progress.

#### “Early Life”

Robert Murray McCheyne was born in Edinburgh, England in May 1813, the youngest child of a leading solicitor in Scotland's Supreme Court of Justice. His parents took great care over the spiritual welfare of the family and as he grew up Robert developed a high standard of virtue in all his conduct, so much so that his father wrote of him in retrospect, "I never found him guilty of a lie or of any mean or unworthy action." At fourteen he entered Edinburgh University, studying literature and poetry, and graduated four years later in

1831. Robert also had great respect for his eldest brother David who in return took a keen interest in Robert's spiritual condition, but a sudden illness in the summer of 1831 resulted in David's death. Robert felt the tragic loss most bitterly, especially since his own virtuous behavior brought him no consolation in his grief. He turned for comfort to seeking God through diligent study of the Bible, until in his own words, he was "led to Christ through deep and ever abiding convictions" that his sins were forgiven and that he had peace with God.

#### **“Entry into the Ministry”**

Soon after his conversion in 1831, McCheyne began to prepare for the ministry of the Church of Scotland and commenced his studies of divinity under Thomas Chalmers, the outstanding theologian and scholar of his day. He quickly mastered Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but his learning was solely for the purpose of advancing his understanding of scripture, since he had no time for intellectual speculation or scholarly controversies. To him the wisdom of all the ages as revealed by God through His Word far surpassed the finest philosophies and theories devised by men. His student days were marked by a rapid growth in grace as the truths of scripture were applied in his life until he was able to exclaim, "A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man."

He also steeped himself in the journals and writings of Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd and Henry Martyn, and longed that the power of the Holy Spirit that had been so evident in their lives would also be granted him. It was in this way that he was led to start evangelistic work in the poor districts of Edinburgh with his fellow students early in 1834. Conscious of the great responsibility of the task before him, he recorded, "Began in fear and weakness, and in much trembling. May the power be of God!" The next year he was licensed to preach by the Annan Presbytery and immediately set out on what he called, "a glorious privilege" of proclaiming the gospel.

#### **“Sowing the Seed”**

Towards the end of 1835, McCheyne became the assistant minister of a parish near Stirling which included Larbert, an industrial town of ironworks and coal mines, and Dunipace, a country village surrounded by farmland. In preaching and pastoral care, he soon made a deep impression on the town dwellers and farmers alike. Each Sunday he expounded the gospel "as free as the air we breathe, fresh as the stream from the everlasting hills" and each weekday he systematically visited house by house, sharing the scriptures with any needy soul who

was ready to listen. It was a time of patient preparation for the work God had in store for him and in 1836 he was called to the ministry at St. Peter's church in Dundee. The text of his first sermon there at his new church were the words spoken by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings" (Isaiah 61:1-3), and as he looked back over that occasion he prayed to God, "Put Thy blessing upon this day," and noted in his journal that he "felt given over to God, as one bought with a price".

#### **“Bethel-Like Sacredness”**

McCheyne's ministry at Dundee lasted only six years and was divided into two almost equal periods by his journey to the Holy Land in 1839. From the start he labored without ceasing amongst the population in the overcrowded streets. His singleness of heart and mind can be seen from his statement, "I feel there are two things it is impossible to desire with sufficient ardor: personal holiness and the honor of Christ in the salvation of soul." It was this inseparable combination of saintliness and zeal for soul-winning that was the chief characteristic of McCheyne's ministry. Indeed a modern authority has written of him, "He was convinced that a diligent minister ought to expect success in God's service, but he saw that he could not hope for such success unless he were willing to preach Christ for Christ's sake alone." McCheyne fully realized that one word uttered in the power of the Holy Spirit could do more than thousands spoken in a spirit of unbelief, and God's seal upon his ministry was so evident that a contemporary of his, remarked that the church had been filled with a Bethel-like sacredness during the services. In the six short years he spent at St. Peter's church a congregation of twelve hundred members were gathered there and towards the end of his life, he was able to state, without a trace of boastfulness, "I think I can say I have never risen a morning without thinking how I could bring more souls to Christ."

#### **“Gifts and Graces of God”**

The years from 1836-39 were spent faithfully laying the foundations for the blessing which followed later in his ministry. His natural gifts in poetry, art and music were amply expressed in his sermons and writings which included a volume of verses entitled "Songs of Zion". Many of these were set to music and used as hymns, of which, "When this passing world is done" is a memorable example. McCheyne's achievements were all the more remarkable when it is remembered that a severe heart condition often compelled him to lay aside

energetic activities. This was especially so in the matter of missionary outreach which had occupied his thoughts from his earliest days as a Christian. He had eagerly sought the few accounts of missionary enterprises that had been published up to that time and he had been deeply moved by the sacrificial devotion shown by pioneers such as Brainerd and Martyn. By 1836 he felt willing to go to India and prayed that God would make His will plain, but the bouts of ill-health he suffered showed him that God had much to teach him. McCheyne was granted the faith to see beyond the temporary trials and passing glories of this present world to "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

In 1838 as he was recovering from a period of illness, McCheyne was suddenly invited to be one of a delegates sent to examine the possibility of missionary work amongst Jews in eastern Europe and the Turkish Empire. It was in this manner that God through His mercy and providence graciously answered McCheyne's longing to share in the work of opening new fields to the sound of the gospel.

#### **“Dressed in Beauty Not My Own”**

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1839, McCheyne set out from Dover with Andrew Bonar, Alexander Black and Alexander Keith on the start of their journey to the Holy Land. To appreciate the unusual nature of their mission, it should be remembered that the power of the Turkish Empire which had dominated the region for centuries made such visits rare for European travelers. Indeed, they wrote in their account of the journey, "We are not aware that any clergyman of the Church of Scotland was ever privileged to visit the Holy City before." In addition, the disturbed relations between Turkey and the European states at that time obliged them to sail via France and Egypt, and then to make the long overland crossing from Alexandria to Palestine. Thus it was with a profound sense of venturing into unknown lands and re-discovering the ancient sites of biblical days that the four friends at last reached Jerusalem in June. McCheyne could not contain his growing delight as he hurried ahead of his companions to gain his first long awaited sight of the City. The words of Psalm 122 verse 2, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," were literally true in their experience as they spent the following days exploring the City. The slopes of the Mount of Olives, the paths through Gethsemane, the shores of Galilee — each scene was filled with its associations with the life of the Savior, and McCheyne's accounts written for his friends at home show how deeply moved he was by his experiences.

#### **“Suffering for the Savior”**

The weeks of traveling had severely strained

McCheyne's health and by the time they set sail he had developed a fever. Even so, he remained on deck to watch the hills of Lebanon fading out of sight and only as darkness fell did he sadly turn away from the scene. The fever so weakened McCheyne that he needed to be carried ashore at Smyrna and for two weeks he was nursed back to health by an English family who lived nearby. Despite this illness, he spent a further two months traveling through the Balkans and the Austrian, Polish and German territories visiting Jewish communities and gathering a valuable store of information on which to base their report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

#### **“Fruit in Due Season”**

On their return to Scotland in November 1839, their report created such an impact that the General Assembly unanimously decided to begin missionary outreach to the Jews of Eastern Europe and in 1841, Daniel Edward was sent to Poland and Prussia, and John Duncan to Hungary to commence this work. In this way the prayers of McCheyne and his friends were graciously answered and a deep concern was planted in the hearts of Scottish Christians for evangelism amongst the Jews. In later years this work continued to expand until missionaries from Scotland were at last established throughout the Middle East including several of the towns which McCheyne had visited in 1839.

#### **“Wonderful Works of God”**

While McCheyne had been abroad he had left William Burns in charge of St. Peter's Church in Dundee. McCheyne faithfully prayed that while he was away God would honor and bless the ministry of the young preacher. Unknown to McCheyne, a remarkable awakening had swept the town of Kilsyth where Burns had preached in earlier in the year. Two days later Burns returned to Dundee to give an account at the of the revival that he had witnessed. As he spoke of God's wonderful dealings with the people of Kilsyth, his congregation became conscious of the Holy Spirit moving