

James Gilmore of Mongolia (His Diaries, Letters, and Reports) edited by Richard Lovett, Religious Tract Society, (London, England) (1895). (38 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols.)

1. Not a Lazy Man.

One of Gilmour ' s leading thoughts was unquestionably the unspeakable value of time, and this intensified with years. There was not a shred of indolence in his nature; it may be truthfully said that he never willfully lost an hour. [page 27]

2. Not a Fan of Alcohol.

He had quite a horror of intoxicating drinks. On one occasion, perhaps for reasons of hospitality, some beer had found its way into our room: he quietly lifted the window and poured the dangerous liquid on the street, saying, “Better on God's earth than in His image .” [page 28]

3. Read Classic Christian Books.

... read some books which gave almost a new turn to my mind and my ideas of pastoral or missionary life. These books were James's *Earnest Ministry*, Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*, and some of Bunyan's works, which, through God's blessing, affected me very much for good. [page 30]

4. Had Great Character.

No one who knew him during this time failed to perceive the force of his character and the charm of his personality. [page 31]

5. Christ Is Reality.

I have been thinking lately over some of the inducements we have to live for Christ, and to confess Him and preach Him before men, not conferring with flesh and blood. Why should we be trammelled by the opinions and customs of men? Why should we care what men say of us? Salvation and damnation are realities, Christ is a reality, Eternity is a reality, and we shall soon be there in reality, and time shall soon be finished; and from our stand in eternity we shall look back on what we did in time, and what shall we think of it? [page 40]

6. Work Where the Harvest Is Most Bountiful.

Is the kingdom a harvest field? Then I thought it reasonable that I should seek to work where the work was most abundant and the workers fewest. [page 42]

7. The Lord's Service Abroad.

To me the soul of an Indian seemed as precious as the soul of an Englishman, and the Gospel as much for the Chinese as for the European; and as the band of missionaries was few compared with the company of home ministers, it seemed to me clearly to be my duty to go abroad. [page 42]

8. Go Into ALL the World.

“But I go out as a missionary not that I may follow the dictates of common sense, but that I may obey that command of Christ, “*Go into all the world and preach.*” He who said “*preach,*” said also, “Go ye into and *preach,*” and what Christ hath joined together let not man put asunder. [page 42]

9. Not Being Fearful.

‘O Lord, preserve me from the sin of dishonouring Thy name through fear and cowardice! Let us be bold in the Lord!’ [page 51]

10. Going with Nothing among Them.

Oh that God would give me more of His Spirit, more of His felt Presence, more of the spirit and power of prayer, that I may bring down blessings on this poor people of Mongolia! As I look at them and their huts I ask again and again how am I to go among them; in comfort and in a wagon, with all my things about me; or in poverty, reducing myself to their level? If I go among them rich, they will be continually begging, and perhaps regard me more as a source of gifts than anything else. If I go with nothing but the Gospel, there will be nothing to distract their attention from the unspeakable gift. [page 59]

11. Not a Place of Rest.

Do we not in our day rest too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, still to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him? [page 59]

12. Had Severe Depression.

But his loneliness, his ignorance of the language, the inaction to which he was condemned, partly by his difficulty in getting a suitable teacher, and partly by the uncertainty as to whether the authorities would allow him to remain, told upon his eager spirit as week after week passed by, and he became subject to fits of severe depression. [page 60]

13. Became Knowledgeable in Mongol Life.

The next three months were passed mainly in this tent. Gilmour used, whenever possible, to return to Kiachta to spend the Sunday at Grant's house; but by enduring the hardships and suffering all the inconveniences of ordinary Mongol life he rapidly acquired the colloquial, and he also made an indelible impression upon the minds and hearts of the natives, whoever afterwards spoke of him as 'Our Gilmour.' He saw Mongol life as it was, free from all the illusion and romance sometimes thrown around it. He became intimately acquainted with the various Mongol types, and he began to enter into the native habits of thought. [page 64]

14. Comfort Was Not the Missionary's Lot.

After his wanderings even Kalgan was a haven of rest, and he had secured there a base of operations. Now, he writes, "that I have got my study window pasted up, and a nice little stove set going, it seems so comfortable that it would be snug to stay where I am. But comfort is not the missionary's rule. [page 69]

15. No Companion, except His Wife.

Both the friends and the critics of missions are sometimes more ready to tabulate converts than to ponder and estimate aright the difficulties and drawbacks of the work. But in any estimate of the comparative success and failure of the Mongol Mission it should be borne in mind that Gilmour never really had a colleague. He never even had a companion for his work on the Plain, except his heroic and devoted wife. [page 77]

16. The Worth of Singing Hymns.

The next Sabbath, February 2, was fine. All except adherents were excluded, and the congregation numbered about eighty men, and one hundred and twenty women. Twelve men and seven women were baptized.

The most novel feature of the work I noticed was the eagerness displayed to learn and sing hymns. Sometimes poor old women, from whom we could not extract much Catechism information about the unity in trinity and other theological mysteries, brightened up their old wrinkled faces when asked if they could sing, and when asked to give us a specimen of their singing, would raise their cracked and quavering voices and go through "There is a happy land," or "The Great Physician," or "Safe in the arms of Jesus," a good deal out of tune here and there, it is true, but on the whole creditably as regards music, and with an apparent earnestness and feeling that was hard to witness with dry eyes. And if the old women sang thus, what of the young people? They seemed to revel in hymns. The old, big, orthodox hymn - book used in our chapels got a good deal of patronage and attention; but their great favourites were those in a small collection of the Sankey revival hymns translated (with a few exceptions) and published

by Mr. Lees. These hymns contain good gospel, seem to be easily learned, and are set to tunes which the Chinese seem never to sing themselves tired of. The preachers have mastered a goodly number of them, and teach them to all comers; but, Mr. Lees being a singer, of course, when he arrived, there were high singing festivals, and the practice at evening prayers was sometimes so vigorous and prolonged that the tympanum of one of my ears began to show symptoms of defeat. These hymns I regard as a most powerful auxiliary to the other Gospel agencies at work, and I hope a great deal of good from them. [pages 121-122]

17. Encouragement Helps with Growth in the Christian Faith.

...the Christians are like little islands of Christianity isolated in a vast ocean of heathenism, and the waves seem to threaten to swallow them up. The missionary, simply by going and putting in an appearance, or by giving a little simple advice, or by speaking a few words of encouragement, or by devising a few simple methods, or making a few simple arrangements, can often keep the Church out of moral danger, infuse new hope and courage to the members and preachers, and, under God, put fresh life and vigour into the whole concern. As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend; and this is true in an especial degree of a missionary and his preachers and converts.' [pages 122-123]

18. Gilmour's Preaching Was Well-loved by the Chinese.

'As a preacher Gilmour was most unconventional. His sermons were direct talks, without any attempt at rhetoric. They were plentifully illustrated, largely from events in his own experience. Laughable allusions or quaint ways of putting things were frequently used. While there was not much attractive in the manner of the preacher, the directness of his remark and his evident earnestness always made his sermons appreciated and enjoyed. The Chinese were always glad to hear him, and words he used to speak are often referred to.' [pages 123-124]

19. Observed the Sabbath.

He rejoiced greatly when at infrequent intervals a Sunday came upon which he was entirely free from engagements. Such rare occasions he utilised very fully for spiritual edification. He was somewhat hampered in his possibilities on these days by the fact that his temporary home was at Bexley Heath, and his strong Sabbatarian views never permitted him to travel by rail or omnibus on the Lord's Day. The following letter shows how he passed one of these days.

Yesterday being a fine day I left home at 7:15 A. M., walked to London (twelve mile), got to Spurgeon's at 10:30. Had a permit from a seat-holder, was close to the platform heard a good earnest sermon, was introduced to Spurgeon in the vestry after service , went home to one of his deacons for dinner, there met an American who had under Mr.

Moody been converted from drunkenness to God, and whose craving for drink was as instantaneously and as thoroughly expelled as the devils by Christ of old. After dinner visited Spurgeon's Stockwell Orphanages ... [pages 143]

20. Read the Bible Exclusively.

He ceased to read all newspapers except those distinctively Christian. He found no time for books, as he felt that direct work for the Chinese should fill the hours he might otherwise devote to reading. He became more wholly than ever the man of one book the Bible — and so absorbed did he grow in this close dealing with souls that in the earlier stages of his wife's illness he felt constrained to place it before even her wish that he would remain by her at periods of severe suffering and weakness. [page 169]

21. No Use for Books.

Most of my books I'll sell. What use are they to me? I never have time to read them, and am not likely ever to have.' [page 171]

22. Mrs. Gilmour Restored to Health in England, But Not So in China.

Towards the close of the summer of 1885 Mr. Gilmour awoke to the fact that one of the heaviest sorrows of his life was coming upon him. For some years past Mrs. Gilmour had been subject to severe attacks of pain. The visit to England and the rest and change of the old home life had in a measure restored her. But hardly were they comfortably established in their old Peking quarters ere some of her most trying symptoms reappeared. With that brave heart and resolute spirit characteristic of her whole missionary career, for a time she gave herself to the duties of the mission and bore her full share of its anxieties and toils. But gradually she was constrained to recognise that her active work was over. From the first she had thrown herself whole - heartedly into missionary service. She could converse fluently with the Mongols, having acquired their language in the same way as her husband, by enduring repeatedly all the privations of life in a Mongol tent. She had impressed them by her fondness for animals, by her gentleness of spirit, and by her evident interest in all that bore upon their own welfare. In Peking she had laboured hard among the women and girls, both in the matter of education and also of direct religious instruction. A very bitter element in her cup of sorrow was the conviction gradually forced upon her that her power to do this work was fast slipping away. [pages 171-172]

23. Mrs. Gilmour the Equal to Her Husband.

Mrs Gilmour was buried on September 21. Her faith was clear and strong Uncommon as their courtship had been the subsequent married life was very happy She was the equal of her husband in missionary zeal and enthusiasm and he himself bears testimony to the unerring skill which she possessed in gauging the moral qualities of

the Chinese She gave much time and labour to Christian work among the women and girls in Peking and her husband was greatly helped in his work during the nearly eleven years of married life by her sound judgment her strong affection her loving Christian character and her entire consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ. [page 175]

24. Ceasing from Sin, Learning to Do Well.

Beginning with the Chinaman where I find him, and answering the questions which he insists on asking first, I appeal to him to give up what he admits to be wrong doing, sin (*tsao nieh*), as the first step in ceasing to do evil, learning to do well, and coming into right relationship with God through Christ. Some friends are much alarmed lest this should lead to self - righteousness. There is no danger of that. The danger lies all the other way. To leave Christians drinking whisky and smoking tobacco in that region, would be to preach forgiveness of sin through Christ to men who were still going on in the practice of what their conscience told them was sin, and all must admit that this would never do. The condition of things in that region is such that I have no hesitation in saying that a man, to be honest in obeying God by refraining from what is wrong, must throw up his connection with these three things, tobacco, whisky, opium. [page 201]

25. His Life One of Christlike Self-denial.

By the close of 1886 three main centres of work had been selected in the new district — Ta Chên Tzŭ , Tá Ssă Kou, and Ch'ao Yang — all three being towns of some importance. Mr. Gilmour used to spend a month or so in each town, visiting also the neighbourhood, especially those places where fairs were held, and where consequently the people came together in large numbers. He had a tent which he used to put up in a main thoroughfare, and there he stood from early morn until night healing the sick , selling Christian books, talking with inquirers, preaching at every opportunity the full and free Gospel of salvation. His constant and consistent life of Christlike self - denial in the effort to bless them told even more upon the be holders than all these other things combined. [pages 203-204]

26. Hunger for Souls.

October 25. - God has given the hunger and thirst for souls: will He leave me unsatisfied? No, verily. I am reading at night, before going to bed, the Psalms in a small print copy of the Revised Bible, holding it at arm's length almost, close up to a Chinese candle, to suit my eyes; for I cannot see small print well now, and I find much strength and courage in the old warrior's words. Verily, the Psalms are inspired. No doubt about that. None that wait on Him will be put to shame. He is here with me. [page 205]

27. One-on-one Ministry.

It is, as a rule, by direct dealing with individuals that the best results of Christian work in China are obtained, and to this Mr. Gilmour was always ready to make everything give way. In season and out of season, at any hour of the day or night, he was at the service of inquirers. The sight of a seeking face could banish his most exhausting feeling of fatigue, and nothing so swiftly dispelled the depression, from which he so often and so severely suffered, as the sight of a heathen coming to be more perfectly instructed about the doctrine. [pages 209-210]

28. Adopted Native Dress, Food, Habits of Life.

To form any just estimate of Mr. Gilmour ' s work in Eastern Mongolia, it is needful constantly to bear in mind that it was practically a new departure. So far as we know, he is the only missionary in China connected with the London Missionary Society who adopted *in toto* not only the native dress, but practically the native food, and, so far as a Christian man could, native habits of life. [page 211]

29. Depending on the Will of God.

...it must have become abundantly evident that Mr. Gilmour believed in God's present and immediate influence in the passing events of daily life, and that the right attitude of life is one of absolute dependence upon, and submission to, the will of God. [page 214]

30. Wanting Help and Better Health.

My heart is set on reinforcements. Can they not be had? I had hoped Dr. Smith would have spent the winter with me, but he did not. All the grace needed has been given me abundantly, but I don't think there should be any more solitary work. I don't think it pays in any sense.

In addition, it is almost time I had a change. My eyes are bad. Doctors hesitate over my heart, say it is weak, and that its condition would affect seriously an application for life assurance. This winter I have gone in for a cough, which is not a good thing at all, and it would be well for the continuity of the work that there should be a young man on the field . . .

Don't be alarmed, though, and don't alarm my friends. The above is for your own private information and guidance. I still regard myself as in first - rate health. [pages 219-220]

31. Broken Health.

To those who knew him best, and who could appraise at their true value the toils and trials and disappointments of his daily lot, the wonder was not that he broke down; it was rather that physical collapse had not overtaken him sooner. There are many kinds

of heroism, but it may be doubted whether any touches a higher level than that exhibited by this patient sower of the seed of life on the sterile field of Mongolia, bravely continuing to do so until imperatively urged to cease for a season, not by his consciousness of failing power, but by the alarm and influence of his medical co-worker. [page 225]

32. Roughing It.

'I am afraid, if you saw the room, you would not think it much of a place: Tonight, too, I have a pillow. For over three weeks I have rested my head on some folded-up bag or article of dress: tonight I have a pillow. Christ had not where to lay His head. In all things I am still better off than He was. If I could only see souls saved, I would not care for the roughing it.' [page 238]

33. Reading in Hebrews.

Yesterday, as no one knew we were here, I escaped at 5:30 and made for the hot springs, twelve miles away. I walked there and back, and in consequence today am lame on my feet — badly blistered. I had a grand day — so quiet. Going I sat down behind a mud wall and read the four first chapters of Hebrews. Arrived, I had my bath, then got an empty room in an inn, had sleep, dinner, tea, and read the rest of Hebrews. I never saw so much in Hebrews before [page 269]

34. Light of the Holy Spirit in Our Scripture Reading!

Let us cash our cheques. Nay, we have not only God's promises, but God Himself for our portion. Why should we be spiritually bankrupt?

Another thing I notice is the difference subjective states make in reading the Psalms. Sometimes I go over a Psalm and see little in it. At another time I go over the same Psalm and find it full of richness. How important it is to have the light of the Holy Spirit in our Scripture reading! [page 271]

35. Richness in the Psalms.

How full the Psalms are! These days I am going through them in Chinese, as I said; I take one each morning and commit some verses of it carefully. Then, during the day, as time permits, I read a few more. How one the soul of man is! When dull and cold and dead, and feeling as if I could not pray, I turn to the Psalms. When most in the spirit, the Psalms meet almost all the needs of expression. And yet deluded men talk of the Bible as the outcome of the Jewish mind! The greatest proof of the Divine source of the book is that it fits the soul ... [page 272]

36. Great Assistance from the Chinese.

One thing made the journey very pleasant: it was this. Just as we were starting, one of the Christians, a Chinese farmer, but a man who is poor and dresses and eats very poorly, came and gave me two tiao, about 3s. 2d. , to give to God. I was so glad to see him do it, and no doubt God was glad too. Then at the end of the journey, when we were stuck in the mud - hole and could not get out, up came one of the Christians, took off his stockings and shoes, went into the mud and helped us out. The country was very beautiful all the way — just at its best.' [page 275]

37. He Loved the Chinese.

One thing about Mr. Gilmour always impressed me deeply - his wonderful knowledge of the little touches of Chinese politeness and his wonderful power of observation. He loved the Chinese - looked upon them and treated them as brothers and was a man who lived much in prayer and in this lay his great power as a missionary.

When he met a Mongol, he would exchange a few words of Mongol with him, and it was wonderful to see the man's face light up as he heard his own tongue. All the Mongols knew that he could speak their language, and as one of the few who did. [page 278]

38. Heaven's Ahead!

Do you know *In the Volume of the Book*, by Dr. Pentecost? It is A 1. I have just read it. It is not a dear book. Read it, man, by all means. It gives zest to the old Bible. I am reading through the New Testament at about the rate of a gospel a day, or two epistles. Rapid reading has advantages. Close study of minute portions has other advantages. All sorts of reading are valuable. Go for your Bible, brother. There is no end more in it than ever you or I have yet seen. I am going for it both in Chinese and English, and it pays as nothing else does. In Jesus is all fulness. Supply yourself from Him. May the richest blessings be on you from Him! Heaven's ahead, brother. Hurrah!' [pages 288-289]