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## LESSONS FROM LIFE OF DR. CHALMERS.

When Dr. Chalmers was a young minister in charge of the parish of Kilmory, he spent five days of every week teaching in St. Andrew's, with great popularity and success. The work of his parish he discharged to his own satisfaction in two days of every week—Saturday and the Sabbath day. About this time the question of "pluralities" was before the church.—Those who entertained adequate views of the ministerial work maintained that men who had taken upon them the care of souls should not embarrass themselves with any other engagements. Dr. Chalmers entered into the dispute with characteristic zeal, and published a pamphlet, in which he says:—"The author of this pamphlet can assert, from what is to him the highest authority, —the authority of his own experience,—that after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties, a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his tastes may dispose him to engage."

About 1825, the question of "pluralities" was before the General Assembly. The views of Dr. Chalmers had undergone a total change since the time he wrote the pamphlet in Kilmory. He was opposed to "pluralities," and maintained that the care of souls should engross the whole of a minister's time. One of the "Moderates" quoted the declarations of the pamphlet against Dr. Chalmers; and the great man uttered from the fulness of his heart an impassioned recantation of the sentiments published twenty years before:—"I now

confess myself to have been guilty of a heinous crime, and I now stand a repentant culprit before the bar of this venerable Assembly. The circumstances attending the publication of my pamphlet were, shortly, as follows: As far back as twenty years ago, I was ambitious enough to aspire to be successor to Professor Playfair in the mathematical chair of the University of Edinburgh. During the discussions that then took place, it was stated that no person could be found competent to discharge the duties of the mathematical chair among the clergymen of the Church of Scotland. I was at that time more devoted to mathematics than to the literature of my profession, and feeling grieved and indignant at what I conceived an undue reflection on the abilities and education of our clergy, I came forward with that pamphlet to rescue them from what I deemed an unmerited reproach, by maintaining that a devoted and exclusive attention to the study of mathematics was not dissonant to the proper habits of a clergyman. Alas, Sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride! I have now no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and in the utterance of it I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, Sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But then, Sir, I had forgotten two magnitudes. I thought not, of the littleness of time, I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity."

This is a truly noble spectacle, a great man retracting so fully an error of youth,