

Andrew Bonar 1

by Michael Haykin

Michael Haykin's sermon on Andrew Bonar highlights his significant contributions to the church and the importance of maintaining the Gospel message in contemporary society.

Duration: 47:44

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Isaiah 53:6, Luke 15:4-7, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 4:1-16

Topics: "Christian Unity", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the passage Ephesians 4:1-16. He urges the listeners to live in a manner worthy of their calling, with humility, gentleness, patience, and love. The preacher emphasizes the importance of maintaining unity and peace within the body of Christ. He also highlights the grace given to each believer and the gifts that Christ has bestowed upon them. The sermon touches on the life of Andrew Bonner, particularly his dedication to evangelism and prayer.

Transcript

4, verses 1 and down to verse 16, text that is not inappropriate to our day, this day when we think of the resurrection of Christ, but also one that is appropriate to the subject at hand, which is the life of Andrew Bonner. Ephesians 4, and I'll read from verses 1 to 16. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men.

In saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the ways carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, of whom the whole body, joined and held

together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Well, the text that really I'm thinking of for the life of Bonner is verse 11. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. And Bonner was a gift to the Church in his day and is, I hope, as we think about his life, something of that in our own day.

There is a part of Glasgow, Scotland, that massive industrial city of the 19th century and 20th century that was a very, very important part of Scotland's industrialization and a very important part of the world of the British Isles and a very important part of the British Empire. One of the most important shipbuilding dockyards was located in Scotland. Not far from the dockyards, there is a church called Finiston Church.

If you go there today, it's derelict. It's a large structure. It has been derelict for quite a number of years.

On the walls there are graffiti. The soot of an industrial city covers a lot of it. The front doors are still in remarkably good shape.

They're painted quite a vivid blue. But over the front doors there is a piece of netting that has been placed there to prevent masonry falling from the upper stories of that building onto anybody who happened to go right up to the door. As you look up onto the door, if you have no knowledge of the Scriptures, there are these very curious letters carved.

They're not in any language most Glaswegians would be able to read. Probably 99% of Glaswegians would have no idea what the language is. A significant number of Glaswegians no longer go to church.

They're Hebrew letters. And if you were able to read them, there is the statement there of Proverbs 1130. This is the text we read last week.

I was hoping possibly to get to Bonner's life by reading that text last week. Proverbs 1130, He who wineth souls is wise. There is a company that has occupied the back part of it, some sort of sound company or drama company that has occupied the back part of it.

They have a side entrance. And if you were to go up to that company and get admittance from that company into the building, you'd see this huge auditorium. In fact, there are two huge auditoriums.

There's one upstairs which seats around 2,000 people. And there's an equally large one downstairs. The man who designed the building, the first pastor, designed it as a preaching auditorium.

You can go anywhere in the building and in that large auditorium you can hear very distinctly, very clearly, anybody who would happen to be speaking at the front on the podium. But it's derelict. It hasn't been used for quite a number of years.

It's cited as a heritage building by the city of Glasgow. Therefore, it can't be knocked down. But it would be far too expensive to renovate the back portion where there once were Sunday school rooms is being used, as I said, by some sort of sound company.

But the rest of the building is just too large, too cumbersome for renovation. If we would have gone there a hundred years ago on a Sunday morning, you would have seen hundreds, well, literally thousands of people come into that church and hear the Gospel. And the man who designed the church, who designed it as a place where the Gospel would trumpet forth, was Andrew Bonner.

One of the things I think when you see a building like that and you realize what it had once been, there's a note of sadness, a real note of sadness. And to some degree also anger that men would lose the Gospel, that they would allow this precious truth that the place was designed to proclaim, to slip through their fingers, and it can happen over time. Today we remember Bonner, the author of *The Man's Life* that we looked at for two weeks, Robert Murray McShane, that remarkable individual who, after his death, within a year of his death, Bonner had written his life.

And has played a very significant role, that life, that book, in the lives of many. We also remember Bonner today because of a couple of books he wrote. He wrote one on the book of Leviticus.

He wrote one on the book of Psalms. He wrote an edition of the letters of Samuel Rutherford. And then after his death, his daughter published this book.

His own life, in a sense, through the medium of his diary. And I'm going to be citing from this book quite a bit, and it's quite a remarkable book. It reads like a study of prayer in the life of a believer, in one sense.

We remember Bonner today as an author. He wouldn't have remembered himself that way. He didn't want to be remembered that way.

He could say in 1862 in his diary, the name that most fully applies to me is minister. And he could have added not author. In fact, he regretted the time he spent on writing.

It's very interesting. Here is 1845. He was preparing his commentary on Leviticus for the press.

And he says these words, preparing my commentary upon Leviticus for the press, getting to the conclusion of my corrections, I've been over hasty in giving up to it too much time. This morning especially, when I thought all of it was done, the subject of the Urim and the Thummim led me away for two hours. I fear my people will suffer for this neglect of their souls.

It is a wasting of my zeal upon things not immediately required. You know, you sometimes think, well, we live in a very busy day in which we are very conscious of the pressures of the time. Never being different in many respects.

And here is a man who is very conscious of the preciousness of time, the preciousness of the calling that he has been called to, to give himself to the spiritual nurture of those hundreds and really, you know, a couple of thousand who would be there every week to hear the gospel. And he is writing this book, which was going to be abused by God greatly. But he saw it partly as a bit of a waste of time, which is quite remarkable.

I think successive generations would disagree with Bonner's own estimation of his ministry. It's a good reminder that you don't really, you're not able really to evaluate always how God's at work in your life. Well, he was the youngest of, what I'd like to do is look at his life and particularly, we'll see if we get to it today, the whole area of evangelism and also the whole area of prayer and spiritual walk.

Those are the two kind of themes that I want to think about with you in looking at his life. Obviously, I'm not going to finish all that I want to say today, but you'll probably have to carry over until next week. He was the youngest of 11 children.

They came from a long line of gospel ministers. In fact, there was a gospel minister in the immediate family all the way back to the 1700s. One of his ancestors, who was a minister at the time of the Great Awakening in the 1740s in Scotland, who was in his 80s at the time in 1745 and 1746 when Whitefield was preaching at a place called Kamslang, where somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000 people were coming out to hear him pretty well every day in the summer of 1745.

This minister lived about 18 miles away and he could hardly shuffle to church, which was pretty well right next door because he lived in the manse. He was in his 80s, but he heard about this revival and he just had to go see it. So, they got him in a carriage and got him there and apparently Whitefield met him and knew of him and asked him to preach.

After it, he quoted those great words of Simeon, now let us thy servant depart in peace because of what he had seen. So, there is this long line of very godly men in the family and three of the 11 children of the Bonners would become ministers. There was the eldest brother, one of the older brothers, John Bonner, and then there is Horatius Bonner and then there is Andrew Bonner.

And there is a great story that is told by a church historian in Scotland from the 1930s who knew a woman in a congregation where one of these, not Horatius, but John Bonner was a minister and they used to share communion services together four times a year. The Church of Scotland and the Free Church would only have the Lord's table four times a year and you would have a series of preachers come in and on this one occasion there was John Bonner and Horatius Bonner and Andrew Bonner and all preached and one preached on Christ as prophet, one as king and one as priest. And this woman never forgot the three brothers on that particular weekend.

He is the youngest. His father died when he was very young. He was 11 when his father died.

He was born in 1810, his father's death in 1821. His father died on March 25th which was the same day that Robert and Marty McShane would die quite a number of years later and so that day became important for young Andrew Bonner. He had a rich spiritual heritage.

A very gifted young man intellectually. Passed through Edinburgh High School with great accolade. But he was not converted.

When he was 18 we find him in his diary seeking salvation. This is for instance what he says on November 2, 1828. He had heard what he said, a most impressive sermon.

He came home in deep anxiety to be saved. And I was, I trust, unable to choose Christ for my Savior. But he added he feared all was not well.

His doubts were warranted. The following year he was certain he was not yet a Christian. One of the things I think you note about some of these older writers as God works in their lives is their recognition of the danger of easy believism.

Becoming a Christian is not simply, you know, raising your hand at some sort of evangelistic meeting or walking an aisle or signing a pledge card. But there's this work of God that goes on in the soul. Even in the souls of these men and women who are raised in Christian homes there's this breaking up of the hard heart and the influx, as it were, of life.

He could write on May 3, 1829, Great sorrow, because I am still out of Christ. In August of 1830 he was convinced, All appearance of grace in me is only desire after Christ and no more. I am still without Christ.

And the reason why he thinks that is because he says, I have no hatred of sin. And I seek Christ with no ardor. Rather because not happy in the world than because of anything else.

In that year, though, he was reading a book by a man named William Guthrie called The Christian's Great Interest, a Puritan Scottish preacher. And he could say this on October 17, 1830, Reading Guthrie's Saving Interest, that's the book he was reading, I have been led to hope that I may be in Christ, though I have never yet known it. All the marks of faith in a man which he gives are to be found in me, I think.

This is the first beam of joy that I have yet found in regard to my faith. And then two weeks later, ever since I read a passage in Guthrie's Saving Interest, I've had a secret joyful hope. I have believed in the Lord Jesus.

I heard with much feeling and I think understanding Mr. Purvey's sermon today. He was the minister of the church. He that spared not his own son.

And I think that next communion I will go forward to the Lord's table as one that has received him. And he had indeed, as he would later say, reached a place of safety. When he was 82, he could look back in 1830 and say, It was in the year 1830, I found the Savior.

Or rather he found me. And laid me on his shoulders rejoicing and I have never parted company with him all these 62 years. In his life, God had been preparing him for a life of ministry.

And not long after his conversion, he sensed a call to prepare himself in that regard. Following the train of his older brother, Horatius Bonner, he went to the Divinity School in Edinburgh. And there were three very, very important influences of his life there.

One is Thomas Chalmers. We've already mentioned him with relation to the life of Robert Murray McShane. A very gifted preacher.

A man who was a gifted preacher and writer in a number of areas. Not only in theology, but in science. There were a number of books on science, on astronomy.

And gifted also in the whole area of political economy. Chalmers was developing in his life an understanding, applying Christian principles to the whole realm of economics. And seeking to bring reformation economically to Scotland.

And so he sat under this man and as McShane would say, and Horatius Bonner would say, Andrew Bonner would echo, that they had never met a more godly individual who had an enormous impact on them. The second major influence on his life was a man named Edward Irving. Who was born in 1792 and died in 1834.

I don't know if any of you know the name Edward Irving. His name was very well known in the 19th century. He typified, in some ways, the changing style of preachers.

He was a man, when he came into the pulpit, the older style of ministers in the 18th century was one in which they cultivated a sense of dignity. And adding to that was the way they would dress, fairly soberly. And many of the older ones in the 18th century wore wigs.

And by the early 19th century, wigs were out. And anybody who wore a wig, you immediately knew he was a bygone relic of the 18th century. But there was a change coming over the culture.

And there is a movement that we call romanticism that was emerging. This idea of a rejection of all of the 18th century emphasis on reason and order. And instead of order, ardor.

And being in touch with nature. And you probably find it most typified in the English poet William Wordsworth. But it had its impact.

It's interesting how these things have their impact on the life of the church. One of the things you would have noticed when you went to hear Irving preach was he came into the pulpit and his hair was a complete mess. And I'm not sure whether he did it that way.

You know, whether he labored in front of the mirror to make it look like he had just been out wandering on the hills. You know, Scotland's a very, it's barren, a lot of Scotland. And it's windy.

And he'd come in the pulpit like he'd just been up in the highlands. And his hair was all over the place. And he was a big man.

And like one of these Old Testament prophets. At least the way that the Victorians thought of the Old Testament prophets. These kind of wild looking characters.

And that's the way he'd turn up in the pulpit. And so there was a whole change in his appearance. The appearance of a minister.

And Irving was kind of typical of that. He was a young man when he first became very prominent in the 1820s. And a remarkable preacher.

By about mid-1820s, he had embraced what we call pre-millennialism. He was part of a group of young men who were fed up, in their minds, that's not the way they would have put it exactly, but they were fed up with the post-millennialism of many of the 18th century writers. Like Jonathan Edwards or like William Carey.

And as they thought about the world in which they lived, it was the world after the Napoleonic Wars. In which there was enormous depression in Britain after this long war that lasted 22 years. And there was economic hardship.

There was agitation for reform. In which the working class, especially the men, were arguing, we need the vote. The only people who could vote in England during political elections were landowners.

And there was significant unrest and political agitation going on in the 1820s. And a number of these individuals began to look at their world and began to see it as a world of chaos. A world of decline.

And they began to think that the way in which history is structured is one in which, instead of there being a glorious revival at the end of time, which the post-millennialist view argues, in fact, there's going to be decline. There's going to be apostasy in the church. And when Christ comes back, will he find faith in the church? They have embraced, actually, what we call today pre-millennialism.

And prominent among them were men like J.N. Darby. And George Mueller. And these men used to go to prophecy conferences.

Some of them held in Ireland. Some of them in southern England. And Edward Irving was among them.

And one of the big things they began to discuss was, in this period of great pessimism, of great decline in the church, will the Lord restore some of the gifts of the Spirit? A lot of questions, once they started to raise certain questions, you know, are our parents and grandparents right in their understanding of the end times? Other questions started to follow. Maybe the decline of the church began a long time ago. Actually, Constantine.

And that led to the loss of the gifts. Is it possible that God will restore the gift of speaking in tongues? And then suddenly someone in the 1820s, a young woman in Scotland, claimed to have received the gift of speaking in tongues. And a number of these men went to visit her.

Darby went, and Darby was convinced, no, no. It's not legitimate. And Darby, I should have mentioned, Darby is one of the key founders of the Plymouth Brethren.

Edward Irving went to hear it and said, yeah, I think it's real. And he began to preach two things in particular. He began to preach on premillennial eschatology, and he began to preach on the revival of the gifts of the Spirit, which is a violation of his statement of faith, the Westminster Confession of Faith.

By this time, he was ministering in London at a very, very prestigious church in London where significant numbers of wealthy individuals would have recourse. And a lot of it was he was a very gifted preacher, and he was also, as I said, quite a remarkable individual. People would just go to look at him when he'd come out into the pulpit.

He was quite a remarkable individual in so many ways. Every summer, he would come back to Scotland, and he would have prophecy conferences in Edinburgh just around the time of the annual Church of Scotland Convention. And so it was that the two Bonner brothers, Horatius and Andrew, would go and hear him preach.

They didn't buy the stuff about the gifts. They realized he was wrong on that. But the eschatology impacted them, and they embraced it.

And Irving had a significant influence on their lives. Irving would go on. Eventually, he would be - I'm not sure if the word defrocked - his ministerial credentials were taken away from him because he claimed that the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ could have sinned.

He didn't sin, but Christ assumed, or the Son of God assumed in the Incarnation, fallible humanity, which is a real - that's a worse theological problem than any of the stuff about the gifts. That's really a major problem. By this time, just to follow Irving's life, it's a very sad life.

By this time, Irving had broken with - well, he breaks with the Church of Scotland. He founds the Catholic Apostolic Church, in which he appoints, or there is appointed in the Church, 12 apostles. And he thought he would be one of them, but when the Church took the vote, they said, no, we don't believe you're an apostle.

And Irving, a very gifted preacher, would often have to sit in the congregation and listen to the rantings of men who the rest of the congregation thought were apostles, but were hardly gifted speakers at all. Very sad life. He died a completely broken man in 1834.

When the Bonners hear of his death, they will say something to the effect that although he erred greatly, they trusted that he had known the Lord. And he was for them an example of how Christian leaders can sometimes be led into great folly. Anyway, Irving had an enormous impact on the Bonners and upon Andrew Bonner.

He was, for the rest of his life, an ardent defender of premillennialism. In fact, on one occasion, when Andrew Bonner was thinking of going into missions, Horatius Bonner wrote to him and said, it may be for this reason that God has raised us up, namely to defend premillennialism. And it becomes a very, very important part of their theological thinking and expectation.

When we look in a couple of weeks at the hymns of Horatius Bonner, you'll see it in a number of his hymns, a kind of premillennial perspective. And as I said last week, I think it was the Bonners who helped me realize that a person can be premillennial and still be theologically sane. Last night, I was involved in a discussion about John Hagee.

I don't think I've ever watched John Hagee. I know I haven't read anything by him. But after the discussion, I went online and I read a book by Hagee on prophecies.

He's got some book on Jerusalem. And he believes that before the end of April or the end of May, Israel will launch a nuclear strike against Iran. And he's encouraging the United States to do the same, because all this ties into prophecy, because Russia is going to come down and help the Iranians.

And if we don't do a preemptive strike, all these horrible things are going to unfold. And frankly, I didn't find the prophetic part of it interesting at all in one sense. But it's scary that a man of this influence, he's got a huge congregation in the States and significant ties into the Republican Party.

I just hope nobody near President Bush is listening to him. But that sort of wacko, frankly, that's too strong a word, that sort of disturbing prophetic take, for my mind, has always been associated with premillennialism, or at least it was for a long time. And I'm really thankful for the Bonners in helping me realize, I'm not premillennial, but helping me realize that one can hold this eschatological position without these sort of wild fantasies.

The other influence on Bonner was Robert Murray McShane. And McShane's influence reminds us that how important it is, the friends you have in your life, the men and women who you build into their lives and they build into your lives, other sort of people who help you grow in holiness, other sort of people who, for Bonner, McShane regularly was a reminder of the heinousness of sin. Just being around the man and listening to him was a reminder of the heinousness of sin.

And he could say of McShane, he seems to be deeply impressed with the necessity of doing all he can for God's glory immediately. And after McShane's death, the way Bonner would remember him as a man of remarkable holiness. And do our friends challenge us to walk holy lives? Very important to this whole area.

For all of us, not simply because I think of young people cultivating good friends, but for all of us, that we would have good friends who can speak into our lives. One of the things that Bonner would remember about McShane, McShane was not afraid if he saw one of his friends walking in a way that he felt was not to God's glory, to speak plainly to the friend in love. Bonner's first ministry was a place called Jedburgh, Jedburgh rather, in southern Scotland.

And then, in 1838, he went to, there were two, he had two long spheres of ministry. The first was a place called Collis, or Coliseum. I've not been able to find out how to pronounce the name.

You'd think living with a woman who was Scottish, she'd be able to tell me how to pronounce the name, but she had one pronunciation, another Scottish person, another. Anyway, C-O-L-L-A-C-E, Collis, or Coliseum. He was there from 1838 to 1858, 20 years.

And then from 1858, he'd be at Finiston, the church I mentioned at the beginning. Now, Coliseum was a little village between Perth and Dundee. It's on the east coast of Scotland, on the North Sea.

And it was a kind of, today it's a seaside, at least as being a tourist area. In those days, it would have been a kind of sleepy little village. But people were vacating to go into the larger cities.

He was an assistant minister with a man whom, in the diary, he called the old minister. And the old minister was not a Christian. And remember, this is the Church of Scotland he's still in, is a state church, where men are appointed by sometimes the Lord who owned the land, sometimes by the state.

The congregation could have a minister imposed on them who was not a believer. And for about five years, the first five years of his ministry at the Coliseum, he is the assistant to this man who is not a Christian. At his ordination, when he records what happened at his ordination, he could say, I have affection, deep affection for the people, anxiety about the old minister's soul.

He was ordained as the assistant minister on September 20, 1838. He had a deep sense of God's presence. But shame was there, as well as his two brothers, John and Horatius.

And they laid hands on him as they ordained him. While their hands lay upon me and the words of prayer ascended, I felt like one for whom very strong intercession was going up to God, to the very highest heavens. And in great calmness, I gave myself to God my Saviour and expect His promised Spirit.

Even before he came to the church, he was praying that God would pour out His Spirit upon the town, upon the village, rather, and upon the congregation. And over the course of those five years, he began to see God do that very thing. And here he is talking about a woman named Elizabeth Morrison, who became a Christian.

Elizabeth Morrison found peace this evening while we were speaking together. I see it as the work of the Holy Spirit. I've been praying that she might find it, salvation, through the Spirit showing Christ to her.

She was the first of many. And in fact, within a few years, there were around 500 communicants at the Lord's table, whereas there had hardly been any when he went there. The old minister is opposed to the whole thing.

He must have found himself, the old minister must have found himself in a very difficult situation. Theologically, he's a liberal. From Barnard's point of view, he's not a Christian.

God's blessing Barnard's preaching, he's having to listen to it, but he radically disagrees with it. He was a thorn in his side the whole time. Finally, disruption comes.

And God parts Barnard from this old minister. And the event is called the Disruption of 1843. And a split takes place in the Church of Scotland, in which 40 to 50 percent, estimates differ, of the people in the Church of Scotland leave the state church and form what would become known as the Free Church of

Scotland.

The issues were twofold. Number one, does the state have the right to appoint ministers? Does the state have the right to appoint ministers? And men like Barnard, and it was Chalmers who led them out, came to the conviction, no. If we allow the state to appoint ministers, we are undermining the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Church.

And the second thing was, what does it mean to be called to the ministry? There were far too many guys like the old minister. And should there not be on the part of the people of God, a checking and asking the question, what are the marks of a call to ministry? This is a racist Barnard in 1842, Andrew's brother. The whole struggle has been concerning the laws of Christ, especially those pertaining to the choosing of ministers in the government of His Church.

We have held that Christ's people ought to have the calling of their ministers, and it is through them, that is the people, that Christ expresses His mind, so as to point out the fitting pastor, and this is amazing, not through the presbytery, nor the patrons, whoever the Lord might be owns the land. Again, we have held Christ's ordained office bearers are the only rulers of His Church, with whose discipline, government, ordination, deposition, excommunication, no civil lawgiver or judge may interfere. The questions then on which this whole controversy of hens have been raised, is Christ our lawgiver? Is He our only lawgiver? Has He really given us laws? Are we bound to act upon those laws? When Christ's laws and man's laws are opposed to each other, who are we to obey? We don't find ourselves in the exact same scenario.

Thankfully, we don't have a state church here in Ontario. The Anglicans tried to impose one up until the 1840s, and the Baptists and the Methodists fought them to a standstill here in Ontario, and prevented them doing so, and thankfully so, but those are still very valid questions. Who is king in the life of the Church? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Has He not given us directions on how to run the Church? It comes from the Middle Ages, when the state and the Church were bound together in a marriage relationship, and when you were born, you would be baptized within a few days of your birth, because that was entrance into both the Church and into society, and for maintaining order in society, you had only one theological perspective, broadly speaking, and when the Reformation came, the Reformers were not able to break with that.

The only people who broke with that were the Anabaptists, but the Reformers didn't break with that. They maintained that. They also maintained that the state, therefore, was responsible for maintaining reform, piety.

That's all breaking down in the 19th century. In fact, it's broken down in the British Isles from 1688 onwards. In 1688, the British government passed what is known as the Act of Toleration, in which they allowed churches to exist outside the state church.

That was the end of that civil union, because people then could opt out and go to a Baptist church, a Presbyterian church, a Congregationalist church. But it's not until the 1830s, until this struggle, that it really begins to break down. Now, some people, in that day, some people argued, if we allow this liberty, it's the end of Christian Britain, which is not true.

I find it very interesting, this is off to the side, I find it very interesting that it's the United States model, it's separation of church and state, and you've got, from a Christian point of view, the most conservative Christian body in the Western world in the United States, whereas in Europe, where the state church was

mandated, all through Western Europe, you've got rank on belief. So, there's a very important lesson to that. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland are still the state churches, so that means the state still supports the Church of England ministers and Church of Scotland ministers.

Well, you have to pass, obviously, you have to go to university and go to Divinity College. In England, it was Oxford and Cambridge, historically. In Scotland, it'd be Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Aberdeen.

And so, you pass your course in Divinity. You then go before the Presbytery, and the Presbytery would affirm that. It's an external test on theology, it's not an internal test on your own piety and call to ministry.

And then, the Lord of the Manor, who owned the area, could appoint ministers, if he owned, say, till today, no. No, no, not today, no. Now, today, I mean, today, all of the churches in the British Isles are technically free, in a sense.

Now, in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the Church of Scotland, it's the Presbytery who appoints you. The Congregation could oppose that, I'm sure, but it's the Presbytery that appoints you. In England, it's the Bishop that appoints you to a church.

If the Congregation didn't like you, I'm sure that he wouldn't insist on you being there. But there's a lot of hangovers from this period of time. And I think if the Church of Scotland, I mean, the Church of Scotland is on the verge of recognizing homosexual marriages today.

And it's in a parlous or perilous state. If they had followed Chalmers and broken with the state and that marriage back in the 1840s, I think they'd be healthier today. 450 ministers out of about 1,200 went out.

About 50% of the population, though, in the Highlands, most of the churches went out. In fact, the Free Church would find its base in the Highlands. And the most, certainly the most Christian evangelical part of Scotland today is the Scottish Highlands.

And not where Bonner lived and ministered. Bonner's ministry after the break was one that God owned. As I said, within a few years, there were 500 communicants at the Lord's table.

That would not include all the others who would come to hear him preach. He resisted the idea of moving from Colossae. All through that time, he was offered much larger churches, but that wasn't what he was called to be.

He was called to be in that small locale, at least he sensed that for quite a while. When McShane died in 1843, that was horrific, had a major impact on him. And the church at St. Peter's Dundee actually called him to be their minister, but there was no way he felt he could succeed McShane.

All this time he was writing, he writes McShane's life, which became a bestseller and has never been out of print. In 1847, he was married to a woman named Isabella Dixon. Interestingly, he only has a very short entry in his diary about the marriage.

I'm not worthy of the least of his mercies. May the Lord keep all things in their place. Earthly affection, an undercurrent to the divine.

And we could spend a little time talking about that, but I'm going to move on very quickly. Finally, in 1858, he accepted a call to go to Finiston, Glasgow. It was a very difficult acceptance because he was moving from a pastoral setting, where within five minutes of his walking out of his house, he's in fields and it's the

lowlands, and you're moving up into the foothills of the Scottish Highlands, and it's absolutely stunning in terms of its natural beauty.

He was leaving that to go into one of the slummiest areas of Glasgow. It was a difficult choice, difficult because he had grown to love his people. This is what he said when he left.

1856 is when he left. I left Colisee this morning at half past nine. They had packed everything up on one of the carts and were moving down to Glasgow.

I had a sad, solemn feeling spread over me as I rode along and passed for the last time as one among them. Those roads and houses so familiar to me. But the sun was shining sweetly as if to cheer and remind me that my God has been and will still be my joy.

And then he adds, we are pilgrims. And he lived in a town that God had honored his ministry, where it's one of these towns that you would think idyllic settings, you know, just a place to go and get away from it all, so to speak. But we're pilgrims.

We're all pilgrims. There's no stopping place in this world. We're passing through.

And our prayer is that God might make us a blessing, as God made Andrew Bonner a blessing in his day. Next week I want to look at his ministry, Lord Willing, in Finiston. His association with D.L. Moody, which gets him into a bit of controversy.

And also look at the whole area of prayer in the life of Andrew Bonner. Let's close then in a word of prayer. Almighty God, we give you praise and thanks that we have such remembrance of men like this man.

And we thank you for the grace that you displayed in his life, for the outpouring of the Spirit upon this town, for the owning of the gospel. We thank you for the zeal that he had for the building of the kingdom. And our prayer is that as we have contemplated his life, that it would be a challenge and an inspiration to us.

We thank you that he walked his pilgrimage in the light and the glory of the risen Christ. And we thank you that we can come this day, as he did many years ago, and exult in the fact that Christ is risen, and Lord over all, and is at your right hand, and King over the church. Blessed in the hour to come, we pray for his namesake.

Amen.

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