

Andrew Bonar 2

by Michael Haykin

The sermon explores the themes of love, death, and evangelism through the life and ministry of Andrew Bonar, a Scottish theologian and minister.

Duration: 45:55

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Topics: "Church Growth", "Brotherly Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the decline of a church building and the challenge of reaching multitudes of souls. He discusses the 19th century approach of crusade ministry to reach the poor in cities. The preacher then shifts to the story of Horatius Bonner, a church planter who faced the task of reaching a booming city with a large population. The sermon concludes with a reading from 1 Thessalonians 4, emphasizing the importance of brotherly love and living properly before outsiders.

Transcript

...book of 1 Thessalonians, and chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians 4, and I'm going to read from verse 9 down to the end of the chapter. 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 9 to 18. Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

For that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

But since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by word from the Lord, that we who are alive who are left unto the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, I encourage one another with these words. Two themes, really, in this text.

One is love, which we want to think about in the life of Andrew Bonner. The other is death. Now, in the 1 Thessalonians passage there, the problem that Paul is wrestling with is the belief on the part of some of the Thessalonians that those who have died in Christ, prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, will somehow miss out on that.

And that's why he emphasises in verse 14, since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. And again in verse 15, that we who are alive who are left until the coming of the Lord, we will not precede those who have fallen asleep. And if you ask the question of the text, what exactly is Paul seeking to answer or address in the Thessalonian situation, it would appear to be not the general subject of death and resurrection, but the issue of will those who have died in Christ somehow miss out on the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

But this passage, if not wrongly so, has been rightly applied to the whole issue of death and life in Christ, and how the believer is to view this issue of death and those who have died in the Lord Jesus. And that's the theme that I want to look at in Bonner's life as well, specifically the death of his wife. Bonner was Andrew Bonner, we've been looking at Andrew Bonner, the Scottish theologian, Scottish minister whose dates are 1810 to 1892.

And that's a long life that stretches really most of the 19th century. He saw the radical changes that took place in British society in that day. When he was born, the fastest that a man could go was really a horse.

And then the railway was invented in the 1830s. And it was incredible how fast people could travel, 25, 30 miles an hour. And, you know, that speed that starts to become part of Western culture, which we're still living with.

When he was born, the way that you communicated to people at a far distance was you wrote letters. Another way of communication. But in his day, the telegraph is invented.

And that incredible invention of the telegraph line laid from London on the bottom of the Atlantic. It took about five or six tries to do it. It ran from London all the way to New York City.

And in the mid-1850s, so that Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Bonner sermons could be transmitted across the Atlantic. And the week that they preached them, that very week, they could be read in America. And quite remarkable.

In his day, doctors discovered that there were such things as bacillus, the bacilli and germs that cause disease. And significant strides were made in reducing both infant mortality and the mortality of women after giving birth. Although we will see that it is such that will claim the life of Bonner's wife, Isabella.

And so it's a day of great advances, a day of so many advances. But in so many other areas, things were still the same. Men and women still had to wrestle with sin.

Men and women still had to wrestle with knowing God. Men and women still had to wrestle with the spectre of death. Now, Bonner had been married about seven or eight, about nine years before he moved to Glasgow.

We saw last day, we looked, I actually mentioned his marriage to Isabella. He was married in 1848. And I mentioned the one little entry of his diary where he says, talking of his marriage day, through the day, many thoughts of the past and occasionally a sort of thrill of gladness.

That's almost an understatement. I thought in my case, the course of true love had run smooth because we had tried to acknowledge the Lord and keep each other in our place. And it's really a real statement of understatement, because as you read through the diary, you get a rich sense of the love that he had for his wife.

And then we saw how in 1856, after a fairly long ministry of about 20 years, in a rural town called Cullis, a very beautiful spot of Scotland, he moved into the heart of Glasgow, into the heart of this booming, teeming metropolis. Let me actually give you some figures of the way that Glasgow grew in the 19th century. It was an urban planner's nightmare.

In 1780, Glasgow had 43,000 inhabitants. Forty years later, it was 147,000. So, within 40 years, it nearly tripled in size.

21 years later, it was 255,000. 1861, it is 396,000. 1881 is 511,000.

By 1901, it is three quarters of a million. And enormous, massive growth. Most of it, what we would describe today as slums, where the Scottish lower class were dragged into these cities, forced off the land, forced off their ancestral homes where they had lived, and their ancestors had worked the soil, and they were herded into this large urban centre.

British industrialisation, which made Britain the first industrial nation of the world, and undergirded the British Empire, and all of that incredible growth of art and culture and literature, etc., of the 19th century, had behind it a horrific cost. And the cost was a large number of industrial poor. And the question for anybody who was a believer was how to reach these people.

And Bonner finds himself invited to come into Glasgow to start a work. It will become known as Finiston Free Church. And it's not far from the docks.

Glasgow is a great, one of the great parts of Glasgow's economy all through the 19th century and into the 20th century was the docks where they built ships, many of the British ships that plied the seas for the British Empire were built in Glasgow. Interesting, my mother-in-law, who was born and raised in Glasgow, can remember during the Second World War, Nazi bombers targeting the docks in Glasgow to destroy this critical part of the British Empire, which she relied upon. And that base was back into the 19th century.

And not surprisingly, if you were wealthy, you wouldn't live near the docks, you'd live a significant part away, but only the poor would live in that area. But that's exactly where Bonner goes and establishes Finiston Free Church, which eventually will, on a typical Sunday morning, we'll see a couple of thousand come to hear the preaching of the Gospel. And it'll be a place of significant Christian activity.

Today, as I began last day, it's closed. It's actually, when I was there about four or three years ago, this is just an, I'm not necessarily unspeakable, this is a sadness that comes over you when you look at a church building and you know what this place once was, but now it's completely quiet. And not surprisingly then, Bonner is thinking, how on earth can I reach all these multitudes? He could note in his diary on December the 9th, 1856, multitudes of souls, very few indeed that even seek to know the Lord.

Unless I go forth among them, filled with the Holy Spirit, I see all will be vain. Now, the 19th century was a century of raising the question, how can we reach the large numbers of the poor in our cities? And the answer that American and British evangelicals came upon, at least the answer that many came upon, was what we would describe today as the kind of crusade ministry, the campaign ministry. You bring in a

significantly well-known evangelist, who, with the support of the churches in an area, will rent a large neutral space and then you invite people to it.

The gospel is preached. And the man who was brought in the early part of Bonner's ministry in Glasgow was a man named Brownlow North, who did have a remarkable ministry, was Calvinistic. But then in the 1870s, it was the man that we know, but better well-known today, D.L. Moody.

D.L. Moody was born in 1837, he would die in 1899, started his career as a shoe salesman in Chicago, and then the Lord converted him and he became involved as a chaplain during the American Civil War, and then rose to significant prominence as an evangelist, as an evangelist who would specialize in reaching urban centers. And a man who, in his early career, first time he came to England in 1867, he came virtually unknown. Eight years later, he would be very well-known.

And went to hear Spurgeon preach in 1867. In fact, every opportunity he got, he would hear Spurgeon. That, I think, is helpful in understanding where he was theologically, because he would be heavily criticized by Scottish Presbyterians, at least some of them.

One man in particular, John Kennedy, who is the kind of patriarch of the free church in the Scottish Highlands at a place called Dingwall near Inverness, was very, very critical of Moody. Wrote a book called Hyper-Evangelism. And John Kennedy was not, you know, I think, you might think that he was just a hyper-Calvinist, but he wasn't.

But he was concerned about some of the methods of Moody. The public invitation to come to an inquiry room where counsellors would speak to you about your soul after the service. There was concerns that certain things were being watered down.

It is true, and Kennedy had obviously read some of Moody's tracts. There is an element of simplification. I was going to say simplicity, but that's not exactly the word.

There is an element of simplification that's going on in Moody's ministry. There are certain topics that he never talked about. Election and God's foreordaining of the elect and that whole area.

This never came through in Moody's ministry. Now, on the other hand, you could say, well, he was an evangelist. When you're doing evangelism, that's not normally what you're talking about.

Interestingly enough, and I'm not sure if Kennedy picked up on this, interestingly enough, Moody made a decision early on in his career rarely to speak on hell. He never preached on hell after the late 1860s. It would be mentioned in his sermons, but he didn't dwell on it.

It was rather on God as Father calling home wayward children. The prodigal son of Luke 15 was a favourite theme in Moody's preaching. Anyway, Moody came to Glasgow in a great campaign in 1874, 1875.

He came to a number. He targeted the big cities, Manchester, Leeds, and then he came to Glasgow in February of 1874. He was there from February to April, and he stayed with Bonner.

And Andrew Bonner would have realised, I suspect in conversation, that there was a difference between these two men. Not merely cultural, the divide of the Atlantic, as it were, but also theological. Moody, I think, if you look at Moody's theology, he is more on the Calvinist side than the Eminent side, but he's

really not profoundly theological.

He doesn't see it as a major issue. He's an evangelist. He's out to preach the Gospel.

The problem is the foundation upon which you win people is that upon which they're later built. And Moody does set a pattern for the 20th century, the pattern that we've seen in our own day of a Billy Graham. After Moody, you'd have a man like Billy Sunday.

Even worse, I won't get into him, even worse theologically than Moody, at least Moody had the sense to go and hear Spurge and Billy Sunday on occasion talked about intellectual theologians. Where are they all? They're all in hell. And Billy Sunday had no interest in any sort of intellectual thinking about the Christian faith.

We're to preach the simple Gospel and that's it. But there's a pattern set here of how to reach the teeming multitude outside of the church in large urban centers. It's this campaign ministry where you bring in a high-powered evangelist, he's there for a period of time and hopefully significant numbers are won to Christ.

Now, during Moody's time in Glasgow, and this is one of the reasons why Bonner felt the hand of the Lord was with him, there was definite outpouring of the Spirit of God in terms of significant numbers of conversions, around 3,000 in those two months. And Bonner was convinced, yes, this man is indeed the means by which we can reach a place like Glasgow. I can understand, I think personally, as you look at the debate, and it became a very significant controversy between Andrew Bonner and John Kennedy.

They're both members of the free church. Part of it's also a cultural thing. Kennedy's a Gaelic-speaking Highlander and Bonner's an English-speaking Lowlander.

And there are cultural, ethnic, somewhat ethnic differences there between them. There's a different background, even though they're both Scottish. They're both part of the free church.

I think in the long run, John Kennedy had the better argument. The danger of this sort of evangelism, downplaying theology, boiling things down to the lowest common denominator, the whole idea of the invitation, the actual physical invitation to come forward, becomes heavily practised under Billy Sunday, becomes the altar call, as we've seen it, under Billy Graham. And even the Billy Graham Association admits that significant numbers, I forget the percentages that they will admit, significant numbers of those who actually walk the aisle, so to speak, do not persist in the Christian life.

But on the other hand, I can certainly sympathise with Bonner. Kennedy lived in a fairly stable environment in which there was significant social pressure to go to church. The town of maybe 8,000, which everybody knew everybody.

And you have to be pretty reprobate not to go to church. And so that context is, in one sense, an easy one to do evangelism. But what do you do with Bonner? He's in the midst of this booming city of half a million.

Vast numbers of them have been broken out of their traditional lifestyle. They're now in a large city centre, and city centres are notorious as places where people go to escape. And how do you reach these people? It's somewhat the same as we have.

Our challenge here in southern Ontario, this massive conurbation that stretches from, well, maybe Hamilton, maybe all the way to Grimsby, all the way over to Oshawa. This big block of urban culture. How do you reach people? And so, on the one hand, I can see Bonner.

Bonner's hunger to see the power of God displayed among these people. Now, I want to shift, and that's something of the larger background that Bonner is wrestling with as a minister. And obviously, God owned his ministry.

And in the midst of this, he went there as a church planter. There may have been a few families that joined him from maybe a nearby free church. But basically, by the grace of God, he built that church to the point that there were 2,000 regularly on a Sunday morning coming to hear the Gospel.

But it was also a period of great sorrow, the death of a son. And the reason was there was an epidemic of scarlet fever that swept the city. And the cities were centres of industrial life, but also centres of great disease, cholera, typhus epidemics regularly ravaged the cities of Britain during this period of time.

And his son is taken, Andrew, April 1, 1860. I'm going to read a couple of extracts from a diary, his diary. This is really, as I said last day, it's a fabulous book in so many ways.

He never intended it to be published. His one little boy gets ill, a boy named James, named after an older brother, named after actually his father. This is on March the 12th.

Our little boy, James, very ill of scarlet fever, anxious time. It has summoned me into the Lord's presence to hear him say, despise not the chastening of the Lord. Lord, He was given to thee in baptism.

I want to say paedobaptist. In any case, let Him be thine. My heart yearned over Him as He continually touched my hand and stroked it this afternoon.

Relieve Him, Lord, if for Thy glory I should die. Spare Him. Two days later, James very ill.

I got on His behalf this verse. I will deliver thee and Thou shalt glorify me. Today, he's very ill.

The following day. This morning, there is a decided change for the better. Now, Lord, may we return to give thanks and knowing that a broken heart is the best thanksgiving.

Let us have this as ours. But then about 10 days later, his brother, Andrew, contracts his scarlet fever. Our little boy, Andrew, still very ill.

Maybe the Lord will give him back to us. I think I can give him up unless he is to be yet used in after days for God's glory. Probably Wednesday the 29th.

On Saturday evening, we began to have hope. Andrew is recovering. Thus, both my boys have been given back to us by the Lord.

Oh, may it be as I ask for His glory. But these days have yielded me awful proofs of the coldness of my heart. I felt my utter inability to rouse up grateful love.

I have at times felt, as it were, sickness at the discovery of my selfish, unthankful heart. But then things take a turn for the worse. The doctor is little hope of our Andrew.

I could scarcely have believed how this announcement has made my heart bleed. Yet I know he does all things well and Christ is the resurrection and the life still, the saviour of the soul and the healer of the body. March the 25th.

That was the anniversary of his father's death and Robert Murray McShane's death. Anniversary of father's death and Robert McShane's. And this year made even more solemn by our little boy's illness.

March the 31st. Last night sitting up, expecting every moment little Andrew would breathe his last. How such a time of sorrow tries the soul, discovering the vanity of all but fellowship of God.

Isabelle and I have tried to put the little lamb into the shepherd's hands, as on the day of his baptism. It was all I could do at his bedside last night. This morning he still lies breathing in weakness and his eyes dim.

Sabbath morning, April the 1st. At half past six, our dear little Andrew died. Oh, what a calm after a struggle.

Lord, is he not with thee following the shepherd above? I have more than ever to hasten me on to that day of God. Oh, to see him come with Christ. And he's thinking of that 1 Thessalonians passage.

To recognize that sweet, sweet voice amid the company of the redeemed. It was beautiful sunrise as he departed and he has gone to better sunshine, both rest and refreshment. Lord, shall I not abhor sin that brought in this death? And shall I not long for resurrection? Come and destroy death, be its plague and the grave's destruction.

Come, Lord, and wipe away all tears. Come, Lord, cast death and hell into the lake. Come quickly.

I was able to preach all day. But it was the death of his wife that shook him to the depths of his suffering. One of the things, by the way, that where we differ from the Victorians, he's a Victorian, is they spoke freely about death and thought about death in ways that we generally try to shun.

The subject of taboo for them was sex. The subject of taboo for us is death. And obviously, you know how our culture views the other subjects.

His wife died four years later in 1864. She had given birth to a little daughter and probably died from postpartum complications. He doesn't mention that.

She died three weeks after the birth of her daughter. And very, very quickly, October the 15th, 1864, she was ill for about a week, three weeks. And in what Bonner described as a coma.

October 15th, 1864. Oh, what a wound! Last night, most suddenly, after three hours sinking, my dear, dear Isabella was taken from me. Lord, pour in thy comfort, for I cannot.

It needs the Holy Ghost to work at such time. Lord, what innumerable kindnesses thou hast gavest me through her, a true wife, a true mother, a true mistress, a true friend. She passed away so gently till I held her and touched her cheek.

I could scarcely believe it was death. In a letter to Jane Bonner, that's the wife of Horatius Bonner, a few weeks later. Perhaps you and Horatius will excuse me for not writing sooner.

The bewilderment is passing away. All appears too real now, but the loneliness. When will that pass away? I know he doth not willingly afflict, I have felt that.

For though the Lord saw that I must send this stroke, he has not failed when it was over to relieve the wound by many means. I am sure many have prayed for me. I have got many most helpful letters of sympathy, all of which were sufficient to assure me that the elder brother's heart feels for me an infinite love.

Tell Horatius I have tried to glean something in his field the night of weeping. That was the first book that Horatius Bonner ever wrote. But, oh, Jane, when I look back on the 16 years of happy, happy home life, and when I take up some letter or paper or anything else that recalls past days of peace and most helpful affection, all I can say is the Lord has so filled my cup, and then in a moment dashed it to the ground, must be dealing in fatherly love, and must be doing even this in the depth of his compassion for me.

It is the Lord. Let us live of all our might to the Lord. We are looking forward to the baptism of his daughter on Sabbath, eight days.

What sustained him, as you read that text, is the sovereignty of God and the goodness of God. And it is Calvinism. It is theology.

It is bedrock conviction that God is sovereign and sovereign over all of the affairs of men and women, but that God also is good, and all that he does in our lives is good. Oh, the sadness I think of today for evangelicals who question the sovereignty of God, who, you know, I'm thinking here of those who embrace what we call open theism, which is that God does not know details of the future. I mean, how do you deal with these issues of life and death if you don't believe that God holds in his hands all things, and that he also is a good God? You're at the mercy of the elements and powers, as it were, of this world.

As you track through, I'm not going to read them all, but you can track through the way in which he dealt with this in his own life. Here's another entry a few weeks later. The torrent is now settling into a calm river.

My soul is finding real sweetness in the Lord and the hope set before me. Many most interesting notices of Isabella's state of mind have come to light. Many letters from friends speak of her so warmly, so tenderly, and with such assurance of her oneness with Christ.

The Lord's kindness to me in many ways has been quite remarkable. And then so many prayers. My children, too, have drawn around me so affectionately.

I've got access to them in a new way. James, especially, has never sought to be away from this week. And many talks we've had.

The Lord could not have done this thing more tenderly and with more of alleviation. Besides all which, the personal and direct presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, has been in my soul. Let me then gird up my loins and meet all that is in the future.

The thoughts of resurrection have been unspeakably sweet. The baptism must have been a very difficult time. But he writes on that day, his brother John Bonner came over to baptize the child.

My brother John most fervently commended her as motherless to divine care and sympathy. He spoke of baptism, preaching all the promises of God to the believer. He spoke of our depositing the child in the

bosom of the Godhead.

There were circumstances of deep solemnity. I saw my children were all deeply moved. I came home feeling all the way an indescribable sadness.

And yet as if a hand were underneath holding me up. We could get into the whole issue of his thinking about baptism and so on. But you sense God's working in his family, in his own life.

The pain of our loss stays with him all his life. And you don't get any sense in what... There is a healing in a sense. But there's another sense in which that statement about time healing things is just garbage.

Sorry to be so blunt. These sort of losses, we don't get over them. And we don't get over them because death is not natural.

Death's an enemy. And we're not to reconcile ourselves with death. We were not made for death.

We've been plunged into death because of Adam's fall. But the whole idea of reconciling ourselves to this horror and that time will heal us of these things. Well, how deep is our relationship with those who precede us to glory? And although there is a healing, he's able to move on and minister.

In fact, there's a richness that comes in his ministry. And you see it in his writing. And he has a tenderness and a sympathy that now pervades his life.

But he never loses that sense. Part of it, I suspect, is the Victorians, Queen Victoria, who when Albert died, she never wore anything but black from that point on. And all of his rooms were kept exactly as they were when he left.

And there's almost a cult of death that some of the Victorians engaged in. But I don't get that sense of Bonner at all. There's a joy, but also the sadness.

And October the 14th, 1888, this is now 24 years later. This time, 24 years ago, himself with me has been quiet consolation in the day of sorrow. 1890, now 26 years later, ever memorable.

This time, 26 years ago, what a night to be remembered. It's well summed up in this text. October the 15th, 1881.

Last night and this morning, I've been meditating on past sorrows. It is wonderful how the Lord has carried me on these 17 years since my beloved Isabella was taken to Himself. I see now how it was myself that was the necessity for that separation to save me from self, to compel me to live not to myself, but for Christ and the winning of souls.

I thought I'd be more tender, more teachable these 17 years, the clay softer, more impressible. I want some discovery today of my inexpressible worthlessness, impotent weakness, that God has used me as nothing else, the nearest sovereign grace. In fact, there is a little book, I picked it up a number of years ago, it's called the Brook Besor.

And you ever find it by Bonner, it's a gem. Just a very little thing written to those who weep. And it flows out of this experience and he's able to minister to others.

In 1877, he was appointed to be moderator of the Free Church. By 1882, he had been in Finiston for 25 years. And the office bearers, the elders in the church, insisted on doing something about it.

He said in his diary, there's a littleness about me. That distresses me. I would fain have a full heart, fervent love, burning zeal.

Oh, for a day of Pentecost this year to make me as unlike my former self as were the apostles before that day of the Spirit's outpouring. Here's a man of 72, still seeking God's empowerment, not resting. And I think he's a great encouragement.

Still seeking fresh equipping to be what he should be. He enjoyed extraordinarily good health. And died in 1892.

And it was said that those who found him, he died in his sleep. A look of inexpressible peace, almost of delighted surprise, rested on his face as if he had suddenly and unexpectedly found himself in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Interestingly, the same thing, by the way, is said of William Cooper, whose last years were deeply tortured, very different from Bonner.

That when he died in his sleep, when they found him, he was smiling. He hadn't smiled for probably 10 years. The great lesson of Bonner's life is, I think, that there's no shortcut to usefulness and holiness in the work of God.

And there's this richness that pervades his life of pressing after God all of his life. Not resting on past achievements or resting on past communion. And I don't think Bonner's own personal practice of prayer is necessarily a rule for our lives.

But it's a reminder to us of the importance of community. Now, he's a minister of the gospel and that's expected. But I think there's a sense in which he is illustrative of what all should undergird our lives.

Longing for knowing God, in power in our lives, ongoing communion with God. He could write this when he had just come to Finiston. For nearly 10 days past, I've been much hindered in prayer.

I must at once return to the Lord's strength to not less than three hours a day spent in prayer and meditation on the Word. As I say, I don't think that's a binding on us in terms of our practice. But it's a reminder to us of the importance of communion with God.

Passages like 1 Thessalonians 5, 17. Pray unceasingly. Or Romans 12.

Be devoted to prayer. Or Colossians 4, the same idea. And what undergirds his life and enables him to walk through those tragedies.

The death of his wife as a young woman. Was this communion with God. The fruit of his life is expressed in two ways.

I'll just read two quotes. This one from May 30th, 1855. Yesterday was my birthday.

This is 1850, so he's 45. This has led me to set apart some time today in the woods for prayer and meditation. This is before he went to Glasgow.

Oh, I wonder now at the Lord's long-suffering and the sovereign grace that drew me from many waters. If there is one thing for which I bless the Lord more than another, it is this. That He has so far opened my eyes to see that Christ pleases the Father to the full.

And this is the ground of my acceptance. I look and look again at this sight. It was the Lord who kindled that burning bush.

The experience of Moses. And it's the Lord who draws me out to look upon that great sight. And in that sight I live.

And then this. And I think this one is very precious. This is 1892 years before his death.

He's 80 years old. He's in Mull, a little island off the coast of Scotland in the Inner Hebrides. And he's been reading Brainerd's life.

Reading Brainerd's life, it seemed to me he did not hold fellowship with the living Saviour, as he might have done. He didn't see himself covered with Christ's merits, whereby God's eye was turned away from his imperfections, corruptions, ignorance, failures, because the obedience of Christ was imputed to him. I would be like Brainerd every day, mourning and sad, if I did not see myself so covered with the obedience of Christ, that the Father sees me in Him to be beautiful and attractive because of the garment of righteousness.

And the fruit of his life, of his communion with Christ, is this looking out of himself and seeing the Lord Jesus Christ. A full sacrifice of sins and a great Saviour, whose righteousness covers ours, makes us lovely in the eyes of God, makes us saints. Well, let me stop here and ask, we have a bit of time for a quick question, if you have one.

Yeah, they did. In fact, when Spurgeon is ill in 1891, they would die in the same year, Bonner later in the year, he's praying for Spurgeon, praying that the Lord would raise up Spurgeon. And if he doesn't raise him up, as if he's a bedridden, at least maybe he can be like Aaron and Hur, holding up the hands of Moses in prayer.

They did know each other, they did cooperate, there are letters that went back and forth between each other. I don't think it was a close friendship, but they certainly did know each other and appreciated each other's ministries. Binding them together to some degree would be D.L. Moody.

Um, I haven't. I've been to Finiston Free Church in Glasgow. He was born in Edinburgh.

I've, it would be going along the first, the fourth river. I've never been to where he was born or grew up. Most likely that area would still be, they were very wealthy homes, so they're probably still there.

I've never seen any of his letters. Darren, have you, Darren's done a lot of work on his brother, Horatius, who we're going to talk about next week. Have you ever seen any of Andrew's letters? Right, okay.

Before you end, is there any answer you'd like to give? Um, that's a very good question. Any answer I give is very incomplete, because I've not really thought through why the change. I think part of it certainly has to do with our, the rampant secularization of our culture, and the loss of any sense of God in our larger culture.

That may be changing a little, but, um, the men and women don't have any hope. They don't know how to face death. And this is, the Victorian world is still broadly a Christian culture.

Christianity has profoundly reshaped the foundations, uh, large numbers of people. You know, here in Ontario, 70% of people went to an evangelical church in the time of Bonner. And so they have, there is a great sense of hope in the face of death, and therefore the ability to talk about death.

Definitely, I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if there is a reaction on our culture's part to the Victorians. Some of the Victorians made it a cult. Victoria, it is, there's an element of unnaturalness about Victoria in terms of her basically being, wearing black all her life, as indicating that she had never gotten over the death of her husband in a public way.

And our culture definitely, I mean, we're definitely in a reaction on the whole issue of sexuality. From the 1920s onward, the children of the Victorians are wanting to throw off all of the Victorian views. And I think the 20th century and our culture is still living in the shadow of the Victorians on that issue.

I wouldn't be surprised if the same is true with the issue of death. But I think part of it has to do with, that's definitely the secularization of our culture. And men and women have, how can you speak about that? Which ends everything.

But for the believer, it doesn't. But that's an incomplete answer. I suspect there's probably a lot more going on here.

Next week, just to tell you, Lord willing, what we want to do next week. Next week, we want to look at Horatius Bonner, something of the outline of his life. And I'm going to begin looking at his hymns.

I probably won't be able to finish it next week. But then the following week, we would, Lord willing, finish. You want to, if you have access to a hymnal, you can go through and there are about 30, 35 hymns of Horatius Bonner in our hymnal.

And I want to work through them, some of them. Or you can get them access on the internet as well. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank you for this small look at the life of your servant, who though dead, though with you in glory, still speaks to us here. And our prayer is that his faith and his communion with yourself would be a spur to us, a challenge to us, an encouragement to us, to press on with you and to take comfort that you do all things well and that your Son is indeed the resurrection and the life. And he that believes in the Lord Jesus, though he die, yet shall live.

We thank you for this comfort and encouragement. Bless in the hour to come, we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14591.mp3>

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