

Geoff Thomas Brownlow North 20190216c

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Preacher: Geoff Thomas

[0:00] He was about seven years of age, a PK, a preacher's kid, and his father, Moody Stewart, was amongst that galaxy of Scottish Presbyterian ministers, Bannam, Cunningham, the Bonner brothers and McShane, that make the 19th century in Scotland.

He was in such a terrific time. And his father Moody Stewart had a church, and he loved his father, and his father loved him. His name was Kenny, and one day his father was speaking to him and said, you know, there's an aristocrat up there in Inverness, and he's been converted.

And he's starting to preach, and great crowds are coming to hear him. He has an awakening ministry. And lots of people are professing faith through his testimony.

I've asked him to come and preach for us. So within a month or so, Brownlow North came down to the church where Moody Stewart was a minister for so long.

And little boy saw him and listened and was a god and was his biggest supporter and learned so much and came to make a profession, really. It was one of the great influences in his life.

[1:42] And when, 40 years later, Moody Brownlow North died, he was the choice of everyone to write the biography.

And so, he wrote this volume. And so, he wrote this volume. This is a first edition. Brownlow North. Records and Recollections.

So, a beautiful work. I got it from the library in Hackney of the Black Reformed Church here in London, the only Reformed Church of Caribbean and Nigerians in Europe, I suppose.

And the banner brought it from the library in Hackney of the Black Reformed Church.

The second edition, which was smaller, which was smaller, where those chapters were omitted. But he died doing that. And then, his family, his wife and children, they finished the second edition, which really is based on that.

[3:07] And that's also been brought out by Paisley's Press. And that's a photocopy, really, where the banner put a new typeface and so on.

This is John Ritchie. No, that's not the Paisley Press. But we were, we got to know this name Brownlow North, firstly, by the appearance of this book, The Rich Man and Lazarus.

And these are the sermons he preached in the 1859 revival in Ireland. And they go through that whole wonderful story of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great.

It's been reprinted now under the title, The Great Girl Fix, Sermons on the Rich Man and Lazarus.

And when I did the life of, I wrote a book on the life of Ernest Reisinger.

And I once said to him, oh, what was the first ban on the book you came across? I was in Canary, he said, and I saw The Rich Man and Lazarus. And that made such an impact on me. And then also his sermons in Ireland and elsewhere, he taught with them, Wilt thou go with this man?

[4:17] And they have been greatly used. And then there's this publisher. And he photocopies tracts and treatises.

And he's done at least four of the Brownlow North books. And you see how he just puts them like this.

And the prodigal son on the way home. And they are like this. And they are like this very valuable. Great stuff, you know what? He was a colleague of J.C. Ryle. And the man who published Holiness and Practical Religion and Thoughts on the Gospels.

He also published Ryle and Brownlow North. And so it's done. Look at that, for example. It's done so clumsily, some of them.

[5:27] That couldn't be avoided. And there we are. But it's fair to have them. So, I read the book called Brownlow North.

And it's coming out. Joel Beeky is publishing it in the summer. And that's why I'm fascinated by him and love him.

And I hope I can communicate my enthusiasm. And the blessing he's been to me, to you. He was born 207 years ago, 1810.

On January the 6th, it was the year Beethoven wrote his 4th symphony. And his violin concerto came out that year. Napoleon was expanding his control of Europe.

And just a couple of months after his birth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born. And William Pitt the Younger died. The foundations of Darwin Prison were laid.

[6:29] It was the year before Chalmers was converted. And the same year that Andrew Bonner was born. With his older brother Horatius, two years of age. And McShane was born two years later.

So, 1810. To the Reverend Charles Augustus North, his wife Rachel, their only child. Brownlow. Born in Chelsea. In the townhouse of his distinguished grandfather, Brownlow North.

This is the family. He was a bishop in the Church of England. And Brownlow was named after that Brownlow. And he wrote quite a number of Christian books. And you can go online and you must check that with the dates.

That it isn't, you're not reading the grandfather. The bishop's brother was Lord North, who was the Prime Minister. So, we are really in the aristocracy now, aren't we?

One of the most distinguished families in England. But most important of all, his mother was devoted to Jesus Christ. She loved him and served him.

[7:37] Never stopped praying for her son. He was a precocious child, one of the stories. You know how stories come from the families. And then we remember what you said.

When you were a little boy and so on. We've all got those stories. And he was five years old and he was walking with his aunt, Lady Lucy North. And he saw, it was at one of the deer parks of London. And he said to her, Aunt Lucy, why are you like that big stock over there? Well, I have no idea, Brownlow. I don't think I'm a bit like that stock.

Because Aunt Lassie, Aunt Lucy, you're a great deer. Well, for a six-year-old, he earned half a crop. He went to Eton at nine and remained there six years, rebellious, disinterested in study. When he was 19, his father died and he went to Corfu to a theological college.

[8:44] When he was too well-spirited, he had a personal tutor who was to keep an eye on him and toured Europe with him. The grand tour of coming out. The men did it like that and he learned nothing.

Enjoyed dancing, horse riding, the company of women. One winter, he proposed to no fewer than 19 girls, all of whom accepted his offer of marriage.

He was a terrific horse rider and he became a kind of jockey. He raced other aristocrats in places like Chatham. After one of those escapades, he went to Galway on the west coast of Ireland to live quietly for a while.

And he met a clergyman's daughter, Grace Ann Coffey. And at 18 years of age, he married her. By the time he was 21, he had two sons to care for.

They had four boys in the end and one died in infancy. And his income came from a post that his grandfather, the Bishop of Winchester, gave to him.

[9:55] He was appointed registrar of the Diocese of Winchester and Surrey. And he took this post very seriously, although it was administered by a couple of lawyers.

His salary was £300 a year, which wasn't enough to keep up his interest in horses and riding. And so he became a gambler and he lost hundreds of pounds.

And he went to Boulogne to escape those demanding their money. Another fruitless escapade. He sent his family back home, his wife and boys, and he joined the Portuguese army.

And that was another day battle. And so he returned home at 25. His life was going nowhere. His debts were covered by this family. And he decided he would go to Scotland.

To his brother-in-law's home to shoot grouse. And there he fell in love with Scotland. Well, who wouldn't? And there he remained for the rest of his life, virtually becoming a naturalised Scot.

[10:59] For the next four summers, he spent them shooting. And the winters in a large house near Aberdeen. In the winter he raced horses,

winning many of the races.

And shooting energetically across the moors of Scotland, breaking the spirit of all who tried to give up with him. His motto was, every day and all day. In one season at Glenbucket, he shot 770 brace of grouse in six weeks.

At times, the emptiness of his life would convict him. And he would kick against the goads of a troubled conscience. The teaching of his mother. Her little letters to him.

His knowledge that she was praying for him. Couldn't be eradicated from his mind. He had Christian friends. Christian family. Who prayed for his conversion. But there'd be a season of repentance. And conviction. And a new determination. A resolution to turn over a new leaf. It came to nothing. Once at a dinner party, he turned to a Christian lady.

[12:08] The Duchess of Gordon. And he said to her. What should a man do who has often prayed to God and never been answered? And she looked straight back at him. And she said.

He asked. And receive not. Because ye ask amiss. That ye may consume it upon your lusts. And it made a real impact. The ministry of rebuke. What a ministry it is. When his son Brownlow. The third Brownlow. The grandfather. The father of the son. Became very ill. He was subdued. And the Duchess of Gordon gave his wife a book to read to the boy.

And he also read it. And it was a fine Christian book. And he was convicted. Well then he turned over a new leaf. And he trained for the ministry. So he went to.

[13:08] Magdalene Warden Hall. In Oxford. And he took it very seriously. He studied church history.

And the apologias that were very popular at that time. And. In his books later on.

When he became a Christian. And these tracts and books were written. His name was given. And then. Magdalene Hall. Oxford.

Registrar of the Diocese of Winchester and Surrey. So. Should he go into the ministry. He went to see the Bishop of Lincoln. And.

Someone had written to the Bishop of Lincoln. And. And described. His. Excesses. His. Wildness of life. His. Partying. And he went to see the Bishop.

[14:05] And he was laid back. And cool. And there didn't seem to be any evidence of a call. And the Bishop said to him. If I were in your position. And you were in mine. Would you ordain me?

No I wouldn't. My Lord. He said. Well. What was his position at that time? He. Had a sense of guilt. And shame. He knew he was under the wrath of God. But there's a difference between.

Acknowledging one as a sinner. And experiencing. A divine change of heart.

And his training in Oxford. And his awakened conviction of personal sin. Was true. But he says. I never apprehended Christ. I never accepted him.

As my sin bearer. And my righteousness. So he felt like a man. Who had cleaned. And garnished. His house. And driven out the demon.

[15:06] Who lived there. But he had opened the doors. Of every room. And welcomed the Lord Jesus. In. And the demons were hovering. Waiting to return.

In legion force. He later said to a Christian woman. The house was swept. And garnished. But empty. And the last state of that man. Was worse than the first. Think of it.

Think of the love. Of Jesus. That came to me. In spite of that. So. His mind was.

Filled with the theology. That he learned. And the books he read. In Oxford. And it was a challenge. For him. To. Give up the racing.

And the. Jockeying. And the shooting of grouse. And the fishing. He knew. Evidences of religion. Paley. And Butler. The two.

[16:04] Standard. Defenses. Evidentialism. And that was useful. For him. And. When he. Preached.

After his conversion. The. The information. That he had learned. At that time. It wasn't. Wasted. He never had to.

Withdraw words. Publicly. From the very beginning. Of his preaching. That he had made mistakes. And. He. Didn't understand. The gospel. And the articles.

Of religion. And so on. And. When. He was accepted. In the free church. And set apart. Almost unanimously. To be an evangelist. For them. His. Proponents. On the floor. Of general. As family. Could. Get up. And they could say. He studied. Theology.

[16:57] In Oxford. For two years. But. With. No doors opening. He drifted.

Back to his old way. Of like. 35 years of age. He walked. The moors of Scotland. Around Inverness. Gun in hand. Month after month. Increasingly. He forgot God. For three years.

He shot grouse. In the summer. Raised horses. In the winter. His children. Got married. When he was 40. He settled in a large house. In Dallas. Near Inverness.

And there. He continued. A life without God. It was. Unhelpful. To any. Evangelical. Christian. Any moral. Person. None of his.

Friends. Cared anything. For God. And yet. He hated. Foul conversation. He could never stay. In a room. With a man. Who used. Blasphemies. But on the Lord's day.

[17:54] Get on his horse. With his friends. And they would. Ride along the lanes. They would pass people. Who were. On their way to church. To worship. And he would spend. His Sundays.

Fishing for salmon. And this is how he described. This period of his life. For 44 years. Of my life. My object. Was to pass time. Pleasantly. So long as the days.

Were spent. Agreeably. I was satisfied. During those years. Whatever harm. I may have done. I don't believe. I ever did. Any real good. To any human being.

From 1835. Until 1854. With the exception. About three years. The greater part. Of my life. Was spent. In Scotland. I rented. Moors. And fisheries. And my greatest.

Idea. Of pleasure. Was to shoot grouse. And catch salmon. I believe. At the different. Shooting quarters. I rented. I treated. The poor.

[18:49] With. An average. Liberality. Contributing. To their different. Collections. What I fancy. Would be expected. And on five shillings. When an old woman. Lost a cow. All I consider.

My great act. Of kindness. Of the people. And that. For which I expected. Them to be most thankful. Was to give them. At the end. Of the shooting season. A dance. And supper.

To this party. Of my old. Tenants. In the neighborhood. Where their wives. And their daughters.

Were invited. The gamekeepers. The gillies. The shopkeepers. Of the village. My old servants. All in sundry.

And every acquaintance. That any of these. Like to bring. They were very merry. Late in the evening. Some were very noisy. Early in the morning. I've seen some. Very tipsy.

It would be daylight. When a number of both sexes. Gave me three cheers. And thank me for my kindness. They would cry. God bless you. And walk home. They thanked me for my kindness.

[19:47] Was it kindness? They cried. God bless me. Could either they. Or I. Expect God's blessing. On. Such a meeting.

It's true. It was intended kindly. And as a return for kindness. To those who had taken care of my shooting. And preserved my game. And I knew no better way.

Of saying. I'm obliged to you. Yet. Again. I ask. Was it kindness? In the end of 1854. It pleased God. To bring home. With power.

To my heart. It would be. Profit. It would profit. Me. Nothing. If I should gain. The whole world. And lose my own soul. Well then.

How did that. Great truth come to him. With convicting. And life transforming. Energy. He was blessed. With his mother. Still alive. More spiritually minded.

[20:45] And prayerful. Than ever. There was his aunt. Miss Gordon. Of Ward House. In Elgin. Never stopped praying for him. And thinking. The potential he had.

And the wasted life. And one day. He heard a sermon. On let me die. The death. Of the righteous. And she came. She.

Hearing it. Brought him to mind. And she remembered. Much of the sermon. She got home. And she said. Dear Brownlow. I was in church today. And this was the text.

We heard. And you know. This is what the preacher said. He read the letter. And he replied to her. Dear auntie. To die the death. Of the righteous.

We must live the life. Of the righteous. I'm not prepared. To do that yet. And he would. Later on. When he was a preacher. He would. Tell people.

[21:40] That he had written that. And he would say. I said to God. I must have. My sins. I know the consequences.

But I accept them. I accept. Damnation. As my portion. I said that. And so.

His life continued. Until he was. Forty five years of age. Until the autumn. Of 1854. And in that summer. He was slaughtering. Grouse.

As if there was a famine. In the land. And he was responsible. For feeding in Venice. One day. He and his son. Brunner North Junior. Competed with one another.

And. He killed. Fifty brace. And a single bird. While his son. Killed. Fifty one brace. Hundred and two.

[22:38] Four drugs. But the Christians. In the family. Never stopped praying for him. They never gave up. For him. And. There was an increased. Activity.

And an increased. Heaviness. About him. And a burden. And they would say. We must keep praying. Come on. Keep praying now. Don't stop praying. He visited his aunt.

In Elgin. And. She would say to him. How are things. Between you and God. And he said. I'm always saying things to you. That make you think. I'm promising.

Spiritually. And giving you the impression. That I'm better. Than I really am. But one day. He was weary.

Of shooting. And weary. Of fishing. And he spoke to her. And he said. I'm going to see Blackwell. Blackwell was his cousin.

[23:34] He was an. Anglican evangelical. Preacher. And he liked him. And he would call. And see him. And he was so patient. And kind. With him.

And he was. A man. Who explained to him. The grace of God. You know. We. Deserve eternal death. Because we're sinners. But. Jesus Christ. Because. He loved us.

Died for us. He took our guilt. And gave us. His righteousness. Not because of our deserving. But all because of what Jesus Christ has done.

And salvation is offered to us. In. In the gospel. And that was the message. That he always heard. From Blackwell.

And he was drawn to him. He would come back to him. He wouldn't see him for six months. And then he'd go home. Blackwell always knew. What his duty was. To speak to him. Of Jesus Christ.

[24:38] Soon after. He visited. His aunt. In Elgin. She had a. Letter. The post. Was very efficient. You could send a letter. And it would.

Be received. And. You could. Get a response. By the afternoon. The post. Was. Wonderful. And. His wife.

Wrote to the aunt. And said. He's ill. And. It's as much. A state of soul. As of body. And.

In fact. Bromelow North. Had told his wife. Right to auntie. To auntie. Will she come and visit me. It was the favorite time. November.

In 1854. He was speaking at the Christian Union. At Edinburgh University. A few years later. And this is how he described. What occurred. He pleased God.

[25:33] In the month of November. 1854. One night. When I was sitting. Playing at cards. To make me concerned. About. My soul. The instrument used.

Was a sensation. Of sudden illness. Which led me to think. That I was going to die. I said to my son. I'm a dead man. Take me upstairs. As soon as this was done.

I threw myself down. Along the bed. My first thought was. Now. What. Has. 44 years. Of following. The devices.

Of your own heart. Profited you. In a few minutes. I shall be in hell. And what good. Will all those things.

Do me. For which. I have sold. My soul. And at that moment. I was constrained. To pray. It was. The prayer.

[26:29] Of a coward. A cry for mercy. I wasn't sorry. For what I'd done. But I was afraid. Of hell. And yet. There was still.

Something. That stopped me. Getting on my knees. To pray. Because the maid servant. Came in. To clear out. The ash. From the fire. And lay. A new fire.

And you know. If your father did this. When you were a boy. He'd put the ash. In the ash bucket. And he'd put. The unburned. Coke. On one side. And.

And then he'd lay. Finally. Then. Paper. And sticks. On top of it. And the coal. On top of it. And he'd have a blower. That he'd put. And he'd light.

The paper underneath. And seal it. With a newspaper. So that there'd be a draft. I sold my father to it. For years. And then he'd go over and wash.

[27:24] And he'd shave. And my mother would be. Alongside him. And she would be. Cooking eggs and bacon. Which we always. We never had. Cereals.

We had eggs and bacon. Every day. And then the fire would. So this woman. She took ages. And he wanted to get on his knees.

And cried to God. For mercy. I didn't believe. At that time. I had ten minutes to live. And I knew.

There was no. Possible hope for me. But in the mercy of God. And if I didn't seek that mercy. I couldn't expect to have it. Yet such was the nature of my heart. And of my spirit. Within me.

That was a balance with me. A thing. To turn this way. Or that. I couldn't tell how. Whether I should wait. Till the woman. Left the room. Or whether I would fall on my knees.

[28:19] And cry for mercy. Before that girl. I believe it was. The turning point. With me. I believe. If then.

I had resisted. The Holy Spirit. Of course. Who can say. Who can limit. The Holy Ghost. But my belief is that. It would have been. Once too often. But I wasn't held back.

I got on my knees. With her. Lighting the fire. And I prayed. Although. I'm not that I should be. Yet I am. This day.

What I am. Which at least. Is not what I was. I mention this. Because I believe. Every man. In his life. Has a turning point.

I believe. That the sin. Against the Holy Ghost. Is grieving. That spirit. Once too often. So.

[29:20] The servant. The servant. I went downstairs. And said. He's praying. He's on his knees. He's praying. So. They all gathered. For breakfast. In the morning. And.

He joined them. And. He took. Pen.

To paper. And he wrote. To everybody. Everyone. He wrote letters to. He wrote a letter. To them. And announced. I've become. A Christian. And.

At 11 o'clock. His auntie. Miss Gordon. Arrived. And she found him. Writing these letters. And he was quiet. And he was gentle. And at 8 o'clock. He joined. The family.

In worship. And he read. A portion of scripture. And he made a few comments. About it. No hysteria. He had found. Peace with God. Through Jesus Christ.

[30:15] And. He just. Spent. The days. In much prayer. And then. He would stretch out. On. The carpet.

With his mouth. Next to the rug. Longing. That God. Would. Be hearing him. And would listen to him. And answer. To him. He stopped.

He stopped smoking. His cigars. Immediately. He'd been. Addicted. To nicotine. He couldn't. Play billiards again. For months. He would read. Nothing. But the bible. The crimean war.

Was going on. He wouldn't. Read the newspapers. With a change. In him. Was staggering. And you were fearful. Then. Things. That are human. Are not sinful.

Will be. Given up. Whereas you want them. To be. your tools but there will be an anknunfunkspunk a point of contact that there will be with other people his friends heard the Jews with great skepticism they suggested he had a breakdown it was temporary excitement it was soon get over he withdrew from hunting and racing and the newspapers reported this and journalists wrote ah it's for a wager he's made a bet that he could gather a thousand people to listen to him do you know how Christian people are when a notable figure, a media star a sportsman, a singer professors faith in Christ Saul of Tarsus conversion the early church said if there's anybody who would be the last to be converted it's Saul of Tarsus and so when he was converted they were very uncertain he wrote in

[32:16] Brownlow North wrote in the margin it was by black 721 so it was with Brownlow North and no wonder and yet for all that he does believe that the Lord has spoken to him to him be the gratitude and the glory and then along the words of Tarsus to Paul Acts 26-24 that Paul was beside himself and mad Christians in all ages have been called mad but who was the most mad Paul or Tarsus but the Christians who knew him his mother and his family his aunt his cousin the evangelical vicar those who believed in the triumph of grace and regeneration by the Holy Spirit they stood by him and they encouraged him to visit some old friends who were not

Christians and that he could write to them and go and see them and talk to them he wouldn't travel on the Sabbath he had been kept twice in the free church in Inverness on the boat on the Caledonian Canal on the Monday he sailed to Fort William and the steward recognised him was amazed of the difference appearance that he had going north on that boat a few months earlier he had consumed glass after glass of scotch but on this journey he was a broken man he was leaning on his staff he was deeply serious and thoughtful he didn't slip easily into a religious laid back frame of mind at all the fiery dogs were enormous he was becoming acquainted with the deceitfulness of his own heart he was striving to enter the narrow gate and walk on the narrow path and mortified by the Holy Spirit remaining sin and God was preparing him for this extraordinary future that lay before him he came to growing assurance day by day he could appropriate

Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour at the beginning of every day and keep in communion with him through those days he told a friend he couldn't pray that Jesus Christ would come again soon you know it was a very popular time for speculation eschatological speculation about the coming of Christ he said I can't pray that Jesus I don't want that I'm afraid we'll ask God to make you want it his friend said and that helped him he thought of the atonement what has Christ accomplished then has he accomplished for me in his death that I should be afraid of seeing Jesus Christ haven't all my sins been laid on the Redeemer and when he returns doesn't he return as my Saviour and I will be like him so he began to pray come

Lord Jesus come Lord Jesus the first Christmas as a disciple 1854 we spent with his mother he stayed with her for a week the joy was full as a much grateful only child who had been dead was alive again who had been lost was found and in the next months he came to a clearer understanding of the Christian faith he learned to harm the dear life on the naked wood of God he learned the blood of Christ the atonement of Jesus Christ the all sufficient answer for the past years of wickedness and emptiness he had many difficulties but going to the Bible he found peace again and again he said aloud to himself do you think by your own reason or deep thinking that you can find out God or know Christ better than the Bible can teach you how to know him if you can't then why are you perplexing your brain with worse than useless speculation why aren't you learning from scripture and holding on to what you've got you must either make a God and religion for yourself and stand and fall entirely and eternally on the God you've made or you must take the religion of Jesus

Christ as revealed to you in his word you can't take a little of God's teaching and a little of your own you can't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and the wisdom of your own heart at the same time choose that now and forever by which you will stand or fall and he put his hand on the open Bible and he said God helping me I will stand or fall by the Lord Jesus Christ I will put my trust in his truth and in his teaching as I find it in the written word of God as sure as the Lord Jesus Christ is the truth I must be forgiven and saved and that then established his attitude from that time on to his much read Bible and much written Bible how he fed on it three months after Christmas he and his wife became members of the congregation of Donald Gordon in the free church in Elgin you can still see the same building it stands today and he sat under an expository evangelistic preaching from that ministry he was going through

[38:31] Mark's gospel and his assurance grew as he heard the word of God preached he was a very imposing presence he sat in the pew there and the marks of his past encanglements in the world were on him and an air of unrest of strength of hungry looks as he gazed at the preacher his eyes fixed and when guest preachers came near to be warned about this man built like an ox who was there just would gaze and gaze he does that to us

all he said not just to you and his minister then at that time like we do there are times when we give up our regular visitation of people and there are individuals and we have to spend hours with them and his pastor spent time with him reading the bible praying and he never lost his wonder that the god of heaven should have mercy on a prodigal like him and fiery dance like the thorn in the flesh for Paul as a counterbalance to the one voice whispering in one ear you're a great man

Paul you're a wonderful man and in the other ear you're a wicked man Paul you're a cruel man look what you've done Paul and so he had whisperings there's no god it's a fantasy there's no god there's no god it came when he got on his knees to pray it came at the lord's table it came under the word of the means of grace and then he would have to say god is god is there is a god and his diligent trust coloured his convictions and he could sympathise with people wrestling in the congregation who later came and opened their hearts to him his anchor verse on which he would often cast himself was him that cometh unto me

I will in no wise cast out and no verse did he so often quote in his preaching and in his private counselling with awakened men and women than not worse and that testing time came to an end in his life like it did with Bunyan and like it did with Luther and he describes his piece!

I had risen from my bed in an agony of soul for I had been many months in trouble about my spiritual condition I need not have been like that for many hours if I had only had faith to believe in Jesus Christ and make my own heart a liar but my own heart told me I was the chief of sinners that Paul who called himself the chief was not to into my room to read the Bible the portion I was reading was the third chapter of Romans and as I read the 20th and following verses a new light seemed to break in on my soul by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight that I knew but then I went on to read these words but now now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe for there is no difference and with that passage such a light came into my soul and I struck my book with my hand and I sprang from the chair and cried if that scripture is true I am a saved man that is what I want that is what God offers me that is what I will have God helping me it was that I took the righteousness of God without the law and that is my only hope and so that period then of searching for forgiveness and satanic assault a fearful period in his life came to an end he wouldn't he said want his worst enemy to endure what he had experiences like reading the first chapter of Bunyan's Grace of Bounty he said that his friends would tremble for him thinking he was losing his reason he would break down under the strain of those times and part of the enormous influence that he exercised in

[43:48] Scotland and Ireland was due to the fact that so long he had served the world the flesh and the devil and then he come to renounce it totally and habits had been formed which could injure the sinner himself and Brown Renor would compare himself to the sick man of Acts 4 who was 40 years of age when he received the miracle of healing and when he began a new diary the year after his conversion he wrote his name Brown Renor and then a man whose sins crucified the Son of God and he penned his words alas that I so lately knew thee thee so worthy of the best nor had sooner turned to why thee truest good and only rest the more

I love I mourn the more that I did not love before all right let me close now with how does God make a person an evangelist how does God some of your men are thinking about the ministry is God calling you to be a minister there's a great need for preachers of the gospel there's great need for evangelists church planters in Europe in these days how did God draw this man saved strengthened knowing he trusted in Jesus Christ how did God call him now to be a preacher 11 months after his conversion he was convinced of his lack of compassion for the people who lived around him what was he doing for them so firstly tract distribution should he distribute tracts that would make him look ridiculous people would laugh at him people would call him mad but he resolved to try and one day he went to a quieter part of

Elgin with a pocket of tracts he met an old woman he handed her a tract she took it without a smirk on her face she said thank you as did another old woman when she received his tract the test came as a policeman came walking along the road he offered one to him the constable said thank you Mr.

North so for 14 years he carried a supply of tracts in his pocket and there was only one occasion when an atheist refused to take one there were others who avoided him and he noticed this but he took it as a cross!

so he would engage in conversation with people and he would leave tracts in prominent places he never found it easy after 14 years it was still very difficult he said it took him half an hour of internal struggle on a train before he offered a tract to a fellow traveler once he was on a ferry and there were a group of gentlemen talking together how could he speak to them it was so pleasant and far easier to read the paper or a book and then he thought of the eternal life that was facing these men and he galvanized them he went across and he smiled at them all and he gave them each a tract and some of them knew him and they would have been surprised if he hadn't come across to give later he wrote well as you've seen some terrific tracts like rye tracts but they're meaty and convicting secondly so he's giving that's how he's beginning his journey into being an evangelist and a preacher he gives out tracts secondly he visits the sick he was a member of a free church and there were people in the congregation who were sick and he began to visit them one of his members said

[48:39] I remember his supplying the very poor and bedridden with many little comforts he paid for gas to warm their rooms I myself have gone to see some of these poor people and I'll never forget some of those visits it was a wretched old body and she couldn't leave the bed for years and he would pick up a stool and he would sit next to the bed and he would bring oranges with him and he would unpeel the orange and he would give her a portion after portion and the surroundings were so disgusting even to mention after that time I for one felt I couldn't be in his company for a quarter an hour without being benefited by it we all loved him so much and he had a there was a town missionary a member of the congregation and they would go to the hospital and they would go from from bed to bed and they would talk on Sunday afternoons thirdly there was evangelistic visitation and that developed of course from visiting the sick in

Aberdeen in 1863 he spoke of this when I first came to know the Lord the Spirit said to me Brown run off there's that woman in the porter's lodge you ought to go and speak to her about religion but the flesh said don't do that keep what you've got to yourself but the Spirit gave me no rest till I went to the woman at the porter's lodge I read the Bible to her and told her what the Lord had done for my soul then the Spirit said to me there's the washer woman in the town you know you should go to her and read and pray with her also do nothing of the sort she will likely think that she has more religion than you have the Spirit would give me no rest till I read and prayed with the washer woman so he gave away trunks he visited the sick reading the Bible to them and occasionally prayed then he visited a young woman whom he had been told about she didn't have long to live she said to him don't mind me my father please speak to him he's a bad man and so he went to the room where they were and he spoke to them and they were impressed with what he said and there were two other people in the room and they were helped by his words so that whenever he visited the home which was very frequently in order to see the dying daughter they would come and they would listen to what he had to say and the father was changed and the change in his life was so evident that everybody in the street all his neighbours knew about it and then many other people wanted to know about this change and it all came about him visiting a dying girl then a woman came to him and said can you come and see my husband and speak to him the way you were speaking to us in the room here and the man was a shoemaker and he asked from the north to return and he would bring a few of his fellow shoemakers with him and a dozen gathered to hear him and they asked him to return and this time sixty men assembled to hear him and these meetings continued and grew and in various occasions so that every night all over

Elgin he was out speaking to groups of men and women and there was a solemnity and a deep hearing the daughter in law John Macdonald the apostle of the north heard him in these meetings and tried to attend she couldn't get in the stairs up to the room where he was speaking were full of people sitting and craning their ears to hear she said she heard nothing like it since hearing her father preach and he would be driven home in a horse and truck by one of the elders of the church and he would express to his driver his fear oh I'm not really ordained I shouldn't be speaking in

meetings like this I'm trespassing on the duties of a minister but then I can find no prohibition in the Bible that stops me from speaking like this and I bring the matter to God in prayer again and again if it's against God's will close the door but the very reverse occurs and I get more and more invitations to come and speak to gatherings of men and women he travelled a great distance to visit one family where there was much carelessness and indifference about the same it was a long journey and he had no assurance that he would be welcomed when he knocked the door but they asked him in and when he visited

Woody Stewart then he spent much of one day writing an owner's letter to someone who he had known in the days of his follies and he wrote and said he longed that the saviour that he knew that they should know him too and the Christian wrote to him and said will you go and see my brother a man he'd hunted with in his early life and he shrunk from the invitation she gave him an address in Edinburgh and he went to see him and when he went through his pockets he'd lost a bit of paper so he took a cab to the station to go to Glasgow and in the cab he put his hand in his pocket and he found a piece of paper so he told straight away turn around and go to this address he could have pleaded the providence of God but he went to see the man and spoke earnestly and lovingly to him fourthly there was street preaching next he'd gone to

London to visit his mother and one Sunday afternoon he called on a young Scotsman who'd been converted in a remarkable way and had begun to preach in the street and Braulot knocked him the door and he said if I can't ask you in come with me now I'm preaching in King's Cross will you come with me and he stood on a street corner and he prayed and then he addressed a handful of people nobody stopped his words seemed to just be like barbarians bouncing around the place not making any impact and there was frustration in the air and somebody in the crowd we want to hear the Stoutman with the dark eyes Brownman all standing next to him and there was no escape and he wasn't ashamed of the gospel and there on the street corner near King's Cross he began to preach and immediately his voice and his presence and his conviction that what he was saying was the very word of

[55:44] God impacted and a crowd came and people stopped a large crowd and when he preached until he was exhausted people cried out don't stop go on but he couldn't preach any further and so he was persuaded from that experience of the usefulness of open air preaching and his own ability to speak without notes of the God he knew and the Bible that he knew and then fifthly Sunday preaching from the pulpit and that was a providence out of his control he returned to Inverness to Dallas where he lived for years and hunted and fished and raced and he told them he was looking forward to being with them in the free church on Sunday he said oh we haven't got anybody the preacher has been called away and there's nobody we looked and visited lots of people they can't will you preach there'd be no sermon unless you come and preach they pleaded with him

I'm not ordained well let an elder take the devotions and I'll preach and that's what happened and they thought of 18 months ago and that long long wealthy hunting shooting riding Sunday riding out to fish and hunt the next day the Monday after that Sunday when they thought what has grace wrought in this man's life to preach to us like that the next Monday there was a tragedy it was a heavy rain and two little children had tried to cross the river on a plank and they had fallen in and were drowned and the minister was away and the father came to Brown Row and asked him to come and speak to his wife and where he did so the bodies of the children were brought from downstream and were brought and the crowd of people gathered and they looked to Brown and he stood outside the house and he spoke to of the providence of God and the love of God in Jesus Christ and to sympathy with them and urged them to be ready to meet God themselves and the minister came back and he was told that everything had happened and he went to see him straight away and said will you preach next Sunday again preach again and the building was full and in the congregation were two men who walked eight miles to hear him and they came and said can you come to where we live and preach there and he said but I'm not ordained they wouldn't take no for an answer and so there he preached to a large and attentive congregation every seat taken the staircases the stairwells people were converted the cause of Christ was revived he was asked to explain whether he was a real preacher or not you would say don't think

I'm intruding into the office of the ministry I'm not an authorised preacher but I'll tell you what I am I'm a man who stood on the brink of the bottomless pit and I looked in and I saw many of you going down into that pit I am here to haul you back and warn you of the danger I'm here as the chief of sinners saved by grace to tell you that the grace that saved me can surely save you and so in Dallas in Venice the place where he had so publicly shown his opposition to the claims of Christ there he began preaching on the Lord's day and he did it tirelessly for the rest of his life with great effect he said I've done all the harm I could in Scotland and now I intend to remain here and do all the good I can and so his ministry began and went on and he was recognized unanimously by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Rabbi Duncan just loved his preaching and coalition and the leaders in the free church he was set apart he left a famous message it follows on from what we heard this morning six short rules for young Christians never neglect daily private prayer and when you pray remember that God is present that he hears your prayers two never neglect daily private Bible reading and when you read remember that God is speaking to you and that you are to believe an act upon what he says I believe all backsliding begins with a neglect of these two rules three never a day pass without trying to do something for

[61:45] Jesus every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you and then ask yourself what am I doing for him four if ever you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong go to your room and kneel down and ask God's blessing upon it if you can't do this it's wrong five never take your Christianity from Christians or argue that because such and such people do so and so that therefore you may you are to ask yourself how would Christ act in my place and strive to follow him six never believe what you feel if it contradicts God's word ask yourself can what I feel be true if God's word is true and if both cannot be true believe God and make your own heart a liar so the long life of ministry 1859 in

Ulster and his preaching there his awakening ministry came to Wales to Swansea to preach and travelled throughout the British Isles until his death the transformation of a man so wonderfully transformed by grace encouraging us to follow him let's pray him to to to him to him to!