

## THE FIGHT FOR THE REFORMED FAITH : 2

# THE FORGOTTEN KENNEDY Leader of the Highland Host

*"The memory of the Just is blessed" Prov. 10 : 7*

*Editor*

But four years had the mortal remains of John Kennedy of Dingwall been laid to rest, when, in 1888 T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh brought forth from the presses the Twelfth Series of the prestigious "Cunningham Lectures" under the title "The Preachers of Scotland".

Founded in 1862 in memory of the late Dr. William Cunningham, principal of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, the lectures occupied an eminent place in the theological world of Scotland's 19th century Free Kirk. Over the years many of Scotland's most eminent names in theology had had the honour to deliver these profound discourses, many, if not all, of which found their way into print via the good offices of Messrs. T. and T. Clark. For instance, no less than Patrick Fairbairn delivered the Third Series, on "The Revelation of Law in Scripture", James Walker delivered the Fourth Series on "The Theology and Theologians of Scotland", and the Ninth Series were delivered by George Smeaton under the title "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", this last of which will be well known to modern readers since it has been reprinted several times within the last forty years by the Banner of Truth Trust, and gives a salient indication of the solidity and worth of the whole enterprise, at least up until Smeaton's time.

But now, in 1888, and the Twelfth Series came from the presses, the work of the then Professor of Apologetical and Pastoral Theology at New College, Edinburgh, one William Garden Blaikie, D.D., LL.D. With such an august topic, and with the lecturer being, as it were, in the very cockpit of Scottish Calvinistic religious life, one would expect this volume to be a mine of rich spiritual edification and encouragement, covering as its title indicates "The Preachers of Scotland", and that from the times of St. Ninian and the early Celtic churches, right through the times of St. Columba ( whose stentorian voice could be heard singing the Biblical Psalms at a range of a mile and more !), through the Reformation, the Covenanters, the Seceders, the Disruption, and right up to Dr. Blaikie's contemporary times.

Indeed, from his own times Dr. Blaikie draws our attention to a plethora of great names....Chalmers, Burns, McCheyne, Candlish and many more of the leading pulpit giants of the times of the youthful Free Kirk are brought to our attention, and from the latter half of the 19th Century he is at pains to tell us about some of the great pulpiteers of that era, and we find ourselves confronted by Dwight L. Moody, Dr. Oswald Dykes, Dr. John Ker, and Principal Caird. ( Who on earth the latter three were, is beyond me, but Dr. Blaikie seems to think they merited eulogistic notice as examples of great preachers of his day. Moody, was of course, an American, but spent a lot of time in Scotland on his evangelistic crusades ). All in all, Dr. Blaikie seems to have determined to cover everybody within the scope of his lectures, even to the point of spending thirty one pages on none other than the infamous "Moderates" !

But Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall, he who Spurgeon called "true as steel and firm as a rock", he who was popularly known as the "Leader of the Highland Host", he who was one of the most eminent preachers of Scotland's Free Kirk, he whose Calvinistic orthodoxy was so unimpeachable, what did Dr. Blaikie leave on record about him ? After all, Dr. Blaikie was contemporary with him, a leader in the same denomination, in the same country, so surely Dr. Blaikie has left for us at least thirty one pages of note, as he did for the moderates ? So what has Dr. Blaikie, this eminent Cunningham lecturer to say about Dr. Kennedy ?

Nothing.

Amazingly, nothing. Nothing at all. The omission glares luridly. Could it be that this highly educated, highly intelligent, eminent theologian had decided to omit all reference to his contemporaries ? Not so, he gives details about Dykes, and Ker, and Caird ( whoever they were), and of course, about Moody (who was an American preacher). Could it be then that Dr. Blaikie was unaware of Dr. Kennedy? Really ? Unaware of the author of : *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire; John MacDonald, the Apostle of the North; Man's Relations to God;* and a host of polemical tracts ? Really ? An academic like Dr. Blaikie unaware of the best preacher in his denomination and country, when even the working class of Glasgow and Edinburgh knew exactly who Kennedy was, and would spare nothing to go and wait upon his ministry whenever he was in town ?<sup>1</sup> When blind Mary McLennan, nigh eighty years of age, could have been seen groping her way to Kennedy's church at Dingwall every Sabbath to feast her soul on the riches spread by Dr. Kennedy from her Heavenly Father's blessed Word ?<sup>2</sup> When the University of Aberdeen could notice Kennedy to the extent that in 1873 it conferred on

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Alexander Auld :*Life of John Kennedy D.D.*, ( London: T. Nelson & Sons 1887) p 117.

<sup>2</sup> Auld. Op. Cit. p.124

him the degree : Doctor of Divinity, in recognition of his stalwart labours for the cause of Christ in Scotland ?<sup>3</sup> Dr. Blaikie, an academic, and he didn't notice this ? And when one John Barron, editor of the 'Inverness Courier' could notice him, and could say of him "For sheer power over an audience, there was none to surpass Dr. Kennedy at his best"?<sup>4</sup>

Oh no, Dr. Kennedy was too well known over a widespread area not to be noticed ! In London, Spurgeon was one of his admirers, and a great friend. And he was known of as far afield as Australia- a Sydney church had called him in 1854, and other calls came from congregations in Dunoon, Renfield in Glasgow, and Greenock,<sup>5</sup> all which he declined, firm in his conviction that it was God's purpose for him to remain at Dingwall, the congregation that he served for forty years till his death in 1884.

So why did Dr. Blaikie miss mentioning Dr. Kennedy ? To write a history of the Preachers of Scotland and to leave out Kennedy would be like writing a history of the British Army in the Second World War without mentioning anything about General Montgomery. The omission seems so glaring that it begs the question : *Was it all deliberate, did they want to forget him, and consign him to the limbo of No-mentionland ?* And indeed the next generation of Free-Kirkers came along and generally appeared to be oblivious to this godly man's existence among their forebears.<sup>6</sup>

The fact is, that John Kennedy did not fit in at all with the predilections of the new school of evangelical leaders that had taken effective control of the Free Kirk by, probably as early as 1870, or soon after. He represented the strict adherence to the Westminster Standards and the old school of Scottish theologians which the rising generation of Dr. Blaikie's day could not stomach. They had fed their souls on a crass revivalism and the excitements it had generated all over the realm, they had drunk deeply at the wells of 'modern thought', they had gone, hook, line and sinker for the style and methods of Dwight L. Moody, and with this Arminian and Amyraldian views of the Gospel were imported wholesale into the churches. Calvinism was, for them, something to be 'tempered' with 'modern' considerations, and while

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. footnote page 163. The University of Aberdeen was Kennedy's *Alma Mater*.

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Neil M. Ross, in Biographical Introduction to **The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire** (Inverness : Christian Focus Publications 1979 reprint reset) page 10. Ross pertinently points out that this John Barron had 'heard most of the great national speakers of the day.' His opinion, therefore is of great weight.

<sup>5</sup> Auld : Op. Cit. pp 81 - 82

<sup>6</sup> It was not only Dr. Kennedy that was so ignored, but also his great friend and confidant, Dr. James Begg, of Disruption fame, Begg, who at one of the vital General Assembly debates prior to the Disruption, "rose unknown" to speak, "but sat down famous" such was the impact of his speech on the Assembly as he stood for the true principles of Christ's Church. ( See: biographical introduction to Vol.1 of Cunningham's **Historical Theology**). Dr. Begg was a minister of the Free Kirk in Edinburgh, and was therefore right under Dr. Blaikie's nose, so to speak, but like Dr. Kennedy, he gets no notice, and gets lost in a hinterland of forgettery, most undeservedly so. .

many eminent leaders in the Free Kirk made lip service to the Confessional Standards, they were able somehow to combine this with attitudes and practices which belied those same Standards, some more, and some less. This was the era when Professor William Robertson Smith could solemnly aver his evangelical beliefs and still regard the Pentateuch as a hodge-podge of myths, sagas, and traditions sewn together by later biased editors.<sup>7</sup> This was the era when Dr. Alexander White, eminent Free Kirk minister of Edinburgh, could steep himself in the Theology of the Puritans, especially that of Owen and Goodwin, fill his sermons with references to them, and yet be a supporter of Robertson Smith, yea, more, could go out of his way to pay his respects to Cardinal Newman, and could flirt with the same destructive criticism of the Bible as that which was the hallmark of Wellhausen and Robertson Smith.<sup>8</sup> And by the early 1890's, as the Free Presbyterian Magazine can tell us, the faithful Professor Johnston at Aberdeen was virtually booted out of his job by students of Divinity, who, according to *The Scotsman*, had, like virtually most Divinity students of that era become "higher critics" of the Bible, with the result that any Professor who dared to assert the old beliefs venerating the Bible would effectively have "the Bible flung at his head", because "orthodoxy in Scottish Colleges has been turned upside down" since the affair concerning Professor William Robertson Smith.<sup>9</sup>

A dreadful war had been prosecuted in Scotland's Free Kirk for forty years and more, and gradually the assailants of Calvinistic Orthodoxy gained the upper hand. The pattern of their progress was the usual course of the disease, first the flirtations with Amyraldianism that Dr. Kennedy had so fought against, then the wholesale influx of that heresy under the umbrella of 'Marrowism', then the headlong descent into Arminianism, then the 'broad' evangelicalism that could espouse Higher Criticism simultaneously with much high talk about being 'born again'.

Through these conflicts Dr. Kennedy fought his battles for the Reformed Faith. No wonder they wanted to forget him. He did not conform himself to the spirit of that age, and he had become an anachronism to them, like His Lord and blessed Saviour, he had become a 'stumbling block', indeed, the world knew him not, even as it knew not the Lord Christ. (I John 3 v.1).

But the tragedy did not end simply with the likes of Dr. Blaikie consigning Dr.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland 1893-1970* pp.37 - 49 where the opposition of Dr. Begg to Robertson Smith and his considerable phalanx of highly-placed supporters is outlined. Dr. Begg made a brave stand in this affair, and for his pains suffered public vilification before the 1877 General Assembly of the Free Kirk principally from the massed followers of Robertson Smith who humiliated him with the epithet of being a "worldly ecclesiastic" like Eli in the Old Testament.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p.48. An instructive and intriguing profile of the enigmatic psychology and methods of Dr. Whyte can be found in Issue No. 5 of Vol 1 of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine*, (Sept. 1896), and pages 186 - 190, under the heading *Open Letter to the Rev. Alex. Whyte D.D.*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. details of this sad case in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* Vol.1 No.5 pages 190 to 193 where the report from *The Scotsman* is included.

Kennedy to oblivion. Amongst those who were his friends, amongst those who had clung close to him through the years of controversy, there proved to be a dwindling level of open support for everything he had stood for. Under the pressures of the times, when the faith once delivered unto the saints was under attack right from within its own citadel, it must be understood that even the faithful began to stagger under the many blows that the antichristian forces were delivering daily in their midst, and there tended to be an attitude developing in which Dr. Kennedy's distinctives were rather glossed over even by those who were his friends. The biography of him, written by his friend, Alexander Auld, betrays something of this trend. Given the subject matter, such a biography should have been dynamite, but, alas, Auld's book disappoints. Suffice it to say, that Auld does give us enough data to get an impression, and that of a spiritual giant shrouded in mist, there being insufficient attention paid to the details of Kennedy's theology and his polemic battles for the Truth. Compared to the detailed biographies provided, for instance, for other worthy men like John G. Paton, Auld's work is a lightweight. Indeed, on certain of the important polemic issues that Dr. Kennedy fought, e.g., the issues arising over the proposed merger between the Free Kirk and the Amyraldian-infested United Presbyterians, all that Auld can say is that though Dr. Kennedy in this regard expressed "his mature convictions", they "need not be cited here".<sup>10</sup> A hundred years later on, in a "Memorial Sketch" to Dr. Kennedy by the Free Kirk minister, the Rev. Maurice Roberts (then of Ayr), this feature is picked out for comment, and Rev. Roberts gives his view that Auld was "doubtless concerned not to appear to drag into the book matters which were invariably known at the time to be inflammatory and likely to render the book *less agreeable*". (! ! ! and emph.mine, Ed.)<sup>11</sup> "But it is regrettable nonetheless", Roberts continues, "that by this omission Auld has left rather scantily treated a *most vital aspect of Doctor Kennedy's ministry and influence....*" (Emph.mine Ed.).

A careful analysis of Auld's biographical work will bring this into sharp relief. Whilst passing over such "a most vital aspect" of Dr. Kennedy's life and work, nevertheless in contrast Auld went on to take up page after page with Kennedy's letters concerning various every-day matters, page after page being filled with for instance: descriptions of Ben Lomond, (pp.205 - 206), of Iona and Staffa, and Mull, (p.207 - 209), letters concerning the activities of The Highland Railway Company running goods traffic on the Sabbath (pages 211 and onwards), to specify but a few. Indeed, the letters are, in their own way, interesting to read, and do give insights into the character of Auld's subject. What is regrettable is that so much of this kind of material was included, and so much more important material

<sup>10</sup> Auld, Op. Cit. p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Maurice Roberts : *Dr. John Kennedy - a Memorial Sketch*, in the Aug - Sept 1984 double issue of the *Banner of Truth*. (Edinburgh).

is "rather scantily treated". It seems as though Auld had to write with one eye on the market for his book, a complete and detailed biography, with all the "inflammatory" material in it may well have been a flop on the book market, so much had the times changed.

But there is more to it than this. In the 1979 reprint of Dr. Kennedy's book, "The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire", there is found a tersely brief, but interesting biographical introduction to the author, provided by Neil M. Ross, of Ullapool. One sentence that Ross has written there fairly jumps off the page to hit the reader squarely in the eye. Drawing attention to Dr. Kennedy deploring any presentation of the gospel which ignored or belittled 'the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace', and his consequent criticism of Moody's campaigns printed in his pamphlet "Hyper-Evangelism", Ross goes on to note that on account of these things "**some charged him with *Hyper-Calvinism***" !! (emph mine, Ed.).<sup>12</sup> One wonders why! Ross has little to say on the matter, but another reference is traceable to Dr. John McLeod in his eminently useful tome, "Scottish Theology". Dr. McLeod tells us that there was a "counter criticism....(against Kennedy) ...that dared to say that he himself **did not preach the offer of the Gospel**"<sup>13</sup> (! and emph. mine, Ed.). McLeod dismisses such a charge, but without giving us any detail as to the exact reasons why it was levelled against Dr. Kennedy, and glosses the matter with words about Dr. Kennedy preaching a gospel that was "as full as it was free and as free as it was full"(whatever all that is supposed to mean we are not told), and that "it was, however, the day of ebb-tide and the definite out-and-out Calvinism of another day was going out of fashion..."<sup>14</sup> One wonders what "out-and-out" Calvinism is supposed to be, is there another form of Calvinism which is not "out- and-out"? And just how, and to what degree, do these two putative "Calvinisms" differ?

It is at this point that we get to the nub of the matter. What Dr. Kennedy was fighting against was the "watered-down" Calvinism of the Amyraldianised Calvinists that suddenly seemed to be infesting the Scottish churches on a large scale, this much is evident from a perusal of his book "Man's Relations to God". It was not so much Arminianism that he strikes out against in that little volume as those who, professing firmly and with conviction to be Reformed had stretched their theology to encompass the style of gospel preached by Arminians, in that they

<sup>12</sup> Neil M. Ross, op.cit. footnote 4 herein, and p.12

<sup>13</sup> Cf. John McLeod **Scottish Theology** (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 reprint) page 328. Dr. McLeod originally addressed this material as lectures to students at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in April 1939, which institution is known to be strongly pro-free offerism. McLeod tends to be unsatisfactorily brief in dealing with this point, but no doubt, given more time and space he would have treated it in more detail. As it is, he merely contrasts Dr. Kennedy briefly with the emergent Arminianism of those days, and fails to draw attention to the salient impact of Amyraldianism, and the notion of there being a 'double reference' in the atonement. It was this that Kennedy was fighting, not just the "hyper-evangelism" unleashed by Moody.

<sup>14</sup> McLeod : op. cit. p.328

were, as Dr. Kennedy said “Calvinists in their vows and Arminians in their tendencies”<sup>15</sup>. Unwilling to part company with Calvinism, yet unhappy with the sterner side of Reformed doctrines, there was a trend to throw overboard any notion of Limited Atonement, and men became infatuated with the “larger hope”, as they saw it, and the “amelioration” of Calvinism. Under the umbrella of the popular “Marrow” teaching, there seemed to be a chance that one could hold to Calvinism and at the same time drop the Limited Atonement, and preach a gospel that was essentially a general offer to the whole of humanity in the style of the Arminians, though, it must be added, those who followed this trend would never have considered themselves to be Arminians. A careful examination of chapter three of Kennedy’s book, “Man’s Relations to God”, enables one to extrapolate from his polemics to the kind of targets he was aiming at. Primarily, his arguments are not aimed extensively at Arminians. He was writing this book some four to five years before Dwight Lyman Moody put in an appearance in Scotland,<sup>16</sup> so he was certainly not levelling his guns, as it were, against “Finneyism” and the “anxious seat” as was practiced in the Moody campaigns. Dr. Kennedy was to polemicize against the way of the “Moody style” some time later, in his famous (and no doubt, “inflammatory”!) tract: “Hyper-Evangelism”. In “Man’s Relations to God”, his polemics indicate that he is targeting an “ameliorated” Calvinism, which in itself was spread over a spectrum of variant deviations from original Confessional doctrine. One finds for instance, that he polemicized against Calvinists who had taken aboard the notion of a double reference in the atonement, against the “Marrow” doctrine of the Atonement encompassing “a deed of gift and grant” to all men, against outright Amyraldian tendencies, against indeed, all forms of doctrine that extended the Atonement to all men, and perhaps most significantly, against the mollification of Gospel preaching that all this generated.<sup>17</sup>

This last factor is a most dangerous issue. It is not generally understood today that Gospel preaching underwent a massive and fundamental modification in its very foundations and content under the influence of Arminianism and Amyraldianism.. Deviating from the Reformation, many Calvinists, from the 17th century on came under the spell of Moise Amyraut. To preach the gospel as an Amyraldian, or

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Article: “**Preaching the True Gospel Properly**” in the **British Reformed Journal** Issue No. 9 page 37, this being found also on pages 100-101 of the original work: **Man’s Relations to God**.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Man’s Relations to God’ was published in Edinburgh by John Maclaren in 1869. Moody did not begin his Scottish crusades until Sunday Nov. 23rd., 1873, and continued his work throughout that winter, ending in April 1874 in Glasgow. He returned again to Scotland in 1881, just three years before Dr. Kennedy’s death.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. chapter 3 in “Man’s Relations to God”. Much of this chapter has been reproduced in Issue No.9 of the **British Reformed Journal** and following herewith in this issue. Interestingly, and very significantly, Dr. John McLeod in **Scottish Theology** pages 245 - 247 outlines the changes that occurred in Gospel preaching as a result of Amyraldian ideas sweeping in, and the deleterious consequences for the churches, but again, Dr. McLeod seems not to notice that ‘Marrowism’ effectively held the door open for this influx, unwittingly maybe, but nevertheless effectively.

as an Arminian, necessitates a theological re-direction from the plain, original and Scriptural gospel propounded at the Reformation, and since the late 19th century the vast majority of Calvinist believers do not seem to have understood this, and one finds them even eulogizing Arminian preachers, such as happened all across the U.S.A. in the case of Charles Grandison Finney. Dr. Kennedy's perspicacious eye spotted this deviation, and he sounded the alarm. In this new kind of gospel preaching, he insisted, the auditors, instead of being presented with Christ in the fullness of His three-fold office, and called to subject themselves in faith to Him, are presented with a proposition about Christ, and urged that if they believe that, well, then they will be saved. And this proposition was: "To believe that Christ died for ME, on account of Him having died for ALL." <sup>18</sup> To believe this, says Kennedy, "is something else than to believe in Christ Himself. It is, in effect, making His death a substitute for Himself". Now this of course stands in contrast to the New Testament gospel, where, for instance, the Philipian jailor was told in response to His question "what must I do to be saved?" this answer given by the Apostle "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...." (Acts 16 : 30 - 31). And Dr. Kennedy points out that in the 'modern' gospel there is that which panders to the unregenerate heart. "There is in every unrenewed heart a desire to avoid the necessity of dealing with a personal Saviour, and to attain to hope, through the gospel, without being 'born again'. The figment of a universal atonement has been produced to meet this craving. It is just the gospel perverted to suit the taste of proud carnal man. 'Christ died for all, and therefore for me; I believe this, and therefore I shall be saved', are the short stages of an easy journey to the hope of peace. But there is a triple error here - the personal reference is separated from the gracious design of the death of Christ; the death is dissociated from the person of Christ; and the work of the Holy Ghost is ignored."<sup>19</sup>

The practical consequences of such a deviant gospel are, bluntly, to sweep thousands along to hell under the delusion that they have been saved. It is to produce what is, in effect, an 'insurance policy' gospel. It appeals to the natural instincts and subconscious fears of the carnal, natural man, and produces for him a quick and easy indemnification for eternity. He can sleep at night now, so he thinks, because he has "taken Jesus to be his Saviour" ( signed up on God's heavenly insurance policy) and joined a church of some sort (pays his premiums). It is the final coating of sugar on the cake of life, crowning his prosperity in this world, refining his tastes ( giving him a respectable image) and ensuring him that whatever befalls him, everything's going to be alright. A nice gospel. A comfortable gospel. An easy gospel. A happy - happy gospel, it will help him so much in his pursuit of his ambitions in this world, and put him right for the next ( lump sum bonus).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Ch. 3 of Dr. Kennedy's work 'Man's Relations to God' pages 98 - 99, and **British Reformed Journal** Issue No. 9 page 36.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp.95 - 96, and Journal Issue No.9 p.35.



What a wonderful bargain ! And what wonderful experiences it can generate within to know that everything is covered now, and you no longer have to worry about your sins ! Of course, you'll not want to learn the catechism, indeed, catechizing is old-fashioned (and its hard work), you'll not want to stick with the Regulative Principle of Worship, your natural fleshly propensities will demand a more entertaining, "lively", "free", "exciting", and up-to-date style. You'll not have much, if any interest in delving into the great truths of the Christian faith, no, no, controversy, strife, and suffering lie that way. Martyrdom was a thing maybe for ages ago, today our world is so much better, why cause trouble ? Why contest the theory of evolution ? Why get tangled up over Predestination, and the doctrine of the Atonement ? Put all these things on the back burner, and let 'church' be happy get-to-gethers.....we're all covered, after all, by this marvellous firm Celestial Mutual Life, Inc.

A selfish faith ! Selfish, indeed, for that it is a committal to a proposition, and not to that Great Majesty Himself, the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was of the genius of Reformed and Puritan theology to have spotted this distinction, and Dr. Kennedy followed in those old paths. He saw the danger - as a faithful watchman on Zion's walls he sounded the warning. Sad, sad, the truth he propounded was not the message people wanted to hear. It had been forgotten, or at least dropped from conscious contemplation that to become a Christian meant more than "taking Jesus as your Saviour" . As the Confessional standards pointed out, becoming a Christian meant subjecting oneself to Christ in His Three-fold Office, of Prophet, Priest, and King. ( Shorter Catechism questions 23 - 26 ). In coming to the Lord Christ in this full Scriptural sense one might, of course, far from experiencing bliss and security, find instead that one loses all, respect, reputation, wealth, possessions, home, health, and, as millions found throughout Church history, subjection to assault, torture, and murder. And what multitudes of them, like St. Stephen, preferred death to a life where they would have had to bend the knee to the devil and deny the Lord Jesus !

Now it should be noted that Dr. Kennedy was polemicizing against all this some years before the 'Moody' campaigns hit Scotland. A rampant and overt Arminianism was not exactly a primary threat in the Free Kirk of those days, but what was evident was a state of affairs in which the Kirk was moving doctrinally in a direction that would welcome "Moodyism" with open arms when it came. Prior to that event, the slide was on, and it was a slide amongst those who avowed themselves to be "Calvinists". There was, indeed, to put it in the kind of words Dr. John McLeod used, two kinds of Calvinists about in those days, "out-and-out Calvinists", the leader of whom was undoubtedly John Kennedy, and other "NOT out and out Calvinists", which were represented by the main stream of Free Kirk leaders and their adherents in the southern areas of Scotland. It was the Highland regions that hung on to the old "out-and-out Calvinism", and as their leader in that respect Dr.

Kennedy became known as the “Leader of the Highland Host”<sup>20</sup>. Now it is possible to see clearly how Dr. Blaikie could manage to omit any mention of this “Spurgeon of the North” as he was also known. Blaikie has something to say in a footnote. In a footnote ! While briefly commenting on such famous Highland preachers as John MacDonald of Ferintosh, of whom Dr. Kennedy wrote the biography, and also of Stewart of Cromarty, Dr. Blaikie gives this in a footnote :

Some apology is due for this fragmentary reference to the preachers of the Highlands. It is not from want of appreciation that we do not go more fully into the subject. The truth is, it is a department by itself, and would not be properly handled except by one well acquainted with the Highland language, Highland literature, and the Highland people.<sup>21</sup>

The Highlands were largely out-and-out Calvinistic, and one could effectively consign the whole lot to oblivion with their leaders Kennedy and Begg, by this device. But it won't wash, because Dr. Kennedy had published his materials by then a-plenty in English, his ministry was, at Dingwall, initially roughly evenly divided between English and Gaelic, but eventually became wholly English on Sabbath days.<sup>22</sup> And of course, when on his many “Spurgeonic” forays to the south his ministry would have been almost exclusively in English. Blaikie leaves out, too, the fact that Dr. Begg was ministering in Edinburgh and was right in the citadel of Scotland's Calvinistic religious life, and underneath Blaikie's nose, so to speak. Again, what kind of discourses does Dr. Blaikie imagine he is giving, if he entitles his lectures “The Preachers of Scotland” and then arbitrarily draws a line that cuts off half of Scotland's geographic area from any consideration ? What kind of Scotland is that ? But Dr. Blaikie did not even stick to his enunciated principle. From pages 12 to 34 he goes in to detail concerning the early Celtic preachers ! What language did they speak, we wonder, English ? What areas of Scotland did they work in, we wonder, exclusively south of Killiecrankie ? But no, St. Columba spoke in the ancestral Gaelic tongue of the Highlanders of Dr. Kennedy's day, and worked in those very same areas- the Inner Hebrides, the Great Glen, and over to Inverness. If they merited inclusion in Dr. Blaikie's work, why not their 19th century successors ?<sup>23</sup> But a significant trait that shows through Dr. Blaikie's discourses may provide a clue in answering this question. Dr. Blaikie shows that he is at least sympathetic to, if not an outright supporter of, “Marrowism”. He deigns to show the “Marrow” as being the true, and fervent stream of Calvinistic

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Maurice Roberts : op. cit. **Banner of Truth** Aug/Sept 1984. Rev. Roberts points out that between them, Dr. Kennedy up in the North, and Dr. Begg down in Edinburgh they formed the “North Pole and the South Pole of Free Kirk orthodoxy and while they lived it stood.” This of course implies that subsequently to their deaths, it stood no more. Sure, it didn't.

<sup>21</sup> Blaikie, **The Preachers of Scotland** (Edinburgh T. and T. Clark 1888) p.295.

<sup>22</sup> Auld : op.cit. pp.53 ff. Auld says that the English speaking congregation became so much larger than the Gaelic as time went on.

<sup>23</sup> As such Dr. Blaikie's lectures had been better titled “The Preachers of Half of Scotland”.

orthodoxy in Scotland, while the Church of Scotland Orthodoxy is represented as being dry and dead, and tending to a position that justified notions of a salvation that depended on works.<sup>24</sup> He avers that the whole “Marrow” controversy was essentially centred on “the ground it supplied for a free and universal offer of the Gospel, in harmony with Calvinistic doctrine, especially on personal election and-particular redemption.”<sup>25</sup> The fact is that the Church of Scotland Calvinists of this period have had scant justice done to them by subsequent generations, indeed even by the “marrow-men” themselves, who, when Whitefield’s ministry propagated a widespread quickening in the Establishment pronounced it as being counterfeit, and not of God, though they themselves had experienced similar blessings under Whitefield’s ministry not long before. Bearing all this in mind, and that Dr. Kennedy held to the ‘establishment’ side of the argument against the “Marrow”, one can now understand how a preacher of his calibre could be ignored in such a monumental and authoritative work as that of Dr. Blaikie’s in a day when ‘marrowism’ and amyraldianized Calvinism had eclipsed Scotland’s Free Kirk. And no doubt, when Dr. Kennedy published his excellent little book : “Man’s Relations to God” in 1869, this reinforced opposition to him and the position he took. Alexander Auld, Kennedy’s biographer noted something of this book, saying : “the circulation of this book , though fairly good, could not be expected to be extensive, on account of its severely logical structure (! ! Ed.) and condensation of truth. It would make an admirable text-book for a teacher of theology, (it would, it would...Ed.) but it would receive, as it did receive, a cold reception from those who cannot deal with God’s universal call in the Gospel without endeavouring to trench on His eternal purpose to save an elect people”.<sup>26</sup>

Hyper-Calvinist ! Does not preach the offer of the gospel ! Are these not the stock-in-trade epithets that get flung against anyone that holds to the strict orthodoxy of the Reformed Confessions, notwithstanding their vociferous and detailed documentary defences establishing their distinction and distance from the heresy of Gill, Hussey, and Brine ? If you don’t preach that God wants to save all men, ( including the non-elect ! ), if you don’t frame the gospel to what measures up to the popular concept of a “free-offer”, if you don’t espouse “common-grace”, well then, they’ll condemn you as a “hyper” . They’ll condemn you as not preaching the gospel properly. And who knows, they might even relegate you to a footnote.

*To be continued, (DV) in the next issue, with details concerning the phenomenal preaching ministry of Dr. Kennedy.*

<sup>24</sup> Blaikie : op.cit. p. 219, and pp.190 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.191. Blaikie notes nevertheless, how the Church of Scotland Calvinists were very wary and expressed great caution in this area. Cf. p. 194.

<sup>26</sup> Auld : op. cit. pp.135 - 136.