

Evangelism

A Reformed Debate

Being an appraisal of the book published by the
James Begg Society, and an appreciation of the
stand for the truth made by

Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall

by

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and including a critique of certain of Kennedy's
modern critics.

Introduction

E*vangeli***sm: A Reformed Debate** (hereafter, *Evangelism*) draws together for the first time, since publication in 1874-5, three polemical pamphlets: John Kennedy's "Hyper-Evangelism: Another Gospel, Though a Mighty Power" (pp.13-36), Bonar's defence of Hyper-Evangelism in, "The Old Gospel: Not 'Another Gospel,' But the Power of God unto Salvation" (pp.39-104), and Kennedy's masterful, irrefutable and unanswerable, "A Reply" (pp.107-140). The publication of *Evangelism* demonstrates that while "*there is no new thing under the sun*" (Eccl. 1:9), the contentious issue of Reformed evangelism is still a matter which agitates today's church. If these pamphlets reveal little else they demonstrate that two systems struggle to dominate as the *modus operandi* of Reformed Evangelism. While both schemes establish an edifice based on New Testament data, the two theological constructions are wildly divergent, with, we would suggest, Bonar's scheme having profoundly deleterious consequences for the church militant, her confessions, and theology generally.

Substantially, this publication will be seen as the product of an endeavour to refute the innovative evangelical practice in Scotland and elsewhere typified by the American evangelist, D.L. Moody (1837-99). Like him or not, Moody was, and is, an enigma. His background was obscure, his early professional life, though uneducated, he would transverse the Atlantic preaching to thousands their saveable state. With the soloist, Ira D. Sankey, their brand of Revivalism was not conducive

to neutrality. It fostered either indefatigable opponents on the one hand or uncritical friends on the other. Dr John Kennedy (1819-1884), the famous inimitable orthodox preacher-theologian of Dingwall, and Dr Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), well-known hymn-writer and minister of Chalmers Memorial Church, Edinburgh, took up these respective positions.

It could be mooted that apart from John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regimen of Women* (1558)¹ John Kennedy's "Hyper-Evangelism: 'Another Gospel,' Though a Mighty Power" (pp.13-36) is the most famous pamphlet in the History of the Scottish Kirk since the Reformation.²

Moody, his Apologist, their Pre-millenialism, and the Genesis of Modern "evangelical" Syncretization.

In many ways the campaigns run by D.L. Moody were not dissimilar to those of modern American evangelists like Billy Graham. These campaigns are notorious for their ecumenical content and lack of doctrinal distinctiveness; such distinctiveness is necessarily abandoned for the sake of wide denominational support, including that of the Church of Rome.

Moody and Roman Catholicism

John Pollock in his "no-warts-and-all" biography of Moody, *Moody Without Sankey*, provides an invaluable insight into the restricted theology behind the popular preacher. In the 1874 campaign in Ireland - where the grey of ambiguity and neutrality forfeits its dull pigment to the diametrical oppositions of black or white! - "Moody astounded the Irish by refusing to attack Roman Catholics, who therefore did not scruple to attend".³ Firstly, by "Roman Catholics" we are to suppose "Roman Catholicism"; it would be absurd that he was asked to attack individuals - who? how many? why? That Roman Catholics attended demonstrates his refusal was to preach against the errors and doctrines of Romanism. In America Moody subscribed to the building of a Roman Catholic Church in Northfield, Massachusetts, and told Archbishop Corrigan of New York, that he

"wanted to see New York *shaken for Christ* and wouldn't it be a grand thing if *all the churches swung into a simultaneous effort*...The Archbishop had the power to do it for the Roman Catholic churches, and the other churches would follow the lead." (emphasis added).⁴

¹ Knox: *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regimen of Women* - republished by Presbyterian Heritage USA in 1993.

² For a more extensive analysis of the text of this first polemic, see this writer's review *Hyper-Evangelism: Another Gospel* in British Reformed Journal No. 12.

³ Pollock: *Moody Without Sankey* (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1963, 1983) p.129.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 251

This is not uncommon language, representing as it does the likes of Billy Graham and Luis Palau in embryo. The attractiveness of ecumenical evangelism to Arminians and crypto-Arminians lies in the belief of God's redemptive love for all and promise to all, thus leading to the jettisoning of preaching the law, of God's sovereignty and man's inability, election and reprobation. All this will work better if mass evangelism takes place. Not only does this show the man Moody was, but it betrays an appalling ignorance of Reformed doctrine as expressed, for example, in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Rev. William Hamilton's comment on the 1859 Ulster Revival and its eclipsing of the Confession (WCF chapter 3) is germane:

"But this Revival takes for granted Arminian principles, that all are in a salvable condition, and that ministers and converts have somehow or other the power to bring sinners into a state of salvation. Hence their extraordinary efforts".⁵

John Kennedy's overriding concern was the defence of apostolic Christianity and the Confession of Faith which embodied it. He would have agreed with Hamilton in describing such contraventions of the *regulative principle* as "extraordinary" - or, the worshipping of God "according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture" (WCF, XXI, i).

Bonar and Moody - Why?

Perhaps Bonar believed this was the time of fulfilment of R.C. Candlish's dying prophecy of great blessing; or, perhaps the break with Presbyterian rigidity (orthodoxy!) would legalize the singing of his famous hymns; however, it is likely, as suggested by Andrew Randalls in his useful and interesting work, *Today's Gospel and Apostolic Exhortations*, "what drew the Bonars and Moody together was Premillennialism."⁶ Whether it was all, none, or a combination of these matters it makes little difference. Kennedy was right: it was easier to judge from "afar" than near. How could Bonar denounce the Moodys and the Sankeys when he, with his brother, housed their fellow chiliasts?

God in the Movement? - but, where was His Word?

Gordon Clark remarks that, "If one will read the sermons of Moody, one will be surprised at how little of the Gospel he preached," that the evangelists only preached for decisions and many of those who responded knew so little of Gospel

⁵ Hamilton, *An Inquiry into the Scriptural Character of the Revival of 1859*, (First publ. 1866, reprint ed by: The Reformed Book Outlet, Hudsonville, USA, 1993), p.175.

⁶ Randalls, *Today's Gospel and Apostolic Exhortations: A Study in the Presentation of the Gospel*, (The Huntingtonian Press, Windmill Hill, E. Sussex, 1997), p.86.

truth as to warrant doubt as to the genuineness of the conversions professed.”⁷

Kennedy assumes the same position; thus he could say, “being one of those, to whom the present movement has hitherto yielded more grief than gladness, I feel constrained to tell why I am a mourner and apart” (p.13). “Hyper-Evangelism” is Kennedy’s *Apologia* for standing outside the camp of the then current ecclesiastical practice; its basic criticisms are a timeless critique of God-displaced evangelism. What Kennedy attacks is not the fruit of the movement (that can only be assessed in our day) but the seed from which it grew.

The ever-present flaw in Moody’s system, in Bonar’s support of it - the embryo which gave birth to current trends practised by neo-Calvinists - is the dislocation, surreptitiously, of the electing sovereignty of God by the foregrounding of an Amyraldian theology. Our problem is with the essence of a system which draws a plan of salvation with the sole aim of saving man from the *consequences* of sin, rather than saving man that God’s glory might be manifested. Indeed, “it drops the first note of the angel’s song, in which the gospel is described as ‘glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men’ ” (p.17).

Anomianism

What is the *gospel*? Is it a narrow message hung on a “come” text and tailored to elicit responses from an audience given the indiscriminate promise of the Saviour, or is it the entire body of Scriptural truth (**Jn. 5:39**)? If we accept the latter (and we must), any concerted omission of a particular spectrum of doctrine is not preaching the gospel. Kennedy defends the historic Reformed position thus:

“ ‘By the law is the knowledge of sin;’ and the Spirit, who convinces of sin, uses it in that department of His work. A due regard for the glory of God demands that it be so used. Sinners are not to be saved on the misunderstanding as to what they are, and as to what they merit. They must know Him against whom they have sinned...They must be made acquainted with their iniquity as well as guilt, as sinners...Any hope attained to without this, can only be based on a misunderstanding, and must involve dishonour to God”. (p.17-18)

The point is simple. The law places man in a state of condemnation before a holy God, thus Paul could exclaim, “I had not known sin, but by the law” (**Rom. 7:7**). It is an x-ray that reveals “righteousnesses as filthy rags”: that is, sinners must recognize their illness before being brought to the great Physician. The law which shows man “in a most miserable state by nature” (Boston) - dead in, and bound by the power of, sin; lacking any propensity good-wards; and deserving nothing before

⁷ Clark, *Today’s Evangelism: Counterfeit or Genuine?*, (The Trinity Foundation, Maryland, USA, 1990), p.98.

God only condemnation - is exclusive of, and antithetical to, the Arminian construct of man with free will and ability to exercise faith as *the* saving component as presented in the theology of Moody, Bonar, Sankey *et al.*

The Arminian theory of man rests on an excision of the law to convict of sin, and is replaced by, according to Bonar,

“the glad tidings concerning Christ and His cross. Christ crucified was that which was preached for conviction and conversion. Peter did not say to his hearers, ‘Ye have broken the Ten Commandments’, but, ‘Ye have crucified Christ.’ ” (p.60).

We would have thought “Ye have crucified Christ” contravened the Sixth Commandment - but perhaps Bonar would have us believe Peter failed to preach the law here! If this were the sword used, Kennedy was quite right to say:

“There was, then, no conviction of sin in cases of conversion under the apostles’ preaching! If no law was preached there could not be, ‘for by the law is the knowledge of sin’ But if there was no conviction, there could be no conversion, for conviction of sin is the first step of the work as Christ describes it” (**John 16:18**). (p.126)

Kennedy continues to indict Bonar for believing and teaching theories which were un-Scriptural and anti-confessional, as we indict those of our present age for believing that “the *anomian* form of preaching is the only one in which the freeness of the gospel can be preserved,” amongst other things (p.127). A preaching of the law would leave the hearer at the feet of Him “who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy”, and “the most urgent pressing to belief in gospel propositions would not help such a soul” (p.128).

The Dingwallian’s prospect of the theological mayhem surrounding the mass “conversions” was both prophetic and forensic:

“Some wonder, and some give thanks that this result was so easily and so soon attained. And they think this was because of the care taken to exhibit the freeness of the gospel. *The facility was rather due to a substitute for gospel grace. Faith, and not Christ, was the Saviour preached to them.* Believing was said to be an easy thing to do, and so they found it; and they did their believing in as self-righteous a spirit as if they had been doing Popish penance.” (emphasis added, p.128)

Bonar's "The Old Gospel" Proven to be "Hyper-Evangelism" by Kennedy's "A Reply"

The stylistic features and weighty theological content of Kennedy's *Man's Relations to God* (1869) is far removed from his popular, though profound and perceptive, "Hyper-Evangelism." We concur with the view that his former work is a direct result of outworkings in Scottish theology emanating from, firstly, the widespread influence of Marrowism, and, secondly, the absorption of Amyraldianism into Scottish Presbyterianism. By 1874, this problem had to be tackled practically, as it was manifested in the heart of Scotland in Moody's full-blown Arminianism. "Hyper-Evangelism" is an *aide-memoir* of Reformed Presbyterian practice; an astutely argued indictment of the practices appendaged to the American evangelist. It is obvious from "The Old Gospel" that as well as rallying to the defence of Moody, Dr Bonar read the charges and, despite loud self-protestations to Confessional and Biblical orthodoxy (p.56), beheld himself in the dock.

Much of Bonar's tract disappointingly disengages from serious *doctrinal* argument to substantiate and vindicate the innovative practices supported by some Scottish Presbyterians, and instead attempts to personalize the debate, as well as, dangerously, making it a North-South issue. In making this personalization, he accuses Kennedy of making sweeping generalizations from a position outside the Moody campaign movement, and without specifying names and sources as to his information. Bonar throws in with this a carefully crafted insinuation that Kennedy is a "hyper-Calvinist" even maybe, a "hyper-hyper-Calvinist"! (pp. 42; 59; 85.) He goes on to accuse Kennedy of holding a cynical view of the previous great revivals in Scotland, then insinuates that "Hyper-evangelism" (Kennedy's name for the Moody movement) is a misnomer. (p.59). And in response to Kennedy's claims of hearing doctrinally heterodox statements made by Moody, Bonar denies it flatly and attempts to harmonise Moody's emphases with the Westminster Standards. Several of Kennedy's assertions are rubbished in this manner, with Bonar insisting that whilst Kennedy did not document his assertions, he, (Bonar) knew of no such heterodoxy, neither did any of the mass of ministers who stood with him.

Behind Bonar stood the larger phalanx of Scots evangelicals of that day, all of them up to their necks in "Moody-Sankeyism", all carried headlong in the general rolling bandwagon that such movements generate. And these were the army of Amyraldianised clergy that had courted the apostate Amyraldianised Secession Churches for unity for some ten years previously. Against these, Kennedy had striven for years with all his might by preaching, and by his counsels at high synodical levels. In 1869 he published the little volume, "Man's Relations to God", which exposed the Amyraldian slide in the churches a full four years before Moody's first appearance in Scotland. The Dingwallian had seen all this coming for years, and over those years he had been observing acutely, analysing, warning, and polemicising against the rising Amyraldian-cum-Arminian trends pressing deep inroads into the Scots churches, particularly into the Free Kirk. The coming of Moody in 1873-

1874 was but the match set to the powder-keg that Kennedy had warned about, and the ensuing detonations and consequent age-long spiritual desolations have proven him a true prophet of the Lord.

Bonar's reply to Kennedy is something of a morass of evasions and special pleading. In all this however, he significantly makes some telling admissions, viz., the usage of "enquiry" meetings after the evangelistic appeals; that all too often "converts" who appear to have the most deeply emotional and moving experiences in "revivals"(sic) are the very ones who fall away; that hymns were used in preference to psalms; and significantly, that the whole issue of the debate was more than anything, TWO DIFFERENT GOSPELS. (p.85). Kennedy's gospel, Bonar insinuated, was that of the "hyper-calvinist"(!) whereas the Bonar-Moody breed was the true gospel, and thus Bonar entitled his defensive tract against Kennedy as "The Old Gospel Not Another Gospel".

Against this foray of sparks Kennedy's reply of 1875 came as the last word. Therein he is able to point out that his position of being outside the Moody bandwagon, far from being a hindrance to understanding it, put him better placed to accurately assess it, whereas those caught up in it were carried headlong by it, and glossed over its failings at the same time they trumpeted its apparent successes. We have to concur that when a "bandwagon" starts rolling, brainwashing is intense, and the bandwagon's adherents become blinkered and uncritical of their own movement, just like football fans with respect to the team they follow. The same phenomena is today as plain as a pike-staff with respect to the Billy Graham movement. Any attempt by Calvinist "outsiders" to calmly and objectively critique the "Graham machine" meets shrill and often hysterically vituperative reproof.

In all this, Kennedy comes over as a calm and deliberate polemicist, a battlefield veteran who has learned to think and not be stampeded along by the spirit of the age. By contrast, Bonar is a shrill fanatic for his side.

In his refutation of Bonar's tract, Kennedy is able to reference actual personal experiences and testimonies as to what Moody and others had actually said and done. Having thus demonstrated the accuracy of the assertions made in his first pamphlet, he then exposes Bonar's gross inaccuracies concerning the "North-South divide", and shows how Bonar's tract effectively confirms the assertions made in "Hyper-Evangelism". This emerges especially in the section of Kennedy's reply on "Dr. Bonar and the Question of Doctrine" (pp.124-133), wherein he also takes on the matter of the "Inquiry Rooms". A thorough analysis is given here indicating Bonar's idiosyncratic views as to the nature of faith, its connection with repentance, and the matter of assurance. Then follows a thorough exposure of Bonar's defences of the "new devices" or methods incorporated in the Moody campaigns, and an able denial of the insinuation that he (Kennedy) is a hyper-calvinist. Let Kennedy conclude for us in his own words here, so illustrative of what was going on in those far-off days:

“The idea that law and sovereignty must be ignored, in order to the preaching of a ‘free gospel’, as Dr. Bonar seems to think, is one of those weaklings that can only issue from an infant school of theology. Because I will not ignore the sovereignty of God, and the necessity of conviction of sin through the law, in order to shut sinners up to the faith of the gospel, and of spiritual illumination and renewal in order to the reception of Christ, it is imagined that the gospel which I preach cannot be free. These are the things on which I have insisted, and on the ground of which I am called a hyper-calvinist”. (p.138).

John Hales *Redivivus*, or Calvinism in *extremis*: Are today’s Calvinists bidding John Calvin goodnight?⁸

Evangelism’s reception amongst contemporary Calvinists is telling. Generally speaking, thus far, the response has been muted. Those who have ventured reviews in the better-known periodicals have not been favourable either to the Reformed position of Kennedy, or even to the appearance of this book.⁹ We give herewith a critique of two of the critics.

1) Mark Johnston, Grove Chapel, London.

Mark Johnston in his review for the lightweight, monthly tabloid, *Evangelical Times* (June, 1997), desires, we believe, to portray objectivity. This is commendable but rarely attainable. A reviewer (or any reader) cannot be objective: do we all not come with an individual horizon of theological expectations? And have our own viewpoint to disseminate? This is reasonable; readers expect and respect it. Therefore, ostensible objectivity is a trojan horse - hollow and dangerous. That Johnston’s equi-critical analysis of both interpretations fails soon surfaces when he prefaces his assault with, “The handling of the theology of this debate is disappointing”. Who does he mean - Kennedy or Bonar, or both? Let us read the charges. Kennedy

“allows the logic of his Theological system, rather than Scripture, to control its shape and function... What is perhaps more disappointing is the tone of the debate. Kennedy presents his case, by his own confession, from a distance (p.107) and has a propensity to make inflammatory statements which cannot be substantiated. It has been rightly said that this kind of theology and method has something metallic about it.”

This is serious. Kennedy is charged with (1) operating and promoting not

⁸ The “ever-memorable John Hales of Eton” (1584-1656), was Chaplain to Sir Dudley Carleton, the British Ambassador at the Hague, and while compiling his reports on the pan-Reformed Synod of Dordt, he exclaimed that then, “I did bid John Calvin goodnight”.

⁹ An excellently comprehensive and considered review has appeared in *The Banner of Truth* (Jan.1998).

only an un-Scriptural practice lacking the Divine imprimatur, but of “allow[ing] the logic of his Theological system” to stand over against Scripture - in effect Kennedy’s Reformed viewpoint is characterised as *anti-Scriptural*; (2) Kennedy is branded a separatist from a movement which, we may conjecture, Johnston believes was of God; (3) Kennedy was a demagogue. We shall shortly refute Johnston’s own “statements which cannot be substantiated”! It will suffice to answer the first upon which the second and third rest. But, what about the charges against Bonar? For Johnston, he merely “lacks precision in *some* of the theological statements which he makes” (emphasis added).

On a charge so prosecuted, even this reviewer would need to acquit the venerable doctor on the grounds of diminished responsibility! On mature reflection, Johnston may conclude it was an unfortunate lapse to torture the word “some,” choosing instead a more accurate paradigmatic member - “most,” perhaps.

Is Logic to be Shunned?

The chestnut of a logical and systematic Calvinism being placed in binary opposition to an alleged Scriptural warrant for preaching God’s desire to redeem *all*, is no new thing. Why is John Kennedy, an orthodox, right-wing Calvinist decried and branded for adopting the logical conclusion - “its shape and function” - of the Reformed faith, the gospel? Is it not inconsistent, a contradiction - not a paradox - for advocates of a limited atonement to teach a universal gospel - that is, an indiscriminate preaching of a general promise of salvation to those other than God’s elect? Reformed theology historically knows of no common or general love. This is exactly the crux of the issue between Reformed preaching and evangelism, which Kennedy typified, and the Arminian preaching promoted by Moody and defended by Bonar *et al.* To be fair Johnston does recognize this and ensures his readers understand that

“in this exercise in pamphleteering, we soon find ourselves in the midst of the age-old debate over how we are to understand the love of God and, in light of that, how we are to offer the gospel to the unconverted.”

Denial of a universal love (as Kennedy and conservative Calvinists advocate) is branded by contemporary neo-(or hypo-) Calvinists as “hyper-Calvinism,” who therefore think they have a good reason to reject the Kennedy thesis. Bonarism never represented the historic position of Scottish Presbyterianism, as evidenced by the condemnation of its “Marrow” progenitor in 1720 by a General Assembly cognizant of the serious error of universal atonement and pardon, and the apparent abandonment of the Law which lead to antinomian “paradoxes”.

Alas, doctrinal debate is not palatable for those whose preference for mass responses to preaching flourishes on doctrinal syncretism rather than distinctiveness

and accentuation. Nevertheless, the logic of the Reformed thesis with regard to the particularity of God's love needs inflection, and Kennedy succinctly encapsulates this in 1869:

"Especial care should ever be taken *not to dissociate God's love from Christ*. There must be zeal for the *holiness* as well as the freeness of the love of God. But to tell the sinner that God loves him apart from Christ, is to represent the love of God so as to provoke contempt - as a love adapting itself to the sinners convenience, rather than as a love which God becomingly expresses. **How can the love of God be fitly expressed but in providing Christ as a Saviour, in bringing sinners unto Him, and in blessing them with spiritual blessings in Him when they come?** (Kennedy's emphasis italicized. Bold emphasis is mine - RAK).¹⁰

Kennedy's question is logical. The acme of a common love is an unlimited atonement and a universal redemption. Those who advocate God's *desire to save all who hear the gospel* while simultaneously maintaining a limited atonement explain this as a great "mystery," a "paradox." This is no paradox: this is a contradiction. Is it not logical to suppose that from the premise that Christ died only for the elect (**Matt.1:21; John 10:14,15**) there cannot be another doctrine which teaches a *contrary* will of God expressed in the preaching of the gospel? Following from this, if it must be concluded that the gospel brings not God's redemptive *desire to all who hear*, this is not allowing a system's logic to dominate, as Johnston would have us believe, but rather a logical and rational appraisal of Scriptural revelation¹¹ - or, "by good and necessary consequence may be *deduced* from Scripture" (emphasis added, WCF.1:v).¹² Mr Johnston vowed this as his position at his ordination.

Kennedy's position is the historic Reformed view and the doctrinal belief held by Mark Johnston's illustrious predecessors at Grove Chapel. The twelve "Articles of Faith and Practice of Grove Chapel", first read publicly in 1818, testify to a Calvinistic orthodoxy akin to Kennedy's: a) Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, encapsulate the cardinal doctrines of Reformed theology - "total depravity of human nature", "absolute and unconditional election," "limited atonement," "the absolute necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify our souls," and the assurance of "obtain[ing] everlasting life."¹³ Lock in 1919 could still assert that:

¹⁰ Kennedy, *Man's Relations to God*, (The James Begg Society, no city, 1995), p.47. We know Mark Johnston is familiar with this work. Cf. Johnston, *Child of a King: The Biblical Doctrine of Sonship*, (Christian Focus, Fearn, Ross-shire, 1997), p.183.

¹¹ Cf. Romans 1:16-19

¹² Cf. Hanko, "Logic and Scripture", *British Reformed Journal*, No. 13, Jan - March, 1996, pp.23-30.

¹³ Lock, Joseph, *The History of Grove Chapel, Camberwell*, (C.J. Farcombe & Sons, London, 1919), p.15. I am deeply indebted to Mr Graham Miller, of Guernsey in the Channel Islands, who is a valiant

“It is readily admitted, yea gloried in, that the doctrines commonly called *high*, and which are everywhere spoken against, are, and always have been, fearlessly and unflinchingly asserted and maintained in Grove Chapel, and God grant they ever may be while its walls stand...” ¹⁴

Evidently, the Reformed doctrine dismissed as “high,” (commonly misunderstood as a synonym for “hyper”) that pervades the historic essence of Grove Chapel is synchronous with the theology and practice of Rev. John Kennedy, D.D. There is a downgrading of Reformed principles, which we look forward to being yet considered another Downgrade Controversy. It will not do to defend Bonarism-cum-Moodyism on the one hand and simultaneously agree the Articles of Grove Chapel on the other, without someone respectfully asking: Will the real Mr Johnston please stand up?

2) I.D. Campbell, Editor of the Free Church of Scotland’s *The Monthly Record*

An unsigned review of *Evangelism* appeared in *The Monthly Record* (May, 1997). This is not an insignificant periodical representing as it does the denomination of Kennedy and Bonar. The tenor of the review may indicate the theological temperature of a Reformed church more than a century on from the introduction of Moodyism and the shift in Calvinism which it occasioned. I.D. Campbell’s evaluation reminds this reviewer of the comment made on the Remonstrants’s behaviour at Dordt: “mere powder without shot, which gives a clap but does no harm”! Nevertheless, this powder was meant to blind the eyes of Scottish Presbyterians traditionally associated with, amongst others, Campbell’s own denomination. This is obvious when, “Kennedy’s concerns revolved around the use of hymns, organs, inquiry rooms and open prayer meetings. He felt that necessary doctrinal emphases were being neglected”, but Campbell dismisses this with, “It is a pity that much of his energy was expressed in an unnecessary opposition to his brethren”. To Campbell, taking a stand against the violation of the *regulative principle* (WCF XXI .i) and Arminianized “American mass Evangelism” may be an “unnecessary opposition to...brethren”, but to many aligned to orthodox Calvinism, both past and *present*, these are not inconsequential matters.

Of course, Editor Campbell vowed at his ordination to uphold the position of the Free Church of Scotland on this matter. Vows - ordination, marriage or otherwise - are not to be taken lightly. We are not incognizant of difficulties in the Free Church of Scotland which mirror the points of the Kennedy-Bonar debate, and we are not surprised that Campbell would say that, “this booklet (*sic*) [144 pages, a

Footnote 13 contin.....defender of Reformed Soteriology, for kindly loaning me this volume.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.24.

booklet!] will only throw up anew the mistrusts that continue to polarize the church".¹⁵ But Campbell's dismissal of Kennedy's thesis lies only in one issue: namely, that Bonar was exactly right, surely, to contend that the responsibility of opposing the work, which Kennedy undertook, was of far greater moment than that of upholding it. In the words of Kennedy, we ask Mr Campbell and other Bonarites:

"Why [do you] fear only the danger of not countenancing what is a work of God? Is there no danger on the other side? Their one fear tends to make them tolerant of all that accompanies what they regard as a work of grace? All modes of teaching, and all forms of worship, that have around them the halo of what is deemed a blessing from on high, are apt to be regarded as divinely sanctioned, and, as such, to receive unquestioning acceptance" (p.114).

In asserting that Kennedy was more aware of Biblical procedure than his opponents, we would respectfully remind Campbell of the following basics.

1) Scripture requires that examination be applied to distinguish the true from the false. In other words, *try the spirits* (1 John 4:1; Col. 2:8; 1 Thess. 5:21). Kennedy's duty was plain: he was to examine the movement first in the light of Scripture, then decide to support or reject it.

When we try the spirits, there must be no predetermined, favourable disposition. Indeed, as Kennedy said, "It may be legitimate to form an *unfavourable* judgement, even at the outset of a religious awakening, if the means employed in producing it are such as the Lord cannot be expected to bless..." (p.13). The point simply put is that, the end can never justify the means.

2) False teachers spreading false doctrines are ubiquitous and are the church's greatest danger (2 Cor.11:14; Matt. 24:4). On the Bonar-Campbell "logic," the recent "Toronto Blessing" movement - claiming to be of, and from, God - placed a greater onus on the majority of the church than on the irregular practitioners, all because, in Bonar's words, "*the responsibility of opposing the work...[is] of greater moment than that of upholding it*".

3) We submit ourselves to *regula Scripturae*, the rule of Scripture, as the determiner of practice - hence, the "regulative principle". Modern revivalism and the Arminian techniques which it employs must not be allowed to subvert the place of scriptural practice - namely, the Reformed doctrine of the call of the gospel (Acts

¹⁵ The present turbulence in the Free Church owes its genesis to a failure to deal with doctrinal slippage in the past. And in a sense the Church has in its barn the produce of a poor harvesting - or, chickens coming home to roost invariably betray their perching.

20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15). Is it surprising that God does not bless Evangelism when doctrine is jettisoned for one message sermons, when man's depravity is played down or ruled out, and when God's sovereignty in salvation is hid or rejected? We think not.

The Reviews say what the Reviews do not say¹⁶

The reviewers would undoubtedly regard themselves as reformed, presenting a reformed analysis concurring with Bonar's. Yet there is a silence - perhaps an unwitting but revealing silence - which must leave us uneasy. Bonar was merely a defender of the avowed ultra Arminian D.L. Moody and his practices. Why was Moodyism, or Arminianism, not denounced in these reviews? Why was Kennedy given no credit for opposing the Moody theology? Not only this, why was Kennedy openly attacked by the reviewers? Surely, to attack Moodyism would have meant essentially laying an axe to the root of much of today's evangelism: the message of a universal love and a less than totally depraved human nature which can do some good and respond to contrived gimmicks - for example, uninspired and a-theocentric songs to reach the unchurched. To attack Moody was to undermine Bonar and lay bare the present nakedness of the majority of today's reformed thinking. A dominant theology dominates! Is it not sad that today's Calvinists find more in common with the essence and practices of Arminianism than they do with their fellow Reformed? Campbell was particularly confined: had he condemned Bonar he would have poured opprobrium on his-fellow ministers who are fighting desperately for the Moody-Bonar practices in the Free Church. His position would be untenable. Both have shown the major shift leftwards in Reformed theology fanned by the ecclesiastical and doctrinal hurricanes of 1874-5. The shift towards an effeminate Calvinism by those intent on adhering to a revisionist Confession has left us with a majority in Reformed circles (of which the reviewers are not atypical) who simply cannot condemn Arminianism.

Introduction and Publisher

In his Introduction to *Evangelism*, Prof. Hugh Cartwright, Professor of Church History and Church Principles, Free Church College, Edinburgh, makes two cogent observations. Firstly, like the Scotland of 1870, we too are "surrounded by unchurched masses" and the danger is of accommodating ourselves "intellectually, doctrinally and liturgically to the spirit of the age in order to win the age". Secondly, history has vindicated Kennedy's position: our isles have not benefited from the preaching of a diffusive christianity coupled with man-invented strategies designed to engender mass responses, even though doctrine and confessional

¹⁶ Pierre Macherey, "The Text Says What it Does Not Say", in Walder (ed.), *Literature in the Modern World*, (OUP and The Open University, Oxford, 1990), pp.215-222. He rightly pointed out that, "Speech eventually has nothing to tell us: we investigate the silence, for it is the silence that is doing the speaking".

Calvinism were sacrificed in the process and were made an offering on the altar of novelty.

“Evangelism”, is the second Kennedy reprint by the “The James Begg Society”. Formed in 1994, the Society aims to advance, mainly through publishing, a return to Calvinistic orthodoxy. Stylistically, their reprints are of a very high standard, and we warmly commend this Society to our readers. Ventures like this perish for lack of support and the responsibility will be ours. The book is a *must*: it is a manual and a checklist for distinguishing true and counterfeit evangelism. The theological battles of the past are still being fought today. Sadly, today’s congregations are, by and large, less well briefed than our forefathers. This book will significantly address many imbalances. Buy this book now: *you* need to know its truths, *your* church needs to adopt the Kennedy position. Kennedy’s position may be Scripturally encapsulated in, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44).

Readers who wish to obtain a copy of “Evangelism: A Reformed Debate” (ISBN 0-9526799-1-4) should contact Paul Hayden on 01248 670 260 or e-mail : jbeggsoc@easynet.co.uk Or write to him at 67 Ffordd Garnedd, Y Felinheli, GWYNEDD, North Wales LL56 4QY

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”.

This (text) is the Scripture version of the Gospel Call; and I can never hesitate to proclaim it.....The idea of the Call being the offer of a gift has driven the Scriptural form of it out of the minds of many men altogether.

Extending the idea of the marrow-men’s “deed of gift and grant”, they (the “moderate Calvinists”) reached at last the universal reference of the Atonement, while still stretching a long arm to keep a weak hold of the Calvinism of the Confession.

They hesitate not to say that without the universal reference they could not preach the gospel at all..... and what do they have there on which to base the offer? A reference that avails for no definite end; that secures no redemption; and that leaves those whom it connects with the death of Christ to perish in their sins.

John Kennedy: “Man’s Relations to God”: pages 56 - 57