

Gleanings from the Highlands

Murdoch Campbell

DR. John Kennedy was one of the greatest of preachers in the North. Born in 1819, he studied divinity at Aberdeen; but it was hearing the news of his father's death that overwhelmed him with grief and when he returned to Aberdeen he appeared to have been made a new man. Later, recalling that very sad period of his life, he wrote, "The memory of that loss I can bear to recall, as I cherish the hope that his death was the means of uniting us in bonds that shall never be broken." Licensed to preach in 1843, he was then called to Dingwall Free Church, in which church he ministered to the day of his death:

"The love of Christ for the Church is infinitely rich and infinitely holy. But be not afraid that the holiness of His love will ever come between its riches and your soul. ...many indeed are the spots upon you, but if you come to Christ with them all, you will never regret it. I heard the Lord complaining of those who did not come to Him with their sins, but never of those who came...All is given you through the blood, and there is not in your sinful heart on earth, or in Hell beneath, that can keep you from Christ. The end of His love is that He might present the Church to Himself 'without spot.'"

Donald Morrison was from Fivepenny, Ness. He was brought to Christ when only 15 years old, through a tender personal appeal from Finlay Munro; and later he became a gifted and powerful preacher of God's Word:

"Though approved in Christ, Donald often walked under a cloud of felt spiritual desertion. None could therefore be more tender than he in ministering comfort to the mourner in Zion. Speaking once in the open air at Dell he referred feelingly to the way poor believers often lost their "receipt" for what they had carefully deposited in the heavenly bank,

and thinking that having lost this they had lost their all. To such Christ would say, "Though you have lost your 'receipt', your name is still in my Book and your treasure is safe in My hands.' In other words, the eternal salvation of the believer is not dependent either on feeling or on an unclouded assurance, but on Christ's faithfulness in the covenant which is 'order in all this and sure.'"

Robert Finlayson, as a boy, passed through times of deep anxiety about the state of his soul, but when a student at King's College, Aberdeen, he was richly blessed under the preaching of Dr. James Kidd and the teaching of James Hervey in "Theron and Aspasia." Licensed to preach in 1826, he was ordained at Knock, on the Isle of Lewis; and then he served the Lord in the parishes of Lochs and Helmsdale. A Christian woman of deep discernment once remarked that he was the most "affecting" preacher she had ever heard:

"He once spoke on the 'eternal weight of glory' which the Church of Christ shall exchange in heaven for her 'light affliction' in this life. He described how the creatures which inhabit the great deep are so free and alive notwithstanding the vast and perpetual weight of shimmering seas above them. In the deep they are in their element; and the deeper down they go the more free, the more joyous and alive they are. So in Heaven 'the new creature in Christ' shall reach his eternal element; and under the eternal weight of glory, in an ocean of infinite peace and love, his life, freedom and joy, shall reach the pinnacle of their perfection and fullness."