
Hugh Kennedy (1698–1764)

Defender of Dutch and Scottish Revivals

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I. Religious Movements in the Age of Enlightenment

According to J. van den Berg (1922–2003), the history of Protestantism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is marked by two currents. On the one hand, attempts were made to consolidate and, if necessary, to reaffirm the legacy of the Reformation. This movement is known as Orthodoxy. On the other hand, a movement emerged that was critical of Orthodoxy and radically attacked classical Christian truths. This movement was the Enlightenment, which first emerged at the end of the seventeenth century. Both movements, which occurred within Calvinism as well as Lutheranism, determined the religious landscape on both sides of the North Sea.¹

The Enlightenment had a major influence on the political, social, and ecclesiastical life of Europe. It signified a spiritual emancipation process, both individually and socially. It manifested itself in a resistance to the authorities of the past, emphasising, instead, rational thinking. Classical biblical truths were to be subjected to human reason.

Scotland and the Netherlands both experienced the influence of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. In addition – or opposition – to a worldview determined by the Bible, a scientific worldview was now taking shape. The influence of the Enlightenment did not pass by the established churches. Theological frameworks based on Scripture and Confessions of Faith were no longer normative. The differences between the Reformed profession of the established churches and the dissenting and heterodox

¹ J. van den Berg (ed.), *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents: Essays on Early Modern Protestantism and the Protestant Enlightenment* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1999), p. xi.

movements outside the established churches had to be eliminated. The idea of tolerance towards dissenters was fed from the universities.²

The Enlightenment philosophers assumed a positive view of man. Particularly in France, prominent personalities such as Voltaire and Rousseau had great influence. They provided inspiration for the French Revolution with its ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. There were also strong personalities in Scotland who gave concrete form to their Enlightenment idea in word and writing. Men like David Hume, Francis Hutcheson, and Adam Smith expressed their ideas with great effect.³

Many publications are available on the influence of the Enlightenment in Europe on ecclesiastical and religious life. Less studied, however, is the way in which *Pietism* developed and manifested itself within this new climate. Pietism is a third movement that can be added to the Enlightenment and Orthodoxy. Pietism was not a theological or philosophical direction of the kind to which van den Berg refers, but a pietistic movement that accompanied Orthodoxy. Before the emergence and dominance of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, Pietism in the seventeenth century had already deepened the confessional orthodoxy and provided an antidote to one-sided rational theology, frozen religious life, and worldliness. We can say that before the Enlightenment, Pietism was the most important movement within Continental Protestantism.⁴

Pietism flourished in the seventeenth century and reached its peak in the following century. A related movement was 'Revivalism'. The revival movement, which appeared in a minor way in the seventeenth century, made a great advance in the eighteenth century. The question is whether the two movements can be examined independently of each other to find out how they were related. They were not random but occurred in all Protestant countries in Europe as well as in the English North American colonies. This applies to the Calvinist church communities as well as to

² For the Enlightenment in Scotland, see especially A. Broadie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). For the Enlightenment in the Netherlands, see E. G. M. van der Wall, and L. Wessels (eds.), *Een veelzijdige verstandhouding. Religie en Verlichting in Nederland, 1650–1850* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2008).

³ Broadie, *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, p. 1: 'The Scottish Enlightenment, a remarkable intellectual flourish that lasted for much of the eighteenth century, was an event of great importance for western culture.'

⁴ Cf. W. J. op 't Hof, *Het Gereformeerd Piëtisme. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt als bijzonder hoogleraar aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam op 4 oktober 2005* (Houten: Den Hertog, 2005), p. 101.

the Lutheran national churches.⁵ D. W. Bebbington does not see the revival movement as an extension of Pietism but regards it as a separate movement. If Bebbington is right, we can add to the third current of Pietism a fourth, that of Evangelicalism.⁶

The Pietist movement within the churches of Calvinist signature is sometimes referred to as ‘Reformed Pietism’. W. J. op ’t Hof, who is considered to be one of the most important researchers of Pietism and analogous Puritanism, defines the Reformed variant of this piety movement as follows:

Reformed Pietism was that movement within Reformed Protestantism which, turning against what it saw as widespread abuses and misconceptions, strove with prophetic inspiration for both the inner experience of doctrine as well as the radical and total sanctification of all spheres of life.⁷

The national reformed churches of Scotland and the Republic of the Seven United Provinces played an important role within Reformed Pietism. Revival movements occurred in both countries. Both the Scottish and Dutch revivals around 1740/50 were defended by Hugh Kennedy, pastor of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam. Our purpose in this article is to give an account of Kennedy’s life and to examine his significance as a connecting pietistic link between the two countries.

II. Birth, youth, study, and entering the ministry

Hugh Kennedy (1698–1764) was born in Ulster to Scottish parents. He attended the University of Glasgow where he obtained his Master’s degree (M.A.) in 1714. He became chaplain in the family of Archibald Douglas of Cavers near Hawick in the south of Scotland. The Presbytery of Jedburgh accepted him as a probationer in October 1720, after which he was inducted as a minister on 7th September 1721 in Torthorwald, a small village near Dumfries in southwestern Scotland. Two years later he moved to Cavers near Hawick in the Borders. On 16th March 1722, he married Margaret Scott (1702–1746). Twelve children were born from this marriage. The first seven were all baptized in Scotland and the rest in Rotterdam in the United

⁵ For Reformed and Lutheran Pietism in the eighteenth century, see especially M. Brecht, K. Depperman (eds.), *Der Pietismus im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). For the revival movements in Europe and America, see W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁷ W. J. op ’t Hof, *Het Gereformeerde Piëtisme*, p. 85.

Provinces. On 25th May 1737 he became pastor of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam. Marischal College in Aberdeen awarded him the title of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) in 1762. He died on 3rd November 1764 in Rotterdam.⁸

Kennedy was inducted to Cavers on 13th November 1723. He was friendly with Robert Riccaltoun (1691–1764) who became minister of nearby Hobkirk in the same Presbytery in 1725.⁹ The Jedburgh Presbytery belonged to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale. Probably at the meetings of this Synod, Kennedy met the pietistic theologian Thomas Boston (1676–1732), minister of Ettrick.¹⁰

In the year of Boston's death, on April 18th 1732, Kennedy gave an opening sermon before the Synod on 1 Corinthians 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' and on John 1:18, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' At the earnest request of fellow ministers, he had the sermon printed in Edinburgh in 1732.¹¹ M. D. van den Heuvel gives a short summary of this sermon:

⁸ For short biographical sketches, see Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (2nd edn., 8 vols., Edinburgh, 1915–1950), Vol. 2, p. 106; Vol. 7, p. 552; D. F. Wright, 'Kennedy, Hugh', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), accessed 20–1–2021; 'Kennedy', in P. C. Molhuysen, P. J. Blok, *Nieuw biografische woordenboek (NNBW)* (10 vols., Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1933), Vol. 9, pp. 501–502; F. S. Knipscheer, 'Kennedy, Hugh', in P. de Bie, J. Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland* (6 vols., 's-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1907–49), Vol. 4, pp. 725–728; A. J. van der Aa, 'Hugh Kennedy', in A. J. van Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden* (21 vols., Haarlem: A. J. van Brederode, 1852–1878), Vol. 10, pp. 121–122; 'De predikant Hugh Kennedy te Rotterdam', in *Blad van Nederlandse genealogische vereniging, afd. Rotterdam e.o.*, Vol. 24 (2010–11), parts 3–4, pp. 459–464. See also M. D. van den Heuvel, 'Kennedy: trouw pastor, praktisch theoloog', in *Reformatisch Dagblad*, article I, 6th May 1983, and article II, 13th May 1983.

⁹ Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 119. For his friendship with Kennedy, see W. Steven, *The History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1833), p. 170.

¹⁰ Scott, *Fasti*, Vol 2, pp. 174–175.

¹¹ H. Kennedy, *A sermon preached at the opening of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, April 18th, 1732. By Hugh Kennedy, M.A. Minister of the Gospel at Cavers. Being an essay to shew the utter vanity and insufficiency of human reason and philosophy, and the absolute sufficiency of the plain and faithful preaching of Christ, to recover men from their great and universal guilt, corruption and misery; and to bring them to complete holiness and happiness: In opposition to modern infidels* (Edinburgh: printed for Arthur Armstrong, bookseller in Kelso, and sold at his shop there, 1732). The sermon was translated and included in a collection of sermons during his ministry in Rotterdam: H. Kennedy, *De leidinge des Evangeliums tot zaligheid van zondaren, zynde den inhoud van verscheidene leerredenen* (Utrecht: S. de Waal, 1767), pp. 1–57. The Dutch title of the sermon is 'De getrouwe prediking Christi, het voornaamste uitwendige en gewoone middel tot zaligheid', 1 Korinthe 1: 22, 23.

The title is ‘An Essay to show the utter vanity and insufficiency of human reason and philosophy, and the absolute sufficiency of the plain and faithful preaching of Christ’. The Scripture text is 1 Corinthians 1:22-24. He already shows that human reason and philosophy, so supreme at that time, are nothing but vanity. At a time when man is elevating himself and putting himself in the centre, eclipsing Christ’s place, Kennedy sharply opposes the ‘modern infidels’ who seek to reconcile their beliefs with the spirit of the times.

Although it was not his intention to publish this sermon, yet he does so at the request of many, and hopes that readers will benefit from it. He wants to stand up for a clear preaching of Christ and says that reason does not play a major role in faith.¹²

The title of the sermon highlights two aspects. The first is ‘the utter vanity and insufficiency of human reason and philosophy’, and the second is ‘the absolute sufficiency of the plain and faithful preaching of Christ’. The first aspect refers to the spirit of the emerging Enlightenment. In his preface, Kennedy compares the value of three principles: ‘sense, reason, and faith’. The objects upon which these faculties of the soul are directed are different. It is not that reason has no role in religious activity. But without faith and the enlightenment through the Holy Spirit, reason has no foundation. When it comes to understanding Divine revelation, this can only be done in the way of faith. Supernatural things in the Word cannot be comprehended by the mind *per se*. These are accepted only by faith. The ‘infidels’ [prophets of disbelief] and sceptics who exalt reason and will not accept supernatural things without being able to reason them, show only the ‘darkness of the mind’ corrupted by the Fall.¹³

What, according to Kennedy, is the only way to counter the flood of theories of disbelief and glorification of the mind? It is the Gospel of Christ, as the apostle points out: ‘But we preach Christ’. ‘I am firmly convinced, that to publish the Gospel of Christ, in its amiable childish simplicity, is the only effectual way to stop this flood of irreligion and infidelity.’¹⁴

Kennedy discerns that Christ-centred preaching is missing from many pulpits. At the beginning of the Synod sermon, he remarks on this:

Multitudes seem to grow weary of this part of the Gospel; a natural religion, or none at all, pleases them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That anything more is necessary in religion but those

¹² Van den Heuvel, ‘Kennedy: trouw pastor, praktisch theoloog’, 6th May 1983.

¹³ Kennedy, *A sermon preached at the opening of the Synod*, ‘Preface’, III, IV, V.

¹⁴ Ibid. ‘Preface’, VI.

moral duties of righteousness and honesty, which natural light and the common reason of mankind discover and direct to, many will not acknowledge.¹⁵

The ‘infidels’ – the radical followers of the Enlightenment – focused their attacks on Christian doctrines that they could not comprehend such as the Trinity, the virgin birth of Christ, and the miracles that Christ performed. They glorified learning and art and ridiculed true religion. So-called ‘Moderate’ followers of the Enlightenment maintained the biblical revelation but elevated the natural knowledge of God with the associated moral lifestyle that is accessible to the natural man. The modern deists and other freethinkers focused on the philosophy of the pagan world. They passed over human depravity and the Fall-darkened mind. Their religion was identical with the wisdom of the Greeks which Paul has in mind in the text from which Kennedy preached.¹⁶

Kennedy paints the Person of Christ, ‘the power of God and the wisdom of God’, in various tonalities. He also brings him near in the offer of the Gospel:

To preach Christ is, to make a general offer of life and salvation through Christ to all the world, with ardent affection beseeching and persuading the vilest and chiefest of sinners to embrace Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; to be reconciled to God and to trust to and in Christ for life, righteousness, grace, and glory. ‘Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners’; and He sent his apostles, and still sends the pastors whom He gives to His churches, to call poor sinners to consider their misery; to look to Jesus, in Whom alone is salvation.¹⁷

In the application, Kennedy describes how ministers of the Gospel should be equipped. He emphasizes, in particular, the necessity of rebirth and faith:

How can they preach the grace of Christ, who never tasted that the Lord is gracious? How can they preach the work of the Spirit in conversion, sanctification, or consolation, who never experienced His gracious operations? How can they open the nature of faith, who never believed? How can they enforce all duties, with motives respecting the glorious Person of Christ, the life, soul and glory of the christian religion, who never felt the love of Jesus constraining them?¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

III. A new sphere of labour: the Scottish Church in Rotterdam

In 1737, Kennedy received a call from the Scottish Church in Rotterdam, Holland. This congregation had been established in 1643, and originally consisted of Scottish merchants and sailors working in the important port. During the period of the Restoration (1660–1688) many Presbyterian refugees from Scotland joined the congregation.

The question is whether the Revolution of 1688 led to an intensification of pietistic contacts between the Dutch Republic and Scotland. Many Scottish migrants returned to their homeland. The Dutch pietistic minister James Koelman, who had the most contact with the migrants, died seven years after the Revolution. Another pietistic minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Wilhelmus à Brakel, who lived in Rotterdam, presumably still maintained contact with the Scottish Church there.

The Scot Thomas Hog or Hoog (1655–1723), who studied in Utrecht, pastored the congregation from 1694 until his death in 1723, and had a good reputation both in Scotland and in the Seven United Provinces.¹⁹ He was married to a Dutch woman, Johanna van Strijen, a sister of Jacobus van Strijen (1662–1727), an eminent minister attached to Rotterdam. Hog had three sons who became pastors in the Dutch Reformed Church. His son Willem (William) was a merchant in Rotterdam and a deacon for fifteen years and an elder in the Scots Church for eighteen years.²⁰

Although Hog left no writings, his involvement in Scottish Puritan thought can be deduced from the contacts he maintained. His brother-in-law Jacobus van Strijen translated a book written by the English Puritan John Owen that was published in Rotterdam in 1728 under the title *Genade en plicht om geestelijk gezind te zijn* [*Grace and duty of being spiritually minded*]. Van Strijen died before the book could

¹⁹ Hog (Hoog) was offered professorships in both the Netherlands and Scotland, but he did not leave Rotterdam: Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 143, 144. He was the elder brother of James Hog (1658–1734), the Scottish Presbyterian minister and Marrowman.

²⁰ H. ten Boom, 'Hoog, Thomas', in *Biografisch Lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlands Protestantisme (BLGNP)* (6 vols., Kampen: Kok, 1978–2006), Vol. 5, p. 258; Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, p. 551, 'He marr. 1688, Johanna van Stryen, or Broedelet, a widow'. The three sons who became ministers were Marinus in Schoonhoven, John in Brouwershaven, and Cornelius in Ooltgensplaat. Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 145, 'His [Hog's] esteemed and beloved brother-in-law, the Rev. James Van Stryen, a popular minister, had very recently removed from Middleburg to Rotterdam.' For William Hoog, see *ibid.*, pp. 369–370.

be published, and it was seen through the press by a son of Hog (Hoog), Marinus Hoog (1690–1766).²¹

In the Rotterdam church there were several office bearers who had one or more translations of Scottish and English Puritans to their name. We mention Simon Commenicq who was an elder for three years from 1735. He translated John Owen's commentary on Hebrews into Dutch in four volumes.²² William Hoog (Hog) translated ten sermons from Thomas Halyburton, entitled *De zondaar verheugd in Gods heiligdom* [The sinner rejoicing in God's sanctuary] (1763). It is a translation from two Scottish books, entitled *Five Sermons preached before, and after the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (1721) and *Other Five Sermons preached before, and after the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (1723). He translated this work together with Jacobus de Koningh, deacon of the Scottish Church at Rotterdam from 1741.²³

Written by Thomas Halyburton there was published in the first half of the eighteenth century, successively *Gedenk-schriften* (1745), *Het groot aanbelang der zaligheid* (1747), and the above-mentioned *De zondaar verheugd* (1763). The first book does not give the name of the translator. The second was prefaced by Hugh Kennedy.²⁴ The date of this is 'Rotterdam, the 1st December 1746'. The English titles of the first two books are *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Thomas Halyburton* (1714) and *The Great Concern of Salvation* (1721).²⁵

The candidates for the ministry had to be approved by the mayors of the city. This was also the case when a second pastor was sought in addition to the senior pastor John Ensle. This vacancy had arisen in 1735 when Robert Black moved to another church. Several

²¹ F. S. Knipscheer, 'Strijen, Jacobus van', in *NNBW*, Vol. 10, p. 988. J. Owen, *De genade en pligt om geestelyk-gesint te zyn verklaart en ter betragting aangedrongen* (Amsterdam: H. Keyzer/Utrecht, D. Baars, ca. 1780, second print). *Pietas online*, accessed 21 September 2016.

²² Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 369. J. Owen, *Eene uitlegginge van den Sendbrief van Paulus den Apostel aan de Hebreëen* (4 vols., Rotterdam: N. Topyn, 1733–40). *Pietas online*, accessed 21 September 2016.

²³ Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 369–370. T. Halyburton, *Den zondaar verheugd in Gods heiligdom* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt/P. Holsteyn, 1763). *Pietas online*, accessed 21 September 2016.

²⁴ Steven, *History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 201–202; Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 106; Vol. 7, p. 552.

²⁵ T. Halyburton, *Gedenk-schriften* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt/A. Douci, 1745); T. Halyburton, *Het groot aanbelang der zaligheid* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt/A. Douci, 1747); T. Halyburton, *Den zondaar verheugd*, *Pietas online*, accessed 21–9–2016.

well-known Scottish pastors were mentioned in the minutes such as Ebenezer Erskine and Thomas Mair, the former of whom had seceded from the Scottish Established Church in 1733, with the latter joining the Secession in 1737.

From a fourth leet, Kennedy was elected by the consistory and approved by the city council on 27th April 1737. It was not easy for Kennedy to be separated from the church in Cavers. The Presbytery of Jedburgh did not immediately release him, and he was not admitted as co-pastor in Rotterdam until Sabbath 18th August 1737. Enslie inducted him, preaching from ‘Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ’ (Eph. 3:8). In the afternoon Kennedy preached in front of ‘a large audience, including many Episcopalians, Remonstrants and Papists’, from the words, ‘Turn to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth’ (Isaiah 45:22).²⁶

Kennedy made a happy start in his new position. His sermons and home visits testified to pastoral compassion. His kindness was not at the expense of maintaining church discipline. The admission of new communicant members was also his concern. Before he came, candidates had had to answer two simple questions that were also used during the pastoral ministry of Thomas Hog (Hoog) and the pastor before him, James Brown (1634–1713). From Kennedy, a total of twelve questions had to be answered by the candidates for membership. These testify to a deep piety. The new pastor was not content with an outward confession but also descended to the heart. This is not to say that he wanted to pass judgment on the spiritual state of the candidates, but the questions did serve to examine whether they possessed the faith. The content of the questions corresponds to the checkpoints of Marrow-theology that will be discussed in the course of this article.²⁷

The conclusion of this statement shows how carefully the consistory handled the aspirant’s life:

The candidates having given satisfying answer to these questions, and subscribed with their own hands, or the hands of the Moderator, or Clerk, at their desire, when they cannot write, then the Moderator, with consent of the consistory, shall in the name of the Lord Jesus, declare them to be admitted to partake, with the other approven members of

²⁶ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 163-172; *Boekzaal der geleerde werelt* (1738), p. 365; *Biografisch woorden van protestansche goedgeleerden*, Vol. 4, p. 725.

²⁷ J. Morrison, *Scots on the Dijk: the story of the Scots Church, Rotterdam* (Kirkpatrick Durham, 1981), pp. 49-51; Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 174-183.

this congregation, in all the spiritual privileges and provisions of our Lord's house.²⁸

In addition to sharpening and clarifying the requirements for admission, the exercise of moral discipline was an important point of attention on the Consistory's agenda. We read about this in the register of the church council; among other things:

The consistory, considering the necessity of keeping up the exercise of that discipline which the Lord Jesus, the alone King and Head of the church, has appointed in His Word for preventing his worthy name to be blasphemed, and his holy ordinances prophaned, and for preserving the purity and beauty of his church; and that those who are in danger of falling by the infectious example of scandalous sinners, may take warning by the rebuke given to them, and made afraid of falling into sin, and the offenders themselves may be brought to reflect upon their own evil ways and doings, and be excited with shame and contrition of heart, to turn again to the Lord ...²⁹

As has already been noted, Kennedy had some members in the Consistory who did translation work from English. This was done by William Hoog, Jacobus de Koningh, Simon Commenicq, and Cornelis Brem. Hoog, De Koningh and Brem mainly focused on Scottish pietistic writings. In the following we will see that they also translated Kennedy's own writings into Dutch.

Most translations by Scottish authors were done by Jan Ross (1714–1766) a Scotsman from 's-Hertogenbosch who also lived in Rotterdam. He was probably not a member of the Scottish congregation because his wife was Dutch. He translated sermons by the Scottish preachers Ralph Erskine (1685–1752) and Ebenezer Erskine (1680–1754). The first editions of these cover the period 1740–1762. It is probable that the dissemination of the Marrow doctrine by Kennedy resulted in the writings of the Erskines and also of Thomas Boston being so widely received in the Republic.³⁰

IV. Kennedy as theologian

According to Steven, Kennedy was highly regarded as a theologian. He was regularly consulted by both English and Dutch colleagues on difficult points. In particular, he was on good terms with his compatriot

²⁸ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 182–183.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 183–184.

³⁰ Cf. L. J. van Valen, 'Ross, Jan', in *Encyclopedie Nadere Reformatie*, Vol. 2, pp. 231–234.

and colleague Dr Alexander Comrie (1708–1774) who was a minister in Woubrugge. The latter asked him to write a foreword to the Dutch translation of Thomas Boston's *View of the Covenant of Grace*, which was published in 1741 under the title *Eene beschouwing van het verbondt der genade*. The book, which has been reprinted many times in the English-speaking world, was translated into Dutch by Comrie.³¹

The book includes a dedication to Comrie by Kennedy which he had written on 15th July 1740. He cordially ended this preface with:

I sincerely pray our glorious Lord and Master, with Whom is the fullness of the Spirit, that he may give you much of his Spirit, to fit you for the great work to which he has called you, to teach you in all Gospel truths, to guide you, and to make you wise to win souls to the Lord.³²

This dedication is followed by a preface by Kennedy of nearly twenty pages of printed text, also dated 15th July 1740. He appears to be well acquainted with the life and significance of Boston. Thus he notes that Boston was influenced in his theological thought by 'two great and shining lights of the Reformation, Doctor Owen and Professor Witsius.'³³ The book includes a short treatise on the Covenant of Works by Comrie, and Kennedy's 'Preface to the Reader' also contains a discussion on the Covenant of Works.³⁴

From Kennedy's preface it is clear that he had the same view of the covenant doctrine as Boston. He did not view the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Redemption as two separate covenants. He admits, however, that other theologians do make this distinction, which, when interpreted according to Scriptures, agrees perfectly with the same object, and is in no way injurious to the liberty or supremacy of the grace of Jehovah. Like Boston, he points out that the elect are included in the essence of the Covenant of Grace, but that its ministry (blessings) in the offer of grace extends to all who hear the Gospel.³⁵

Another book by a noted Scottish theologian, the translation of which is provided with a preface similar to that in Boston's work, is *Het groot aanbelang der zaligheid* (English, *The Great Concern of Salvation*)

³¹ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 197–8. Steven calls them 'intimate friends'. T. Boston, *Eene beschouwing van het verbondt der genade* (Leiden: J. Hasebroek; Amsterdam: N. Byl, 1741). The first English edition was T. Boston, *A View of the Covenant of Grace* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1734).

³² Boston, *Verbondt der genade*, ed. 1741, ***2r.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5 r.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, *3r, dated 9th April 1740.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Voorreden van Hugh Kennedy'.

(1747) by Thomas Halyburton, mentioned above.³⁶ Halyburton (1664–1712) was professor of theology at the University of St Andrews. During the persecution after the Restoration in 1660, Halyburton and his mother lived in Rotterdam for a while. Halyburton wrote an autobiographical account in which he mainly reflects on his own spiritual development. These *Memoirs* were published in 1721 after his death, reprinted many times, and also translated into Dutch in 1745, although the name of the translator is not given.

Kennedy, in his foreword to Halyburton's *Het groot aanbelang*, dated 1st December 1746, outlines five features of Halyburton's preaching:

- A glorious link of evangelical truths, spreading the great doctrines of grace, in which there is only life for souls to be found, I see through the whole book, as they also radiated in the whole work of his ministry.
- He preached Christ crucified, as our only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And surely the plain and simple preaching of the Gospel, and the power of the Mediator's blood, is the best and most potent means of bringing back all sorts of sinners to the Lord.
- He was persuaded that the instant teachings and influences of the Holy Ghost, to make the Gospel of salvation effectual, were absolutely necessary.
- He had in his own soul a very great experience of Christ's power and grace.
- He preached experimentally, and with special application, the great truths of God, according to the various kinds and conditions of his hearers.³⁷

Kennedy notes that the applying work of the Holy Spirit occupies a large place in these sermons. This can also be said of his own sermons. Steven notes concerning these:

His sermons were distinguished by perspicuity of arrangement, and above all, were uniformly evangelical and practical. Having announced the subject of discourse, it was his general custom to remove the pulpit Bible from the desk, and proceed with great solemnity and earnestness.³⁸

³⁶ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 198. Steven mentions Jan Ross as the translator, but this is not apparent from the book itself.

³⁷ T. Halyburton, *Het groot belang der zaligheid* (Gorinchem: Romijn en Van der Hoff, 1972), pp. 5-10.

³⁸ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 197.

The books that Kennedy wrote himself have a pietistic content. Some of these were published in Dutch. The translators of the first editions were Willem Hog (Hoog) and Jacobus de Koningh. One of Kennedy's works was translated by Cornelis Brem (1721–1803), who has several English and Scottish Pietist works to his credit. Brem was a deacon for nine years from 1756 and an elder of the Scottish Church of Rotterdam for fourteen years from 1789. He had many contacts, mainly in the British colonies.³⁹

V. Affinity with Marrow theology

The two Erskine brothers, Ralph and Ebenezer, and Thomas Boston, of whose writings Dutch translations appeared during Kennedy's lifetime, belonged to the so-called Marrowmen, a group of ministers who endorsed the theology of the republished *Marrow of Modern Divinity* (first edition in England, 1645; first edition in Scotland, 1718). During the controversy in the 1720s, the book was condemned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and defended by the twelve Marrowmen before the General Assembly.

The *Marrow* was written by the English Puritan lay theologian Edward Fisher. The core of the content is formed by the distinction between Law and Gospel. The reason for his writing was the controversy among English Puritans about the place of the Law in the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). The themes that played a role in the Marrow conflict are the following:⁴⁰

1. Relationship between Law and Gospel (place and function of Law and Gospel, in the proclamation of the Gospel and order of salvation);
2. Nature of saving faith (assurance of faith, preparation for faith, justification, sanctification);
3. Scope of the Atonement (offer of grace, for whom Christ died).

The question is whether Kennedy had an affinity with Marrow doctrine. We know that his friend Riccaltoun of Hobkirk, mentioned above, supported

³⁹ For Cornelis Brem, see Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 199, 230, 369–370; A. Th. Boone and J. van Ekeris, “‘Ter bevordering van de kennis en beoefening van den waaren evangelischen godsdienst.’ Een onderzoek naar Cornelis Brem (1721–1803) en zijn relatie op het Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap”, in A. Th. Boone and J. van Ekeris, *Zending tussen woord en daad* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1991).

⁴⁰ Cf. D. Beaton, ‘The *Marrow of Modern Divinity* and the Marrow controversy’, *Records of Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 1 (1926), pp. 112–134.

the Marrowmen in their conflict through his writings, although he did not agree with them on all their themes. Kennedy also did not count himself a member of the group surrounding the Marrowmen, but from his writings we can conclude that he endorsed these statements.

From the questions that Kennedy formulated for the candidate for the Lord's Supper, we conclude the following in this regard:

(i) The believer is not under the law as a covenant:

*Do you believe that, though Christ by being made under the law, completely obeying its precepts, and suffering the penalty and punishment thereof, has redeemed them that under the law, so that believers are no longer under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet, all believers stand bound by the sovereign authority and matchless love of God their Creator and Redeemer, to obey the whole law of God (...)?*⁴¹

(ii) Eternal Covenant of Grace:

*Do you believe that there is a covenant of grace established from eternity, for the relief of lost sinners betwixt the Father and His Son Jesus Christ as the Second Adam, the Surety and Head of the elect, wherein, upon condition of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness by obeying the law which they had broken, and suffering the punishment which was due to them, eternal life is promised to all the elect, that Jehovah in and through Christ the Mediator, will be their God, and they shall be His people?*⁴²

(iii) Accepting Christ in the offer of grace:

*Do you, this day, as poor, guilty, perishing sinners in yourselves, upon the warrant of, and in obedience to, the call and command of the eternal God, take hold of the covenant of grace for life and salvation, as it is in Christ the Head thereof, offered and exhibited to you in the Gospel and you called to the fellowship in Him?*⁴³

(iv) Faith and assurance:

Do you with all your hearts and souls, take the Son of God incarnate to be your only Priest and Surety, Intercessor and Redeemer, and in Him, the Father to be your God and Father, and the Holy Spirit to be your Sanctifier and Comforter, a God in Christ, to be your God; and do you resign yourselves soul and body to Him, as your Lord, Head, and

⁴¹ Steven, *Scottish Church*, Rotterdam, p. 180.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Husband, to be justified by His righteousness, sanctified by His Spirit and to live by Him, to Him, and for Him only, wholly, and for ever? ⁴⁴

In testimony whereof, you say with your heart and mouth, that God is your God, according to the tenor of the Covenant, and subscribe with your hand to the Holy One of Israel, that you are, and will be one of his peculiar people, from henceforth and for ever? ⁴⁵

In a sermon of Kennedy's on Matthew 11:28 there are statements that are consistent with what the Marrowmen taught. This concerns what should be understood by 'they that labour and are heavy laden'. We mention the following:

Various expositors, from Pelagian principles, and especially the Neonomians,⁴⁶ tell us that under this designation those, and those alone, are invited to Christ, who are convinced of the evil of their sins and therefore are humbled and defeated, and who verily forsake all her sins, and that these things are essential preparatory requirements and conditions of forgiveness and peace.⁴⁷

To maintain the necessity of such preliminary requirements is contrary to the directory and intent of the whole Evangelium, and tends to make many earnest souls discouraged, and to perpetuate a legal spirit and confidence in something in ourselves; which, in proportion as it is followed, nullifies the grace of Jesus Christ.⁴⁸

All that are weary and heavy laden are invited to Christ with the troubles, miseries, cares, and contraries of this present life, while God is not in their mind.⁴⁹

What is faith in principle? Faith then is the outgoing deed of the soul to Christ as the Saviour, and through him to God; and since it is in the

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁶ 'Richard Baxter (1615–1691) fought the errors of the Antinomians. He did this so forcefully that he fell into another extreme: he made the Gospel a new law by emphasizing the necessity of penitence so strongly that coming to Christ was blocked by legalistic conditions. He became an exponent of the later so-called Neo-nomianism. His followers were also called Baxterians.' See L. J. van Valen, 'Comrie and the *Mergh des Evangeliums* of Edward Fisher', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie (DNR)*, Vol. 44:2 (2020), p. 148.

⁴⁷ H. Kennedy, *De leidinge des Evangeliums tot zaligheid van zondaren* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1748), p. 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

glorious Gospel, and in its ordinances, that Christ may be met, so there must be a coming to the same without doubt.⁵⁰

In the outgoing faith, assurance is included: a firm trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness, with a firm persuasion or assurance, that He will deliver us from sin and wrath, according to His glorious faithfulness in the promises and presentation of the Gospel.⁵¹

(v) Faith and justification

Kennedy also follows the Marrow teaching with regard to the doctrine of justification. In the context of a controversy in the Republic about the place of justification in the *ordo salutis* and the function of faith therein, he published a book about justification, translated into Dutch, entitled *God Die den godloosen regtvaardigt* [God the Justifier of the Ungodly] (1761). The translators are mentioned on the title page as Willem Hoog and Jacobus de Koningh.⁵²

The problem in question was the place of the imputation of Christ's merits in the matter of justification: Does it precede the act of justifying faith or does it follow it? This first view was shared by, among others, Kennedy's contemporaries Alexander Comrie and Jan Jacob Brahé, Dutch minister at Vlissingen. As Brahé expressed it: Imputation (the sinner's *actual* justification) precedes the believer's acceptance of Christ, and 'is therefore immediate, preceding, and direct' in the arrangement of faith and justification. If faith is placed before imputation, as for example was done by the Remonstrants, then merit is attributed to faith. In Brahé's view, a sinner is primarily justified before faith when the righteousness of Christ is *immediately* imputed. This is an act of God that takes place in his divine court. This is followed by the accepting or receiving act of faith. This is what Brahé calls *passive* justification in the court of conscience. If immediate imputation is denied, faith would be a condition of justification, which would be Arminian. In summary: first the sinner is justified, and on that basis God gives him faith, with which he may appropriate the sentence of absolution. Alexander Comrie was also of this view.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 80.

⁵² H. Kennedy, *God die den godloosen regtvaardigt, de Rechtvaardiger van allen die in Jezus Christus gelooven* (Rotterdam: J. Bosch, 1761). I am not aware of any English edition of this book.

⁵³ J. J. Brahé, *Aanmerkingen over de vyf Walchersche artikelen* (Middelburg: A. L. and M. H. Callenfels, 1758), pp. 119-123. G. A. van den Brink indicates that the view of Brahé and Comrie about immediate imputation is not based on statements of reformers and

Kennedy rejects the concept of a justification from eternity. Justification by faith in union with Christ is conclusive, though the elect are justified in the decree of God; but the emphasis in Kennedy is on justification by faith, though the imputation of Christ's righteousness precedes in order of nature (not in order of time). Kennedy also rejects the *immediate* imputation of Christ's righteousness, as taught by Comrie:

I have not touched at all that present-day distinction between *a mediate and an immediate* imputation. Our Church [i.e., of Scotland] considers that nicety as a mere chimera, and the most incongruous and preposterous distinction hitherto wrought, and which has not the least shadow or ground that was once known in the world. A distinction invented to overthrow the true Scriptural doctrine of Christ's suretyship and imputation.⁵⁴

In a sermon on Romans 8:1 he points out the great importance of the pure doctrine of justification by faith:

The doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ's righteousness is so deeply grounded in the design of the Gospel, and of such a wide influence that, if it should ever be corrupted, the purity of the doctrine of the Gospel is inevitably destroyed, and all fountains of consolation are stopped, yea, the life and power of godliness is swallowed up by a flood of errors and wickedness. All suggestions of justification and acceptance by God through man's own work, however called, have always produced licentiousness, though its advocates vehemently pretend the opposite.⁵⁵

We do not come across an elaborated vision of the decree of eternal justification among the Marrowmen. Their emphasis is on the act of faith as an instrument of justification. Some Scottish theologians who can be

later orthodox Protestant theologians, as Comrie claimed. See G. A. van den Brink, "Every deed is a work": Alexander Comrie (1706–1774) on the differences between the Remonstrant and the Reformed doctrine of justification', *Theologia Reformata*, Vol. 55 (2012), pp. 146-164.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *God die den godloozen regtvaardigt, de Rechtvaardiger van allen die in Jezus Christus gelooven*, pp. 10-11, 16, 33-34, 43-44, 66. Compared with the title of A. Comrie, *Brief over de rechtvaardigmakinge des zondaars door de onmiddelyke [immediate] toerekening der borggerechtigheid van Christus* (Amsterdam: N. Byl, 1761). D. Baarssen provides incomplete information about Kennedy's doctrine of justification. He ignores Kennedy's primary focus, which was the actual justification by faith, as shown above. See D. Baarssen, *Sporen van Comries rechtvaardigingsleer. Een onderzoek naar de receptie van de rechtvaardigingsleer van Alexander Comrie (1706–1774) in de gereformeerde gezindte in Nederland tijdens de twintigste eeuw* (Academisch proefschrift, Vrije universiteit te Amsterdam, Apeldoorn: Labarum Academic, 2021), pp. 103-104.

⁵⁵ Kennedy, *De leidinge des Evangeliums* (1748 edn), p. 115.

considered ‘forerunners’ of the Marrowmen have shaped this view. These were Thomas Halyburton (1674–1712) and Robert Traill (1642–1716). Halyburton points out that justification takes place *in* the act of believing and not before.⁵⁶

To the Neonomians, Kennedy maintains that faith and repentance are not conditions that man must meet. He was aware that the opponents of the Marrowmen appealed to the Westminster Confession for using such terms:

It is true that the Westminster Assembly once, and only once, uses the word condition, but entirely differently from that which signifies the proper conception of that word, and in a sense in which many in these later times have been inclined to use it themselves.⁵⁷

(vi) Process of conversion

A description of the process of conversion, related to that of the Marrowmen, we find in Kennedy’s *A discourse concerning the nature, author, means and manner of conversion*. This came off the press in Edinburgh in 1743 as a translation of a preface to the Dutch translation of *A faithful narrative of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, at Kilsyth, and other congregations in the neighbourhood* (1742). The Dutch edition of the latter book about the revival in Nijkerk is *Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal van ’t heerlyke werk Godts, geopenbaert in de overtuiging en bekeeringe van een groot getal zielen in de gemeente van Cambuslang en in andere plaatsen van Schotlandt* [Credible and short story of the wonderful work of God, revealed in the conviction and conversion of a large number of souls in the community of Cambuslang and in other places of Scotland] (1742).

Kennedy understands conversion in a broader sense:

⁵⁶ ‘An enquiry into the nature of God’s act of justification’, in T. Halyburton, *An Essay on the ground or formal reason of Saving Faith* (London: James Nisbet, 1865), pp. 121–143. See especially p. 127: ‘The reformed churches, in their confessions, seem harmoniously agreed in this; that justification is an act of God, applicative of the gospel to the sinner’s actual relief, upon his believing, and at the time of it...The immanent acts of God are all eternal, and are not distinct from God himself, as our divines generally agree. But this act of justification takes place at the time of believing, and not before it.’ For a Dutch translation, see T. Halyburton, *Een zedig onderzoek of in orde van natuur wedergeboorte of rechtvaardigmaking voorgaat*, ed. C. B. van Woerden Sr (Gorinchem: Romijn & van der Hoff, 1929), pp. 32–49. For Halyburton’s view on the relationship between faith and assurance of salvation, see H. M. Cartwright, ‘Faith and assurance in the teaching and experience of Thomas Halyburton (1674–1712)’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. 11:2 (1993), pp. 109–128.

⁵⁷ Kennedy, *God die den godloozen regtvaardigt*, p. 36.

The conversion of elect sinners from sin and Satan to God and holiness, which comprehends the whole work of the Spirit of Christ, in effectual calling and regeneration, till it be completed in justifying faith, introduces such a vast change, that the converted do as truly become new creatures, as if they had other kinds of being given them.⁵⁸

Kennedy expands on the names of *regeneration*, *effectual calling*, and *justifying faith* mentioned in this paragraph, along with repentance unto life, the first renewal of the soul.

The first operation of God's Spirit in the scheme of conversion is to convince of sin. This is not conversion itself, as the Neonomians argue, but a work of the law, in which the soul is discovered in its lost condition:

The dead secure conscience is alarmed, filled with fear and horror, and cries, 'What shall I do to be saved?' He convinces them of their sin and misery by the law; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Nor will sinners ever betake themselves to Jesus Christ, till they see themselves wretched and miserable, lost and undone, amidst all their earthly comforts.⁵⁹

This is followed by the renewing work of God's Spirit, the new birth:

When a blessed change is wrought on some, who have been long rooted in sins and the world, and grown old in resisting the merciful calls and offers of the Gospel, when they are brought to the feet of Jesus, ... When the Spirit has thus broken and wounded the hard heart in such measures and degrees as He pleases, of which He only is the sovereign Judge ... He by the Gospel, gives the soul a real, clear, and lively discovery of Jesus Christ.⁶⁰

This *Discourse* clearly shows the relationship of Law and Gospel. There is no room with Kennedy for any mixture of these two means which the Holy Spirit uses to bring the elect sinner to Christ. Thus the work of the Law in itself is not saving if the faithful acceptance of the promises of the Gospel does not follow.

VI. Kennedy and the revivals in Scotland

The eighteenth century was the century of religious revivals. These had an international character and began on the European mainland. In the Anglo-Saxon world, they occurred between 1735 and 1750. In the

⁵⁸ Kennedy, *A Discourse concerning the nature, author, means and manner of conversion* (Edinburgh, 1743), p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

United Provinces, the main revival was in the town of Nijkerk in 1749. In Scotland, the villages of Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1742 were the epicentre of revival.

Was this a display of pietistic spirituality or an emotional mystical movement? Or should we regard Cambuslang and other events, in the context of the internationality of the eighteenth-century revivals, as a new form of spirituality to be placed under the heading of Evangelicalism? In the latter case, we do not speak of a continuation of the seventeenth-century Reformed Pietism or Puritanism but of a revival movement with other elements, defined by Bebbington, as was indicated above.⁶¹

Kennedy was positive about the revivals in Cambuslang and Kilsyth in his homeland as well as the movement in Nijkerk in Gelderland. Because of the sometimes fierce criticism of the revival in Nijkerk, he asked the three translators from his congregation – Brem, De Koningh, and Hog – to translate accounts of the Scottish revivals. He also wrote a defence of the Nijkerk movement, of which he again produced an account in English.⁶²

He thus introduced the Scottish revival movement into the Dutch Republic. Revival was not a new phenomenon for Scotland. In 1625 in Irvine and Stewarton in southwest Scotland, under the preaching of David Dickson (1583–1663), many were touched to the heart. Because of startling phenomena as a result of a deep conviction of sin, people spoke of the ‘Stewarton sickness’. In 1630, nearly 500 souls were converted under the preaching of John Livingstone in Kirk of Shotts.⁶³

The great eighteenth-century revivals in the Anglo-Saxon world began in the 1730s in the North American colonies, with the main exponent

⁶¹ For the international character of the revivals, see Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*; A. Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish evangelical revival of the eighteenth century* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971); L. J. Van Valen, *Een rijke oogst. De opwekking in Schotland in 1742* (Leiden: Groen, 1993). See also T. Lennie, *Land of Many Revivals. Scotland's extraordinary legacy of Christian revivals over four centuries, 1527–1857* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2015), pp. 104–130.

⁶² Steven wrote of the Dutch accounts of these revivals: ‘Dr. Kennedy got three worthy members of his session, Messrs. William Hoog, J. de Honingh [Koningh] and C. Brem, to translate into Dutch, all the different narratives of, and remarks on, the Awakenings at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1741 and 1742; and he largely prefaced each piece with some pertinent observations. Most of these little works went through six editions; and the Doctor was more than once called upon to defend himself and the cause which he had espoused, against several native writers who published on the subject, especially the Rev. Gerardus Kuypers, minister of Nieuwkerk [Nijkerk], near Amersfoort’, Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 199n.

⁶³ Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 53–55.

being Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) of Northampton, New England. This revival heralded the Great Awakening. In the same decade, Wales became the model of a revival movement that spread across much of this country. Separately, the Methodist revival began in England during those years, in which George Whitefield (1714–1770) and John Wesley (1703–1791) played important parts. They belonged to the Church of England, the English State Church. Since many local churches refused permission, they preached with great blessing in the open air.⁶⁴

At the invitation of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, Whitefield came to Scotland at the end of July 1741. He had meanwhile been to America and had preached the Gospel there to many thousands. The Erskines, who were Marrowmen, had separated from the Church of Scotland in 1733. Although the first encounters of the Seceders with the ‘priest’ of the Anglican Church were amicable, they came to a rift when Whitefield refused to confine his preaching to their churches. The upshot was that they condemned Whitefield and his associates and distanced themselves from them. Thereafter, Whitefield accepted invitations from the likes of John Willison of the Church of Scotland to preach in Dundee, and was soon invited to other places as well.⁶⁵

The breach with the Erskines and the Secession Church turned out to be final, and the Seceders sharply criticized Whitefield’s subsequent successes. Conversions that took place under his preaching were especially condemned during his second tour in Scotland and even regarded as devilish work. Physical phenomena, in particular, such as fainting and trembling, proved to the Erskines that the movement was not of God. In contrast, the Church of Scotland evangelicals such as John M’Laurin, John Willison, and the Marrowman John Bonar welcomed the English Methodist.⁶⁶

In June 1742 in Edinburgh, Whitefield began his second tour of Scotland.⁶⁷ Visits to the hitherto unknown village of Cambuslang near Glasgow were a highlight. The parish minister William M’Culloch (1691–1771), encouraged by reports from America, England, and Wales which conveyed to the congregation the need for revival, noticed some

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 52–53, 91.

⁶⁵ D. Butler, *John Wesley and George Whitefield in Scotland, or the influence of the Oxford Methodists on Scottish religion* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1898), pp. 15–34.

⁶⁶ For the breach with the Erskines, see W. VanDoodewaard, *The Marrow Controversy and Seceders Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), pp. 175–184.

⁶⁷ Butler, *John Wesley and George Whitefield in Scotland*, pp. 36–43.

commotion among the people, who were generally in an unconverted state. Societies of prayer – local societies of God’s children – promoted collective pleading for a revival. Literature, such as *The Christian’s Great Interest* by William Guthrie (1620–1665), provided instruction for those concerned about their eternal salvation.⁶⁸ From the pulpit in 1741, M’Culloch passed on – with great emotion – reports of revivals in New England. These were collected in *The Glasgow Weekly History*, a newspaper giving reports of revivals in different countries. M’Culloch edited this, the first religious periodical published in Scotland.⁶⁹

M’Culloch saw the first signs of a revival in his congregation in the winter of 1741–1742. After a sermon on 18th February 1742, fifty persons in spiritual need came to the manse and by the end of May, he said, 300 souls had been touched. Whitefield was invited to preach in July, before and during the five days of the communion season. Saturday and Sabbath were the climax, when 20,000 people gathered in a valley near the church, 1,700 of whom partook of the Lord’s Supper. In all, Whitefield preached seventeen sermons. Many came to a spiritual breakthrough. Souls convinced of sin came to faith in Christ and many of God’s children were enlivened in their heart. In August, Whitefield returned for a second Lord’s Supper. After all those blissful weeks, M’Culloch came to the tentative conclusion that 500 souls had been awakened to a realization of their lost estate.⁷⁰

In the same year, a revival began in the village of Kilsyth, north of Glasgow. The local minister James Robe (1688–1753), suffering from the spiritlessness of the congregation, delivered a series of sermons on the new birth in 1740. The attention for spiritual things increased, but there was no revival. After the first great blessing in Cambuslang, there came movement among the people. In 1742, in part due to visits to Cambuslang, many in the village of Kilsyth, which had 1,100 inhabitants, were also convinced of sin. Robe even spoke of 200 souls who were touched. As in Cambuslang, the revival was accompanied by much uproar. Loud exclamations were heard in the services and physical signs such as fainting were also seen. Robe tried to counter such excesses. Whitefield, who spoke twice before a crowd of 10,000, was even forced to say that he had never seen such a commotion.

⁶⁸ Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 57ff, 85.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 94–123; I. A. Muirhead, ‘The revival as a dimension of Scottish church history’, *Records Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 20 (1980), pp. 179–196 (see, for Cambuslang, pp. 180–181); Butler, *John Wesley and George Whitefield in Scotland*, p. 40, ‘that upwards of five hundred souls have been awakened.’

At a celebration of the Lord's Supper in October, with many of the services held in the open air as at Cambuslang, twenty-two tables were served and 1,500 communicants sat at the administration of the Sacrament.⁷¹

Other places were also involved in the revivals, some of them in the Highlands. A movement had already started there in the 1730s in Nigg in Easter Ross and would grow over the century. At Golspie on the east coast, under the ministry of John Sutherland, there was a revival in 1744. Sutherland had visited Cambuslang and had come home deeply impressed.⁷²

VII. Introducing reports of Scottish revivals in the Republic

Kennedy soon heard the news of the revival at Cambuslang and Kilsyth. He informed a friend in Edinburgh that he 'happened to get his hands on a *Narrative of the Work at Cambuslang*.' The note that had come off the press in 1742 had made a deep impression on him. 'It is life from the dead,' he wrote. He also read Robe's account of Kilsyth, *The Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God* (1742).⁷³ As mentioned above, this account was translated into Dutch with a substantial preface by Kennedy, and was published in Utrecht and subsequently reprinted twice.⁷⁴

The *Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal* [Credible and short story] was followed by two additions, namely *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van 't heerlyke en uitmuntende werk Godts* [Further and more detailed story of the wonderful and excellent work of God] (1743) and *Derde stukje of vervolg*

⁷¹ Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 124-134; Muirhead, 'The revival as a dimension of Scottish church history', p. 181.

⁷² Muirhead, 'The revival as a dimension of Scottish church history', p. 182; Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 136, 137.

⁷³ Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, pp. 138-140. Fawcett refers to Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 161-171 and *Glasgow Weekly History*, no. 43, pp. 1, 3, 7. The first reports are *A short narrative of the extraordinary work at Cambuslang, in a letter to a friend, with proper attestations by ministers preachers and others* (Glasgow: W. Duncan, 1742) and J. Robe, *A faithful narrative of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, at Kilsyth, and other congregations in the neighbourhood* (Glasgow: W. Duncan, 1742).

⁷⁴ The first edition of the Dutch translation was H. Kennedy (ed.), *Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal van 't heerlyke werk Godts, geopenbaert in de overtuiging en bekeeringe van een groot getal zielen in de gemeente van Cambuslang en in andere plaatsen van Schotland* (Utrecht: R. Oudemyer, 1742). The second edition was printed the same year: H. Kennedy (ed.), *Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal* (Heerenveen: E. Wijngaarden, 1742). The third edition came out a year later: H. Kennedy (ed.), *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van 't heerlyke werk Godts, gewrogt in de bekeeringe van vele zielen in verscheidene gemeintens van Schotland, inzonderheit tot Kilsyth, en daar omtrent leggende plaatsen* (written by James Robe) (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1743).

wegens het nader en uitvoeriger verhaal [Third piece or sequel because of the further and more detailed story] (1744). Both writings were published in Rotterdam by Hendrik van Pelt and Adrianus Douci, who also printed translated sermons of the two Erskine brothers.⁷⁵ The text of the three booklets was taken from various editions of *Narratives of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, etc., begun 1742*. These were presumably translated by the three translators mentioned above, belonging to the Scottish congregation in Rotterdam. The original English edition, already mentioned, was by James Robe and others with the title *A faithful narrative of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, at Kilsyth* (1742/43).⁷⁶ The first Glasgow edition was followed by reprints to which new information about the revivals was added.⁷⁷

It is striking that several English editions, such as the complete version of 1790, include a preface by Hugh Kennedy, dated 26th July 1742. This indicates that the Rotterdam minister was involved in the Scottish revivals from the start.⁷⁸ It is an abbreviated version of the preface included in *A discourse*. This is dated 16th January 1743 and is the source text of a much shorter preface in the *Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal* [Credible and short story] dated 24th August 1742. In *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal* [Further and more detailed story] (1743) an extensive preface to the previous introduction is included, dated 20th April 1743. This also applies to the *Derde stukje* [Third piece] (1744), which contains an entirely new introduction, dated 16th June 1744. The prefaces and introductions to the first edition (1742) and the *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal* [Further and more detailed story] (1744) as well as the English text in *A discourse* (1743) largely correspond. The name of James Robe, minister at Kilsyth, appears on the title page of the second and third Dutch booklet, namely *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal* [Further and more detailed story] and *Derde stukje* [Third piece].⁷⁹

⁷⁵ H. Kennedy, *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van 't heerlyke en uitmuntende werk Godts gewrogt in de bekeeringe van veele zielen in verscheidene gemeentens van Schotlandt, inzonderheit in Kilsyth* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1743); H. Kennedy, *Derde stukje of vervolg wegens het nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van 't heerlyke en uitmuntende werk Godts, gewrogt in de bekeeringe van veele zielen in verscheidene gemeentens van Schotlandt, inzonderheyt in Kilsyth* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1744).

⁷⁶ An extensive reprint with 'part 2 and 3' was published in London: J. Robe, *A faithful narrative of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, at Kilsyth* (London, S. Mason, 1742–43).

⁷⁷ We use probably the most complete edition: J. Robe, *Narratives of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, etc., begun 1742* (Glasgow: D. Niven, 1790).

⁷⁸ We have not been able to check whether this preface was included in the first edition of *A faithful narrative* (1742). In any case, it is found in the 1790 edition.

⁷⁹ T. Prince (ed.), *The Christian History for 1743, Vol. 2* (Quinta Press reprint), pp. 286–292.

In *The Christian History*, a religious newspaper published in Boston, Massachusetts, we find accounts of revivals in North America and Britain. An issue of 1743 includes an extract from *The Glasgow Weekly History* containing a report from the United Provinces. It contains a letter from Kennedy written in Rotterdam on 26th July 1742. This letter, as stated above, was included in James Robe's *Narratives of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God*. In 1744, on 1st September, *The Christian History* included a letter from a gentleman from Holland to a friend in northern Britain. This confirmed that he had received the sequel of the Kilsyth narrative. He cites three editions of accounts of the revival at Cambuslang and Kilsyth and continues:

The Reverend Mr. Kennedy, minister of the Scots congregation at Rotterdam, who caused translate these narratives into Dutch, and wrote a preface to each of them, dined at the Hague lately, with the deputies of the two synods of South and North Holland, from whom he received the most affectionate thanks for the share he had taken in communicating that work to the publick, and one of the most eminent ministers of Utrecht made him a visit to that purpose. It is likewise reprinted in that city. Some of the ministers of Dort, Utrecht, and several other places did from the pulpits warmly recommend it.⁸⁰

The preface of 20th April 1743 in *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal* [Further and more detailed story] has more than seventy printed pages. It begins with the same text as the prefaces of previous editions. In fact, this text is identical to that of the *Discourse* discussed above. Kennedy gives a detailed account of the conversion process with some information on the revival at Cambuslang and Kilsyth. The following fragment typifies his affinity with the Scottish movement. It is his desire that such a revival should take place in the Netherlands also:

Let this great and mighty dispensation incite all ministers faithfully to preach Christ crucified, and the great and clear doctrines of the eternal Gospel; this is the great and blessed means, ordained of God for the conversion of perishing sinners, and for their edification in sanctification. The simple preaching of a crucified Christ has been the blessed means in the hand of the Spirit, through which this work [in Scotland] got its first beginning, and which has been happily continued hitherto.⁸¹

The continuation of this fragment does not reflect a positive assessment of the state of the Dutch Reformed Church:

⁸⁰ T. Prince (ed.), *The Christian History for 1744*, Vol. 2 (Quinta Press reprint), pp. 209–210.

⁸¹ Kennedy, *Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal*, ****5r.

How! my brethren, though our labour hitherto has had no considerable prosperity, let us rejoice, however, that others, in some part of the Lord's vineyard, have been made wise by God to win souls to Christ: the Spirit has, alas, largely departed from the Reformed Church; when shall we hear of the conversion of a soul, or of some humbled in the heart by the Word of the Lord?⁸²

The preface in the *Derde stukje* [Third part] dated 16th June 1744 is completely new and consists of about sixty pages of print. Kennedy wanted to emphasize the biblical relationship between Law and Gospel and thereby to indicate the danger of mixing the two. He then pointed to the necessity of embracing Christ by faith. The emphasis was on justification, regeneration, and conversion, as well as on the atoning work of Christ. According to Kennedy, these matters were central to the testimonies of conversions in Cambuslang and Kilsyth.⁸³

The long preface was followed by a presentation of the continuation of the revival in the west of Scotland. Kennedy had received new information since the previous books that he did not want to withhold from Dutch readers. His desire was aimed at similar revivals in the Republic. Do God's children, who have the same desire, have to wait long for their prayers to be answered? 'Should one wait seven or a number of years? The Scriptures give us no such rule, as even the very nature of it does not.' But return to God is necessary. 'Beg the Lord of hosts that He would return to us, and cause His face to rest upon us.'⁸⁴

Because the criticism on the part of the Scottish Seceders focused mainly on physical phenomena, this booklet provided space to show that such phenomena were not new. James Robe referred, among others, to Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661), who in his book on the *Spiritual Antichrist* (1648) paid attention to the 'influence of spiritual activities on the body'. The operations of the Spirit can be so powerful that the body is touched by them. Robe mentioned pains in the body in those who were under heavy conviction of sin. 'The arrows of the Almighty had pierced to the very heart of the heart.' Appropriate in this connection is Psalm 32: 3, 4: 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all day long.' Then there were also the 'tremors in the bodies', fainting and other symptoms of turmoil of the body.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid., ****5v.

⁸³ Kennedy, *Derde stukje of vervolg wegens het nader en uitvoeriger verhaal*, 'Voorreden'.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 'Voorreden'.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 45–47.

Robe included an ‘Appendix’, ‘comprising cases of persons who in former times, under the convicting influences of the Holy Ghost, had afflictions on their bodies, like those that now take place.’ He mentioned a number of examples from Church history.⁸⁶ The first is the revival in 1625 and following years at Stewarton in Scotland. He also mentions Katharine Ross (née Collace, c. 1635–1697), an account of whose spiritual experiences had been edited by James Hog of Carnock. She had for three days ‘an undisturbed heavenly communion with God’, but thereafter Satan harassed her with his attacks, and at one stage her body was in agony. A note reads: ‘This excellent treatise has now also been translated into Dutch, by the printer of this book, and widely available for 7 pcs.’⁸⁷

VIII. The Nijkerk revival in the United Provinces

It seems that Kennedy’s prayers for a revival in the Republic were answered. ‘Should one wait seven or a number of years?’ – it was less than seven years before the wind of the revival began to blow in the ‘Nijkerse revival’ that started in 1749. Due to negative reviews, this movement has often gone down in history as the ‘Nijkerk troubles’. Johan Fekkes gives a historical sketch of the development of revival in the town in Gelderland on the Veluwe, Nijkerk or Nieuwkerk.⁸⁸ The local minister, Gerardus Kuypers (1722–1798), had been inducted in April 1749. The spiritual climate at his arrival was poor. The new pastor, colleague of Johannes Roldanus, gives a personal picture of the situation in his new congregation in his *Getrouw verhaal en apologie* [Faithful story and apology] (1750):

This stronghold was branded everywhere as the dwelling of men, who, made fat by long prosperity, beat backwards, running in their course, like unbridled and teething horses; yea, who, moreover, did not mind the sting of divine judgments, of cattle plague and barrage of commerce, which were sure consequences of the blessings so misused. In a sense more than ordinary, Satan had established his throne here, and apparently fastened it on immovable pillars. The godly who were still found here tormented their souls over the abominations; while they were yet hidden props of

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

⁸⁷ Kennedy, *Derde stukje of vervolg wegens het nader en uitvoeriger verhaal*, pp. 74–76. The first English edition was *Memoirs or spiritual exercises of Mistress Ross* (Edinburgh: D. Duncan, 1735). The Dutch translation, by J. Ross, was *Gedenkwaardige en geestelyke oefeningen; of eenige aantekeningen van des Heeren handelingen met Jufvrouw Katharina Colace, weduwe van mr. Ross* (Rotterdam: A. van Pelt en A. Douci, 1744).

⁸⁸ J. Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken op de Veluwe. Een historische beschrijving van de ‘Nijkerkse opwekking’ in 1749* (Heerenveen: Groen, 1999), pp. 25–28.

this place, and faithful intercessors for fallen Zion, because they had an eye for the salvation of the Lord. Their way was here gardened with thorns, but they learned to grow like myrtle trees in the depths against all the slander, ridicule, and reproach, and oppression of a blind world, yea, to walk after the Lord in unsown land; though it also became true to them that afflictions can sometimes drive the wise mad. In and under all this evil there was something good here. The greatest hopes of the people, however wicked, were set upon earnest sermons; their sins they would have punished; and in their judgment they were persuaded that another way must be taken for their eternal salvation.⁸⁹

Kennedy, who at a later stage published an English edition of a short account of the revival, adds the following:

It had been in this place a dead barren backsliding time for many years past; conviction and conversion work was very rare; the place was full of infidelity, carnality, profanity, and without the fear of God.⁹⁰

Soon after Kuypers' arrival, things changed. In a letter to his parents who, unknown to him, appeared in print with two more letters, he writes that in a sermon on Psalm 72:16, 'There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon,' the stirrings of God's Spirit began to be manifested. The sermon was delivered on 16th November 1749 and touched a number of people, some of whom were present at the after-meeting. There were three rooms full of more-or-less desperate people who were convinced of their lost condition and asked Kuypers for advice. To provide for the need of souls, the pastor started weekly meetings.⁹¹ Kennedy writes about this:

The first means which the Lord was pleased to bless, for awakening that dead secure people to something of seriousness and concern about eternal things, was a public weekly catechizing, set up with this good design, that by this plain simple familiar way of instruction, ignorant people might be brought to some distinct knowledge of the Lord in His righteousness,

⁸⁹ G. Kuypers, *Getrouw verhaal en apologie of verdediging der zaaken voorgevallen in de gemeente te Nieuwkerk op de Veluwe* (Amsterdam: G. Borstius, 1750; repr. Middelburg: Gihonbron, 2004), p. 7, citation.

⁹⁰ H. Kennedy, *A short account of the rise and continuing progress of a remarkable work of grace in the United Netherlands* (London: J. Lewis, 1752), p. 10. These accounts are included in part in J. Gillies, *Historical Collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the Gospel* (2 vols., Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1754), Vol. 2, pp. 455-459 (2nd October 1750), pp. 459-461 (15th January 1751). Kennedy's name is not mentioned.

⁹¹ Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken*, p. 33.

holiness, and hatred of sin, and in His love, grace and mercy to the chiefest sinners through Jesus Christ, and of themselves in their fallen, guilty, corrupt, miserable state and condition. This exercise was attended with great success; many were stirred up to search the Scriptures, and filled with desires after the sincere milk of the Word; and the Lord left not Himself without a witness, that the work was acceptable to Him.⁹²

Now things really got going. Many were touched in their hearts by the preaching of Kuypers. Some of them could not contain themselves but started to scream. Symptomatic was the wail of an old woman at the church service in which Roldanus presided. Kuypers continues his report:

All this went so far with a great deal of silence and composure, in such a manner and under such circumstances as are found in the ordinary course of the work of conversion. But gradually it went further. The number of troubled souls grew ever greater, because the Lord continually sharpened the arrows of His Word, so that they struck and wounded hearts. All this excited me greatly, and spurred me on earnestly, in season and out of season, in the discharge of the duty of an evangelist, in hope of seeing more blessing and fruit. More and more, I found in me impressions of the weight of the immortal souls, which were also entrusted to me. Therefore I sought to pluck them like firewood, with compassion, from the fires of their eternal destruction. Finally the proclamation of the Word began to gain so much power, especially in public worship, that some people, from the wrath and misery and sorrow of heart, with weeping and lamentation aloud, sought room for their oppressed minds.⁹³

During the revival people also gathered outside the church services. Lay preachers wanted to receive the pricked souls to existing conventicles. Some of them did not handle this wisely, after which the consistory intervened. It was impossible for the ministers to guide all sin-convicted souls. After the sermon on Psalm 72, two hundred people came to the manse. Kuypers worked late into the night. Sometimes conduct became disorderly. Men in anguish and distress seized Kuypers' cloak and cried out, 'O servant of God! Come in, help us, pray now, we must be converted!' The city was in turmoil. Screaming was heard, but also singing. Testimonials of deliverance from despondency and legal pressure gave the pastors courage to continue their heavy pastoral work.⁹⁴

⁹² Kennedy, *A short account*, p. 11.

⁹³ Kuypers, *Getrouw verhaal en apologie* (Gihonbron), p. 9.

⁹⁴ Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken*, pp. 34-36.

Kuypers goes on:

Meanwhile those troubled and heartbroken ones were led to my house by the help of their acquaintances or came themselves. I heard them speak and spoke to them and questioned them. Under this I quickly perceived that the Lord had convinced them of sins by the Word, because their trespasses were set before them in the light of their countenance, and they regarded themselves as the greatest of sinners, who lay by original and actual sins under God's righteous wrath. They justified the Lord, though He might immediately cast them from Him for ever, and marvelled that God had endured them so long in their unconverted state. When I found these things in them, I got a quiet hope that something of the good hand of God might be upon us; though I was astonished, nay often moved with a great deal of fear and doubt, at the unusual affections and strenuous activities in such a degree and measure in so many persons, to which it subsequently grew, who usually lamented loudly and groaned bitterly. This fear and doubt made me wary and cautious to see and examine all things well, and compare them with God's Word, while at the same time it drove me in earnest sighs to the mercy-seat for wisdom in such an unusual way from Him.⁹⁵

When the 'troubles' became known all over the country, many went to Nijkerk to see what was happening there. There were both curious and interested parties. On the basis of symptoms of fainting and screaming, some spoke of fanaticism. Others went home moved. In point of fact, the two pastors and elders were not expecting so much interest. They also had to defend themselves against all kinds of false rumours and to correct exaggerated reports. Criticism sometimes came from places where it was not expected. How would the multiple Church assemblies respond to the 'troubles'?⁹⁶

In an earlier revival in Werkendam in 1746, involving the pastor Johannes Groenewegen and his brother Jakob, some moderate 'disorders' had already occurred.⁹⁷ But in Nijkerk, which marked the commencement of a series of revivals, greater disorders took place. At the time of the 'Nijkerk revival', revivals arose in various places in the country. A great revival took place in Aalten under the preaching of Phillippus de Roy.

⁹⁵ Kuypers, *Getrouw verhaal en apologie* (Gihonbron), p. 10.

⁹⁶ Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken*, p. 37.

⁹⁷ For an account of the revival in 1746 at Werkendam, see J. Groenewegen, *Een opregt verhaal, en eene verdediging, van het werk der overtuyging en bekeering van zondaren in de gemeente van Werkendam, in den jaare 1751 en 1752* (Gorinchem: T. Horneer, 1752).

The Reformed church in Aalten was directly influenced from Nijkerk, the other churches indirectly. The revivals concentrated mainly on the Veluwe, in the Alblasserwaard, in Drenthe with offshoots in Groningen and the Achterhoek. Revivals also occurred in Pernis and in the province of Utrecht. These showed similarities with Nijkerk, but also differences. In Aalten and Werkendam, for example, the revivals were accompanied by visions.⁹⁸

Kennedy's Defence of the Nijkerk movement

As we have mentioned, Kennedy was positive about the Cambuslang and Kilsyth revivals in Scotland. On the basis of eyewitness accounts and Kuypers' *Getrouw verhaal* [Faithful story], Kennedy came to the conclusion that there was a similar movement in Nijkerk as in Scotland.⁹⁹ He also saw parallels between the two movements when it came to the sometimes excessively sharp criticism from prominent figures from whom no such thing was expected. His conclusion about Nijkerk and other places, also in Germany, was clear. He wanted to defend, at all costs, this work of God that was under attack. He therefore wrote *Nederige verdediging van het werk des Heiligen Geestes, in de overtuiging en bekeering van vele zielen, eenige jaren geleden in Schotland, en onlangs te Nieuwkerk, en op andere plaetsen in Gelderland* [A Humble Defence of the Work of the Holy Ghost, in the Conviction and Conversion of Many Souls, some years ago in Scotland, and recently at Nieuwkerk, and in other places in Gelderland] (1751). It was translated from English by Willem Hoog and Jacobus de Koningh.¹⁰⁰

In this small book, Kennedy responds to an anonymous piece of writing that had expressed itself critically and condemningly about the events in Nijkerk. The preface was dated 25th March 1751. The content is not identical to the English account, the first part of which was dated 5th January of the same year. Kennedy now mainly focuses on the points raised by the anonymous critic.

First, he points to the great blessing of the revival in Nijkerk and also to the movement in his homeland:

⁹⁸ Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken*, p. 37.

⁹⁹ For the Scottish revivals, see Van Valen, *Een rijke oogst. De opwekking in Schotland in 1742*, pp. 114–117. For the revival in the Alblasserwaard (Bleskensgraaf), see A. P. B. van Meeteren, *Het ruysschen als de Libanon. De Nijkerkse beroeringen in Bleskensgraaf in 1752* (Bleskensgraaf: Uitgeverij Blassekyn, 1998).

¹⁰⁰ H. Kennedy, *Nederige verdediging van het werk des Heiligen Geestes, in de overtuiging en bekeering van vele zielen, eenige jaren geleden in Schotland, en onlangs te Nieuwkerk, en op andere plaetsen in Gelderland* (2nd edn., Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1751).

According to the judgment of the wisest and wisest Christians, the Lord recently granted Scotland, and now also this country, with such a dispensation of grace as we who live these days have never seen before, and with such a revelation of the power and grace of his Spirit in discovering and convicting sinners and in comforting and edifying the saints in the most holy faith: Yea, also with such testimony to the word of his grace, as, in all its circumstances, it has been very seldom bestowed upon the church of God.¹⁰¹

Aside from some excesses, it is clear to Kennedy that the revivals are a genuine work of God's Spirit:

The revival of religion, as presented in the narratives, is so closely in agreement with the Lord's Holy Word, and the experience of His saints, that, as it has been received with joy and thanksgiving by the wisest and best Christians in Great Britain and Ireland, so also in the Netherlands, and in many parts of Germany, of which I have received indisputable proofs.¹⁰²

The critique of the anonymous 'Aenmerker' [Observer] primarily focused on the physical phenomena, on which basis he judged the revival not to be a work of God:

The 'Aenmerker' [Observer], and the like, build upon very erroneous conceptions of things, when they make so much of the extraordinary bodily disturbances of some of the convicted, as a matter which disturbs religion and renders its end and purpose useless; the 'Aenmerker' discusses this extensively on pages 94 and 95 and tells us with a most solemn grace, 'Had he lived in Nieuwkerk, he would never have come to church, as long as those things lasted there.'¹⁰³

The 'Aenmerker' believed that emotional turmoil should be suppressed. He suggests questioning affective symptoms that predominated in the conversion process. Kennedy points out that experiences are part of the work of God's Spirit in a human soul. He notes about this:

It is false theology to suppose that religious affections are not part of the great essence of Christianity. It is not only unscriptural, but even unreasonable, to determine that a work is not a work of the Spirit of God, because of the extraordinary degree to which the minds of men

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

are disturbed and distorted. If they already seem to have an uncommon conviction of the terrible nature of sin, or of their wretched condition outside of Christ, or unusually vivid contemplations of the certainty and glory of divine things, and are proportionately affected with very strong affections of fear and hatred, sorrow and sadness, love and desire, and joy or delight ...¹⁰⁴

According to Kennedy, the assessment of the Nijkerk movement by the 'Aenmerker' is based on his own reason and belief. In passing, he remarks that the mind cannot comprehend the work of God. Only personal experience can make us acquainted with the power of faith. The argument of philosophers such as Descartes and Newton cannot lead one to the 'knowledge of electricity — no, we have come to it by experimentation'! Here Kennedy attacks the 'Enlightened' spirit of the age that wants to explain everything through rational reasoning. He is annoyed by the critic's childish nagging and trifling. Finally, he places the events in Scotland and Nijkerk in an eschatological perspective; they are a harbinger of the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.¹⁰⁵

Polemic with Professor Van den Honert

The 'Aenmerker' turns out to be none other than Joan van den Honert Junior (1693–1758), professor at the University of Leiden.¹⁰⁶ His criticism of what happened in Nijkerk was sharp. He mainly examines the physical symptoms of trembling and fainting. He responds to some of Kuypers' pamphlets in defence of his view on the revival. Van den Honert especially criticizes the letters to his parents, issued unbeknownst to Kuypers. Later Kuypers makes some corrections to these letters. In his *Briefv aan de leeraaren onzer kerk* [Letter to the ministers of our Church], he distances himself from the 'profound bodily disturbances, and convulsions and throes' which are not workings of God's Spirit but additional phenomena. He wants with this restriction to close the discussion, but Van den Honert will not be silenced. He continues to attack Kuypers and others for a while, to which the latter feels an ongoing compulsion to respond. Unlike his opponent, he does this with dignity. But he indicates in his letter to his

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 46–47.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. C. Huisman, *Geloof in beweging. Gerardus Kuypers, pastor en patriot tussen vroomheid en verlichting* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1996), pp. 64–65.

¹⁰⁶ J. van den Honert (anon.), *Aenmerkingen op het werkjen, door Do. Gerardus Kuipers, uitgegeeven, met dit opschrift, 'Getrouw verhael en Apologie'* (Amsterdam: A. Wor, 1750). For Van den Honert, see J. van Eijnatten, 'Honert, Joan van den', in *BLGNP*, Vol. 5, pp. 251–255.

colleagues that his patience has now run out, apparently referring to the tone of Van den Honert's writing.¹⁰⁷

Kennedy is also involved in the polemic between Van den Honert and Kuypers. This has primarily to do with his answer to *Nederige verdediging* [Humble defence] of the professor's anonymous writing. In his *Twede antwoord* [Second answer], the professor also targets the Rotterdam clergyman. He refers to his anonymous writing in which he described the Scottish revival as 'rending'. But he apologizes by pointing out that this judgment did not come from him. Other accusations make little sense. They are mostly person-oriented. According to him, Kennedy cannot form a fair judgment about Nijkerk because he does not know Dutch! Van den Honert also finds the title of his writing, which begins with *Nederige* [Humble], misplaced.¹⁰⁸

The anonymous author of *Ernstige en nuttige samenspraak* [Serious and useful dialogue] (1751) stands up for Kennedy and Kuypers. This takes the form of a dialogue in which Van den Honert is sharply criticized. The lay theologian and defender of the revival, Jakob Groenewegen, is also involved.¹⁰⁹ Kuypers also stands up for Kennedy. He does this especially in his *Derde brief* [Third Letter] (1751). He strongly condemns his former teacher, especially because of his rude and derogatory words towards the Scottish pastor from Rotterdam.¹¹⁰

The barren pamphlet battle continued. In the *Vierde antwoord* [Fourth Answer] (1751) the Leiden professor continues to maintain that Kennedy has not provided sufficient evidence to show that the conversions in Nijkerk are truly biblical.¹¹¹ Then Kuypers' father, Francois Kuypers, minister in

¹⁰⁷ Huisman, *Geloof in beweging*, pp. 65-68. See also G. Kuypers, *Brief van Gerardus Kuypers, predikant te Nieuwkerk op de Veluwe, aan de leeraaren onzer kerk* (Leiden: J. Hasebroek, 1751), 'Voorrede'.

¹⁰⁸ J. van den Honert, *Twede antwoord van Joan van den Honert, T. H. Soon, professor en predikant te Leiden, op den tweden brief van Do. Gerardus Kuypers* (Leiden: S. Luchtmans en zoon; Amsterdam: A. Wor, 1751), 'Aanhangsel: wegens het onlangs uytgekomen werkjen van Do. Hugh Kennedy' [Appendix: Responding to the recently published work of Ds Hugh Kennedy], pp. 83-85.

¹⁰⁹ Anon., *Ernstige en nuttige samenspraak over het werk des Heeren te Nieuwkerk, te Aalten en andere plaatsen* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, 1751). See also Jac. Groenewegen, *Vrijmoedige en ernstige verdediging van het werk Gods te Nieuwkerk* (Gorinchem: T. Horneer, 1751); idem, *Antwoord aan den hoog eerwaarde heer Joan van de Honert (over Nijkerk)* (Gorinchem: T. Horneer, 1751).

¹¹⁰ G. Kuypers, *Derde brief van Gerardus Kuypers... aan den wydberoemden heer Joan van de Honert, T. H. S.* (Utrecht: J. H. Vonk van Lynden, N. van Vucht, 1751), see 'Aanhangzel', pp. 32-36.

¹¹¹ J. van den Honert, *Vierde antwoord van Joan. Van den Honert T. H. soon, professor en predikant te Leiden op den derden brief van Do. Gerardus Kuypers* (Leiden: S. Luchtmans en zoon; Amsterdam: A. Wor, 1751).

Woudrichem, puts up a defence. He had also experienced a revival in his hometown. Kennedy is also mentioned again: ‘Kennedy, who crumbled him [Van den Honert] into the ground, and his whole defence in all the particulars to his shame, he denies it by saying, *he understands no Dutch!*’¹¹²

To record once again the events of Nijkerk and the criticism of this revival work, Kuypers wrote his *Pleitgeding* [Plea] (1751) against Van den Honert. In this two-volume work, with a total of about 500 pages, he pulls out all the stops to prove that the Nijkerk revival, despite the unbiblical ‘side effects’, must be regarded as a work of God. Kennedy’s name appears in it repeatedly. But even after that, a few further pamphlets came from the printing press.¹¹³ After this exchange, Kennedy could no longer be silent. He dignified his views in his *Aenmerkingen* [Remarks] (1752).¹¹⁴

Kennedy’s defence of the revival in Nijkerk in ‘Aenmerkingen’

The pamphlet *Aenmerkingen* [Remarks] is addressed to ‘the ministers and Christians in the places where the Lord hath poured out his Spirit graciously and singularly, and revived his work.’ Kennedy indicates that he reluctantly responds to the ‘niggles’ of the Leiden professor, which, in his opinion, contain no sound biblical arguments for rejecting the work of God in Nijkerk and other places. ‘I dare say that my defence is irrefutable, and the professor seems to think so too, because he does not try to answer any argument contained therein.’¹¹⁵

The Rotterdam minister’s rebuttal is peppered with rather sharp remarks to the professor. It is understandable that he reacts in this way to Van den Honert’s unfounded critical tone. He accuses the professor of slander, and substantiates this with various examples from his pamphlets. Again Kennedy shows how the Lord through his Spirit also worked in Nijkerk and what the essential elements were. The professor apparently overlooks this and he knows nothing but to focus on additional

¹¹² Fr. Kuypers, *De saeke Godts verdedigt tegen de menschen of sogenoemde aenmerker op het getrouw verhaal en de apologie van Do. Gerardus Kuypers* (n.p., 1751).

¹¹³ G. Kuypers, *Pleitgeding van Gerardus Kuypers* (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leiden, Utrecht: G. Borstius, H. van Pelt and A. Douci, J. Hasebroek, J. H. Vonk van Lynden, N. van Vucht, 1751).

¹¹⁴ H. Kennedy, *Aenmerkingen dienende tot opheldering van de sterkte en genoegzaamheid der blykbaarheid voor een groot der werk der genade te Nieuwkerk, enz., waer in de beuselagtige berispingen van professor Van den Honert op eenige woorden of regelen van de Nederige verdediging enz. onderzocht en wederlegt worden* (translated by Willem Hoog and Jacobus de Koningh) (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt, A. Douci, 1752).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

symptoms.¹¹⁶ This is a very distorted picture. Kennedy wants to give a balanced value-judgment:

The things which were heard and seen by the witnesses of whom I speak: that a great number of careless sinners have now been awakened, and have become deeply convinced of their guilt and lost condition, of the great misery of their present state, and of the terrible wrath that hung upon them for it; and that variously, as far as they could judge, are savingly converted, willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30), filled with faith, peace and joy in believing, and with earnest desires to forsake wickedness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present evil world (Tim. 2:12).¹¹⁷

Kennedy refers also to a pamphlet written by Jacob Groenewegen, *Eer en leere van het synode van Dordrecht verdedigt* [Honour and doctrine of the Synod of Dordrecht defended] (1751), which gives ‘a very special and excellent description of the present condition of the church of Jesus Christ in Nieuwkerk [Nijkerk], and of the enlightenment and working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of many men there, as being a glorious work of God’s omnipotent grace.’¹¹⁸

Then he mentions six more witnesses as confirmation that the revivals in Nijkerk and many other places are a work of the Spirit. These are all men for whom the professor has respect. The first witness is the professor himself(!) who writes in his anonymous *Aenmerkingen*: ‘For I am very far from thinking that in such a numerous congregation not many souls are gained by word and spirit to the Lord’; then a ‘very revered teacher’, referred to by Van den Honert himself; then Theophilus Frisius, ‘an excellent judge’; then ‘Irenophilus’, ‘a gentleman who also praises the professor’; and fifthly, the professors at the University of Harderwijk, who had approved Kuypers’ *Geloofwaardig verhaal* [Faithful narrative]; then finally Rolandus, Kuypers’ colleague in Nijkerk.¹¹⁹

It is incomprehensible to Kennedy that the very learned professor rages against the revival work so much. He asks himself:

How can it be that this man is such a fierce enemy of the use of passions and affections in religious matters? One would have to think from his way

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 34-48.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

¹¹⁸ J. Groenewegen, *De eer en leer van de synode van Dordrecht verdedigt, in het leerstuk van des menschen blindheid van natuure en de noodzakelykheyd van het bovennatuurlyk ligt der wedergeboorte* (Gorinchem: T. Horneer, 1751); Kennedy, *Aenmerkingen*, p. 91.

¹¹⁹ Kennedy, *Aenmerkingen*, pp. 95-104.

of writing that religious duties, as cold as the mountains that are along the coast of Greenland, would be most beneficent to the Lord; which, however, I am assured, cannot be his feeling. If he were half as good a philosopher as some of his more learned colleagues are, he would see the passions to be of great use with regard to knowledge, to virtue, and to bliss.¹²⁰

Kennedy's revival review

Van den Honert did not respond in print to this statement. The flow of pamphlets concerning Nijkerk gradually dried up. Kennedy concluded his printed reports in English in 1752 with the work *A short account of the rise and continuing progress of a remarkable work of grace in the United Netherlands* mentioned above. The first report appeared in 1750, the second a year later; both records were merged with two letters dated 14th April and 4th July 1752. It is an evaluation of the revival after the peak was reached. Kennedy began his letter of 14th April as follows:

The subjects of the Lord's work at Nieuwkerk continue stedfast in the ways of the Lord. There has been a blessed harvest there this winter. Several persons, whose former convictions had worn off, have been made thoroughly willing in these days of power. Opposers themselves stand confounded at the universal external reformation of that town which is become an example of everything that is lovely and praise-worthy to all about them.¹²¹

The number of places involved in the revival work had expanded to villages between Dordrecht and Gorinchem, namely Papendrecht, Sliedrecht, Giessendam, and Hardinxveld. A movement had also started in Gorinchem, as well as in Woudrichem, where the Lord worked vigorously. Incidentally, the awakening phenomena also occurred in Zeeland, for example, in Wissekerke. In his letter of 4th July, Kennedy mentions other places where revival had occurred: Pernis, Schiedam, and Hoogvliet, all near Rotterdam. At the end of this letter to an anonymous relation in London, he gives an overview of some of his publications, several of which had been translated into Dutch.¹²²

An 'Appendix' to the *Historical Collections* by John Gillies, printed in Glasgow in 1761, includes several letters dated May 1754 'to a deacon of the Scots church of Rotterdam', living in Pernis. It is not known who this

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 106.

¹²¹ Kennedy, *A short account*, p. 27

¹²² Ibid., pp. 28-29.

deacon was. Cornelis Brem, who had many contacts with Great Britain, was elected deacon in 1756 (after the mentioned ‘appendix’ in Gillies’ book). It could be Jacobus de Koningh, who had been a deacon since 1741. The reports are about the revival in Pernis. The first letter was dated May 1754, the second 22nd May 1754.¹²³

IX. Last years of Kennedy’s life

In 1767, three years after Kennedy’s death, the second Dutch edition of *De leidinge des evangeliums tot sinners* [The dealings of the Gospel with sinners], discussed above, was published. Kennedy had delivered some of the sermons in 1747 on the occasion of the installation of Willem Karel Hendrik Friso van Oranje (Willem IV) as hereditary stadtholder of Holland and West Friesland. He dedicated his sermons to the stadtholder in the first Dutch edition of 1748. The date of this dedication was 12th March 1748. This shows how connected Kennedy felt to the Republic and the House of Orange.

During the years that he was a minister in Rotterdam, that is from 1737, he closely followed political developments as well as the ecclesiastical situation. In his commission to the stadtholder, he points to the significance of the stadtholder-king William III, who was king of the British Empire from 1689 until his death in 1702: ‘What century ever delivered a prince like William III? A prince begotten by heaven to live, as it were, and the soul of the liberty of Europe, the honour of the crowned heads in his time, and who will prove an enduring wonder in the ages to come.’ And further, ‘A prince who has delivered both these United Provinces and Great Britain from the papacy and from arbitrary power.’ In this way Kennedy also intended to confirm the bond between Scotland and the Republic.¹²⁴

Kennedy was gloomy about the spiritual situation in the Republic in his ‘Dedication’:

Never was less respect for the Lord Jesus Christ, His Spirit, justice, and grace, found among those who are called Christians, than at this day: and if the Lord do not graciously revive His work, it is most probable, that Christ will be lost from the Gospel.¹²⁵

He may have had to adjust this opinion during the revival in 1749. But the rapid end of this movement, after the sharp criticism that followed, was

¹²³ J. Gillies (H. Bonar, ed.), *Historical Collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the Gospel* (Kelso: J. Rutherford, 1845), pp. 496-499.

¹²⁴ Kennedy, *De leidinge des Evangeliums* (1748 edn), ‘Opdracht’; reprinted in 1767 edition.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

bound to disappoint him all the more for the future of the Church in the Netherlands. Perhaps his hopes for better times were rekindled when, in 1762, he was able to greet the English revivalist George Whitefield at his church. Whitefield has been to the United Provinces once. That was at Kennedy's invitation. He preached four times in the Scottish Church of Rotterdam. He spent about a month in the Republic (June) and also visited The Hague, Gouda, Haarlem, Leiden, and Amsterdam. History does not record the effect of his sermons.¹²⁶

Another visitor to the congregation, of a very different calibre from Whitefield, was Dr Alexander Carlyle. He was pastor of Inveresk, a man of the 'Enlightened' Scottish Moderates. His autobiography shows that he was a man of the world who cared little for a life of godliness. His impressions of his stay in the Netherlands in 1745 are interesting. His opinion of the two pastors of the Scottish Church was: 'Kennedy was popular, and pompous, and political, and an Irishman'; Enslie 'was a plain, sensible Scotchman, less sought after, but more respectable than his colleague'. Worth noting is his comment that Kennedy's wife had tuberculosis; she passed away the following year.¹²⁷

Kennedy remained well known in Scotland. He received several calls to congregations in his native country, such as to Dunfermline to be Ralph Erskine's successor and to Dalkeith. Because of his theological abilities, the University of Aberdeen awarded him the title of Doctor of Divinity in 1763.¹²⁸

He was on good terms with his colleagues, both from his own congregation and from the local Reformed Church. From 1737 to 1760, John Enslie was his closest colleague. He was succeeded by William Walker. Four years later, on 3rd November 1764, Kennedy died.¹²⁹ Enslie followed two years later. The minutes of the consistory give an *in memoriam* of Kennedy:

¹²⁶ For Whitefield's sojourn in the Republic, see A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The life and times of the great evangelist of the eighteenth-century revival* (2 vols., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1970–80), Vol. 2, p. 419; J. van den Berg and W. Stephen Gunter, *John Wesley and the Netherlands* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2002), p. 120; C. Brem (ed.), *Evangelische schatkamer of gemengde bijdragen* (4 vols., Rotterdam: N. Cornel, 1799–1802), Vol. 4, p. 17, note. Also of interest is Josias Smith's booklet on Whitefield and Katharine Collace: J. Smith, *De uitmuntende levenswyze en predikdienst van den zeer vermaarden evangelie-prediker en reiziger George Whitefield* (Rotterdam: H. van Pelt en A. Douci, 1751).

¹²⁷ A. Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr Alexander Carlyle* (2nd edn., Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1860), pp. 165, 177.

¹²⁸ Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, pp. 187, 191, 196.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 195–198.

Since our last meeting, it has pleased the Supreme Disposer of all events, to remove to Himself, on 3rd November, that eminent servant of the Lord, the Rev. Hugh Kennedy, faithful pastor of this church for seven and twenty years; whose memory will be ever dear and held in remembrance by many of this congregation; of the seals of whose ministry we doubt not there are many now in heaven, and some still remaining in this congregation, who will, we hope, through grace be His crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord.¹³⁰

The magazine *Boekzaal der geleerde waereld* [Bookroom of the learned world] of December 1764 devoted a few pages to Kennedy's passing. The writers praised him for his diligence and faithfulness in the congregation. 'From all who knew him intimately he has won an immortal fame and esteem'. He had 'excellent gifts, extensive learning, and was a diligent preacher.' He had wholeheartedly championed 'the doctrine of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus.' He departed this world 'with full confidence and faith, embracing that grace of God in Christ Jesus.' In recent weeks he had been preaching from Philippians 3:20, 21 and Job 14:14, expressing his desire to depart. On Sabbath 12th November, his colleague William Walker delivered a memorial sermon from Acts 20:36-38.¹³¹

Four of Kennedy's twelve children survived him: William was a professor of Greek at the University of Aberdeen; Walter managed a plantation in Suriname; Anne was married to Alexander Livingston, Provost of Aberdeen; and Beatrix was the wife of Captain Bradshaw who lived mainly in Antwerp.¹³²

Dr John Erskine of Edinburgh, who helped in the calling of a successor to the church in Rotterdam, had great respect for the deceased pastor. He recommended Archibald Smith of Fintry in Scotland as his successor, who accepted the call. Smith served the congregation for only a few years.¹³³

Kennedy as a 'trait d'union' [link] between Scottish and Dutch revivals

Where are the roots of Nijkerk's movement and what is Kennedy's place in this context? One Dutch historian, A. Eekhof, who expressed thoughts about Nijkerk's origins, lacked objectivity. He pointed to Scotland and to

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 197.

¹³¹ *Boekzaal der geleerde waereld*, December 1764, pp. 736-739.

¹³² Steven, *Scottish Church, Rotterdam*, p. 201.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 201-203.

Kennedy as introducing the revivals to the Republic with his reports on Cambuslang and Kilsyth. As proof, he cited a hostile letter writer:

The Scots are therefore the masters of Ds Kuypers. If Kuypers' endeavours are thus closely connected here with Scotland's revival, it is stated in so many words in the 'Letter from WRQ' that Kuypers borrowed his ideas from Scottish authors, and he is advised: 'First leave all those imagined findings which thou hast gathered from so many Scottish divines and placed under thy braincase.' And the writer WRQ continues: 'I see with sorrow, that though thou wilt be wise, thou art become foolish, and therefore untrained in many things, and therefore entangled in inexorable snares, by a heap of Scottish writers, to whom thou hast not hesitated to give faith, and to receive their authority and testimony, and who have caused you to preach things, by which 'a crowd is almost driven mad and dispersed', things which perhaps you yourselves do not believe.'¹³⁴

More positive in his assessment of Nijkerk was another historian, S. D. van Veen, who did not cite Kennedy and the Scottish movement as the roots of the Dutch revival.¹³⁵ J. Fekkes showed that Kuypers was aware of the movement in Scotland, opting for the hypothesis that Kuypers was attracted to the practical elaboration of Methodist preaching such as that of Whitefield. But 'knowing' and 'being influenced by' are two different things.¹³⁶

The manifestations of both movements were very similar. This also applies to the side-effects being criticised. In that respect, the opposition of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine can be compared to that of Dutch critics. But with the Scots critics, there was an important point that they mixed their opinion with that of their ecclesiastical point of view. The Dutchman Alexander Comrie kept a low profile; he did not condemn the revival, but he made no defence of it. He was aware that before his arrival in his church at Woubrugge there had also been a revival. He mentioned Nijkerk and Kennedy in connection with Van den Honert's criticism but made no judgment about the revival itself.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ A. Eekhof, 'Waar liggen de oorsprongen van de Nijkerksche Beroeringen?', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis*, Vol. 20 (1927), p. 297.

¹³⁵ S. D. van Veen, *Uit de vorige eeuw. Vier voorlezingen ter kenschetsing van het kerkelijk en godsdienstig leven in de 18^{de} eeuw* (Utrecht: C. H. E. Breijer, 1887), pp. 1-44.

¹³⁶ Fekkes, *Nieuwkerk, een lichtbaken op de Veluwe*, pp. 30-32.

¹³⁷ For the revival at Woubrugge in 1716, see A. G. Honig, *Alexander Comrie* (Utrecht: P. den Boer, 1892), p. 25; A. Comrie, N. Holtius, *Examen van het ontwerp van tolerantie, om de leere in de Dordrechtse synode anno 1619 vastgesteld* (Amsterdam: N. Byl, 1753–59), pp. xxx-xxxiii.

Theodorus Van der Groe, minister at Kralingen close to Rotterdam, focused his condemnation on the additional phenomena. He placed the arousal phenomena in the context of the Enlightenment. Thus, in his day, the extremes of ‘both dead letter-knowledge and blind shrine-worship seem to conspire more than ever.’¹³⁸

Position of Kennedy in the ecclesiastical Netherlands

Kennedy’s publications in response to the revival in Nijkerk show his great involvement in the spiritual well-being of the Netherlands. In this context we must also see his attempts to have Scottish devotional works translated into Dutch. He was on good terms with his fellow townsman Jan Ross (already mentioned), a Scottish translator who lived in Rotterdam, who had, among other things, the English sermons of the Erskine brothers translated and published by the Rotterdam publishers Van Pelt and Douci. As we saw above, Kennedy had contact with Alexander Comrie, who lived in Woubrugge. However, it is not known that they personally often met.

One question is, What was Kennedy’s attitude to the activities of Comrie and his colleague Nicolaas Holtius (1693–1773), minister at Koudekerk, who were seeking to erect a dam against the advancing spirit of the Enlightenment. Their conflict with the Leiden professors Van den Honert and Jan Jacob Schultens (1716–1778) comes to the fore. Comrie and Holtius mainly defended the doctrine established by the Synod of Dort and rejected any form of compromise with dissenters, such as supporters of the ‘systema’ of Saumur and the Remonstrants (Arminians). In an anonymously published series under the title of *Examen van het ontwerp van tolerantie* [Examination of the Scheme of Tolerance] (1753–1759), they strongly condemned the spirit of tolerance and deviations from the teachings of the three Confessions [the Three Forms of Unity].

The authors mainly focused on the Leiden professors mentioned. Comrie was deeply concerned about the theological climate of his day. The relevance of the confessions was made debatable by the ‘tolerants’, and that from the perspective of tolerance towards dissenters such as the Remonstrants. The emphasis among the Arminians on the act of faith as a means and not merely an instrument of justification had made Comrie and others shy about accentuating acts of faith. Comrie was especially apprehensive of a doctrine in which faith itself became a new condition. He

¹³⁸ T. Van der Groe, *Toetssteen der waare en valsche genade* (2 vols., Rotterdam: H. van Pelt and A. Douci, 1752–1753), Vol. 1, ‘Voorreden’.

saw similarities in this with the teachings of Baxter and the Neonomians.¹³⁹ Schultens and Van den Honert in their turn strongly condemned both Comrie's *Catechism* and the *Examen* [Examination]. Although the *Examen* was published anonymously, it soon became known that Comrie and Holtius were the authors.¹⁴⁰

It is not known whether Kennedy supported their struggle for orthodoxy. The question is what his theological position was in this conflict. Some light on this matter is given in a surviving letter from Kennedy to Schultens dated 30th January 1752.¹⁴¹ Kennedy indicates that he is fond of the professor. Schultens had kept aloof in the *Nijkerk* issue, unlike his colleague Van den Honert. But this letter is about another ecclesiastical matter, namely the case of Antonius van der Os. This preacher in Zwolle was suspended and after a lengthy procedure deposed because of alleged Remonstrant errors.¹⁴²

Schultens regarded Van der Os as an orthodox preacher who placed somewhat different accents than those who sought to bring the doctrine of the faith under the domain of election. There had to be room for a broader view of the scope of the universal atonement or hypothetical universalism, as taught by Moise Amyraut (1596–1664) of the Saumur school. Briefly, this view holds that Christ died for the whole world, but that only the elect are saved. Schultens felt that there should be room for this view. He was indignant that Comrie denounced the English theologian Philip Doddridge, who also held this broad view. This also applied to the attitude of Comrie and Holtius towards Van der Os. In his eyes, the Zwolle preacher was a gifted servant of the Word who preached to the foundation for the conversion of sinners.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ L. J. van Valen, 'Het geloofsbegrip in het kader van de heilsorde bij Alexander Comrie vergeleken met de leer van de Schotse Marrow-men', *DNR*, Vol. 45:2 (2021), pp. 140–164.

¹⁴⁰ According to J. van den Berg, Comrie and Holtius represented the anonymous 'Calvinian society': J. van den Berg, 'De "Calviniaanse sociëteit" en het kerkelijk leven in Nederland omstreeks het midden van de achttiende eeuw', *Nederlands archief voor de kerkgeschiedenis*, Vol. 63 (1983), pp. 205–218 (at p. 209).

¹⁴¹ Letter from H. Kennedy to J. J. Schultens, 30th January 1752, hs. BPL 127 AD2, bibliotheek Universiteit van Leiden.

¹⁴² For the Van der Os conflict, see J. van den Berg, *Een Leids pleidooi voor verdraagzaamheid. Het optreden van Jan Jacob Schultens in de zaak-Van der Os* (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1976); idem, 'De "Calviniaanse sociëteit" en het kerkelijk leven in Nederland omstreeks het midden van de achttiende eeuw'; E. G. E. van der Wall, 'De Verlichting in Nederland kritisch bekeken: Het 'Examen van het ontwerp van tolerantie' (1753–1759)', *DNR*, Vol. 27:1 (2003), pp. 1–17; R. A. Bosch, *Het conflict rond Antonius van der Os, predikant te Zwolle, 1748–1755* (academisch proefschrift Theologische academie Kampen, 1988).

¹⁴³ Bosch, *Het conflict rond Antonius van der Os*, pp. 120, 121.

In his letter to Schultens, Kennedy states unequivocally that he disapproves of the action taken by Comrie and Holtius in the Van der Os case. This is not directly about the teachings of the convicted Zwolse pastor, but about the way in which the two pastors had tried to cross swords. For example, Kennedy writes:

A very precarious time of this church seems to be commencing. *Judicium facultatis Leidensis longas post se consequentias tracturum cerno* [I see that the judgment of the Leiden faculty will have long-lasting consequences, LJV]. In all the main cities they are trying to do something about it. The ministry of The Hague is working on this, and also here. They keep it a great secret from me; but I have found out: The first project was to write a letter of thanksgiving to Holtius: but which has been denounced as trivial and beneath their dignity. Now they are deliberating strongly.¹⁴⁴

It is beyond the scope of our theme to go into detail about Van der Os's procedure. The letter referred to shows that Kennedy has great difficulty with the actions of Comrie and Holtius. He writes about the latter that he surreptitiously tried to make the men of the Leiden faculty suspect. He even mentions Comrie: '*Qui omnium, quos unquam novi, aut nosciturus sum, hominum imprudentissimus est* [He is the most imprudent of all the men I have ever known, LJV]'. From this it appears that Kennedy no longer had much regard for Comrie as a person. He found his controversial approach unacceptable.¹⁴⁵

It is now clear that as a reaction to the idea of tolerance, Comrie had modified his own emphasis. We speak in this connection of the *early* and *later* Comrie. This shift from emphasising a generous Gospel to a strongly predestinarian system has already been noted in several studies. It has also become apparent that Comrie's concept of faith and his view on the place of justification in the order of salvation differs from that of the Marrowmen. In addition, in his book on justification, Kennedy clearly distances himself from the exaggerated thesis of the immediate imputation of Christ's righteousness. It is true that Comrie wanted to make a positive contribution to the dissemination of the Marrow doctrine by publishing a translation of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* [Mergh des Evangeliums] (1757), but this is not apparent from his writings of

¹⁴⁴ Van den Berg, 'De "Calviniaanse sociëteit" en het kerkelijk leven in Nederland omstreeks het midden van de achttiende eeuw', pp. 215, 216; Letter from Kennedy to Schultens, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Kennedy to Schultens, p. 3. See also Bosch, *Het conflict rond Antonius van der Os*, pp. 125, 165; Van den Berg, *Een Leids pleidooi voor verdraagzaamheid*, p. 15.

justification, which were also controversial among men such as Jacob Groenewegen and Schultens.¹⁴⁶

X. Evaluation and conclusion

The Enlightenment church historians A. Ypey and I. J. Dermout give an evaluation of the Nijkerk movement in their four-volume *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche hervormde kerk* [History of the Dutch Reformed Church].¹⁴⁷ They strive for a balanced assessment of this revival, and praise Kuypers' modesty and sincerity. Kennedy is also mentioned and about him they write the following:

A year later, HUGH KENNEDY, a champion of the Scottish congregation in Rotterdam, appeared after and among many others as a valiant proponent of what happened in Nijkerk, in a writing made popular by the press, which because of the entertainment of its good style was read with pleasure by many. In all this, it was so arranged, that, though the author, in so far as the matter appeared to be defensible, was able to reason succinctly, he seldom betrays any obvious sign of his great embarrassment at the disturbances which accompanied it, to condone and to excuse.¹⁴⁸

This conclusion paints a one-sided picture of Kennedy's view of the movement. Partly because of the parallel with Cambuslang, he regarded Nijkerk as a work of God, although he did condemn the excesses. A few pages later, the two Enlightenment authors Ypey and Dermout admit that there were 'among them [the converts] those who feared God,' but moments before that they link the phenomena of the revival to 'those old ascetic mystical rudiments' of men like Schortinghuis and his *Innnige Christendom* [Devout Christianity], the experimentation of the *gezelschappen* [religious societies] now 'brought out again and more sickly than ever.'¹⁴⁹

Nijkerk's modern historiography contains passages about Kennedy that require some addition. Wim van Vlastuin, for example, reflects on the

¹⁴⁶ Van Valen, 'Het geloofsbegrip in het kader van de heilsorde bij Alexander Comrie vergeleken met de leer van de Schotse Marrow-men', pp. 140-164; Van Valen, 'Comrie and the *Mergh des Evangeliums* of Edward Fisher', pp. 146-161.

¹⁴⁷ A. Ypey and I. J. Dermout, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche hervormde kerk* (4 vols., Breda: F. B. Hollingerus Pijpers, 1819–27), Vol. 4, pp. 8-32.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 31, 28; W. Schortinghuis, *Het innige christendom tot overtuiging van onbegenadigde, bestiering en opwekkinge van begenadigde ziele, in deszelfs allerinnigste en wesentlikste deelen gestaltelik en bevindelik voorgesteld in t'zamenspraken* (1740). Critics attacked Schortinghuis, accusing him of promoting a false passivity by emphasizing 'five experiential steps' ('vijf nieten') as conditions for coming to Christ.

link between Northampton in New England, where Jonathan Edwards, as revival apologist, followed the course of the Great Awakening. When he heard from Nijkerk, 'he believes that Kennedy and other spiritual leaders in the Netherlands are not attentive enough to the carnal aspects in the revival.'¹⁵⁰ They would not see the dangers. When the New England movement peaked, Edwards became disappointed with the outcome. Kennedy opposed what he considered to be an unreasonable charge. His reports from Nijkerk show that he too was critical of the excesses. As a whole, however, he did not want to use the word 'enthusiasm'. Van Vlastuin rightly thinks it is unreasonable to apply this accusation to Kennedy. It therefore makes no sense that Edwards speaks about Kennedy and not about Kuypers. They had supported each other in their defence and occupied the same position. The Rotterdam clergyman made every effort to apply the test of God's Word when assessing the Dutch revival, as is apparent from his reports and comments on critics such as Van den Honert.¹⁵¹

Edwards' preaching was not directly characterized by a strong emphasis on the offer of grace. Van Vlastuin notes that 'Kuypers' preaching comes across as sweeter, more agreeable and more Christocentric than that of Edwards.' In that regard, too, Kuypers and Kennedy were in the same position. Kennedy's sermons are marked by the Marrow doctrine, in which predestination is not a dominant theme.¹⁵²

Peter van Roden claims that Kennedy used 'the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment – particularly its emphasis on the importance of experience as a source of new knowledge, its positive appreciation of the emotions and the body, and its reflection on the importance of witnesses to historical knowledge – for the defence of the possibility of revival'. We find no evidence for this proposition in the source mentioned by Van Roden, *Nederige verdediging van het werk des Heiligen Geestes* [Humble Defence of the Work of the Holy Ghost]. Kennedy, in my view, did not experience an Enlightenment influence to prove the truth of this statement. He was inspired by Scottish Pietistic spirituality and the accounts of the Cambuslang revival. However, Van Roden's claim is correct in that he places the events in Nijkerk in an 'extensive salvation-historical

¹⁵⁰ See also G. S. Claghorn (ed.), *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 16: Letters and Personal Writings* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 538, in letter to J. Erskine, 23rd November 1752, pp. 537-542; see also pp. 375-377.

¹⁵¹ W. van Vlastuin, 'Nijkerk en Northampton', in J. Spaans (ed.), *Een golf van beroering. De omstreden religieuze opwekking in Nederland in het midden van de achttiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), pp. 68-69, 76-78, 146-152.

¹⁵² Van Vlastuin, 'Nijkerk en Northampton', p. 71.

perspective', based on God's unfulfilled promises about the outpouring of God's spirit'. He was not alone in this. Edwards and the Scottish ministers involved at Cambuslang had the same expectation.¹⁵³

Kennedy's interest in the revivals in Scotland and the Netherlands must be placed in an international context. It appears that not only the English-speaking territories were involved in the revival work, but similar movements were taking place on the European continent during the same period. These were not marked by any Puritan piety, but had their own pietistic characteristics. Thus, the Herrnhut revival in Saxony clearly marked the work and theology of Von Zinzendorf. In other areas, such as Salzburg, Austria and Silesia, the influence of Lutheran Pietism was visible. Given the significance and impact of these movements, modern historiography which overemphasizes the influence of the Enlightenment should give more attention to these revivals.¹⁵⁴

Both Van den Honert and Van der Groe, as well as the Erskines in Scotland, had arguments to condemn the revival work because of blemishes and excesses. Kennedy did not ignore this, but instead pointed to the phenomena that tie in with a biblical conversion process. The critics mentioned have overemphasised the additional phenomena at the expense of the positive side of the revivals.

¹⁵³ P. van Roden, 'De communicatieve ruimtes van de Nijkerkse beroeringen', in Spaans, *Een golf van beroering*, pp. 149-150. For the eschatological aspects, see I. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), 'The eighteenth-century awakening: the hope revived', pp. 105-128.

¹⁵⁴ J. M. Yeager (ed.), *Early Evangelicalism: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 146-152. See, for the revivals on the continent, Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*.