

JOHN NELSON DARBY: HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY

THEOLOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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This study investigated the contributions of John Nelson Darby to selected institutions of contemporary theological higher education. A qualitative approach to the investigation was employed. Archival foraging occupied a greater part of the research data and yielded rich returns as evidenced in the literature review. Purposeful sampling was also utilized. The faculty and administration of three institutions, Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Emmaus Bible College, were mailed questionnaires comprising 22 questions to ascertain their opinions of Darby's contributions to their institutions. Of the 22 questions, 21 were of a Likert type scale offering 5 options: *Strongly agree*, *Agree*, *Not sure*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly disagree*; and 1 open-ended question. A response rate of 45% ( $N=27$ ) was achieved. All results were statistically significant at the  $p=.05$  level utilizing chi-square goodness-of-fit tests.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

John Nelson Darby (November 18, 1800 to April 29, 1882) was a nineteenth century itinerant preacher whose message took him through much of Europe, North America and the West Indies. An ordained priest in the Church of England, he became disenchanted with their practices, and subsequently joined a small group of dissenters in Plymouth England. Quickly distinguishing himself as the dominant force of the “Brethren who met at Plymouth,” Darby would become best known as the individual who systematized modern dispensationalism. An understanding of Darby’s dispensationalism however, requires an understanding of his hermeneutic. Dispensationalism, the product of a system of biblical hermeneutics, is based on a literal interpretation of scripture; it views God’s dealing with mankind as progressively occurring in stages or administrations. Also known for his emphasis on eschatology (theological doctrine of the end times), and ecclesiology (theological doctrine of the church), Darby’s Christian doctrines have had a profound influence on Christian higher education globally (Coad, 1968; Noel, 1936; Ried, 1875; Rowden, 1967).

Darby’s teachings, ubiquitous in his voluminous writings and through his many discourses, influenced some who would later prove instrumental in the founding of institutions of theological higher education. Philadelphia College of the Bible, Dallas Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, The Master’s Seminary, Chafer Theological Seminary, The Criswell College, and Emmaus Bible College—to mention only a few of the better known schools—all have theological roots in Darby. These Christian institutions of higher learning, whose students consist of both nationals and

internationals, annually confer degrees on thousands of graduates. Many subsequently perpetuate Darby's teachings in seminaries and churches across the United States and around the world. Missionaries, professors, clergymen and Christian authors spread his doctrines in many lands and in numerous other institutions of Christian higher education, thereby perpetuating his contributions in much of contemporary evangelical Christian thought.

### Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study involved an investigation into the hermeneutic of John Nelson Darby and eschatological thought in selected institutions of theological higher education.

### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study were to:

1. Discuss the hermeneutics of J. N. Darby
2. Discuss the relationships between J. N. Darby's hermeneutic and his eschatological teachings
3. Discuss the contributions of J. N. Darby to eschatological thought in selected contemporary theological institutions of higher education

### Research Questions

The research questions that directed the study were:

1. What was Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics?
2. What is the relationship between Darby's hermeneutic and his eschatological teaching?

3. What have been the contributions of J. N. Darby to biblical hermeneutics and eschatology in selected contemporary theological institutions of higher education?

### Significance of the Study

This study focused on the contributions of John Nelson Darby to contemporary eschatological thought in selected institutions of theological higher education. Although Darby continues to exert great influence on Christianity, particularly conservative evangelical Christianity, many conservative Christian leaders remain largely uninformed of their theological roots. There abides a great measure of oblivion to Darby's influence in their Christian beliefs and convictions. The research will apprise evangelical Christian leaders of Darby's teachings and it will serve to furnish some explanations for the reasons they adhere to the very doctrines they propagate. It will also provide the first major discussion on Darby's contribution to contemporary eschatological thought at selected American Bible colleges and seminaries.

There is also a paucity of determined effort to document Darby's contributions to higher education. A search of *ERIC* database containing the words, "John Nelson Darby AND Education" generated zero responses. Similar searches in *Dissertations Abstracts International* produced like impoverished return. *ATLA Religion Database* garnered no improvement in the results when searched. At the conclusion of this study these databases will respond positively to this search.

The 1636 founding of Harvard College had been based on the convictions of men such as the reverend John Harvard whose ambition it was to, "raise up literate and pious clergy" (Lucas, 1994, p. 104). So began the history of American Higher Education — to prepare an educated clergy. With the coming of the American Revolution, the

emergence of science, and the infamous Scopes trial, (Eaton, 1984; Fraser, 1999), America experienced a gradual erosion of faith-based learning largely in favor of science and empiricism. And although Christian higher education in American state universities have been relegated to elective courses, or to a marginalized department on campus, America maintains strong interest in faith-based learning. The number of private institutions of theological higher education in the United States attests to a thriving faith-based subculture. There are 900 religiously affiliated institutions of higher education in the United States. According to Andringa (2005), president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), "These 900 religiously affiliated campuses enroll more than two million students, employ upwards of 600,000 faculty and staff and have operating budgets of more than \$35 billion. They are located in every State" (CCCCU, 2005; Trowbridge, 2003). Darby's ideas, doubtlessly, have permeated many of these institutions.

The United States occupies a leading role in world politics and postulates itself as an established world power. It is significant that the American president is openly a man of faith who embraces strong evangelical convictions. Darby's views, more than likely, have influenced his thinking and decision making as well as that of some of his predecessors. Boyer (2003), visiting professor of history at the college of William and Mary argued in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, that dispensationalism is the most popular prophetic teaching formulated by 19<sup>th</sup> century British churchman John Darby. Academics, he warned, need to pay more attention to the role of religious belief in American public life. He expressed concern over the lack of attention given to the prophetic scenario embraced by millions.

With such influential ideas, the questions need to be raised, who then was Darby? What were his ideas, what are his contributions to higher education, and what are the implications of his seminal ideas?

## CHAPTER 2

### JOHN NELSON DARBY: HIS LIFE AND PROPHETIC BELIEFS

#### A Biographical Brief

##### *Family Background*

On November 18, 1800, John Nelson Darby was born in Westminster, London to Anne and John Darby (Goddard, 1948; Nebeker, 1997; Pickering, 1986; Sturgeon, Turner, 1986; Weremchuck, 1992). He was the youngest son of eight children. His mother Anne was the daughter of Samuel Vaughan of London, a wealthy merchant who owned plantations in America. His father, John Darby, also a wealthy merchant, owned businesses in London. The Darby family was an old family whose records trace back to the sixteenth century.

Young Darby was baptized fifteen weeks after his birth on March 3, 1801 at St. Margaret's Church in keeping with the rituals of the Church of England. One of his uncles, Admiral Sir Henry Darby, made a name for himself as captain of the ship *Bellerophon* in the battle of the Nile in 1798. The Admiral was a friend of Lord Nelson, commander of the British navy. Uncle Henry became the godfather of John Nelson Darby. On the occasion of his ablution, he received his middle name as a direct consequence of the Admiral's connection with Lord Nelson.

##### *Education*

Darby attended two schools. During his earliest years he attended the famous and respected Westminster school only the wealthy could afford. It was a public elementary school, located within walking distance from his home. All the Darby boys

received their earliest education there. The clergy-taught curriculum consisted largely of Latin and Greek with some English Composition included. Young Darby's career at Westminster, however, may be described as uneventful. Dr. Carey, schoolmaster during the time Darby attended, when questioned about him years later and even after he was well reputed for his pietism, merely stated that there was a lad named John Darby in the school at the time. According to Carey, there was nothing special about him as far as memory served (Turner, 1986).

After leaving Westminster, at age fifteen Darby matriculated at an Anglican institution, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, as a fellow commoner (Elmore, 1990; Turner 1986, Weremchuck, 1992). This meant that he came from a wealthy background, paid double fees and dined with the fellows. He specialized in classical studies and mathematics (Dixon, 1985). Although Stokes (1885) and Sturgeon (1957) have Darby meeting Rev. John Walker at Trinity College, Rowdon (1964) pointed out that, "He [Rev. John Walker] offered his resignation to the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, but instead of accepting his letter, the Provost expelled him on 9 October, 1804"—making it unlikely that the pair met (p. 77). Unlike his anonymity at Westminster, however, Darby distinguished himself at Trinity by graduating as a classical gold medalist—the highest award in his discipline (Turner, 1986; Rowdon, 1967).

Upon graduation from Trinity, Darby spent the succeeding three years preparing for the Irish Bar (Elmore, 1990; Pickering, 1986; Turner 1986, Weremchuck, 1992). At the completion of his law studies, he received his call to the Irish Chancery Bar on January 21, 1822. Darby was now a barrister. There were two courts of law in Ireland at the time. The Court of Equity staffed some of the finest legal minds. The Court of



Chancery was the final court of appeals; their personnel were culled from the Bishops of the Church. Sergeant Pennefather, Darby's brother-in-law, was the highest official in the Court of Equity (Dixon, 1985). Darby subsequently abandoned the legal profession in favor of spiritual pursuits (Dixon, 1985; Turner, 1986, Weremchuck, 1992). It is uncertain whether Darby ever actually practiced law. Goddard (1948) stated that he did not. Nevertheless, his decision disappointed many family members especially his father who disinherited him, and his brother-in-law, both of whom eagerly anticipated a promising and prestigious career for him in British law (Dixon, 1985; Weremchuck, 1992).

### *Spiritual Awakenings*

Darby's decision to relinquish his pursuit of the legal profession with its promise of prestige came as a result of his conversion to Christ. This life-altering, spiritual transaction occurred at age 21 in either 1820 or 1821. According to his own testimony, his conversion came about as a direct consequence of reading the Holy Scriptures alone, independent of any assistance from man. The impact of this personal decision was felt, not only in his career, but in virtually every area of his life.

In 1824 Darby decided to seek ordination to serve in Christian ministry and was eventually ordained deacon on August 7, 1825 by Bishop William Bissett in Ralph Cathedral. In the Anglican church, a deacon was ranked lowest among ordained clergy (Weremchuck, 1992).

His first assignment was as a curate (a clergyman in charge of a parish) of a large parish, Calary, in the mountains of County Wicklow, Ireland. Inhabited largely by

impoverished Roman Catholics, Calary was said to be a wild and uncultivated district. The novice deacon endeared himself to the poor with devoted abandon in stark contrast to the attitude and actions of the average clergyman of his time (Turner, 1986). Typical clergymen were not careful to dispense the teachings of God to the less fortunate. "At best they preached a soul numbing morality, and trafficked with the souls of men by receiving money for discharging the pastoral office where they did not so much as look on the faces of the people more than once a year" (Weremchuck, 1992, p. 40).

His dwelling may best be described as a peasant's hut located about a mile from the schoolhouse in which he conducted services. Every evening Darby made his rounds over the hills and across the district to serve the people of Calary. His diet consisted of whatever food was offered to him. His acceptance of their often indigestible gesture of kindness revealed his Christ-like concern for them. But that practice of non-refusal may have accounted for his meager frame. He spent his money building schools and giving to the needy (Weremchuck, 1992, p. 42). His benevolence was evident in every area of his life. As a result of his efforts, many Roman Catholics were converted to his teachings, at one time more than 500 in a week.

But even during this time of teaching and service, Darby's soul was not totally at peace. For seven years he mused upon the words of Psalm 88, and drew his solitary comfort from its opening line, "Oh Lord God of my salvation." When a year's service to the poor of Calary's Wicklow County drew to an end, on Sunday, February 19, 1826 deacon Darby became priest Darby. That day he was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Magee in Christ-Church Cathedral, Dublin Ireland. But even after the resumption of his duties in the mountains of Calary, the clergyman continued to grapple

with his lack of inner peace. In particular, he sought to reconcile his view of ecclesiology as described in *Acts* with established Roman Catholicism and state-governed Anglicanism.

While devoutly executing his priestly duties, one day Darby was violently thrown from his horse and crashed against a doorpost. The next three months were spent recuperating in Dublin at the home of his brother-in-law, Edward Pennefather. During his convalescence, Darby worked-out his inner turmoil and arrived at a measure of contentment. In a letter to professor Friedrich Tholuck, who taught theology in Halle, Germany, he confessed that after deep exercise of soul he was brought by grace to feel he could entirely trust the word of God alone (Darby, 1971; Weremchuck, 1992). This stood in sharp contrast to the alternative of trusting established religion as reified in the Anglican Church with its formal system connected to the state of England.



*Figure 1.* Portrait of John Nelson Darby.

Darby's return to his parish was met by the unsettling discovery that the Home Mission work was practically stymied due to a disturbing letter from Archbishop Magee.

The pastoral document required that the converts take an oath of allegiance to the king. To Darby this was the last thing the converts needed because the choice seemed between the king or the pope and not Christ. As a consequence, he protested the demands but to no avail. He composed a tract, *Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ*, and sent it privately to Archbishop Magee and the clergy in 1827 (Weremchuck, 1992). Darby's Martin Luther-like stance failed to achieve the desired result from the Archbishop; instead, the conversions of Catholics practically ceased. These events converged and ultimately resulted in what seemed inevitable—his break from the established Anglican Church. Like his 15<sup>th</sup> century counterpart, Martin Luther, Darby grappled with his scriptural conviction regarding his ecclesiastical position.

As much as Darby loved and cared for the poor of Calary's Wicklow County, he found it impossible to function under the yoke of unscriptural ecclesiastical leadership. "He had already for conscience sake given up one lucrative profession, and now abandoned another position of influence and dignity, as being, to him at any rate, untenable because unscriptural, and derogatory to the glory of Christ"(Turner, 1986, p. 17). But Darby was unconcerned with worldly position and status. "It was the unity of the Assembly of God, of those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, which forced me to leave the Anglican Church and prevented me from joining any other, Darby confessed"(Weremchuck, 1992, p. 63). Some years later Darby was questioned by his friend and protégé, who also edited his twenty four volume set of *Collected Writings*, clergyman Rev. James Kelly, about his reason for leaving the Church of England. His explanation was that he "failed to find such a Church in Scripture" (Turner, 1986, p.18).

### *A Movement Develops*

It was perhaps fortuitous that while contemplating his break from the Church of England, Darby found a small group of like-minded believers with whom he began to congregate. Led by Edward Cronin, an ex-Roman Catholic, the group included among others, J. G. Bellett, A. N. Groves, and Francis Hutchinson. They met in Hutchinson's home at Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, Ireland and subsequently formed the nucleus of a movement poised to make its mark on the world. By 1830, that small company of dissenters relocated to an auction room on Aungier Street due to growth in numbers (Turner, 1986; Weremchuck, 1992).

In 1831 Darby was invited to Plymouth, England by Benjamin Wills Newton whom he had met on a previous trip to Oxford, England (Neatby, 1902; Weremchuck, 1992). Before long a small company consisting of Darby, Newton, Wigram, and Captain Hall (a 26-year-old retired naval commander) began to “break bread” together. The term “break bread” or “breaking of bread” came to affectionately denote their primary meeting, which was the worship meeting—Communion. With no designated leader, the group agreed to meet at an appointed time each Sunday. To commence the meeting, one of the “brothers in the faith” would suggest a congregational hymn, offer a prayer of worship, or read from the Bible. After this pattern had continued and the agreed upon time had arrived, one of the men offered a prayer of thanks and started the communion by breaking a loaf of bread and sharing it among the group. A goblet containing wine was similarly passed around to the tiny congregation. It was from this group which gathered at Plymouth that the moniker Plymouth Brethren (PB) would eventually emerge to denote the conservative Christian group. As more and more dissenters

joined the assembly (a term preferred by PBs to refer to the local Church), many of whom were from among the middle class, the group grew to as many as seven hundred members strong. Speaking about the origins of the PBs, Bass (1960) observed that,

Whatever else may be said about the origins of the Plymouth Brethren movement, it cannot be stated that it started at a specific place or time. Attempts to trace its history can only begin with a series of independent groups meeting at various locations. . . . its growth was furthered by several early leaders: A. N. Groves, B. W. Newton, W. H. Dorman, E. Cronin, J. G. Bellett, S. P. Tregelles, and J. N. Darby.

The founder of Brethrenism as a system, however, was undeniably J. N. Darby, who became its energizing and guiding spirit. (p. 51)

Like most, unaware of their influence, Darby wasn't seeking to be the progenitor of a new movement. That came about as a result of his uncompromising positions on the doctrines of scripture.

Darby visited Bristol in 1832 where he met Henry Craik and George Müller. These men led congregations based on beliefs and principles mirroring that of the PB's. Believers at Plymouth shared a special bond with believers from Bristol and these two groups began to fellowship with each other (Weremchuck, 1992). Despite of this felicitous beginning, Darby and Müller eventually disbanded over this very issue of church fellowship (Sturgeon, 1957; Turner, 1986). This pattern of gathering to break bread spread throughout England and Ireland. Darby in particular, not unlike the first century's Apostle Paul, went on what may be considered missionary journeys, visiting budding churches to spiritually bolster their fledgling faith.

### *Prophecy Movement*

Accosted by feelings of angst brought on by the French Revolution and the actions of Napoleon, some 19<sup>th</sup> century Christians feared that Napoleon might be the

coming antichrist and developed renewed interest in biblical prophecy (Fuller, 1957; Stokes, 1885; Weremchuck, 1992). As a result, a spate of prophecy meetings sprang up to address their concerns.

Theodosia Anne Powerscourt (1800-1836), held prophetic meetings at her residence in Wicklow, Ireland (Reid, 1995; Weremchuck 1992). Known as Lady Powerscourt, she inherited the Powerscourt name through marriage to her deceased cousin's husband, Richard Wingfield, the fifth Viscount Powerscourt. A Viscount is a British title of nobility which ranks just above a baron and below an earl. Boasting a thousand years of history, Powerscourt Castle contains a hundred rooms and sits on one of Europe's great gardens. Both husband and wife were earnest Christians who had been influenced by Reverend Robert Daly, rector or spiritual overseer of Powerscourt. The Viscount Powerscourt died on August 9, 1823 after only fourteen months of being married (Weremchuck, 1992). Lady Powerscourt built a reputation for being "strong minded" coupled with tender feminine affections. Her regular attendance at the Albury Park prophetic conferences in Surrey, England, betrayed her interest in prophecy. These were hosted at the home of the well known banker and Parliament member, Henry Drummond. Impressed with those conferences, she started similar meetings at her mansion in Wicklow (Pickering, 1986; Weremchuck, 1992).

Darby was invited to these meetings by a mutual friend, the Reverend Robert Daly, and participated in the conferences. He advanced an eschatology that envisioned two distinct trajectories, one for Israel and one for the church. He suggested that the church's (Jews and Gentiles who are believers in Jesus Christ) current and future position was heavenly while national (ethnic) Israel's was earthly. He argued, "The

Church being the spouse of Christ, she has lost her earthly citizenship and acquired a heavenly one” (Kelly, 1972, 27:6, p. 46). Darby explained his view of the Christian’s position.

When I came to understand that I was united to Christ in heaven, and that, consequently, my place before God was represented by His own, I was forced to the conclusion that it was no longer a question with God of this wretched “I” which had wearied me during six or seven years, in the presence of the requirements of the law. It then became clear to me that the Church of God, as He considers it, was composed only of those who were so united to Christ, whereas Christendom, as seen externally, was really the world, and could not be considered as “the Church,” save as regards the responsibility attaching to the position which it professed to occupy—a very important thing in its place. At the same time, I saw that the Christian, having his place in Christ in heaven, has nothing to wait for save the coming of the Saviour, in order to be set, in fact, in the glory which is already his portion “in Christ.” (Darby, 1971, 3:298)

In a letter to one of the Editors of *Français*, a Catholic newspaper, dated sometime in 1878, Darby wrote, “That Jacob or Israel is elect for earth, scripture does teach; and that as a nation they will be blessed” (Darby, 1971, 2:440). These seminal ideas figured prominently in his discourses and likely found a hearing at the Powerscourt conferences. According to Weremchuck (1992), at the Powerscourt conferences, Darby emphasized the Lord’s coming for His own before a seven-year period of tribulation on earth.

Darby and Lady Powerscourt were engaged to be married but eventually dissolved the prenuptials in favor of propriety. The decision to discontinue the courtship was mutual as they agreed that it may be best that Darby have full freedom to serve in the ministry. Lady Powerscourt died at the relatively young age of 36, on December 30, 1836 (Weremchuck, 1992).



## *Expansion*

As Darby's ideas began to gain prominence, he commenced a vigorous itinerant preaching ministry throughout much of Ireland and England. His speeches covered a variety of themes which included evangelism (proselytizing), ecclesiology and eschatology. So thorough and developed were his ideas that Kelly later remarked, "Mr. Darby was, I think, the only one who saw the Church at all clearly in the early days" (Kelly, 1986). Kraus (1958) referred to a time when, not only Darby but, the men associated with the Brethren began to take their brand of theology on the road. "The great period of expansion for the Plymouth Brethren movement is dated from 1832 to 1875" (p. 46).

Besides the aforementioned travels, Darby ministered in Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, the West Indies, and New Zealand; also in Holland and Italy" (Pickering, 1986; Sturgeon, 1957).

## *North American Travels*

Darby made several trips to North America between 1862 and 1876 (Sandeem, 1970; Smith, 1956; Sturgeon, 1957). These visits facilitated the spread of Darby's ideas. Fuller (1957) emphasized the importance of Darby's personal appearance to the American continent when he said the spread of dispensationalism to America was greatly enhanced by the visits of Darby himself.

Although Smith (1956) wrote that Darby's first visit to North America was from July, 1862, Darby's letters in that month and year record his location in Bristol. His first correspondence from North America was from Toronto, Canada dated September 17,

1862 (Darby, 1971, p330). On his initial trip, the traveling minister stayed in North America until September, 1863, and went as far west as Chicago and St. Louis (Fuller, 1957; Smith, 1956).

His second North American trip, again to Canada, according to a letter dated December 9, 1864, may have lasted until August 5 of the following year when he left Quebec for England (Darby, 1971, pp. 394, 401-405; Smith, 1956). Sturgeon (1957, p. 39) incorrectly recorded this as August 6. During this trip, various cities both in Canada and the United States were visited where the preaching and teaching of the Bible proved his main occupation. Among them were Boston, New York, Toronto, and Quebec.

The third visit to the United States and Canada was from July 1866 to April 1868 (Darby, 1971, p. 490; Smith, 1956; Sturgeon, 1957). Lasting 21 months (Smith, 1957), Darby's travels included Toronto, New York, Milwaukee, Detroit and Chicago (Darby, 1971; Smith, 1956; Sturgeon, 1957).

A fourth trip to the North American continent, according to Smith (1956), may have lasted about two months in the summer of 1870.

Darby's fifth trans-Atlantic journey came in 1872 and lasted at least until April 1873 (Darby, 1971, II p. 212; Smith, 1956; Sturgeon, 1957). Some cities visited included Boston, St. Louis, Chicago, Montreal, and New York among others. There is some uncertainty regarding the dating of the sixth trip. Smith (1956) believed it occurred in 1873. Citing the measure of time it would take for Darby to make a return trip from England, Sturgeon (1957) suggested that Smith's reference to 1873 belonged to the

fifth trip. This suggestion seems tenable considering the modes of transportation available at the time.

The sixth trip, then, was in 1874. An initial letter dated September 7, 1874 (Darby 1971, II p. 305; Sturgeon, 1957) was written from Boston. Here Smith (1956) incorrectly listed a date of July 7, 1874 as the seventh journey. That visit seemed to be limited to the United States and covered cities from Maine to San Francisco (Sturgeon, 1957). Lasting just about a year, the last letter was dated August 1875 and was written from San Francisco. Cities covered along the way included Boston, New York, Concord, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, and San Francisco.

A final visit to North America saw Darby back in San Francisco. A letter dated June 9, 1867, provided the evidence of his whereabouts (Darby, 1971; Sturgeon, 1957). From there his custom of visiting many cities took him through Chicago, Hamilton, Toronto, Belleville, Detroit, Quebec, Boston, New York, ultimately climaxing in Ottawa with a letter dated June 4, 1877.

### *Darby's Publications*

As previously mentioned, Darby's voice was carried beyond the shores of England, Ireland and North America. Through his travels and writings his ideas found their way into the homes, pulpits, schools, and libraries around the globe. During his lifetime Darby amassed an astronomical body of literature originating from his own pen. One of his biographers, Turner (1986), said of his written work, "John Nelson Darby was a most voluminous and original writer of theological books and tracts" (p. 57). Another biographer, Weremchuck (1992), said, "The largest of Darby's published works is his

Collected Writings in thirty-four volume” (p. 164). In addition to these, Darby translated the Holy Scriptures in French, English and German. Weremchuck (1992) also stated that, “Darby knew ancient Latin, Hebrew, and Greek and modern French, German, and Italian“ (p. 163). To some, his use of these ancient biblical languages produced his best works. “Foremost amongst his works is his translation of the Holy Scriptures (an entirely free and independent rendering of the whole original text, using all known helps), into German and French, and of Greek into English” (Turner, 1986, p. 57).

Some of his other scribal exploits included a five volume commentary on the books of the Bible, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, a three volume work chronicling his *Letters*, a seven volume set entitled *Notes and Comments*, and five volumes now compiled into one volume of his *Notes and Jottings*. Added to all this Darby somehow found time to compose many hymns.

### *Departure*

John Nelson Darby died in Bournemouth, on April 29, 1882 of protracted illness (Pickering, 1986; Turner, 1986). In *John Nelson Darby: A Memorial*, is outlined the funeral service of the revered theologian. Therein is documented that he “was brought to Bournemouth some weeks before his death, to the house of Mr. Hammond, an ex-Clergyman of the Church of England.” A large following attended the burial, “from eight to ten hundred” participating in prayers, singing hymns (some written by Darby), and reading, with comment, the Scriptures. “There has been a large plain stone to mark the resting place of the richly-gifted servant of the Lord” displaying the caption:

JOHN NELSON DARBY  
"AS UNKNOWN AND WELL KNOWN."  
DEPARTED TO BE WITH CHRIST,  
29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1882.  
AGED 81  
2 COR. V. 21.  
Lord let me wait for thee alone,  
My life be only this,  
To serve Thee here on earth unknown,  
Then share Thy heavenly bliss.

J. N. D.



Figure 2. Tombstone of John Nelson Darby.

Darby's social, religious, familial and intellectual background all conspired to mold him into the pious, intellectual giant that eventually emerged. Like a sponge the impressionable youth imbibed the various views floating around his environment. With maturity he thoughtfully and meticulously fine-tuned these ideas, and after lengthy episodes of grappling with them he arrived at a measure of confidence in his beliefs. There was a decided shift in his life direction around the time of his riding accident. It appears that he worked out a gnawing question regarding the role of the church in society. The process by which he came to settle upon his conclusions about the church's role he applied to other areas of his bible study. This process produced doctrines for which he was willing to travel the world to propagate.

Darby and the Brethren exhibited courage born out of their convictions befitting martyrs. These men were really a grass roots, radical, revolutionary and renewal movement which emphasized a back-to-basics approach to the thought and practice of Christianity. They may be credited with reintroducing the non-denominational, house-church movement of the earliest Christians in the New Testament book of *Acts*. Today evangelical Christians around the world are returning to this concept of house-church some refer to as cell-groups.

An attempt at tracing the background and historicity of Darby's ideas holds the promise of shedding light upon the value of his contributions to theological higher education. Such a search may best commence with his method of interpretation.

### Hermeneutics

The English word "hermeneutics" is a derivative of the Greek word *hermēneia*

and means interpretation or explanation (Bromiley, 1985; Colin & Brown 1986, Zuck 1991). The term *hermēneia* is related to the name Hermes denoting the mythical Greek god. As the interpreter of the gods, Hermes was responsible for translating the language of the gods into a form conducive to human intellect. Colin & Brown (Vol.1, p. 59) say that hermeneutics is,

The science of the interpretation of written texts in accordance with scientifically formulated rules and principles. . . It involves the study of language, tradition, historical setting, intention, the original readers, the universe of discourse and the subject matter of the text. In its broadest sense hermeneutics can be understood as the methodological basis of the human sciences. Biblical hermeneutics has to do with the interpretation of biblical texts in the light of its various techniques and branches of → exegesis. Theological hermeneutics seeks to translate, interpret and make comprehensible the message of the bible in the contemporary situation.

Johnson (1990) concurs when he says that it is the science and art of *textual* interpretation. “As a science, it develops and uses principles of viable interpretation and as an art it develops a strategy for methodical study of the Bible in the use of the principles” (p. 309). Other Christian authors, agreeing with Johnson, designate meaning to the word “hermeneutics” as the science and art of Biblical interpretation (Ramm 1970, Tan 1974, Zuck 1991). Synthesizing these definitions, an *a priori* evaluation would render hermeneutics the systematic, methodical, and scientific approach to biblical interpretation.

Interpreters, irrespective of their awareness, employ some method of interpretation. The spectrum encompasses the most primitive to the most sophisticated methods which have been practiced for centuries.

## The Prevailing Method of Biblical Hermeneutics Preceding John Nelson Darby

The occasion of the returning Jews from the Babylonian exile to Jerusalem is generally cited as the origin of biblical hermeneutics; there, Ezra the scribe interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures to the Aramaic speaking congregation recorded in Nehemiah 8:1-8 (Pentecost 1964; Ramm, 1970; Tan, 1974; Zuck, 1991). Since then, various hermeneutical methods have been developed and propagated. At various stages during its evolution, a distinctive system of hermeneutics prevailed over less salient methods. Some were allegorical (seeking hidden meaning beyond the plain sense of the text), others were literal (the plain sense of the text including the historical context and grammatical layout of sentences), and still others employed dualism (an amalgamation of allegorical and literal methods). Contemporary methods retain detectable elements of its well documented history.

Prior to the Protestant Reformation, much of biblical interpretation could be characterized as allegorical. Notable exceptions included the literal approach, as employed by the Apostles, and dualism as practiced by Augustine (A.D. 354-430). The Antiochene school founded by Lucian (died A.D. 312) taught and practiced the literal method which produced alumni as late as Theodoret (A.D. 386-458) and John Wycliffe (A.D. 1330-1384) who also emphasized the literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of Scripture. Wycliffe is also credited with being the first English translator of the Bible (Ramm, 1970; Tan, 1974; Zuck, 1991). These were exceptions rather than the rule. The allegorical method was the prevailing method preceding the time of the Reformation.

Martin Luther's (A.D. 1483-1546) audacious move of nailing his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Chapel inaugurated the Protestant Reformation (A.D. 1517-



1650). This action was characterized by a return to, and insistence upon, the literal method of hermeneutics. The whole movement was a reformation primarily of hermeneutics before it burgeoned into the better known ecclesiastical reformation (Pentecost, 1964; Ramm, 1970).

The Post-Reformation era generally adopted the literal approach of the strong reformation period. However, in the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church countered the literal movement with an emphasis on creeds and church interpretation (Pentecost, 1964; Tan, 1974). The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cradled the rise of rationalism which advocated the sufficiency of the human intellect to discern between right and wrong. In this system, reason became the criterion for judging and interpreting scripture. This humanistic emphasis, which denied the historicity of miracles and supernatural occurrences in scripture, was termed the liberal approach to hermeneutics (Ramm, 1970; Zuck, 1991). By it, liberal interpreters sought natural means to explain the supernatural.

The hermeneutical climate into which Darby came was still under the spell of the previous century's liberal mindset. Biblical criticism became prominent and a rationalistic approach to biblical interpretation grew more and more pervasive. Scholars studied the bible for its historical value and held disdain toward supernatural events by its advocates. In contrast with these biblical critical adherents, however, many conservative scholars still practiced the literal method of interpretation (Tan, 1974; Zuck, 1991). The literal method had not been abandoned by followers of the reformation tradition.

## John Nelson Darby's Method of Biblical Hermeneutics<sup>1</sup>

Had these hermeneutical systems, prevalent in Darby's time, been found vying for his attention, the literal method would have been the one that secured it. Darby's increasingly conservative posture was evident and his sermons and scholarship betrayed as much. An evaluation of his writings reveals that he employed and defended the literal method while refuting the liberal and allegorical.

Darby believed that there are principles which guide the process of sound interpretation. Beginning with what he called "A Treatise on the Interpretation of Scripture," Darby advocated that to properly interpret, one must accept that "all Christians receive the Old and New Testaments as sacred writings" (Kelly, 1971, 9:2, p. 226). That statement also revealed his belief that the entirety of the Bible is inspired by God. Here again a reaction to the liberal denouncement of supernatural events in scripture occupied his attention. Even so, a quote from his letter to professor Tholuck confirms that Darby always held that view and it was not contrived merely to refute his critics. "During my solitude, conflicting thoughts increased; but much exercise of soul had the effect of causing the scriptures to gain complete ascendancy over me. I have always owned them to be the word of God" (Darby, 1971, 3:298).

Congruent with his insistence upon the inspiration of Scripture, his approach to interpreting the scriptures necessitated two indispensable criteria. One was human activity and the other was divine activity. While acknowledging human participation, he insisted on the critical, non-negotiable—divine guidance. To Darby, these two principles were fundamental assumptions of both the inspiration of scripture and interpretation of

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed study on Darby's Hermeneutical Methodology see Elmore's (1990). *A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Two Peoples of God in John Nelson Darby*. Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas

biblical passages. In his system, the interpreter understood biblical meaning when he considered the writer's grammatical context, historical setting, and supernatural occurrences. He also depended upon revelation from God which could be neither independent from, nor contrary to, scripture. Epiphany resulted from the fusion of cognitive labor and divine revelation. His collected writings edited by William Kelly, contain this discourse (1971, 2:9, p228).

It is quite true that in a human mind truth is modified by circumstances in its form, for we are feeble and hold the truth partially and mixed with error. The Christian says, Yes; and what a comfort, therefore, to have the truth itself, which, though taking a human form that it may apply to the human heart, and have a witness of originating where it professes to have originated, by leaving the stamp of the time and circumstances as to its form, is yet the truth of God Himself; and the channels of its communications so guarded, that I should have it pure and exactly as God meant me to have it!

Darby held that although the human element in inspiration and interpretation of scripture has limitations, God's contribution in originating and protecting it guaranteed its credibility. Perhaps Elmore (1990) best understood this principle in Darby,

God's part of the communication equation is accurate and certain. But to properly understand that communication, Darby maintained that man must take a position in grace; relying on the Lord's enablement, as he interprets God's message in the plain sense of the words written. Thus illumination of the Spirit and literal interpretation are foundational factors in Darby's hermeneutical methodology (p. 126).

Another hermeneutical principle espoused by Darby constitutes an observation of the grammatical sense. In refuting the notion that the interpretation of the Bible may be approached like any other book, he conceded, "No one denies that the structure of a sentence is to be sought. . ." (Kelly, 1971); but proceeded to clarify, ". . . it is impossible that language formed by man's ideas can be an adequate expression of God's" (p. 236). To him, a mere understanding of the grammatical layout of a Scriptural passage alone

was insufficient to complete the process of biblical interpretation, spiritual illumination was also needed. Goddard (1948) correctly noted this observation in Darby's hermeneutical approach.

Darby never divorces interpretation from illumination. He endorses and uses the laws of grammar, logic, etc., but is always conscious of the semantic problem and relies upon divine enabling to arrive at the divine idea transmitted in language which in the nature of the case is human. (p. 41)

This basic tenet of the literalist approach—the grammatical structure—occupies a fundamental position in Darby's hermeneutic.

Darby contended that individual Christians, not intermediaries, such as churches, priests, or pastors were qualified to act as the final arbiters regarding interpretation and appropriation of the Bible. His writings were replete with polemics aimed at refuting any sentiments to the contrary. A hypothetical anecdote illustrates this trait in Darby's system of hermeneutics (Kelly, 1971, 4, 20, p. 239-240).

If I send a letter of orders to my servants, he who steps in and takes the letter and does not allow it to reach directly and as my orders *to* them and *addressed* to them, is meddling not merely with the servants' rights (though, as regards the meddler, the servants being under the obligation to follow their master's orders, they had both a right and were bound to have themselves because they were responsible to act on them as so sent *to them*), but he is meddling with the master's rights and wisdom in sending it. It was sent to the servants, not to the meddler, and the servants are bound to take it; it was sent to them, and they are responsible. Now this is the place an interpreting clergy take. They meddle with God's rights, and impugn God's wisdom in sending these scriptures to the Christian people. They cannot take the responsibility of these servants; they cannot deny that the scriptures, all save a very small part, were addressed to the Christian (of old to the Jewish) *people* by the inspired persons ordained of God.

Recollections of his religious heritage and his eventual service with the Church of England may have combined to reinforce his displeasure with a system he eventually rejected.

## Dispensationalism

Ryrie (1995), a major voice for dispensationalism, describes a dispensation as “a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose” (p. 28). Chafer (1948), founding member of Dallas Theological Seminary, says the English word translated dispensation from its Greek counterpart primarily means stewardship, is a specific, divine economy and, a commitment from God to man of a responsibility to discharge that which God has appointed him. Scofield (1967) who is credited with popularizing dispensationalism via his ubiquitous *Scofield Reference Bible*, stated that, “a dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God” (p. 3). These definitions are neither comprehensive nor complete; however, they do contain the essential concepts that, when unpacked, present a fuller picture of the term. Scofield sensed this need when he explained,

Three important concepts are implied in this definition: (1) a *deposit* of divine revelation concerning God’s will, embodying what God requires of man as to his conduct; (2) man’s *stewardship* of this divine revelation, in which he is responsible to obey it; and (3) a *time-period*, often called an “age,” during which this divine revelation is dominant in the testing of man’s obedience to God.

Foraging through Darby’s writings intent on unearthing a definition of dispensation or dispensationalism failed to yield a comprehensive statement. And although there may be exceptions, he rarely set out to provide comprehensive definitions. However, he did write enough on the subject to enable piecing together his thoughts on dispensationalism. In one of his explanations, he used the words *economy* and *dispensation* interchangeably and stated, “*economy* means an order of things established by God: the *Jewish economy*, the *present economy*, etc.” (Kelly,

1972,1:289). The word dispensation, he said, “is generally used to specify a certain state of things, established by the authority of God, during a given period” (Kelly, 1972,1:169). Crutchfield may well have captured Darby’s idea of a dispensation in his attempt to summarize him when he wrote,

A dispensation, age, or economy, is any order, state or arrangement of things established by the authority of God, whereby He governs or administers the affairs of humankind during a given period of time on the basis of distinct principles which place humankind in a specific relation of responsibility to Him. (Crutchfield, 1985, p. 79)

A summary of these definitions indicates that dispensationalism may be understood as a theological doctrine which advocates the existence of distinct periods of time during which God holds man responsible to respond appropriately to the revelation he has been granted.

#### Antecedents to John Nelson Darby’s Dispensationalism

Although dispensationalism has been said to be recent, that is, that it began in the mid nineteenth century with Darby (Fuller, 1957; Ladd, 1952), rudiments of dispensational thinking can be detected in the writings of some as early as the church Fathers (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995). (The church Fathers were prominent theologians and church leaders during the time immediately following the era of the Apostles, usually after the first century).

Beginning with Justin Martyr (110-165) in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, it is evident that God used different emblems to represent His righteous standards during various time-frames. In his chapter titled “Unless the Scriptures be Understood through God’s Grace, God will not Appear to have Taught Always the Same Righteousness,” he saw

the times of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses as specific time-frames wherein God administered different programs during each era. Though he used the term dispensation to refer to the time in which he lived, he did not use it with reference to the aforementioned epochs (Roberts & Donaldson Eds., 1899, vol. 1).

In *Against Heresies*, Book 3, chapters 7 and 8, Irenaeus (130-200) compared the four Gospels with four primary covenants given to the human race: The first was under Adam up to the time of Noah, the second was during the time of Noah, the third was the giving of the law under Moses, and the fourth administration of God was the “summing up of all things” (Roberts & Donaldson Eds., 1899, vol. 2).

According to Coxe (1899), Clement of Alexandria (150-220) distinguished four dispensations: Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses (Roberts & Donaldson Eds., 1899, vol. 2).

Augustine (354-430) wrote about the abolition of the sacrificial system, which was instituted during the time of Moses and the law, since it was not “suitable.” He also argued that God knew better than humans what is appropriate for each age (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995).

According to Elhert (1944), Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus (386-458), was credited with saying that, “God dispenseth all things suitably to the particular time, and measureth his Institutions by the Abilities and Powers of Men” (p. 325).

Each of these men has made a case for the dividing up of administrations which saw God regulate generations according to the progressive revelation (revelation appended to succeeding generations) He afforded them.

Table 1

*Rudiments of Dispensational Thought in the Early Church Fathers*

Justin Martyr (110-165)	Irenaeus (130-200)	Clement of Alexandria (150-220)
Enoch	Adam	Adam
Noah	Noah	Noah
Abraham	Moses	Abraham
Moses	Summation	Moses

There were other such examples of primitive dispensational roots during that time. But it was after the Reformation that any significant dispensation-like schemes appeared (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995; Wiley, 1960). Elhert (1944) commented on the body of literature regarding dispensations from the Reformation to Darby.

This is the period during which the larger doctrine of ages and dispensations had its beginning and unfolding. By 1825 there was a considerable literature to be found on the subject, and the doctrine was well established as a theological concept. (p. 44)

The first example of dispensational schemes during this milieu may be that of William Gouge (1577–1653). Gouge was a fellow and lecturer at Cambridge, London, England and was considered the father of the London ministers. Borrowing from Augustine’s scheme, Gouge compiled his dispensation-like divisions thus: 1) Adam to Noah, 2) Noah to Abraham, 3) Abraham to David, 4) David to the captivity of Israel, 5) the captivity to Christ first coming, and 6) Christ first coming to the end of the world (Elhert, 1944; Gouge, 1866).

Pierre Poiret (1646–1719) a French mystic, and philosopher, in his *L’OEconomie Divine*, which was translated into a six volume, English work in 1713, committed each



volume to a particular economy (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995). The titles of each volume and the titles assigned each scheme, however did not always match. The six volumes were titled: 1) The Economy of the Creation, 2) The Economy of Sin, 3) The Economy of the Restoration before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, 4) The Economy of the Restoration after the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, 5) The Economy of the Co-operation of Man, with the Operation of God, and 6) The Economy of Universal Providence (Elhert, 1944). Poiret's dispensational scheme began with Infancy to the Deluge, followed by Childhood to Moses, next was Adolescence to the prophets (about the time of Solomon), after that came Youth to the coming of Christ, followed by Manhood to "some time after that," Old Age, "the time of man's decay" was next, and he ended with Renovation of all things—the Millennium (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995).

John Edwards (1639–1716) was an eminent English Calvinist who was educated at Cambridge and became scholar and fellow of the same institution. In 1699 he published two volumes entitled *A Compleat History or Survey of all the Dispensations* (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1995). His intricate scheme is outlined as follows:

- I Innocency and Felicity, or Adam created upright
- II Sin and Misery, Adam fallen
- III Reconciliation, or Adam recovered, from Adam's redemption to the end of the World, "The discovery of the blessed seed to Adam":
  - A. Patriarchal economy:
    - (1) Adamical, antediluvian
    - (2) Noachical
    - (3) Abrahamick
  - B. Mosaical
  - C. Gentile (concurrent with A and B)
  - D. Christian or Evangelical:
    - (1) Infancy, primitive period, past

- (2) Childhood, present period
- (3) Manhood, future (millennium)
- (4) Old age, from the loosing of Satan to the conflagration (Elhert, 1944).

Isaac Watts (1674–1748), better known among evangelicals as a hymn writer, was also a substantive theologian. He compiled six volumes of his collected works. He authored a forty-page essay entitled, “The Harmony of all the Religions Which God ever Prescribed to Men, and all his Dispensations towards them.” His dispensational scheme was outlined as follows:

- I. The Dispensation of Innocency, or, the Religion of Adam at first
- II. The Adamical Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, or the Religion of Adam after his Fall
- III. The Noachical Dispensation; or, the Religion of Noah
- IV. The Abrahamical Dispensation; or, the Religion of Abraham
- V. The Mosaical Dispensation; or, the Jewish Religion
- VI. The Christian Dispensation (Elhert, 1944; Ryrie, 1955)

All these were adapted to the conditions of the human race at these several periods; all, in regular succession, were mutually connected and rendered preparatory one to the other; and all were subservient to the design of saving the world, and promoting the perfection and happiness of its rational and moral inhabitants. (Watson, 1844, p. 309)

By the time Darby came along, there was much at his disposal from the preceding dispensation-like schemes. “There is no question that the Plymouth Brethren, of which John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was a leader, had much to do with the systematizing and promoting of dispensationalism” (Ryrie, 1995, p. 67). Huebner (1988), however, argued against the idea that Darby systematized dispensationalism.

This, then, illustrates what I mean by “age-ism,” the mistake at the root of looking for sorts of dispensational schemes (age-ism schemes actually) before J. N. Darby and then saying that he systematized dispensationalism. Age-ism is not the dispensational truth brought out through J. N. Darby . . . (p. 27)

Table 2

*Developmental Dispensational Schemes from the Reformation to Darby*

William Gouge 1577–1653	Pierre Poiret 1646-1719	John Edwards 1639-1716	Isaac Watts 1674-1748	J.N. Darby 1800-1882
Adam to Noah	Creation to Deluge (Infancy)	Innocency	Innocency	Paradisical State (to the Flood)
Noah to Abraham	Deluge to Moses (Childhood)	Adam fallen Antediluvian	Adamical (after the fall)	Noah
Abraham to David	Moses to Prophets (Adolescence)	Noahical	Noahical	Abraham
David to the captivity of Israel	Prophets to Christ (Youth)	Abrahamick	Abrahamical	Israel— Under law Under priesthood Under kings
Captivity to Christ first coming	Manhood and Old Age	Mosaical	Mosaical	Gentiles
Christ first coming to the end of the world	Renovation of All Things	Christian	Christian	Spirit
				Millennium

In Darby's dispensational scheme each successive dispensation failed in their moral responsibility toward God. "In every instance there was total and immediate failure as regarded man . . ." (Kelly, 1971, 1:125). His outline is as follows:

- I. The paradisiacal state (which he says "cannot properly be called a dispensation),"
- II. Noah (of which he says, "here dispensations, properly speaking, begin),"
- III. Abraham
- IV. Israel
  - A. Under the Law
  - B. Under the priesthood
  - C. Under the kings
- V. Gentiles
- VI. The Spirit
- VII. The Millennium (Kelly, 1972, 1:124-130).

#### The Logical Sequence between Hermeneutic and Dispensationalism

The proverbial, "which came first the chicken or the egg?" has been posed to theologians regarding the order and relationship of their doctrines and hermeneutics. With regard to Darby and his eschatology, there is a direct relationship between his hermeneutics and his dispensational scheme. Dispensationalism is a product of the literal method of hermeneutics (Elmore, 1990; Ryrie, 1995; Zuck, 1991). As such, if an individual consistently applies the principles of the literal method of biblical interpretation, that person will be a dispensationalist. Although it is possible for theologians and scholars to be influenced by a doctrine and subsequently embrace the hermeneutics that birthed it, ultimately the doctrine and the hermeneutics are one package with the hermeneutics producing the teaching and not vice versa. Ryrie (1995)

pointed to some basic tenets that are fundamental to proponents of literal hermeneutics. He argued from three ideological persuasions. Firstly, a philosophical reason for the existence of language itself requires literal interpretation. Language was given by God for communication. Since God is the originator of language and since His chief purpose was to convey His messages to humanity, then it must follow that He originated sufficient language to convey all that was in His heart to tell mankind. Furthermore, it must be that God expected people to understand language in its normal, plain and literal sense. Citing a biblical reason for his second explanation for literalists' adherence to this method, Ryrie argued that the already fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about Christ—His birth, life, crucifixion, burial, and His resurrection—have all been fulfilled literally. As a result, this augurs strongly for a literal fulfillment of unfulfilled prophecy. A third reason dispensationalist insist on a consistently literal approach to biblical interpretation is a logical one. If people fail to apply the plain, normal, literal method, all objectivity is lost. There would be no way to check the validity of innumerable interpretations.

Darby's hermeneutics naturally led to his dispensationalist conclusions. His own testimony of his position on prophetic interpretation necessitated the plain reading of the text. He said (Kelly, 1972, 2:30, p.178), "to understand prophecy one must understand what God says as He says it, just believing simply the things as they are said. It is because of not following this plain rule that people find so many difficulties." His prophetic conclusions supported this principle as well as found support from Ryrie's second reason dispensationalist practice the literal method. Having read *Isaiah 32*, for instance, he expected a future, literal, earthly, fulfillment.

In my retreat, the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Isaiah taught me clearly, on God's behalf, that there was still an economy to come, of His ordering; a state of things in no way established as yet. The consciousness of my union with Christ had given me the present heavenly portion of the glory, whereas this chapter clearly sets forth the corresponding earthly part. (Darby, 1971, 3:298-299)

The idea that there was "still an economy to come" is the language of dispensationalism. Darby's convictions about the future, earthly, fulfillment of *Isaiah* chapter 32, finds a suitable explanation in his literal approach to biblical interpretation.

### Premillennialism

The word *Millennium* is derived from two Latin words *Mille* (one thousand), and *annus* (year) that when joined means "one thousand years" (Lightner, 1997; Walvoord 2000). The twentieth chapter of *Revelation* describes a thousand year period of time when Christ will reign upon the earth. Premillennialism refers to the belief that Christ will return to the earth before the thousand year period mentioned in *Revelation* and He will in fact, commence the millennium epoch (Johnson, 1992). Darby, in writing about Christ's leadership in the millennium posits,

Now the true pre-millennial view is that God's purpose is to gather together all things in heaven and earth under one head, Christ. The church is the center after Christ of the heavenly system, the Jews of the earthly. The church is caught up, when He comes, to take her place with Him there, as are all raised saints with her; and then He comes with them to establish peace and blessings on the earth. (Kelly, 1971, 11:4, 334)

Other views on the millennium include the amillennium perspective (the belief that there will be no Millennium reign of Christ), the postmillennium position (the belief that Christ will return after Christianity triumphs around the world) and the non-literal or spiritual view (which denies a literal, bodily, personal return of Christ) (Lightner, 1997; Pentecost, 1964; Walvoord, 2000).

According to Walvoord, (2000) who for many years served as president of Dallas Theological Seminary, and who was a staunch defender of dispensationalism and premillennialism, “Premillennarians believe that Christ will reign on earth for a literal thousand years, in fulfillment of promises in the Old Testament that Christ will reign on David’s throne in Jerusalem” (p. 242). The premillennial view advocates that such time will be characterized by Christ’s righteous reign wherein universal peace pervades.

### The Logical Sequence between Hermeneutic and Premillennialism

“The antecedent to any discussion of the prophetic Scriptures and the doctrines of Eschatology is the establishment of the basic method of interpretation to be employed throughout” (Pentecost, 1964, p.2). “A widespread consensus suggests that there are two controlling hermeneutical principles at issue in the interpretation of the millennial kingdom. One is the literal interpretation of the Bible; the other is the analogy of faith” (Johnson, 1992, chap. 1). It has already been established that dispensationalism is a product of literal hermeneutics. Likewise “premillennialism depends upon a literal interpretation of prophecy, taking the words in their ordinary meaning” (Walvoord, 1976, p. 846). A similar disclosure revealed Darby’s commitment to such a method. Since premillennialism advocates that Christ would return to the earth with His saints, and subsequently inaugurate the millennial kingdom, this understanding requires a literal interpretation of Bible passages relative to the millennium. “Darby never failed to wed the illumination of the Spirit to the interpretation of the intended literal meaning of the text of Scripture. And he constantly affirmed that it was the intended literal meaning of the text which demanded a future for ethnic Israel” (Elmore,

1990, p. 140). Darby's insistence upon the literal method of interpretation is the only reasonable explanation for his premillennial stance. Rival millennial views such as post-millennialism and amillennialism admittedly adopt interpretational schemes which are less than loyal to the literal method in their approach to prophecy. Tan (1974) adds that the "Literal interpretation of millennial prophecies presents the hope of a future kingdom of Christ on the earth where peace, righteousness, and blessing will ensue as Satan is bound for a thousand years" (p. 352). J. Dwight Pentecost (1964) in responding to an opponent of Premillennialism, Oswald T. Allis, who admitted that, ". . . Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been yet fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this age," explained why various views on the millennium exist: "It is not too much to say that the issues dividing these four views can be solved only by settling the question concerning the method of interpretation to be employed" (pp. 372-373).

### The Rapture of the Church

The rapture of the Church refers to that event described as the snatching away of believers in Jesus Christ. The idea comes from biblical passages in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. The word *rapture* is derived from the Greek word *harpazo* used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and is translated 'caught up.' It is the catching up or translation of the church while it is being caught-up to the dwelling place promised in John 14:1-3 (Ryrie, 1983, 1999). According to Walvoord (1957), the Scriptures predict that the church will be raptured or "caught up" to heaven at the coming of the Lord for them. Walvoord (1988) also stated that, "The central theme of prophecy for believers



today is the 'catching up' of the church" (p.17). In describing the rapture, Darby considered it a crowning act for the believer. In his eschatological view, he distinguished the return or "coming" of Christ in the air for the church from His "appearing" to the earth to set up His millennial reign.

No doubt the saints will be manifested to give an account of themselves to God; but this is not separated from privilege, for they arrive there already like Himself. Yea, He has come Himself to fetch them there. This special association with Christ is made good, not by Christ's appearing, as we have seen (though manifested there), but by His coming to receive them to Himself where He is; His introducing them into His Father's house, and in the kingdom placing them in the heavenly seat of government with Himself. This is effectuated by His coming, and causing them, raised or changed, to come up to meet Him in the air. This is the rapture of the saints, preceding their and Christ's appearing: at that they appear with Him. So that at their rapture He has not appeared yet.

Such is the general doctrine of the rapture of the church—a doctrine of the last importance; because it is immediately connected with the relationship of the church to Christ, its entire separation from the world and its portion. It is the act which crowns its perfect justification. This rapture before the appearing of Christ is a matter of expressed revelation. . . . (Kelly 1971, 11:4, p. 155)

### Pretribulationism

Pretribulationism is the belief that the rapture of the church will occur before the great tribulation spoken of in *Revelation*. In chapter 7 verses 13 and 14 of that apocalyptic book, is described a period when the world will experience "great" tribulation. Advocates of pretribulationism contend that that time is still future and that true believers in Christ will not enter the period of great tribulation but will be taken out of the world prior to it, at the rapture event, which will in fact inaugurate the seven-year period of great tribulation. Walvoord (1957) citing a corresponding Bible passage in Daniel 9:27, posited,

The pretribulation interpretation regards the coming of the Lord and the translation of the church as preceding immediately the fulfillment of Daniel's

prophecy of a final seven-year period before the Second Advent. . . . At the translation, before the seven years, Christ will return to meet the church in the air; at the second advent, after the seven years, it is held that Christ will return with His Church from heaven to establish His millennial reign on earth. (p. 51)

Citing as a reason he and other premillennialist “widely” hold to pretribulationism, Walvoord pointed to the application of a literal interpretation. Due to Darby’s practice of literal hermeneutics he held to pretribulationism and is in fact credited, by some, with originating the concept (Walvoord, 1957). Here again, as he made his distinction between the Lord’s “coming” meaning rapture, and “appearing” signifying to the earth to inaugurate the millennial kingdom, Darby set forth his pretribulationist defense (Kelly, 1972).

But that this coming to receive us to Himself is not His appearing is still clearer, if we pay attention to Colossians 3, which shews [sic] that we are already with Him when He shall appear. “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” This identification of the Church’s hope and glory with Christ Himself is of the essence of the Church’s blessing. . . .but for this we must be caught up to meet Him, and that before He appears at all—when He does, we are already with Him and appear with Him. (11:233)

Much has been made about the origins of Darby’s views on the pretribulationist rapture. MacPherson (1975) attempted to show that Darby took those ideas from Margaret MacDonald (a young teenage girl who “prophesied” at a church during a meeting in Scotland) during one of his visits there. But Huebner (1988) and Ice (1990) have refuted MacPherson’s arguments showing them to be untenable. Other scholars, both friend and foe of pretribulationism, have agreed that MacPherson’s allegations are baseless. Scholars such as F. F. Bruce, long time associate of PB but who does not agree with the pretribulationist view, theologian Ernest R. Sandeen, historian Timothy P. Weber, and Posttribulationist William E. Bell have all found MacPherson’s work to be inconclusive. Darby’s pretribulationist scheme does not correspond to MacDonald’s

“prophecy” (Huebner, 1988; Ice, 1990; Weremchuck, 1992). Based on Darby’s literal hermeneutic, his views on Israel and the church, and his contemplative style of Bible study, it is not farfetched that he would arrive at his pretribulational conclusions through his study of Scripture.

### Eschatological Climate Preceding John Nelson Darby

Nothing seems to resurrect interest in prophecy as do major wars. As such, the late 18<sup>th</sup> century theologians’ fixation with the Apocalypse may be attributed to the French Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic wars. For many in that era, that interest amounted to variations on millenarian views (Fuller, 1957; Stokes, 1885; Weremchuck, 1992). A glance at the trajectory of eschatological developments from New Testament times to that of Darby reveals a cyclical shape.

Evidence from the first century supporting the idea that Christ will literally return to the earth may be found in passages such as Acts 1:11; 2 *Thessalonians* 3; and *Revelation* 20:2-7. Little room is left for doubt as Acts 1:11 for instance, records angels of God announcing, “this same Jesus. . . shall return in *like manner as you have seen Him* go into heaven.” It is safe to aver that Jesus and the apostles expected a premillennial, bodily return of Christ to planet earth (BeVier, 1955; McKinney, 1997).

This premillennial expectation lasted through the succeeding two centuries and accounts for the prevailing opinion of that time (Walvoord, 1976). “It is generally agreed that the view of the church for the centuries immediately following the Apostolic era was a premillennial understanding of the return of Christ” (Pentecost, 1964, p.373).

Antagonism toward premillennialism finally gained ascendancy during the times

of Constantine and Augustine with the fusion of Church and state. Lasting through the time of the Reformation, an amillennial position, based on Origen's allegorical method of interpretation, was adopted, and sustained the support of the Roman Catholic church (Allis, 1945; Pentecost, 1964; BeVier, 1955; Walvoord, 1976).

The Reformers themselves, because their foci were not on eschatology but on the questions of the sufficiency of Scripture and the priesthood of the believer, continued in the Augustinian tradition with amillennialism. Rowland (2002) observed that, "*Revelation* did not dominate the interpretative horizons of the principal magisterial reformers" (p. 161). Their literal hermeneutics however, began to swing the pendulum away from amillennialism toward postmillennialism (Pentecost 1964).

By the time Darby appeared on the scene, most theologians were premillennial. Alford (Greek Testament II, p. 350), referring to apocalyptic interpreters after the French Revolution argued that the majority, both in number, learning, and research, adopt the premillennial advent, following the plain and undeniable sense of the Bible. Nebeker (1997) concurred and added, "In the wake of events created by [the] French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, premillennialism experienced a major resurgence in Great Britain in the early 1820s" (p. 86). Sandeen (1970) argued for the origin of the modern revival of millenarianism to have been during the era of the French Revolution. A direct beneficiary of that millenarian melting-pot was the young Darby.

During his formative college years, Darby was surrounded by strong millenarian advocates whose prophetic interest was stirred up by the overshadowing angst of the French Revolution. Trinity College, Dublin, became the site of a theological "culture" of millenarian thought (Nebeker, 1977). Richard Graves (1763-1829), Regius Professor of

Divinity; Edward Hincks (1792-1866), a specialist in apologetics and ancient near eastern languages; and Thomas Elrington (1760-1835), Provost of Trinity College who had interest in biblical typology, all subscribed to some version of millenarian understanding and likely<sup>2</sup> influenced Darby (Elmore, 1990; Nebeker, 1997). Elmore (1990) came to the conclusion that, "Darby's Trinity College background cannot be discounted when analyzing his later doctrinal formulations. The atmosphere of millennial expectancy in which he trained certainly had its effect on his eschatology" (p. 74).

Darby later formulated his own brand of premillennial eschatology based on his literal hermeneutics. And as early as 1827 his premillennial views were already being disclosed as evidenced by a letter written in 1863. ". . . Christ coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new dispensation, from Isaiah 32 (more particularly the end); all this was when laid aside . . . in 1827" (Darby, 1971, 1:344).

#### Ministers of the Time Who Adopted John Nelson Darby's Ideas

The writings of the Brethren had a broad impact on evangelical Protestantism. This is especially true in the United States, where they influenced prominent ministers such as D.L. Moody, James Ingles, James Hall Brooks, A.J. Gordon, J.R. Graves, and C.I. Scofield (Blaising & Bock, 1993, p. 10).

James Hall Brooks (1830-1897) was a well known pastor, sought after Bible conference speaker as well as the president of the Niagara Bible Conference during its

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<sup>2</sup>For a detailed discussion on the Eschatological climate and the views of some professors who may have influenced Darby see Elmore's (1990). *A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Two Peoples of God in John Nelson Darby*. Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas. pp. 26-73.

existence until his death (Pettegrew, 1976). That Darby had encounters with James Hall Brooks is without question. According to Ironside (1985), Darby preached in Brooks' pulpit. Also we have Brooks' own testimony about hearing Darby. "Having often heard with great pleasure and profit Mr. Darby" (Huebner, 1998, 1:20). Due to Brooks' affiliation with the Niagara Conferences and his resultant dispensational beliefs, Darby's influence was certainly present in him (Blaising & Bock, 1993; Sandeen, 1970).

D. L. Moody has been recognized as one of America's great evangelist. So popular and influential was he it was said that nothing religious could occur in Chicago without his knowledge. During one of Darby's excursions through Chicago, the two met and exchanged views. And although their initial meeting was less than amenable, Moody nonetheless emerged outspoken about his appreciation for the Scriptural truths gleaned from Brethren authors. Apart from Darby, two people who were especially responsible for Moody's interest in Brethren theology were Harry Moorhouse, who preached an entire week on John 3:16, and C. H. Mackintosh, who popularized Darby's ideas through his writings. Moody was laudatory about Mackintosh's writings and exclaimed that he would rather part with his entire library except his Bible to acquire them (Crutchfield, 1992; Sandeen, 1970).

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921) was a lawyer, United States district attorney, a self confessed alcoholic and later pastor and author. His Christian conversion came through the challenge of a friend, Thomas S. McPheeters, who mustered the courage to ask him why he hadn't become a Christian. Scofield's reply that he didn't know how opened the door for McPheeters to take out his pocket *Testament* and lead him to faith in Jesus Christ (Trumbull, 1920). Scofield later met and

became the student of James Hall Brooks with whom he undertook a systematic study of the Bible (BeVier, 1960; Trumbull, 1920). In the summer of 1888, while on vacation at Niagara, he completed *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, a booklet outlining a method of Bible study. This first publication was published through the Plymouth Brethren publisher Loizeaux Brothers (BeVier, 1960; Cranfield, 1988; Trumbull, 1920). His greatest contribution, the *Scofield Reference Bible* is heavily dispensational, premillennial, and pretribulational. It is saturated with much of Darby and the Brethren's ideas.

Besides Brooks, two other men have been known to have significant influence upon Scofield and his theological views. These are Arno C. Gaebelein and Walter Scott. MacLeod (1996) has cogently made the case, that Walter Scott (1838-1933), both met Darby and adopted his dispensational scheme, Scofield subsequently gleaned from Scott's published works. As contemporaries writing around the same time, Scott's earliest work preceded that of Scofield's. In his *Scofield Reference Bible*, Scofield was gracious to acknowledge the contributions of Walter Scott.

There are many more ministers that Darby influenced with his theological views. This sampling of men who have sought to promote these ideas exhibit the weight that Darby's ideas commanded.

### How Darby-ism Came to the United States

Darby certainly viewed the American continent as a mission field that needed to be converted to God. In the twilight of his ministry he wrote, "I felt God, out of England, gave me the French speaking countries as a field of labour, perhaps America also, and

in fact this did not fail” (Darby, 1971, 3:164). He visited the North American continent seven times during the latter third of the nineteenth century (Sandeem, 1970; Smith, 1956; Sturgeon, 1957). But prior to his maiden voyage in 1862, Darby-ism preceded him due to publications emanating from Brethren writers, Darby himself being the preeminent scribe and spokesperson. Even Fuller (1957), who is no friend of Darby-ism, acknowledged, “. . . this influence of the Plymouth Brethren was also furthered by the prolific writings of their authors” ( p. 69). Beside Brethren literature, there has been evidence of a Brethren presence predating Darby’s arrival (Sandeem, 1970). Darby himself, in a letter during one of his trips, thought that “brother E. . . may be, viewing it as a whole, considered the founder of the work in Canada” (Darby, 1971, 1:335).

But it was Darby more than any other who, through his own efforts, proved most responsible for spreading Darbyism in the United States. Again Fuller (1957) admitted that “the spread of Dispensationalism to America was greatly enhanced by the visits of Darby himself” (p. 68). “As a result of Darby’s several trips to the Unites States shortly after the Civil War, many American clergyman accepted his seemingly novel views” (Hannah, 1988, p. 31).



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Design

The purpose of this study was to discuss the contributions of John Nelson Darby to contemporary theological institutions of higher education. The research method employed may best be described as historical research into the contributions of John Nelson Darby to contemporary theological higher education in America. Attempts have been made to provide insights into the life and theological beliefs of John Nelson Darby within the context of theological higher education in the United States.

Historical research is a common form of qualitative research. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), “historical research is the systematic collection and evaluation of data related to past occurrences for the purpose of describing causes, effects, or trends of those events. It helps to explain current events and to anticipate future ones” (p. 226).

The historical method unfolds in four broad steps:

1. Definition of a problem or selection of a topic
2. Data collection or searching for historical sources
3. Data analysis to determine internal and external criticism or evaluation of historical sources for authenticity and accuracy
4. Data synthesis into meaningful chronological and thematic patterns (Gay and Airasian, 2000; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003)

The current study has adopted this fourfold process.

The primary sources for this study included archival documents and related literature. Primary sources constitute firsthand information, such as original documents and reports from eye-witness observation. The term “literature” takes on a broad

meaning in historical research and includes various modes of communications, such as tape recordings, movies, photographs, documents, oral history, books, pamphlets, and journal articles, to mention only a few (Gay and Airasian, 2000). Where it was impossible to locate primary sources, secondary sources were used. Secondary sources refer to secondhand documents generated by someone not historically present at the event.

All research methods are imperfect. Historical research is no exception and presents its own set of opportunities for error peculiar to its nature. Researchers are thus compelled to critically analyze their sources and findings to minimize this abysmal threat to objectivity. Consequently, all sources of data were scrutinized using internal and external criticism. Internal criticism in historical research is the evaluation of accuracy and value of statements contained in a historical document. Its counterpart, external criticism, refers to the process of determining the authenticity of the claims of a historical document's origin (Gall, Gall & Borg 2003). The research employed the use of triangulation to determine both the accuracy and the authenticity of sources. Triangulation is used in qualitative research as a method of cross-checking sources, methods and theories to bolster the likelihood of accuracy and authenticity.

### Limitations

Every research method has limitations. The qualitative nature of historical research, even with the application of the most rigorous standards, renders it "perspectival," interpretative and subjective. Written and oral sources, both primary and secondary, were presented according to the perspectives of the research participants.

Their firsthand and secondhand accounts represented their interpretations of events. As the primary research instrument, I analyzed, synthesized, interpreted and reported these data. And even though I made every effort to maintain the highest possible levels of objectivity, the limitations peculiar to historical research remains a reality.

A preliminary search of *ERIC* database, *ATLA Religion database*, and *Dissertation Abstracts International* yielded no return of documented research on “John Nelson Darby and education.” This presented a limitation of resources to examine comparative data on the subject.

Distance created due to the passage of time and the unavailability of the late John Nelson Darby as a primary object of study, presented limitations for this study.

#### Delimitations

Although Darby’s contribution to higher education involve other areas of theology, this research study focused on his contribution to theological higher education in two areas, VIZ. hermeneutics and eschatology. Similarly, there are theological institutions around the world, which advocates Darby’s ideas; however, only selected American institutions of theological higher education VIZ. Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Emmaus Bible College, were studied.

#### Procedures for Collecting Data

I visited secular and religious libraries in search of related literature. Archives, book stacks, and electronic resources such as dissertation abstracts, ERIC, WorldCat, EBSCOhost and the World Wide Web were all sources foraged.

Approval was granted by the University of North Texas' (UNT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for investigation involving the use of human subjects. A mailing packet was sent to 60 faculty and administrators of three institutions of theological higher education. The package contained a cover letter (Appendix A), a survey on Darby's contribution to theological higher education (Appendix B) and a postage-paid-return-envelope. Three American institutions of theological higher education, which advocates Darby's ideas, were investigated. Each institution represented a different institutional culture with varied mission statements. Moody Bible Institute, Emmaus Bible College, and Dallas Theological Seminary all teach and promote Darby's doctrines although they state their educational missions differently.

I did not opt for a randomized sample of participants as practiced in experimental designs. Randomization would not ensure identification of suitable cases needed to understand John Nelson Darby's contributions to theological higher education. Instead, a purposeful sample, an approach more benign to the goals of qualitative research, was employed. In purposeful sampling participants are selected because they are likely to be information rich (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Gay & Airasian, 2000; Merriam, 1988). Moody Bible Institute furnished the opportunity to sample a comprehensive theological higher education institution with undergraduate and graduate programs. Dallas Theological Seminary, on the other hand, afforded the opportunity to petition faculty and administration of a conservative graduate theological higher education institution offering masters and doctoral programs. Emmaus Bible College provided yet another look with the opportunity to survey faculty and administration of an undergraduate theological higher education institution. These institutions are well known in

conservative evangelical educational circles for their dispensational position. Emmaus Bible College in particular was founded as the Plymouth Brethren's contribution to theological training.

## CHAPTER 4

### JOHN NELSON DARBY: HIS EDUCATIONAL LEGACY

#### Schools in America which Developed around Darby's Views

Much of the discussion surrounding Bible colleges and Bible institutes in America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occurred in the context of fundamentalism. Brereton (1981), citing partisan tendencies, lamented the failed attempts of sociologists and historians at producing a satisfying definition of fundamentalism. Sandeen (1970) in his introduction finds much of fundamentalism's antecedents in Darby suggesting synonymous ideas and notions found within the millenarian movement. "The millenarian movement was strongly marked by this British tradition, and much of the thought and attitudes of those who are known as fundamentalists can be seen mirrored in the teachings of this man [John Nelson Darby]" (p. 19). Although, fundamentalism is too broad a concept to be considered a synonym for millenarianism, the two are so closely related that they were often used interchangeably. Pentecost (1964), using another synonym had this to say,

The Biblical studies promoted by Darby and his followers popularized the premillennial interpretation of Scriptures. It has been disseminated through the growing Bible conference movement, the Bible institute movement, many periodicals devoted to Bible study, and is closely associated with the whole conservative theological movement in our country today. (p. 391)

Pentecost's term, the "conservative theological movement," mirrors that of Sandeen's in intent and use and credits Darby and his followers for considerable stake in it.

Since the literature on Bible colleges and Bible institutes during this era reflect Darby-ite roots, fundamentalism contains strong Darby-ite strains which were largely adopted and disseminated through the Niagara conferences.

The American Bible college movement was born out of a pressing need to train missionaries, and to combat the influx of liberal thought being introduced to existing schools. This became necessary in the eyes of its founders since there developed in American higher education a departure from first principles. These sentiments from Rudolph (1990) were typical of the colonial college, “. . . the Englishmen of early Massachusetts . . . found themselves a college, an English college such as those they had known at Oxford but particularly at Cambridge where Puritan theology and Puritan aspiration had been especially nurtured” ( p. 4). Although Rudolph (1990) went on to emphasize what he thought had more to do with education than with “narrow religious purpose” (p.7), it is evident that the purpose of the Bible college movement was reminiscent of the beginnings of the colonial college. The rise of science with its empiricism concomitant to the American Revolution drove a wedge between faith and reason. McKinney (1997) explains,

The Bible College movement to which fundamentalism has been said to owe its existence, emerged in the last two decades of the nineteenth century as a protest to the inroads of secularization in higher education and as a base for the education of lay workers and full-time Bible teachers, evangelists, and pastors. (p. 65)

Burtchaell (1998) in his seminal study, *The Dying of the Light: the Disengagement of Colleges & Universities from their Christian Churches*, conducted what may best be described as institutional autopsies on Christian colleges and universities that disengaged themselves from their founders' original vision and mission. Throughout his report there emerged a pattern of secularization due, in part, to the institutions' desire to become like their secular counterparts. This deterioration of the Christian witness in traditional schools of American higher education created a gaping

need for biblical training. Darby and the bible college movement paved the way to fill that need. As a natural consequence, their brand of theology proved part and parcel of the germinating movement.

Blaising & Bock (1993) listed theological higher education institutions in the United States that “have become well known for teaching dispensationalism” (p. 12). They include among many others, Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary, Northwestern College, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (now Western Seminary), Denver Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Moody Bible Institute, Biola University which includes the Talbot School of Theology, Philadelphia College of the Bible, Dallas Theological Seminary (these last two being direct products of the Bible Conference Movement), Multnomah Bible College/Biblical Seminary, and William Tyndale College. Each of these institutions has had some Darby-ite influence, whether directly or indirectly, due to their affiliation with dispensationalism.

### *Moody Bible Institute*

Moody Bible Institute stands among the most recognizable of higher education institutions to have strong dispensational and pre-millennial orientation from its inception. Founded by Moody himself, it stood as a beacon of fundamentalism (Brereton, 1981). Moody was said to have looked for “gap-men,” which were lay Christian workers who were trained in the ministry but not overly educated (Brereton, 1981). Although Moody was not particularly dispensationalist nor was he an outspoken pre-millennialist, the institute later to bear his name reflected those beliefs. Article V of



the institution's doctrinal statement, the signing of which is a criterion for admission, is reproduced here in part.

#### Article V

The Church is an elect company of believers baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body; its mission is to witness concerning its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the gospel among all nations; it will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ere He appears to set up His kingdom . . .

The Church of Jesus Christ is a distinct entity from Israel in the ongoing program of God. Further, this universal Church consists of all who possess saving faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church and which will represent every language, people and nation. (Moody Bible Institute)

#### *Dallas Theological Seminary*

Dallas Theological Seminary, formerly Evangelical Theological College, has been called, “an academic and ideological ‘Vatican,’” and “the most important training ground for dispensational teachers and pastors” (Weber, 1983, p. 238). The express purpose of which was to prepare men in the exposition of the Scriptures. Hannah (1988) touches upon some of the reasons the founders established the institution. He then quoted Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, who may be forgiven for speaking in glowing terms of the lasting effects of the Niagara conferences and their connection to the then theological college:

In the establishment of a school that emphasized the preparation of communicators of the Bible, the founders were reacting against the encroachment of liberalism in the churches; more importantly, they were seeking to perpetuate the ideals of the Bible conference speakers of the previous generation.

Though in one particular instance Chafer referred to James Hall Brooks, a St. Louis pastor and prominent leader in the Niagara Bible conferences, he could have said the

same of John Nelson Darby or of George Needham.

I believe you had the privilege of setting [sic] under the ministry of Dr. Jas. [sic] H. Brooks, of sainted memory, and that privilege is one you doubtless prize. Down through the past generations, here and there, there have been ministers like Dr. Brooks who had the insufficient, standardized theological training, but who afterwards took up definite study for themselves and thereby came into an entirely unique position and into possession of a field of spiritual truth and understanding far beyond other ministers. In the last generation these men have been properly called our Bible teachers, whether in England or Canada, or the United States. Our Dallas college is founded by the best of these men in America who have the conviction that the kind of training they had to gain by personal and private study could be offered in regular classroom form. (pp. 168-170)

Here again a reproduction, in part, of Dallas Theological Seminary's doctrinal statement— to which all faculty must agree— may serve to illustrate the enduring attachments to the views of Darby and the fundamentalist movement.

#### Article XIX

We believe that the translation of the church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:1-19:21) during which the church, the body of Christ, will be in heaven. The whole period of Israel's seventieth week will be a time of judgment on the whole earth, at the end of which the times of the Gentiles will be brought to a close. The latter half of this period will be the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), which our Lord called the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21). We believe that universal righteousness will not be realized previous to the second coming of Christ, but that the world is day by day ripening for judgment and that the age will end with a fearful apostasy.

#### Article XX

We believe that the period of great tribulation in the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He went, in person on the clouds of heaven, and with power and great glory to introduce the millennial age, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, to restore Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of God's covenant promises, and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11-9; Ezek. 37:21-28; Matt. 24:15-25:46; Acts 15:16-17; Rom. 8:19-23; 11:25-27; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 20:1-3) (*We Believe: The Doctrinal Statement of Dallas Theological Seminary*, n.d.).

## *Emmaus Bible College*

Emmaus Bible College is the theological higher education institution most directly related to the Plymouth Brethren movement. Its founders, Ed Harlow, John Smart, and Ernie Tatham, responded to what “was a strong sense of need for a Bible-teaching ministry among the Christian Brethren Assemblies that would be more intensive and extensive than most local churches could offer” (Smith, 2002, 99-100). Smith (2002) also stated “the ministries of Emmaus reflect a biblical-theological position within mainline conservative, evangelical Christian ministries and an open commitment to a clear premillennial position eschatologically” (pp. 98-99). The concluding paragraph of Emmaus’ Statement of Faith mirrors, in broad terms, Darby-ite eschatological views.

The personal imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ to translate His church will be followed by the Tribulation and the inauguration of Christ’s reign over the earth; He will then deliver up the Kingdom to God, the Father, that the Triune God may be all in all. (Smith, 2002, p.103)

### Contributions of John Nelson Darby to Contemporary Theological Higher Education

The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain the contributions of John Nelson Darby to contemporary theological higher education. An initial pilot study consisting of Dallas Theological Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School alumni who were professors at other institutions was conducted to test the survey instrument and a small sample of the population. Ten surveys were emailed with instructions to answer the questions as if they were at their alma mater, and to offer critique of the survey instrument. Of the 10 surveys emailed, 4 respondents completed the questionnaires with their suggestions and returned them as part of the pilot study. After

the suggested changes were implemented, a mailed questionnaire was sent to three theological higher education institutions to garner relevant data from among 60 members of their faculty and administration. Representing a response rate of 45%, twenty-seven usable questionnaires were returned ( $N=27$ ).

In this section is presented the findings of the research questions listed in the first chapter and restated here.

Research Question 1: What was Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics?

Much of the findings to this question appeared in the literature review. An evaluation of Darby's writings reveals that he employed and defended the literal method while refuting the liberal and allegorical.

Darby believed that there were principles which guide the process of sound interpretation. Beginning with what he called "A Treatise on the Interpretation of Scripture," Darby advocated that to properly interpret, one must accept that "all Christians receive the Old and New Testaments as sacred writings" (Kelly, 1971, 9:2, p. 226). That statement also revealed his belief that the entirety of the Bible is inspired by God. Here again a reaction to the liberal denouncement of supernatural events in scripture occupied his attention. Even so, a quote from his letter to professor Tholuck confirms that Darby always held that view and it was not contrived merely to refute his critics. "During my solitude, conflicting thoughts increased; but much exercise of soul had the effect of causing the scriptures to gain complete ascendancy over me. I have always owned them to be the word of God" (Darby, 1971 3:298).

Congruent with his insistence upon the inspiration of Scripture, his approach to

interpreting the scriptures necessitated two indispensable criteria. One was human activity and the other was divine activity. While acknowledging human participation, he insisted on the critical, non-negotiable—divine guidance. To Darby, these two principles were fundamental assumptions of both the inspiration of scripture and interpretation of biblical passages. In his system, the interpreter understood biblical meaning when he considered the writer's grammatical context, historical setting, and supernatural occurrences. He also depended upon revelation from God which could be neither independent from, nor contrary to, scripture. Epiphany resulted from the fusion of cognitive labor and divine revelation. His collected writings edited by William Kelly, contain this discourse (1971, 2:9, p228).

It is quite true that in a human mind truth is modified by circumstances in its form, for we are feeble and hold the truth partially and mixed with error. The Christian says, Yes; and what a comfort, therefore, to have the truth itself, which, though taking a human form that it may apply to the human heart, and have a witness of originating where it professes to have originated, by leaving the stamp of the time and circumstances as to its form, is yet the truth of God Himself; and the channels of its communications so guarded, that I should have it pure and exactly as God meant me to have it!

Darby held that although the human element in inspiration and interpretation of scripture has limitations, God's contribution in originating and protecting it guaranteed its credibility. Perhaps Elmore (1990) best understood this principle in Darby,

God's part of the communication equation is accurate and certain. But to properly understand that communication, Darby maintained that man must take a position in grace; relying on the Lord's enablement, as he interprets God's message in the plain sense of the words written. Thus illumination of the Spirit and literal interpretation are foundational factors in Darby's hermeneutical methodology. (p. 126)

Another hermeneutical principle espoused by Darby constitutes an observation of the grammatical sense. In refuting the notion that the interpretation of the Bible may be

approached like any other book, he conceded, “No one denies that the structure of a sentence is to be sought . . .” (Kelly, 1971); but proceeded to clarify, “. . . it is impossible that language formed by man’s ideas can be an adequate expression of God’s” (p. 236). To him, a mere understanding of the grammatical layout of a Scriptural passage alone was insufficient to complete the process of biblical interpretation; spiritual illumination was also needed. Goddard (1948) correctly noted this observation in Darby’s hermeneutical approach.

Darby never divorces interpretation from illumination. He endorses and uses the laws of grammar, logic, etc., but is always conscious of the semantic problem and relies upon divine enabling to arrive at the divine idea transmitted in language which in the nature of the case is human. (p. 41)

This basic tenet of a literalist—the grammatical structure—occupies a fundamental position in Darby’s hermeneutic.

Darby contended that individual Christians, not intermediaries, such as churches, priests, or pastors were qualified to act as the final arbiter regarding interpretation and appropriation of the Bible. His writings were replete with polemics aimed at refuting any sentiments to the contrary. A hypothetical anecdote illustrates this trait in Darby’s system of hermeneutics (Kelly, 1971, 4, 20, p. 239-240).

If I send a letter of orders to my servants, he who steps in and takes the letter and does not allow it to reach directly and as my orders *to* them and *addressed* to them, is meddling not merely with the servants’ rights (though, as regards the meddler, the servants being under the obligation to follow their master’s orders, they had both a right and were bound to have themselves because they were responsible to act on them as so sent *to them*), but he is meddling with the master’s rights and wisdom in sending it. It was sent to the servants, not to the meddler, and the servants are bound to take it; it was sent to them, and they are responsible. Now this is the place an interpreting clergy take. They meddle with God’s rights, and impugn God’s wisdom in sending these scriptures to the Christian people. They cannot take the responsibility of these servants; they cannot deny that the scriptures, all save a very small part, were addressed to the Christian (of old to the Jewish) *people* by the inspired persons ordained of God.

Recollections of his religious heritage and his eventual stint with the Church of England may have combined to reinforce his displeasure with a system he eventually rejected.

Unedited responses from Item 22 on the questionnaire (What would you say constitutes John Nelson Darby's lasting contribution to theological higher education?) speak to Research Question 1 thus:

His emphasis on the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which leads to a distinction between Israel and the church.

His formalization of the normal method of hermeneutics.

Popularized both literal hermeneutic & dispensationalism which fanned the flame for the Bible School/College movement.

He was trained in classical literature. He translated parts of the Bible in English, Spanish, and Italian. As you take classical literature in a literal sense, so do you in biblical studies.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Darby's hermeneutic and his eschatological teaching?

Here again most of the findings related to this research question appeared in the literature review from archival documents and is restated here.

With regard to Darby and his eschatology, there is a direct relationship between his hermeneutics and his dispensational scheme. Dispensationalism is a product of the literal method of hermeneutics (Elmore, 1990; Ryrie, 1995; Zuck, 1991). As such, if an individual consistently applies the principles of the literal method of biblical interpretation, that person will be a dispensationalist. Although it is possible for theologians and scholars to be influenced by a doctrine and subsequently embrace the hermeneutics that birthed it, ultimately the doctrine and the hermeneutics are one package with the hermeneutics producing the teaching and not vice versa. Ryrie (1995)

pointed to some basic tenets that are fundamental to proponents of literal hermeneutics. He argued from three ideological persuasions. Firstly, a philosophical reason for the existence of language itself requires literal interpretation. God gave language for communication. Since God is the originator of language and since His chief purpose was to convey His messages to humanity, then it must follow that He originated sufficient language to convey all that was in His heart to tell mankind. Furthermore, it must be that God expected people to understand language in its normal, plain and literal sense. Citing a biblical reason for his second explanation for literalists' adherence to this method, Ryrie argued that the already fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about Christ—His birth, life, crucifixion, burial, and His resurrection—have all been fulfilled literally. As a result, this augurs strongly for a literal fulfillment of unfulfilled prophecy. A third reason dispensationalists insist on a consistently literal approach to biblical interpretation is a logical one. If people fail to apply the plain, normal, literal method, all objectivity is lost. There would be no way to check the validity of innumerable interpretations.

Darby's hermeneutics naturally led to his dispensationalist conclusions. His own testimony of his position on prophetic interpretation necessitated the plain reading of the text. He said (Kelly, 1972, 2:30, p.178), "to understand prophecy one must understand what God says as He says it, just believing simply the things as they are said. It is because of not following this plain rule that people find so many difficulties." His prophetic conclusions supported this principle as well as found support from Ryrie's second reason dispensationalists practice the literal method. Having read *Isaiah 32*, for instance, he expected a future, literal, earthly, fulfillment.



In my retreat, the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Isaiah taught me clearly, on God's behalf, that there was still an economy to come, of His ordering; a state of things in no way established as yet. The consciousness of my union with Christ had given me the present heavenly portion of the glory, whereas this chapter clearly sets forth the corresponding earthly part. (Darby, 1971, 3:298-299)

The idea that there was "still an economy to come" is the language of dispensationalism. Darby's convictions about the future, earthly, fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 32, finds a suitable explanation in his literal approach to biblical interpretation.

The relationship between Darby's hermeneutic and premillennialism, originally set out in chapter 2, is restated below.

"The antecedent to any discussion of the prophetic Scriptures and the doctrines of Eschatology is the establishment of the basic method of interpretation to be employed throughout" (Pentecost, 1964, p.2). "A widespread consensus suggests that there are two controlling hermeneutical principles at issue in the interpretation of the millennial kingdom. One is the literal interpretation of the Bible; the other is the analogy of faith" (Johnson, 1992, chap. 1). It has already been established that dispensationalism is a product of literal hermeneutics. Likewise "premillennialism depends upon a literal interpretation of prophecy, taking the words in their ordinary meaning" (Walvoord, 1976, p. 846). A similar disclosure revealed Darby's commitment to such a method. Since premillennialism advocates that Christ would return to the earth with His saints, and subsequently inaugurates the millennial kingdom, this understanding requires a literal interpretation of Bible passages relative to the millennium. "Darby never failed to wed the illumination of the Spirit to the interpretation of the intended literal meaning of the text of Scripture. And he constantly affirmed that it was the intended literal meaning of the text which demanded a future for ethnic Israel" (Elmore, 1990, p. 140). Darby's insistence upon the literal method of interpretation is the only reasonable explanation for his premillennial stance. Rival millennial views such as post-millennialism and a-millennialism admittedly adopt interpretational schemes which are less than loyal to the literal method in their approach to prophecy. Tan (1974) adds that the "Literal interpretation of millennial prophecies presents the hope of a future kingdom of Christ on the earth where peace, righteousness, and blessing will ensue as Satan is bound for a thousand years" (p. 352). J. Dwight Pentecost (1964) in responding to an opponent of Premillennialism, Oswald T. Allis, who admitted that, ". . . Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been yet fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this age," explained why various views on the millennium exist: "It is not too much to say that the issues dividing these four views can be solved only by settling the question concerning the method of interpretation to be employed" (pp. 372-373).

Unedited responses from Item 22 on the questionnaire (What would you say constitutes John Nelson Darby's lasting contribution to theological higher education?) speak to Research Question 2 thus:

In the era of the mid 1800's, the rise of the scientific method—inductive. Darby simply translated this to the study of Scripture. While the end product may be the eschatology, the major contribution was the hermeneutic.

His emphasis on the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which leads to a distinction between Israel and the church.

Research Question 3: What have been the contributions of J. N. Darby to eschatological thought in selected institutions of theological higher education?

The mailed questionnaire to faculty and administrators at the three theological institutions of higher education was developed to address research question 3. The responses are stated below.

According to the demographic data in Table 3, 8 (29.6%) faculty and administrators responded from Moody Bible Institute; 6 (22.2%) responded from Dallas Theological Seminary; and 13 (48.1%) from Emmaus Bible College.

The departments from which the respondents serve, 1 (3.7%) indicated that his/her realm of service included all departments; 8 (29.6%) were from the Bible department; 5 (18.5%) were from the Theology department; 3 (11.1%) checked that they served in both the Bible and Theology departments; 2 (7.4%) indicated that they served in the undergraduate school; 1 (3.7%) indicated area of service was the Library; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was New Testament department; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was the Provost Office; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was Academic Affairs; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was

Table 3

*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 27)*

Variables		<i>n</i>	%
Institution	Moody Bible Institute	8	29.6
	Dallas Theological Seminary	6	22.2
	Emmaus Bible College	13	48.1
Department	All departments	1	3.7
	Bible	8	29.6
	Theology	5	18.5
	Bible/Theology	3	11.1
	Undergraduate	2	7.4
	Library	1	3.7
	New Testament	1	3.7
	Provost Office	1	3.7
	Academic Affairs	1	3.7
	Advancement	1	3.7
	Biblical Counseling/Student Services	1	3.7
	Executive	1	3.7
	No response	1	3.7
	Age	30-40	5
40-50		5	18.5
50-60		12	44.4
60-70		2	7.4
70-80		3	11.1
Gender	Female	1	3.7
	Male	26	96.2
Area	Faculty	17	62.9
	Administration	7	25.9
	Faculty & Administration	3	11.1

Advancement; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was; Biblical Counseling and Student Services; 1 (3.7%) indicated that their area of service was the Executive Office; and 1 (3.7%) respondent did not indicated an area of service.

In the category of age, 5 (18.5%) were between 30 and 40 years old; 5 (18.5%) between 40 and 50 years old; 12 (44.4%) were between 50 and 60 years old; 2 (7.4%) were between 60 and 70 years old; and 3 (11.1%) were between 70 and 80 years old.

One (3.7%) respondent was female; 26 (96.2%) respondents were male.

Among the faculty and administration who responded 17 (62.9%) represented the number of faculty; 7 (25.9%) represented the amount of administrators and; 3 (11.1%) indicated that they served in both faculty and administrative capacities.

Table 4

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 1: "I have heard of John Nelson Darby."*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	26	96.3	5.4
Agree	1	3.7	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 98.37\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

All of the respondents (*N*=27; 100%) indicated that they strongly agree (*n*=26; 96.3%) or agree (*n*=1; 3.7%) that they have heard of John Nelson Darby. No

respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 98.37 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 4 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 5

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 2: "I am familiar with the views of John Nelson Darby."*

Response	Observed $n$	Percentage	Expected $n$
Strongly Agree	14	51.9	5.4
Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 40.59\*;  $df = 4$ ; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

One hundred percent of the respondents ( $N=27$ ) indicated that they *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement that they are familiar with the views of John Nelson Darby. Of the 27 responses 14, (51.9%) strongly agree and 13 (48.1%) agree that they are familiar with the views of John Nelson Darby. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 40.59 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed

distribution of responses in Table 5 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 6

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 3: “Our institution’s theology has traceable roots to John Nelson Darby.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	19	70.4	5.4
Agree	8	29.6	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 51.70\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

One hundred percent of the respondents (*N*=27) indicated that they *strongly agree* or *agree* that their institution’s theology has traceable roots to John Nelson Darby. Of the 27 responses 19 (70.4%) strongly agree and 8 (29.6%) agree that their institution’s theology has traceable roots to John Nelson Darby. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 51.70 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 6 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the

number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 7

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 4: “John Nelson Darby introduced the concept of dispensationalism.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	3	11.1	5.4
Agree	10	37.0	5.4
Not Sure	2	7.4	5.4
Disagree	11	40.7	5.4
Strongly Disagree	1	3.7	5.4

Note: Chi-square = 16.52\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the respondents who were confident that John Nelson Darby introduced the concept of dispensationalism, 3 (11.1%) indicated that they strongly agree, 10 (37%) indicated that they agree. The neutral respondents, 2 (7.4%) indicated that they were not sure. Of the faculty and administrators among the three institutions who disagreed with Item 4, 11 (40.7%) indicated that they disagree, and 1 (3.7%) respondent strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 16.52 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 7 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the

number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 8

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 5: "John Nelson Darby systematized dispensationalism."*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	5	18.5	5.4
Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Not Sure	5	18.5	5.4
Disagree	4	14.8	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

Note: Chi-square = 16.52\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 5, that "John Nelson Darby systematized dispensationalism," 5 (18.5%) indicated that they strongly agree, 13 (48.1%) indicated that they agree, 5 (18.5%) were not sure, and 4 (14.8%) disagree that John Nelson Darby systematized dispensationalism. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 16.52 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 8 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.



Table 9

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 6: “John Nelson Darby’s distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	11	40.7	5.4
Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Not Sure	2	7.4	5.4
Disagree	1	3.7	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 27.63\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the respondents that were confident that John Nelson Darby’s distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture, 11 (40.7%) indicated that they strongly agree, and 13 (48.1%) indicated that they agree. Respondents who were not sure equaled 2 (7.4%). A solitary respondent 1(3.7%) disagreed that John Nelson Darby’s distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 27.63 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 9 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 10

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 7: “John Nelson Darby’s views are widely taught in much of evangelical Christianity today.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	2	7.4	5.4
Agree	15	55.6	5.4
Not Sure	3	11.1	5.4
Disagree	7	25.9	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 26.15\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 7, that “John Nelson Darby’s views are widely taught in much of evangelical Christianity today,” 2 (7.4%) indicated that they strongly agree, 15 (55.6%) indicated that they agree, 3 (11.1%) were not sure, and 7 (25.9%) disagree. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 26.15 is statistically significant at *p* = ‘05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 10 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 11

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 8: “John Nelson Darby’s distinctive approach to scripture interpretation is promoted at our institution.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	5	18.5	5.4
Agree	14	51.9	5.4
Not Sure	3	11.1	5.4
Disagree	5	18.5	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 20.22\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 8, that “John Nelson Darby’s distinctive approach to scripture interpretation is promoted at our institution,” 5 (18.5%) indicated that they strongly agree, 14 (51.9%) indicated that they agree, 3 (11.1%) were not sure, and 5 (18.5%) disagree. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 20.22 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 11 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 12

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 9: “The pre-tribulational rapture of the Church is promoted at our institution.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	23	85.2	5.4
Agree	3	11.1	5.4
Not Sure	1	3.7	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 72.82\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 9, that “the pre-tribulational rapture of the Church is promoted at our institution,” 23 (85.2%) indicated that they strongly agree, 3 (11.1%) indicated that they agree and 1 (3.7%) was not sure. No respondents indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 72.82 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 12 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 13

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 10: “Dispensationalism is promoted at our institution.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	21	77.8	5.4
Agree	5	18.5	5.4
Not Sure	1	3.7	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 59.48\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to questionnaire item number 10, that “the dispensationalism is promoted at our institution,” 21 (77.8%) indicated that they strongly agree, 5 (18.5%) indicated that they agree and 1 (3.7%) was not sure. No respondents indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 59.48 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 13 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 14

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 11: “The distinction between Israel and the church is promoted at our institution.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	21	77.8	5.4
Agree	6	22.2	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 61.33\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

One hundred percent of the respondents (*N*=27) indicated that they strongly agree or agree that the distinction between Israel and the church is promoted at their institution. Of the 27 responses 21 (77.8%) strongly agree and 6 (22.2%) agree. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 61.33 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 14 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 15

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 12: “John Nelson Darby’s views on eschatology have helped to provide a foundation for our institution’s direction on the end times.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	12	44.4	5.4
Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Not Sure	1	3.7	5.4
Disagree	1	3.7	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 31.33\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 12, that “John Nelson Darby’s views on eschatology have helped to provide a foundation for our institution’s direction on the end times,” 12 (44.4%) indicated that they strongly agree, 13 (48.1%) indicated that they agree, 1 (3.7%) were not sure, and 1 (3.7%) disagree. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 31.33 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 15 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 16

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 13: “John Nelson Darby’s views should be given more attention at institutions of Christian higher education.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	4	15.4	5.2
Agree	11	42.3	5.2
Not Sure	9	34.6	5.2
Disagree	2	7.7	5.2
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.2

*Note:* Responses = 26; Chi-square = 16.69\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 13, that “John Nelson Darby’s views should be given more attention at institutions of Christian higher education,” 4 (15.4 %) indicated that they strongly agree, 11 (42.3 %) indicated that they agree, 9 (34.6 %) were not sure, and 2 (7.7 %) disagree. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 16.69 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 16 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.



Table 17

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 14: “Institutions that promote literal hermeneutics, dispensationalism, and pre-tribulationism have positively affected America and the world.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	15	55.6	5.4
Agree	12	44.4	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 41.33\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

One hundred percent of the respondents (*N*=27) indicated that they strongly agree or agree that institutions that promoted literal hermeneutics, dispensationalism, and pre-tribulationism have positively affected America and the world. Of the 27 responses 15 (55.6 %) strongly agree and 6 (44.4 %) agree with this statement. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 41.33 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 17 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 18

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 15: “The United States support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel remains the people of God as distinct from the church as the New Testament people of God.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	2	7.4	5.4
Agree	14	51.9	5.4
Not Sure	8	29.6	5.4
Disagree	2	7.4	5.4
Strongly Disagree	1	3.7	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 22.82\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

Of the respondents who were confident that “The United States support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel remains the people of God as distinct from the church as the New Testament people of God,” 2 (7.4 %) indicated that they strongly agree, 14 (51.9 %) indicated that they agree. The neutral respondents, 8 (29.6 %) indicated that they were not sure. Of the faculty and administrators among the three institutions who disagreed with item number 15, 2 (7.4 %) indicated that they disagree, and 1 (3.7 %) respondent strongly disagreed.

The chi-square value of 22.82 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 18 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 19

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 16: “Our institution has produced scholars who share the views of John Nelson Darby.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	5	18.5	5.4
Agree	20	74.1	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	2	7.4	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 52.44\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Among the respondents who answered Item 16, “Our institution has produced scholars who share the views of John Nelson Darby,” 5 (18.5 %) indicated that they strongly agree, 20 (74.1 %) indicated that they agree, and 2 (7.4 %) indicated that they disagree. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, or that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 52.44 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 19 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 20

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 17: “It is important that our institution teaches literal interpretation of scripture.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	18	69.2	5.2
Agree	7	26.9	5.2
Not Sure	1	3.8	5.2
Disagree	0	0	5.2
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.2

*Note:* Responses = 26; Chi-square = 45.92\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 17, that “It is important that our institution teaches literal interpretation of scripture,” 18 (69.2 %) indicated that they strongly agree, 7 (26.9 %) indicated that they agree, and 1 (3.8 %) was not sure. No respondents indicated that they disagree or that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 45.92 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 20 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 21

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 18: "It is important that our institution teaches dispensationalism."*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	14	51.9	5.4
Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 40.59\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

One hundred percent of the respondents ( $N=27$ ) indicated that they strongly agree or agree that with Item 18. Of the 27 responses 14 (51.9 %) strongly agree and 13 (48.1 %) agree. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 40.59 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 21 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 22

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 19: “It is important that our institution teaches the pre-tribulation rapture.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	13	48.1	5.4
Agree	12	44.4	5.4
Not Sure	1	3.7	5.4
Disagree	1	3.7	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 31.33\*; *df* = 4; Significant at  $p = .05^*$

Of the faculty and administrators who responded to Item 19, that “It is important that our institution teaches the pre-tribulation rapture,” 13 (48.1 %) indicated that they strongly agree, 12 (44.4 %) indicated that they agree, 1 (3.7 %) were not sure, and 1 (3.7 %) disagreed. No respondents indicated that they strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 31.33 is statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . The observed distribution of responses in Table 22 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Therefore, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 23

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 20: “It is important that our institution teaches the distinction between Israel and the church.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	17	63.0	5.4
Agree	10	37.0	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 45.04\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

One hundred percent of the respondents (*N*=27) indicated that they strongly agree or agree with Item 20. Of the 27 responses 17 (63.0 %) strongly agree and 10 (37.0 %) agree. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 45.04 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 23 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.

Table 24

*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 21: “Our institution is considered a dispensational, pre-tribulation, pre-millennial institution.”*

Response	Observed <i>n</i>	Percentage	Expected <i>n</i>
Strongly Agree	23	85.2	5.4
Agree	4	14.8	5.4
Not Sure	0	0	5.4
Disagree	0	0	5.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	5.4

*Note:* Chi-square = 73.93\*; *df* = 4; Significant at *p* = .05\*

One hundred percent of the respondents (*N*=27) indicated that they strongly agree or agree with Item 21. Of the 27 responses 23 (85.2 %) strongly agree and 4 (14.8 %) agree. No respondents indicated that they were either not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The chi-square value of 73.926 is statistically significant at *p* = .05. The observed distribution of responses in Table 24 departs significantly from the distribution of responses expected under the conditions of the null hypothesis of no differences in the number of responses per response category. Consequently, the observed distribution cannot be attributed to chance.



*Faculty and Administration Responses to Questionnaire Item 22: “What would you say constitutes John Nelson Darby’s lasting contribution to theological higher education?”*

This question was an open ended question. The unedited responses are presented here according to institution.

Moody Bible Institute:

- He is one of the first to articulate in a systematic way a dispensational approach to the Scriptures. He didn’t “invent” dispensationalism, but he helped develop the concept in a rational manner.
- He allowed for a different model of interpretation/eschatology which has allowed for debate and refinement of theological perspectives. While the debate has not always be [sic] civil it has allowed for a discussion which has been a benefit to theological higher education.
- Darby’s lasting contribution is the transcending doctrinal boundaries that separated denominations in Britain & North America. His approach to Scripture and the importance of Scripture, but he was not responsible for the formation of dispensational thought. Many have contributed to dispensational thinking.
- In the era of the mid 1800’s, the rise of the scientific method—inductive. Darby simply translated this to the study of Scripture. While the end product may be the eschatology, the major contribution was the hermeneutic.
- Darby’s most lasting contribution is simply taking the Bible, especially OT promises *seriously* enough to study them out. His introduction of *systematization* (the systematic study of OT covenants, for instance) was as, if not more important than his system itself.
- His emphasis on the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation, which leads to a distinction between Israel and the church.
- I think it was indirect, but significant. He formulated a system of thought (dispensationalism) that caught on in the churches, para-church organizations, and prophecy conferences. Secondly, it was brought to higher education. I don’t think Darby was the main catalyst, but as the originator he can be said to have had an indirect contribution.

Dallas Theological Seminary:

- Darby’s distinction of Israel from the church helped break the sometimes tribal denominationalism of the English speaking world by positing the priority of an invisible church—body of Christ—that is *not* of a political, geographical nature. B. Such an emphasis opened the way for interdenominational movements, Bible conferences, faith missions, and especially Bible schools/colleges/seminaries, a

movement that now spans the world in both evangelical & Pentecostal movements.

- His emphasis on languages (original).
- His formalization of the normal method of hermeneutics.
- Often overlooked is Darby's passion for social work. His gospel was a historic one. His eschatology viewed the created order of being redeemed. He did not have the sacred/secular dichotomy found in later dispensationalism. He worked for justice, cared for the poor & disenfranchised, and was concerned about environmental causes. For these he should be honored & as an example to be followed.
- He was trained in classical literature. He translated parts of the Bible in English, Spanish, and Italian. As you take classical literature in a literal sense, so do you in biblical studies.

Emmaus Bible College:

- In traveling around the world teaching his views, Darby planted the seeds of dispensational thought. Those that followed him modified and popularized his teaching.
- He personally modeled the scholar's life. He was well educated (Trinity College, Dublin), well informed of contemporary trends, and well read. He was a prolific writer of scholarly papers, and he was also prolific in writing works of a popular nature. All of this plus his translation of the Bible into at least four languages demonstrated and modeled the seriousness which scholars should bring to their work.
- It would seem obvious to me that ideas first formulated 173 years ago by JND (Dispensationalism & its impact on Eschatology) are still taught in schools that hold his views as foundational. This is JND's lasting contribution.
- Pre-Trib, Pre-Mil, Dispensational Interpretation
- Dispensational Theology - Better appreciation of believers' responsibility in church life & governance – Separation of distinctions between clergy & laity
- His systematization of dispensational theology, his eschatological interpretation of Scripture, his understanding of the priesthood of all believers, his commitment to the prominence of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance of the Christian faith.
- Darby's hermeneutical position
- Hermeneutics & eschatology- Dallas Theological Seminary – for our institution, elements of JND's ecclesiology are also important – I should add that

dispensationalism has been considerably revised since Darby so that we would not consider ourselves as 'Darby Dispensationalists.'

- Popularized both literal hermeneutic & dispensationalism which fanned the flame for the Bible School/College movement.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Forces that Conduced to Spreading Darby's Notions of the Rapture, Dispensationalism, and the Second Coming

Within the millenarian ranks, there existed a variety of millenarian views; even within the premillennial camp, variations on premillennial themes surfaced. But it was Darby's version that left a lasting impression. According to Sandeen (1970), early British forms of millenarianism also faded, and by the middle of the century the type of millenarianism known as futurism and especially that taught by Darby and known since then as dispensationalism began to outdistance other varieties both in Britain and America.

The far-reaching influence that Darby's end-times ideas would eventually impose, found divergent avenues to secure their reach. Beginning with his writings, much of Darby-ism was self-disclosed. McKinney (1997) remarked, "The most gifted teacher within the Brethren was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), who popularized this new premillennialism through his many volumes of writing" (p. 106).

Beside his plethora of written sources, numerous other platforms proved conducive to his distinctive contribution to premillennial eschatology. One such stage was the annual prophetic conferences held at Powerscourt Castle in Wicklow (Pickering, 1986; Sandeen, 1970; Weremchuck, 1992). Goddard (1948) emphasized that it was "while still a curate in the Established Church, Darby began attending the prophetic conferences sponsored by Lady Powerscourt" (p. 275). Weremchuck (1992) attributed the rise of these conferences to the dark cloud of end-of-world fears that

gripped early nineteenth century Europe, and spurred interest in prophecy brought on by the belief by some that Napoleon was the coming antichrist. Quite a few of the original Brethren leaders including Darby, not only attended, but also participated. These conferences provided opportunity for Darby's developing eschatology to be heard (Reid, 1995; Weremchuck, 1992). Great interest was evidenced by the attendees and Darby's ideas were well received.

Darby's travels to various places both locally and internationally also opened doors to further his beliefs. From the time of his conversion, Darby cultivated a missionary zeal that was reminiscent of that of the apostles. This was evident in his service to the poor of Wicklow County, Ireland. It was this same apostolic enthusiasm which saw him engage in intercontinental travel to share his beliefs in God, and the Bible. Everywhere he went he sought out churches of likeminded believers with whom he shared his gleanings and synthesis of the Word.

Another major conduit of Darby's doctrines was manifested at *The Niagara Bible Conferences*. These originated as informal private conferences by a group of men associated with the millenarian periodical, *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, in 1868 in New York. Later from 1883 to 1897 these men met at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario the location from which conference inherited its name. They emphasized the doctrines of verbal inspiration of the Bible, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the atonement of sacrifice, the priesthood of Christ, the two natures in the believer, and the personal imminent return of the Lord (Blaising & Bock, 1993; McKinney, 1997; Sandeen, 1970; Stallard, 2002). Mrs. Needham (1891) listed what she thought were the four essential doctrines of the conference. They were the verbal inspiration and complete authenticity

of the Scriptures; the redemption of fallen man by the death of Christ; the work of the Holy Spirit; and the blessed hope of the personal coming and millennial kingdom of our Lord. So great a part the conferences played in millenarian thought that Sandeen (1970) wrote,

American millenarianism was transformed into a protodenominational fellowship movement with enlarged doctrinal concerns, though the springs of its energy still rose from Second Advent sources.

The Niagara Conference was the mother of them all—the Monte Cassino [sic] and Port Royal of the movement. (p. 132)

There is little doubt as to the significance of the Niagara conferences to the cause of dispensationalism as exemplified in this insightful statement. “Virtually everyone of any significance in the history of the American millenarian movement during this period attended the Niagara conference” (Sandeen, 1970, p. 134). And although they were interdenominational, the leaders and speakers at the conferences regularly promoted Darby’s eschatological views; some even used them as polemics (Marsden, 1980; Reiter, 1996; Sandeen, 1970; Stallard, 2002).

These theological, missiological, soteriological, and eschatological, forces all converged and conspired to promote the essential doctrines of Darby.

The publication of the *Scotfield Reference Bible* has been hailed by many as the entity most responsible for popularizing dispensationalism. Its reach had not been limited to North America but enjoyed a rather global popularity. Within its pages are contained Scotfield’s reference notes which detail much of his understanding of dispensationalism, pretribulationism and premillennialism as handed down from leaders of the Niagara Conference. According to Blaising & Bock (1993), Scotfield’s Bible was filled with expositional and theological annotations, which put a “Bible

Conference” in the hands of many. Sandeen (1970) underscored that it was Darby-ite dispensationalism that “formed the substance and the structure for the *Scofield Reference Bible*” (pp. 60-61). Craig Blaising (1988), albeit indirectly, noted that it was “through the educational work of Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer, modern dispensationalism entered a scholastic era” (p.134).

Michael Pocock, Chair of the department of world missions at Dallas Theological Seminary and long time Plymouth Brethren associate enthusiastically stated, “Dispensationalism is a major driving force in a large segment of American protestant Christianity. Its growth and reach, was bolstered by the bible college movement and the world wide missionary movement” (Personal Communication, March 10, 2006).

#### The Status of Contemporary Eschatology that Can Be Traced Directly to Darby

Within the ranks of dispensationalism, a new development has emerged in recent decades. Identified by the label, “Progressive Dispensationalism,” this new form of dispensationalism remains dispensational at its core but presents a different look. In 1993 two seminal works were introduced that “changed the face of dispensationalism” they were Bock and Blaising’s *Progressive Dispensationalism*, and Saucy’s *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*. Other books have followed, including the *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* with contributions from current or former Dallas Theological Seminary alumni and professors published in 1999.

Dispensationalists will agree with Ryrie (1995) that the *sine qua non* (the absolutely indispensable part) of dispensationalism is threefold at its core; namely, that 1) Israel and the church are kept distinct; 2) The Israel-church dichotomy is due to a

system of hermeneutics called literal interpretation, and: 3) The Glory of God is the underlying purpose of God. A belief in the separation between Israel and the church is that which sets apart dispensationalists from non-dispensationalists since that belief is an outgrowth of applying literal hermeneutics and a recognition that God's overall purpose is to glorify Himself. These are views held by progressive dispensationalists as well; however, they differ with the timing of Christ reign on the earth and other fringe matters.

Progressive dispensationalists believe that at the conclusion of Christ's first advent when He ascended to heaven and occupied the throne at the right hand of the Father, that event marked the inauguration of Christ's millennial reign which will be fully realized in the future millennium continuing into eternity. According to Toussaint (1999),

In the original form of Darby's dispensationalism, the line drawn between Israel and the church was heavy, dark, and broad. . . .

Progressive dispensationalism has taken a new track. It still makes something of a difference between Israel and the church, but that distinction is not nearly as sharp. Those who hold to this position believe that the promised kingdom has already begun; progressive dispensationalists assert that the Old Testament covenants and promises have had a beginning, a partial fulfillment in the church, but will have their ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium and eternity. (p. 230)

Progressives tend to assert their position insisting that Christ's reign has already begun but not yet realized. The phrase "already-not yet" pervades their discussions. The line separating Israel and the church isn't seen as sharply as their traditional dispensationalist counterparts.

This shift in dispensationalism has garnered substantial following. Theological institutions, such as Dallas Theological Seminary, known for producing dispensationalists of a more classical or traditional stripe have both accommodated Progressive dispensational professors and consequently turned out students in kind.



There exist, however, a congenial relationship among the professors of both versions of dispensationalism. Moreover, this tolerance of other's views aptly mirrors the state of contemporary eschatology today. Both factions within the camp of dispensationalism agree to coexist as benign debates continue.

### Summary, Discussion of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The remainder of this chapter presents a summary of the research findings of the study, discusses their implications as they relate to Darby's contributions to contemporary theological higher education at selected institutions, draws conclusions and offers recommendations for further study.

#### *Summary of Findings*

Research Question 1: What was Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics?

Darby believed that there were both empirical and supernatural principles which guide the process of sound interpretation. Unlike the allegorical method, which allegorizes or spiritualizes the plain reading of the bible, he employed and defended the literal method of biblical interpretation. Darby advocated that the Old and New Testaments were sacred writings. He insisted upon the divine inspiration of Scripture. To Darby, interpreting the scriptures necessitated two indispensable criteria—human activity and divine activity. In his system, the interpreter understood biblical meaning when he considered the author's grammatical context and historical setting, while taking into account supernatural occurrences. He also depended upon revelation from God, which could be neither independent from, nor contrary to, scripture. Epiphany resulted

from the fusion of cognitive labor and divine revelation. Darby contended that individual Christians, not intermediaries, such as churches, priests, or pastors were qualified to act as final arbiters regarding interpretation and appropriation of the Bible.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Darby's hermeneutic and his eschatological teaching?

With regard to Darby and his eschatology, there is a direct relationship between his hermeneutics and his dispensational scheme. Dispensationalism is a product of the literal method of hermeneutics. As such, if an individual consistently applies the principles of the literal method of biblical interpretation, that person will be a dispensationalist. Darby's hermeneutics naturally led to his dispensationalist conclusions. He said, "to understand prophecy one must understand what God says as He says it, just believing simply the things as they are said. It is because of not following this plain rule that people find so many difficulties" (Kelly, 1972, 2:30, p.178).

"Darby never failed to wed the illumination of the Spirit to the interpretation of the intended literal meaning of the text of Scripture. And he constantly affirmed that it was the intended literal meaning of the text which demanded a future for ethnic Israel" (Elmore, 1990, p. 140).

Research Question 3: What have been the contributions of J. N. Darby to eschatological thought in selected institutions of theological higher education?

The survey used in this study included 23 items to which the participants responded. What follows is an item-by-item delineation and summarization of the research findings at the time the respondents completed their surveys:

1. The respondents:
  - a) Served at Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary and Emmaus Bible College
  - b) Served in various departments—Bible, Theology, Library, New Testament, Academic Affairs, Provost Office and the Executive Office
  - c) Ranged in ages between 30 and 80
  - d) Were mostly male
  - e) Were faculty and administrators
2. All of the respondents had prior knowledge of John Nelson Darby.
3. All of the respondents expressed familiarity with the views of John Nelson Darby.
4. All of the respondents agreed that their institution's theology had roots in John Nelson Darby.
5. The majority of the respondents were divided regarding the notion that John Nelson Darby introduced the concept of dispensationalism.
6. The majority of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby systematized dispensationalism.
7. The preponderance of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby's distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture.
8. The majority of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby's views are widely taught in much of contemporary evangelical Christianity.
9. Most of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby's distinctive approach to scripture interpretation is promoted at their institution.
10. The preponderance of respondents agreed that the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church is promoted at their institution.
11. The majority of the respondents agreed that dispensationalism is promoted at their institution.
12. All of the respondents agreed that the distinction between Israel and the Church is promoted at their institution.

13. Most of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby's views on eschatology helped to lay a foundation for their institution's position on the end times.
14. A slight majority of the respondents agreed that John Nelson Darby's views should be given more attention in Christian higher education.
15. All of the respondents agreed that institutions that promote literal hermeneutics, dispensationalism, and pre-tribulationism have positively affected America and the world.
16. A slight majority of the respondents agreed that the United States support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel remains the people of God as distinct from the Church as the New Testament people of God.
17. The preponderance of the respondents agreed that their institution produced scholars who share the views of John Nelson Darby.
18. Most of the respondents agreed that it is important their institution teach literal interpretation of scripture.
19. All of the respondents agreed that it is important that their institution teach dispensationalism.
20. The majority of the respondents agreed that it is important that their institution teach the pre-tribulation rapture.
21. All of the respondents agreed that it is important that their institution teach the distinction between Israel and the church.
22. All of the respondents agreed that their institution is considered a dispensational, pre-tribulation, pre-millennial institution.
23. The open question, "What would you say constitutes John Nelson Darby's lasting contribution to theological higher education?" is summarized according to institution.

- Moody Bible Institute:

Darby is among the first to systematize dispensationalism. He applied the burgeoning scientific method to his study of scripture. His emphasis on the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation led to a distinction between Israel and the church. This model of interpretation, which birthed his eschatology, generated

beneficial debates. His high value placed on scripture permitted him to transcend denominational boundaries.

- Dallas Theological Seminary:

Darby's distinction between Israel and the church helped break the tribal denominationalism by positing the priority of a universal church—one that is neither political nor geographical. This opened the way for interdenominational movements such as Bible conferences, faith-missions, and Bible schools which spans the world. He modeled a social gospel wherein he cared for the poor, worked for justice, and was concerned about environmental causes. He did not have the sacred/secular dichotomy found in later dispensationalism. He was trained in classical literature, which he applied to his Bible translation. There was an emphasis on languages as he formalized the normal method of hermeneutics.

- Emmaus Bible College:

By traveling around the world, Darby popularized both literal hermeneutics and dispensationalism, which fanned the flames for the Bible college movement. He modeled a scholar's life—the seriousness that scholars should bring to their work. He left a lasting contribution with his pre-tribulationalism, pre-millennialism, dispensational interpretation and hermeneutical position. There was a better appreciation of believers' responsibility in church-life and governance. He contributed his understanding of the priesthood of all believers, and his commitment to the prominence of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance of the Christian faith.

## *Discussion of Findings*

The following discussion is paralleled with the three research questions which directed this study: 1) What was Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics? 2) What is the relationship between Darby's hermeneutics and his eschatological teaching? 3) What have been the contributions of J. N. Darby to eschatology in selected institutions of contemporary theological higher education?

### Research Question 1: What was Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics?

To ascertain Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics, a combination of archival foraging and survey responses were employed for maximum outcome. The literature on Darby's system of biblical hermeneutics revealed that he was exposed to a variety of interpretational methods. However, he favored the literal approach which emphasized the normal (as opposed to allegorical) reading with its observation of the rules of grammar, inclusive of poetry, figures of speech, apocalyptic literature, and the historical setting. His reverence for the divine inspiration of scripture was not contradictory to his position of human participation in the writing process. This disproportionate partnership produced an essentially dual authorship of scripture. Darby's approach to interpretation mirrored this divine/mortal partnership. To the extent that there is a dual authorship, there is also a commensurate dependence by man upon divine illumination for interpretation. Darby held enormous faith in God's ability to protect His word despite the agency of imperfect man both in recording and interpreting the sacred script. His literal approach has enjoyed longevity although it coexisted with different interpretational schemes through various epochs. His literal method is still widely practiced today as is

evident by the responses to items #8 and #17 on the questionnaire. Item #8, “John Nelson Darby’s distinctive approach to scripture interpretation is promoted at our institution,” produced a 70% affirmative response rate. For item # 17, almost all of the respondents (96%) agreed that it was important that their institution taught the literal approach to the interpretation of scripture. With a chi-square value of 45.92 at the  $p = .05$  significance level, there is miniscule possibility that this finding may be attributed to chance. When the open-ended question provided opportunity for respondents to champion what they thought constitutes Darby’s lasting contribution to theological higher education, many averred that it was his literal method of interpretation.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Darby’s hermeneutics and his eschatological teaching?

The literal hermeneutics espoused by Darby laid the foundation whereupon his views were erected. The path to his eschatological doctrines may be traced back to his method of interpretation. His consistent application of the principle of the plain, normal sense of the prophetic text produced dispensational, pre-millennial, and pre-tribulational constructs. His hermeneutics both preceded and produced his eschatology. This cause/effect relationship was corroborated by survey responses to the open-ended survey question soliciting respondents’ thoughts on what constitutes Darby’s lasting contributions to theological higher education. One Moody Bible Institute respondent contended, “Darby simply translated this [scientific method] to the study of scripture. While the end product may be the eschatology, the major contribution was the hermeneutic.” Another Moody respondent pointed to “his emphasis on the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation” which, he said, “leads to a distinction

between Israel and the church.” Item # 6 on the questionnaire, “John Nelson Darby’s distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture,” garnered further support with a convincing 88.8% in agreement. Rival hermeneutical methods cannot produce these doctrines Darby embraced since they deviate from the plain, normal, literal, historical-grammatical reading (Ryrie, 1995; Walvoord, 1998).

Research Question 3: What have been the contributions of J. N. Darby to eschatological thought in selected institutions of theological higher education?

Since no known study has been conducted on the subject of Darby’s contributions to theological higher education, both the literature on Darby and responses to the questionnaire provide the best source for a comprehensive view of his contributions. Two eschatological doctrines emerged salient; they were the systematization of dispensationalism and the distinction between Israel and the church. The collective voice of the literature testified that Darby did not introduce the concept of dispensationalism; instead, he is credited with its systematization (Elhert, 1944; Nebeker, 1997; Ryrie, 1995). Survey results matched the tenor of the literature as respondents were largely divided over the question of Darby’s introducing the concept of dispensationalism; but exhibited a bit more solidarity (66.6%) with the idea that he was responsible for its systematization. Darby claimed that the Israel/church dichotomy derived solely from his personal bible study. This contribution, which was a natural product of his literal hermeneutics, may be his most significant contribution. There was 59.3% agreement with the notion that the United States support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel remains the people of God as distinct from



the church as the New Testament people of God. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (96.1%) indicated that it was important that their institutions teach the literal interpretation of scripture. All the respondents believed that it was important that their institution teach dispensationalism and the distinction between Israel and the church. All three institutions and most (92.6%) of the respondents acknowledged that Darby's views on eschatology have helped provide a foundation for their institution's direction on the end times. These institutions with 100% of their respondents thought that institutions which promote literal hermeneutics, dispensationalism, and pre-tribulationism have positively affected America and the world. There was overwhelming support for other eschatological views in which Darby had strong influence. These include the pre-tribulation rapture of the church and the pre-millennial reign of Christ on the earth. The majority (96.3%) of respondents reported that the pre-tribulation rapture is promoted at their institutions. Nebeker (1997), speaking to a different question did well to articulate Darby's unique contributions to the church and to Christianity in general. His observations resonate with my own findings.

Although forms of premillennial belief existed among different segments of Christianity in the centuries prior to Darby, his unique contribution to modern Dispensational premillennialism is evidenced by four specific impressions. First, he organized a systematic and progressive view of biblical history wherein God is said to test mankind by means of ongoing revelation and corresponding moral responsibilities. Second, by employing a "literal" approach to biblical interpretation, he devised a futuristic hermeneutical grid for understanding OT prophetic texts. Third, in conjunction with his "literal" interpretation of prophetic Scripture, he introduced the modal distinction between Israel and the Church, which distinguished two eschatological destinies between two categorically separated people groups. Finally, by means of an innovative theological exegesis, he formulated the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture of the Church, the belief that those who truly constitute the body of elect Christianity would be removed prior to the period of cosmic wrath known as the Great Tribulation (pp. 35-36).

## *Conclusions*

This study culled the evangelical, dispensational population of theological higher education and garnered a purposeful sample of faculty and administrators from among Moody Bible Institute, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Emmaus Bible College. The statistical significance of the chi-square findings, which indicated that the results cannot be attributed to chance, asserts that these institutions provide a rich seed-bed of Darby's educational legacy. Congruence with related literature provides further credibility to the findings.

Christian higher education may be understood as higher education with a Christian worldview. This component of American higher education represents an integral part of the United States educational population. With more than 150 million members (CCCU, 2005), the Christian voice is adequately represented. This realization was brought to bear on the American public when the evangelical vote proved to be a significant factor in the 2004 presidential elections.

Darby's eschatological doctrines taught at theological higher education institutions 124 years succeeding his death is not insignificant. With the preponderance of respondents indicating that his views are widely taught in much of contemporary Christianity, Darby-ism continues to thrive. This reality exists despite the appearance that mainstream evangelicalism seems oblivious to him.

The significance of Darby's enduring views may be appreciated when consideration is given to Israel's position in world politics. In particular, that the Jewish State is singled-out for annihilation by neighboring states; but, simultaneously befriended by the United States. A slight majority of the respondents agree that the

United States' support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel is still viewed as the people of God. With the President of the United States subscribing to what appears to be strong evangelical beliefs, it is not farfetched to postulate that America's foreign policy is influenced by Darby's dispensational teachings. Gates in a May 24, 2006, *Newsweek* article, "Religion: The Pop Prophets," stated that the best-selling *Left Behind* series of apocalyptic Christian novels sold more than 62 million copies. This series is based on Darby-ite interpretations. Boyer's (2003) *Chronicle of Higher Education* article sought to heighten awareness of the importance of religious belief in American academia today. The following quote discusses President Bush's probable theological interpretation of present day events.

Leaders have always invoked God's blessing on their wars, and, in this respect, the Bush administration is simply carrying on a familiar tradition. But when our born-again president describes the nation's foreign-policy objective in theological terms as a global struggle against "evildoers," and when, in his recent State of the Union address, he casts Saddam Hussein as a demonic, quasi-supernatural figure who could unleash "a day of horror like none we have ever known," he is not only playing upon our still-raw memories of 9/11. He is also invoking a powerful and ancient apocalyptic vocabulary that for millions of prophecy believers conveys a specific and thrilling message of an approaching end—not just of Saddam, but of human history as we know it. (p. B12)

Darby and his cohorts evidently contributed many intangible traits that were adopted by succeeding generations of bible scholars who further disseminated his views in bible schools. One respondent observed that Darby modeled the scholar's life. Indeed he did. His indefatigable pursuit of truth demanded a thoroughly disciplined lifestyle. This was evident in his entire approach to his Christianity. He translated principles of the scientific method to his approach to bible study. He fostered in-depth bible study by preferring the intimacy of small groups. He practiced what he preached by helping the poor and by traveling around the world to propagate his beliefs. He

participated in organized prophetic conferences, which served as a precursor to the fundamentalist movement and the ensuing bible college movement. He rejected organized religion and adopted the simple, non-formal assembly that transcended denominational lines.

### *Recommendations*

This study was delimited to three selected institutions of theological higher education. Further investigation may be conducted upon the population of theological higher education with respect to John Nelson Darby and his contributions.

Dispensational institutions may do well to provide more exposure to Darby and his ideas. Perhaps a lectureship, a seminar, or a course examining the roots of dispensational thought and its far-reaching effects may furnish opportunity to explore Darby's influence in contemporary evangelicalism.

Theological higher education institutions should seize every effort to cultivate "the scholar's life" in contemporary students of theology. By this is meant the attitude Darby modeled by his approach to scripture, the church, the world, and to God. Empiricism should not nullify appropriate belief in the supernatural. They are not mutually exclusive. Rather, a balance of the scientific method wherein consideration is given to the historical-grammatical context of a sentence commingled with an acknowledgement of the need for faith should be incorporated.

Further research into Darby's contribution to the pre-tribulation rapture of the church may be of heightened interest as its origins remains shrouded in mystery; it bears significant weight upon the lives of many evangelicals and its contribution to

theological higher education.

With the emergence of the pivotal evangelical vote, American higher education needs to pay more attention to the Christian world-view especially as tensions escalate between the nation of Israel and her neighbors.

American higher educators should reconsider the general role of religion in colleges and universities, and in particular, the role of Christianity. Science and empiricism do not hold all the answers to life's conundrums; for many, the profound questions of life are best pondered in the realm of faith. Darby found a way to wed the pair.

Religion departments in American colleges and universities need to investigate the claims of biblical prophecy as it relates to the normal, literal reading of the bible. Too much evidence exist to suggest that the dispensational understanding of the end times is coincidental.

Contemporary versions of Christianity failed to emulate Darby's willingness to stand by his convictions regardless of societal pressures. Twenty-first century evangelicalism has assumed, to some degree, the popular, post-modern tendencies of acquiescence to relativism and tolerance. Institutions of Christian higher education need to remedy this proclivity to assimilate into the cultural mainstream if they purport to have a substantive impact on the national and global stage. As distinctive institutions sharing a unique worldview, there abides a gaping need to retain a clear message of Christian values such as their moral convictions, and eschatological hope.

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER TO FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

ON UNT LETTERHEAD

Participant  
Address  
Date

Dear Participant

The attached survey concerned with John Nelson Darby and his contributions to contemporary theological higher education is part of a doctoral dissertation study. This is a research study.

Your institution has been selected because of its affinity with dispensational views. This research concerns the contributions of John Nelson Darby to contemporary theological higher education. We are particularly interested in the extent to which his method of scripture interpretation and eschatology (doctrine of the end-times) currently affect selected institutions of theological higher education.

Mr. Darby has made significant contributions to evangelical Christianity but remains relatively unknown in academe and Christianity even though many institutions of theological higher education promote his views. The results of this study will help foster awareness of Darby's contribution to Christianity. It will also stimulate further discussion of his views and their bearing upon contemporary Christianity.

We are therefore seeking volunteers for our study and hope you will consider being one of them. If you decide to participate here is what you may expect:

1. You will be asked to complete a brief survey regarding John Nelson Darby and your institution and mail it back to us.
2. You will be offered the opportunity to receive a report of the findings.

We will appreciate it if you will complete the enclosed form prior to September 15, 2006 and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope enclosed. Other phases of this research cannot be carried out until we complete analysis of the survey data.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to, will incur no negative affect on you. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation anytime without penalty. Please know that we are cognizant that your time is valuable and have sought to ensure a brief and meaningful survey.

Sincerely,

D. Barry Lumsden, Ed.D.

Winston T. Sutherland, Th.M.

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRE



## Survey on John Nelson Darby's Contribution to Theological Higher Education

The purpose of this study is to determine what, if any, are the contributions of John Nelson Darby to theological higher education. This survey takes about **15 minutes**. Your answers will be strictly confidential. Your name and address will NOT BE CONNECTED to your answers. The completion of this survey is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time. This study does not involve any reasonably foreseeable risks.

The benefit of this study involves the potential to alter or confirm the perception of John Nelson Darby's contribution to higher education.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. D. Barry Lumsden, University of North Texas, Program in Higher Education, at [lumsden@coe.unt.edu](mailto:lumsden@coe.unt.edu) or call 940.597.7923. You may also contact Winston T. Sutherland, University of North Texas, at [wts0005@unt.edu](mailto:wts0005@unt.edu) or call xxx.xxx.xxxx. You may keep a copy of this document for your records. This research project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (940) 565-3940. Contact the UNT IRB with any questions regarding your rights as a research subject.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Answer the questions candidly and to the best of your ability.
- To answer the questions circle the answers in pen or pencil.
- We invite you to elaborate on any answers by writing comments in the margins or on the space at the end of the survey.
- When answering the questions, please use the definitions in the glossary below.
- When you are finished, please mail the survey back in the postage paid envelope provided.

### GLOSSARY

Dispensationalism: The view that God deals with humankind on the basis of administrations or stages of revelation according to various standards.

Pre-tribulation Rapture: The view that the believers in Jesus Christ will be taken up to heaven with Him when He returns before the Great Tribulation.

Pre-millennialism: The view that Jesus Christ will return to the earth with His believers to reign for a thousand years of peace.

Literal interpretation: Understanding the scripture in its plain, normal, grammatical sense.

Distinction between Israel and the church: The view that God has a specific program with Israel as His chosen people that is separate from His program with the church as His people.

Your participation in this survey assumes acknowledgment of your informed consent.

### Demographic Data

<b>Institution:</b> _____			<b>Department:</b> _____		
<b>Age:</b> _____		<b>Gender: Male</b> _____		<b>Female</b> _____	
<b>Area: Faculty</b> _____			<b>Administrator</b> _____		

**Please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are not sure (NS), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) with the following statements by circling the appropriate one.**

1. I have heard of John Nelson Darby.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
2. I am familiar with the views of John Nelson Darby.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
3. Our institution's theology has traceable roots to John Nelson Darby.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
4. John Nelson Darby introduced the concept of dispensationalism.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
5. John Nelson Darby systematized dispensationalism.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
6. John Nelson Darby's distinction between Israel and the Church resulted from his literal interpretation of scripture.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
7. John Nelson Darby's views are widely taught in much of evangelical Christianity today.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
8. John Nelson Darby's distinctive approach to scripture interpretation is promoted at our institution.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
9. The pre-tribulational rapture of the Church is promoted at our institution.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
10. Dispensationalism is promoted at our institution.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD

11. The distinction between Israel and the church is promoted at our institution.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
12. John Nelson Darby's views on eschatology have helped to provide a foundation for our institution's direction on the end times.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
13. John Nelson Darby's views should be given more attention at institutions of Christian Higher Education.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
14. Institutions that promote literal hermeneutics, dispensationalism, and pre-tribulationalism have positively affected America and the world.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
15. The United States support for Israel is probably rooted in the dispensational view that Israel remains the people of God as distinct from the church as the New Testament people of God.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
16. Our institution has produced scholars who share the views of John Nelson Darby.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
17. It is important that our institution teaches literal interpretation of scripture.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
18. It is important that our institution teaches dispensationalism.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
19. It is important that our institution teaches the pre tribulation rapture.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
20. It is important that our institution teaches the distinction between Israel and the church.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD
21. Our institution is considered a dispensational, pre-tribulational, pre-millennial institution.  
SA                      A                      NS                      D                      SD

**Open-Ended Question**

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22. What would you say constitutes John Nelson Darby's lasting contribution to theological higher education?

APPENDIX C

JOHN NELSON DARBY'S HYMN

"I SHALL BE LIKE THY SON"

## I SHALL BE LIKE THY SON

And is it so—I shall be like Thy Son?  
Is this the grace which He for me has won?  
Father of glory, (thought beyond all thought!)—  
In glory, to His own blest likeness brought!

Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?  
Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see  
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,  
Myself the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be: Thy love had not its rest  
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest.  
That love that gives not as the world, but shares  
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Nor I alone; Thy loved ones all, complete  
In glory, round Thee there with joy shall meet,  
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,  
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

John Nelson Darby

APPENDIX D

DARBY'S TRANSLATION OF ISAIAH 32

## ISAIAH

### Chapter 32

<sup>1</sup>Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. <sup>2</sup>And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. <sup>3</sup>And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken; <sup>4</sup>and the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. <sup>5</sup>The vile man shall be no more called noble, nor the churl said to be bountiful: <sup>6</sup>for the vile man will speak villainy, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against Jehovah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. <sup>7</sup>The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the meek with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. <sup>8</sup>But the noble deviseth noble things; and to noble things doth he stand. <sup>9</sup>Rise up, ye women that are at ease, hear my voice; ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech. <sup>10</sup>In a year and [some] days shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; for the vintage shall fail, the ingathering shall not come. <sup>11</sup>Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones; strip you, and make you bare, and gird [sackcloth] on your loins! <sup>12</sup>They shall smite on the breasts [in lamentation] for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vineyards. <sup>13</sup>Upon the land of my people shall come up thistles [and] briars, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city. <sup>14</sup>For the palace shall be deserted, the multitude of the city shall be forsaken; hill and watchtower shall be caves for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; <sup>15</sup>until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. <sup>16</sup>And judgment shall inhabit the wilderness, and righteousness dwell in the fruitful field. <sup>17</sup>And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. <sup>18</sup>And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in



quiet resting-places. <sup>19</sup>And it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place. <sup>20</sup>Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

APPENDIX E  
DARBY'S COMMENTARY OF ISAIAH 32 FROM HIS  
*SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE*

## CHAPTER 32

### **Messiah Shall Reign In Righteousness: Full Earthly Peace**

Then, in chapter 32, the Messiah should reign in righteousness and set everything morally in order. Zion would in fact be a wilderness until the Spirit was poured out from on high, and then it should become a Carmel; and that which before had passed for a Carmel should be counted comparatively but a wilderness. Righteousness should be established everywhere, and peace, the fruit of righteousness, when the hail should come down upon the lofty ones who bear no fruit; and the city, the organization of human pride, should be utterly abased. The last verse appears to me to speak of the blessedness of full earthly peace.

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