

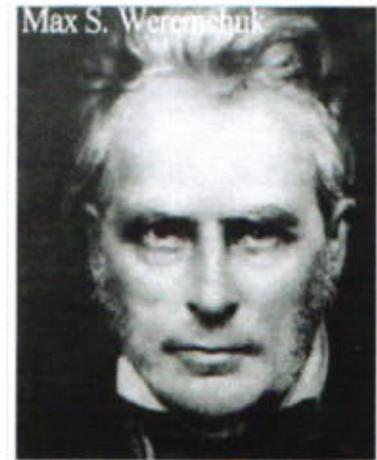
John Nelson Darby

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John Nelson Darby, (November 18, 1800 - April 29, 1882) was an Anglo-Irish evangelist, an influential figure among the original Plymouth Brethren, and considered the father of modern Dispensationalism.

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John Nelson Darby

Biography

Early years

John Nelson Darby was born in Westminster, London of an Anglo-Irish landowning family and christened at St Margaret's on 3 March 1801. He was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated Classical Gold Medallist in 1819. (His middle name is for his godfather, the family friend Lord Nelson).

Darby embraced Christianity during his studies. He joined an inn of court but felt that being a lawyer was inconsistent with his religious belief, and so chose ordination as an Anglican clergyman in Ireland, "lest he should sell his talents to defeat justice". (There is no evidence that he studied theology). In 1825, Darby was ordained deacon of the established Church of Ireland and the following year as priest.

Middle years

Darby became a curate and distinguished himself for his successful ministry among the [Roman Catholic] peasants of his parish; he later claimed to have won hundreds of converts to the Church of Ireland. However, the conversions ended when William Magee, the Archbishop of Dublin, ruled that converts were obliged to swear allegiance to George IV as rightful king of Ireland.

Darby resigned his curacy in protest. Soon after, in October of 1827, he fell from a horse and was seriously injured. He later stated that it was during this time that he recognized that the "kingdom" described in the [Book of Isaiah] and elsewhere in the [Old Testament] was entirely different from the [Christian church]. It seems clear that his ideas were developed in reaction to his disillusionment with the Church of Ireland.

Over the next five years, he developed the principles of his mature theology--most notably his conviction that the very notion of a clergyman was the sin against the Holy Spirit, because it limited the recognition that the Holy Spirit could speak through any member of the Church. During this time he joined an interdenominational meeting of believers who (including A. J. Groves, Edward Cronin, Mr. Bellett and Mr. Hutchinson) to "break bread" together in Dublin as a symbol of their unity in Christ. By 1832, this group had grown and began to identify

themselves as a distinct Christian assembly. As they traveled and began new assemblies in Ireland and England, they formed the movement now known as the Plymouth Brethren.

Darby did not formally declare his separation from the Church of Ireland until 1832, at the Powerscourt Conference, an annual meeting of Bible students organized by his friend, the wealthy widow Lady Powerscourt (Theodosia Wingfield Powerscourt)]. That conference was also where he first described his discovery of the "secret Rapture."

Later years

Darby travelled widely in Europe and Britain in the 1830s and 1840s, and established many Brethren assemblies. In 1848, he became involved in a complex dispute over the proper method for maintaining shared standards of discipline in different assemblies that resulted in a split between "Open" Brethren and "Exclusive" Brethren. After that time, he was recognized as the dominant figure among the Exclusives. He made at least 5 missionary journeys to North America between 1862 and 1877. He worked mostly in New England, Ontario, and the Great Lakes Region, but took one extended journey from Toronto to Sydney by way of San Francisco, Hawaii, and New Zealand. He used his classical skills to translate the Bible from the original texts. In English he wrote a Synopsis of the Bible and many other scholarly religious articles. He wrote hymns and poems, the most famous being, "*Man of Sorrows* (<http://www.plymouthbrethren.com/jndms.mv?bf=1>)". He was also a Bible Commentator.

He died in [1882] and is buried in Bournemouth, Dorset, England with the following text engraved on his tombstone:

John Nelson Darby
As Unknown and Well Known
Departed to be with Christ
April 29th, 1882

Aged 81

2 Corinthians 5: 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.

JND



John Nelson Darby's grave site

Later Influence

Darby is noted in the theological world as the father of "dispensationalism." He originated the "secret rapture" theory wherein Christ will snatch away his true believers from this world without warning. Dispensationalist beliefs about the fate of the Jews and the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel put dispensationalists at the forefront of Christian Zionism. They may have influenced the British government to issue the Balfour Declaration 1917, and have certainly had an effect on United States foreign policy under the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Quotations

- "Oh, the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a Living Christ in glory, and being

careful for nothing but His interests down here." - J.N.D.

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!

See also

- The writings of John Nelson Darby (<http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/>)
- The Exclusive Brethren - The only 'Exclusive Brethren' endorsed site (<http://www.theexclusivebrethren.com/>)
- My Brethren: Biography: J. N. Darby (<http://www.mybrethren.org/bios/framjnd.htm>)
- Dispensationalism
- List of people known as the father or mother of something
- Plymouth Brethren
- Darby & Other Resources (http://plymouthbrethren.org/author.asp?author_id=7)
- End times
- Fundamentalist Christianity
- Cyrus I. Scofield
- Miles J. Stanford
- List of former pupils of Westminster

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Categories: 1800 births | 1882 deaths | Christian fundamentalism | Christian evangelicalism | Old Westminsters | Bible translators

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