

JOHN NELSON DARBY: PIONEER OF DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

by David L. Larsen

With the collapse of Puritanism and the disengagement of Pietism, a dreadful abyss of unbelief and scepticism opened up in the west.¹ The driving force into this darkness was called "the Enlightenment" or "the Aufklarung" in Germany. The tip toward self-centeredness and self-worship actually took place when renaissance humanism took a left turn as when Ficino in the Florentine Academy replaced nine Psalms with the *Enneads* in 1487 in his *Matins*.² One of the consequences of the rapid desupernaturalization of the west was a mounting doubt about the genuineness of Biblical prophecy. This was sure to be a fatality.

The struggle against eschatology was part of liberalism's massive reconstruction. Paul Hazzard in his *The Crisis of the European Conscience* traces the intellectual shattering of Christian foundations at the end of the 17th century. In his Gifford Lectures of 1973-74, Owen Chadwick documents what he aptly terms *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*.³ Darwinism's refusal to have recourse to the Biblical account of creation with regard to origins was another powerful force in reshaping western thought. Engels, the colleague of Karl Marx was a disciple of David Strauss of Germany who denied that Jesus ever lived. Naturalism spread throughout Europe. Renan of France stripped Christ of all supernaturalism. Religious belief sharply declined. Bertrand Russell's father believed that all religion would soon disappear. Still what Chadwick calls "the confident mood of the Enlightenment" couldn't really satisfy Renan who was extremely melancholy in his later years. In 1871 he wondered aloud "Is life worth living when we see the ruin of everything we have loved? Happy is the man who believes like Augustine in *The City of God* and can die comforted."⁴ Even the French positivist, Auguste Comte, had his wife receive extreme unction and five days after her death began his own daily prayers.

Incubated in the radicalism of Rousseau and Voltaire, the French Revolution may have initially tantalized some Englishmen (like Wordsworth and Coleridge), but its violence and excesses terrified most and must be seen as part of the matrix for the Great Awakening in England and elsewhere. As is often the case such drastic upheaval give impetus to the renewal of eschatological interest. We have already mentioned the French Prophets and the "convulsionaries" who studied prophecy.⁵

In his provocative study of millennialism and the French Revolution, Clark Garrett shows us how a French prophetess from Perigord, Suzette Labroussa went at this time to Rome to argue that the times were foretold in Revelation and that a stupendous eschatological event was imminent.⁶ Though hailed by some as the new "Joan of Arc," she had a hard time of it in Rome. This was a kind of "revolutionary mysticism" with a definite Joachaite overlay. She saw herself as the new Eve and looked for the imminent return of Christ. She ended up in the Bastille with virtually no followers to survive her.

The mystical *Avignon Society* came into existence in Berlin in 1779 and trumpeted the imminent advent of Christ's reign on earth. Swedenborg as we have seen widely promulgated his very idiosyncratic views and in 1800 one of his followers in the Irish House used Daniel and Revelation to oppose union with England. Even J.B. Priestly the Unitarian of note advanced millennial views. His ministry was in England also in the United States where the Unitarians among the Founding Fathers attended his services in Philadelphia. Even John Wesley in the face of a series of earthquakes in London in

1750 saw that "God gave the people a second warning."⁷ All of this and much more that Garrett documents bespeaks "the remarkable surge of interest in the old prophecies!"

In all of this, the spiritual journey of a young and deeply intense Irish minister of the Church of England, John Nelson Darby, becomes of special interest to us. His views and studies have exerted a powerful and pervasive influence on the views of Biblical prophecy ever since-and we now turn to examine the man and his legacy.

In the swirling vortex of radical unbelief and revolution, we shall trace a remarkable resurgence of eschatological thinking. At the apex of this recrudescence was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). His lineage was Irish and English. Born in London the youngest of six sons (there were three daughters also), he was baptized at St. Margaret's Church in 1801. His life-long preference was for infant baptism. His early education was at Westminster Public School in London. Effectively losing his mother when he was very young at the separation of his parents, he was sent to Dublin by his father in 1815 where he entered Trinity College.⁸ He was a gifted student and early on met J. G. Bellett who was to be a life-long friend and colleague among the Brethren.

Darby's first vocational direction was the "law" and he was admitted to the bar in 1819. Two years later he was converted under the influence of the Bible commentator Thomas Scott but continued to languish under the "rod of the law" (as in Romans 7) for some years. At one point he was drawn by the church of Rome but decided rather for the Church of Ireland (Anglican) in which he was ordained as a deacon in 1825 even though his father disinherited him with considerable displeasure. He was always touched by the plight of the poor and served charges in destitute largely Roman Catholic areas as in Calary in the mountains of Wicklow. While recuperating from a riding accident, he stayed at the Pennefather home in Dublin, where he met Frances Newman (brother of the famous John Henry Newman and himself later a missionary to Muslim lands and a casualty from the faith). Frances Newman shares his impressions of the non-descript Darby. In this time-frame, Darby entered into the deliverance of Romans 8.

He was increasingly uneasy with the non-doctrinal approach of the established church and disappointed that so many of his clergy colleagues "had no great aims or theological enthusiasm."⁹ The union of church and state seemed more and more "Babylonish." He mourned "the ruins of the church" all about him. He thought he should sell his small library and read only the Bible but 2 Timothy 4:13 arrested this folly. He never formally left the Church of Ireland but began to minister the Word and break bread with believers in assemblies which multiplied around the world. He studied the Scriptural text in the original, wrote voluminously (his Collected Works go to 34 volumes) and traveled indefatigably including many trips to the United States. He translated the Bible into three languages. The return of our Lord was a major theme in his ministry.

In chapter 11 we referred to the famous Albury Conferences which began in 1826 at the estate of Henry Drummond in England where serious prophetic study was done and where among many others Edward Irving veered toward a doctrine of premillennialism, a belief in the near return of Christ and a modified historicism. The outrageous and sensationalistic arguments of Dave MacPherson in his *The Incredible Cover-Up* and *The Rapture Plot* are largely *argumentum ad hominem* and have been thoroughly rebutted.¹⁰ Patterson and Walker have sought to attribute to the Irvingites "the essential doctrinal tenets of premillennialism." J.L. Burns has well exposed the reductionism of "a single source, trickle-down theory of the formation of the

movement."¹¹ Whence then shall we trace Darby's strong dispensational views and his conviction about a pretribulation rapture?

Albury and Irving may be part of the mix which moved him to premillennialism, but the Powerscourt conferences in Ireland at the great estate bearing that name in the 1830s would seem to be a more decisive influence. Lady Powerscourt had attended the first Albury Conference in 1826 and began similar study meetings at her estate in the 1830s where many Brethren including Darby came and ministered. In fact at one point Darby and Lady Powerscourt were engaged to be married but because of the disapproval of some of the Brethren, the engagement was broken and Lady Powerscourt died at the age of 36, it was said of a broken heart. This for all practical purposes concluded the Powerscourt Conferences.

Darby built his doctrine of the church on Christ and the believer's being seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6 et al). Poythress shows how this focus on Christ and his "any moment" coming rather than the millennium added immense appeal to these prophetic ideas.¹² This meant "separate but parallel roles and destinies for Israel and the Church," the one being Christ's earthly and the other Christ's heavenly people. Darby heralded a general return to the ante-Nicene premillennial position which had waxed hot and cold through church history, but he now opens the distinction between Christ's coming for His Church and then Christ's later coming with His Church. Such a distinction has not been clearly articulated through the centuries but he insists that "It is no mistake to be always expecting the Lord to return."¹³ This is what he preached at Powerscourt. Why?

In his doctoral dissertation, Larry Crutchfield wrote on *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor*. The dispensational question is not really relevant here (although the schematization of redemptive history is found in Augustine's seven ages and even in the Covenantal ages of works and grace). Crutchfield shows that Irvingite eschatology was not clear on many issues and lacks consistent imminency and any treatment of Daniel's 70th week. Darby, on the other hand, built his eschatology "from a literal hermeneutic and the distinction between Israel and the Church," with a strong emphasis on the imminency of the rapture.¹⁴

Darby was an avid student of Scripture. None will deny this even though his writing style was somewhat convoluted. He faced a mass of prophetic data in Holy Scripture. Pseudo-Ephraem (as early as 373 and as late as 627 A.D.) believed the last days were in effect and taught clearly: "All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms of the world because of our sins."¹⁵

In the face of the same welter of data we have already mentioned that Thomas Shepard, first president of Harvard, seemed to speak of two phases in the Second Advent of our Lord. The complexity of the Biblical representation seemed to require two phases of the Second Advent. After all, the Advent was in itself in two phases, the first in humiliation to die and the second in glory to rule.

Similarly, Morgan Edwards (1722-1795), a Baptist who preached first in England and then in America, was a co-founder of Brown University in Rhode Island, used a literal hermeneutic and taught that believers would disappear in the tribulation period, meeting Christ in the air and returning to the Father's house above. He does not stress the difference between Israel and the Church nor does he dig into Daniel 9:24-27. Still he is clearly a proto-rapturist.¹⁶ Increase Mather had something of a rapture doctrine. This then was the data Darby faced along with Christians across the ages and he came to his clear conclusion—two-stage rapture.

In his classic study on *The Parousia in the New Testament*, A.L. Moore concludes that "the parousia hope (the hope of our Lord's Second Advent) belongs to the very fabric and substance of the New Testament."¹⁷ He shows that there is an unwavering insistence on the "nearness" of this event and that this expectation is immensely relevant because it is a fundamental basis for the "driving sense of mission" in the early church.¹⁸

The background according to Moore is Israel's expectation of God's imminent visit to his people in salvation and in judgment which gave rise to later apocalypticism which flowered in the inter-testamental period. Jesus and Paul were at one with regard to imminency. The delay of the Advent was a keen disappointment to the church and many fell away from Advent expectation and do to this day (cf Peter wrestling with the delay in 2 Peter 3:1-9). Although there were slender intimations of an interval, the coming was near! Jesus said John might live to see it (John 21:20-23). Paul believed he would live to see the return of Christ (cf 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 7:26-31). The hope of the translation of the church is nowhere delimited.¹⁹ Christ is at the door! Believers are to be constantly watchful. History will come to an end. The task is urgent. "The day" is the motive to obedience and patience (Hebrews 10:37, James 5:7-9).

Ignorance of the date underscores the need for watchfulness (1 Peter 4:7, Revelation 1:1, etc.). There is an acute tension between "the now" and "the not-yet." Israel had not been ready but the Church is to be ready according to the words of Jesus (Matthew 25:1-13). The Church is to be an eschatological community in days made possible by the long-suffering of our God and designed to bring many to repentance and faith. Thus early in the 19th century the likes of Hatley Frere and Lewis Way sought to reverse Augustine's severe delimitation of eschatology.²⁰

Since there is a signless, imminent event—the "any moment" return of Christ to the meeting in the air "like a thief in the night," and there is also a glorious return in power with 10,000s and 1000s of the saints and angels when "every eye would see Him" to defeat the Anti-Christ and his minions at Armageddon and set up His kingdom and rule for a thousand years, is it not possible to reasonably infer that these are two separate and distinct events? Interestingly, R.C. Sproul (now a preterist) sees the Second Advent in two phases—70 A.D. and at the end of the age.²¹ Where did Darby get the idea of "the rapture?" I submit that it is a reasonable inference and that he has many forerunners as the concept has been ripening across many centuries—he proclaimed it at Powerscourt. Now, what did he say? John Nelson Darby stood with the legion of premillennialists such as Augustus Toplady (who wrote *Rock of Ages, cleft for me*) who unequivocally said:

"I am one of the old-fashioned people who believe the doctrine of the Millennium and that there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead—first, of the just; second, of the unjust; which last resurrection will not commence till one thousand years after the resurrection of the elect. In this glorious interval of one thousand years Christ will reign in Person over the kingdom of the just."²²

But Darby led in a significant further step and posited a pretribulational translation of the church. This is not alarming inasmuch as every great doctrine of the faith saw further definition and clarification in various ages of history, such as Christology in the early centuries; soteriology in the Reformation, etc., but always consistent with and never contradictory to what had earlier been revealed. This is similar to progressive revelation in Scripture itself.²³ We do not find anyone earlier than Darby speaking so

explicitly of "the rapture of the church" (derived from *rapturo* or "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17) in a clear differentiation between the two phases of Christ's Second Advent.

Darby's express conviction is that "the divine glory is ever the end of all things."²⁴ He is also crystal clear (as C.I. Scofield was not) that "Salvation is always by grace."²⁵ It is interesting that he visited with D. L. Moody and shared much in common but they parted company on the question of free will. Some have eschewed Darby because he was scrappy and feisty and controversial. This is the ultimate fallacy of *argumentum ad hominem*. Do we torpedo the teachings of Calvin because of his tyrannical rule of Geneva or because of his responsibility for the death of such as Servetus? Or are Luther's doctrines inadmissible because of his anti-Semitism? The temperament of Darby is irrelevant to the truthfulness of his teaching. We must look at what he wrote and preached.

In analyzing Darby's significant *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, we see in his treatment of Matthew 10:23 (dealing with the mission of outreach which will not have completed all of the cities of Israel "before the Son of Man comes") that this testimony, interrupted by the church-age, would resume in Israel, back in their land, "until Christ should return."²⁶ In like fashion the welcome that Israel would accord the Messiah would come in the Eschaton (Matthew 23:39).²⁷ So he sees much in the Olivet Discourse that has to do with the Jews in the tribulation period, with an intensification of persecution during the last final 3 1/2 years. He sees much that was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. but the bulk of the prediction having to do with the end-time.²⁸ Bishop Ellicott recommended this work. Few of his critics have actually read him on "The Dispensations and the Remnants or the Apostasies" as he called them.²⁹

In his constant itineration (seven times to the U.S.), he often spoke of "the rapture" of the church and we find typical material in Volume XI of *The Collected Writings*, edited by his long-time friend and colleague, William Kelly. A major issue for Darby becomes the degree to which Christ gives insight to the disciples not as they represent the Jewish remnant of the end-time but the Church. Clearly the Church has been introduced to the apostles (Matthew 16:18, 18:17). He is very clear on the Day of the Lord or a great epoch of judgment and wrath closing this age.³⁰ He sees spiritual decline not the conversion of the world. Darby really is one of the first to grapple with who the saints in the tribulation are if the church is raptured. The crowned elders are in heaven during the tribulation.

The translation of the Church to heaven is the exegetical and logical outcome in view of the heavenly nature and destiny of the Church. The saints on earth in the tribulation then are the converted Jewish remnant (Romans 11:26) and that great host of Gentiles converted through their testimony (Revelation 7:9ff). He cites as evidence the promise of the living Christ to the Church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:10).³¹ He leans heavily on the prophecy of the 490 years (Daniel 9:24-27). This is an old theme in the church (back to Hippolytus as we have seen) but no one up to Darby's time has been as probing as he on this issue.

Darby sees the disastrous effect of an eroded expectancy: "They lost the expectation of the Church and sank down into hierarchical power and into the world, into comfort and pleasure."³² Of course many previously had seen imminency—including Calvin who wrote "Be prepared to expect Him every day, or rather every moment." So the Westminster Divines and J. Barton Payne who in our time has opposed pretribulationism.³³ But none of these in contrast to Darby made any real effort to show

how Christ's coming could be at any moment if a large agenda remained to be fulfilled before he returned. Darby well argued that Christ's coming was imminent and that nothing had to happen before he appears!

The prophetic insights of John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren (so-called because Plymouth in England was such a center of their life) have been influential to a degree disproportionate to their actual numbers. The "rapture" teaching particularly touched the Congregationalist C.L. Scofield (as we shall see) and the Presbyterian James H. Brookes and through them to the outer reaches of the United States and around the world. Seminaries and Bible Institutes, missionary societies and even many denominations have built on the very clear foundation of dispensationalism and the "any-moment" rapture. In his widely read *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, Ernest R. Sandeen does not hesitate to lay the foundations in John Nelson Darby and his dispensational premillennialism.³⁴

Sandeen shows that Lady Powerscourt did attend one of the Albury Conferences but to use this to explain the origins of Darby's rapture position is a strain. Neither Edward Irving nor his supposed source, Margaret MacDonald, held to an any-moment rapture.³⁵ The great themes of the Albury Conference which so gripped Irving were the arrival of the endtimes, the approach of the Anti-Christ and the soon return of the Lord Jesus. Two other Scottish preachers of eminence and more balance than Irving are Andrew Bonar (1810-1892) and his older brother Horatius (1808-1889). They were leaders in the Free Church Disruption which was spearheaded by Thomas Chalmers in 1843. Both brothers served significant pastorates and each moderated the General Assembly. Horatius Bonar wrote a valiant defense of premillennialism for which due credit was given to the early influence of Edward Irving. This work, *Prophetical Landmarks*, is a worthy statement of the case for classical premillennialism but close examination does not disclose a trace of the any-moment rapture.³⁶

Darby himself said that it was 2 Thessalonians 2 that led him to his view of the two phases of the Second Advent. The issue, as we have seen, is how can we hold to a signless imminent return of the Savior and also to readable signs of a glorious descent to the Mount of Olives and Armageddon in the Day of the Lord epoch of judgment? They must be two different phases of the parousia (coming again). To our own day the question of imminence is at the very crux of the differences among evangelicals on the Second Advent.³⁷

But even among Darby's own Brethren movement these differences existed. Some serious lesions opened quite soon which divided the Brethren into the Exclusives with Darby and Kelly and then the Open with B.W. Newton and George Muller. These painful schisms had several operative causes which were mainly matters of organization and fellowship parameters. Yet B. W. Newton and his cousin Dr. S. P. Tregelles, the distinguished textual critic, both denied the any moment rapture and preferred a post-tribulational return, thus denying imminence. Newton was forced to withdraw some "careless" statements about the sinlessness of Christ and this plus the eschatological differences sundered his fellowship with Darby.

Newton would have no part in preterism or historicism—he was an unabashed futurist. Yet he believed that Christ's coming for his own and his coming with his own would be the same day.³⁸ He sees the restoration of Israel to the land in unbelief and their conversion during the Millennium. He wrote at length about the ten nation confederacy of the end-time as centered in Babylon.³⁹ He believed that the Antichrist would be Greek.

Dr. Tregelles actually left the Brethren in the controversies and returned to the Church of England. He attributed the origin of the "secret" rapture to an utterance in an Irvingite meeting (about 1832), "But whether anyone ever asserted such a thing or not, it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose."⁴⁰ One could only wish that the good doctor's historiography were done as carefully as his outstanding work on the Greek text of the New Testament. The root difference he has with Darby is on the reality of the two peoples of God. He speaks of "the Jewish waste basket" used by Darby. He takes great pains to explain away the meaning of Jesus' word WATCH.

Notwithstanding the internecine wars early on, the great preponderance of those in the Brethren movement to this day follow Darby in his insistence on the any-moment coming. The great classic works of William Kelly, F. W. Grant, C.H.M., Samuel Ridout, Edward Dennett, H.A. Ironside (early with the Brethren), F. A. Tatford, all reflect a vivid expectancy of the sound of the trumpet. What Sibley Towner calls "the ineluctable call of apocalyptic" has deeply gripped these folk.⁴¹ Later in this century the great Baptist preacher Alexander Maclaren declared: "The primitive church thought a great deal more about the coming of Christ than about death; more about His coming than about Heaven." So did these folks.

ENDNOTES

¹ David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) 328ff. Isaiah Berlin: "The Enlightenment is the most powerful movement in European thought... all principles of explanation must be the same-REASON."

² Thomas Fleming, "Turn Left at the Renaissance," in *Chronicles of Culture*, June, 2002, 10ff, also in the same issue, Hugh Barbour, "All Roads Lead to Florence," 19ff. In a sense the roots of the Enlightenment are in Renaissance humanism.

³ Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). "The Victorian Father goes to Church; the Edwardian son stays home. " How did this develop? Penetrating.

⁴ *ibid.* 252. Bertrand Russell's father predicted Christianity would disappear.

⁵ The classic study is Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in 18th Century England* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980). Shows how emigres from Huguenot persecution impacted England and how they were allied with Halle pietists (170ff). A magnificent study! Another fine work is J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millennialism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979). Ann Lee listened to George Whitefield.

⁶ Clark Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millennialism and the French Revolution in France and England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975) 22.

⁷ *ibid.* 153. Shows Richard Brothers (b. 1757 in Newfoundland) was an early devotee of British Israelite identification of Anglo Saxons as the 10 lost tribes. This movement puts a peculiar twist on the prophetic word, cf Anton Darms, *The Delusion of British-Israelism* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.) Best on this.

⁸ Throughout this section I am leaning heavily on the insights of Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby* (Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992). Darby had significant correspondence with the noted German theologian, Tholuck of Halle Darby's ministry in the mountains of Wicklow was greatly blessed as a thousand Roman Catholics came to Christ. He was deeply disappointed that his Bishop wanted them to give their pledge of allegiance to the English King. An error.

⁹ *ibid.* 40. J.G. Bellett brought Darby the news of the revival of prophetic study at Albury, 40 miles out of London. This fine book has been translated from German.

¹⁰ Dave MacPherson, *The Incredible Cover-up* (Medford, Oregon: Omega Publications, 1975); *The Rapture Plot* (Simpsonville, SC: Millennium III, 1995).

¹¹ J. Lanier Bums' review of "Our Unspeakable Comfort': Irving, Albury, and the Origin of the Pretribulation Rapture" by Mark Patterson and Andrew Walker in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July-September, 2000, 363ff. No single originator.

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- ¹² Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 15ff. Quotes Daniel Fuller: "Christ himself became their hope."
- ¹³ Max S. Weremchuk, op. cit. 129.
- ¹⁴ Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992) 177.
- ¹⁵ Thomas Ice and Timothy J. Demy, *The Return: Understanding Christ's Second Coming and the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999) 56ff.
- ¹⁶ Frank Marotta, *Morgan Edwards: An 18th Century Pretribulationist* (Morganville, NJ: Present Truth Publishers, 1995). Evangelist John Bray, a caustic critic of pretribulationism has conceded the Morgan Edwards reference.
- ¹⁷ A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 4. This stately study is in the respected *Novum Testamentum* series.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.* 5. He shows we cannot ignore Israel's Biblically based hope for a kingdom (cf Isa. 44:6-23, 46:9-13, 52:7-9, 24:23, 33:21-22, Zeph. 3: 15ff, etc.).
- ¹⁹ *ibid.* 119. Shows from Romans 13 that knowing the time pumps up ethics.
- ²⁰ *ibid.* 216. "The open, universal and unambiguous manifestation of the end can be postponed, but it is near!" 199. We must come to terms with this study.
- ²¹ R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 158ff. He acknowledges he is "still unsettled on some crucial matters."
- ²² R. J. Reid, *Remarks on the Millennialism and Kindred Teaching of Philip Mauro* (New York: Loizeaux, 1943) 5.
- ²³ Thomas D. Bernard, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949). These are the Bampton Lectures at Oxford in 1864.
- ²⁴ Larry V. Crutchfield, op. cit. 62.
- ²⁵ *ibid.* 57.
- ²⁶ J.N. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: III, Matthew-John* (London: G. Morrish, 1845) 72.
- ²⁷ *ibid.* 156. Written after his extensive ministry in Switzerland and France.
- ²⁸ *ibid.* 164. Considered by many to be his *magnum opus*.
- ²⁹ J. N. Darby, "The Dispensations and the Remnants" in *Collectanea: Being Some of the Subjects Considered at Leamington in the Year 1839*, in *The Serious Christian*, Series II, Volume X, 41ff.
- ³⁰ J. N. Darby, *The Collected Writings*, IV (London: Garrish n.d.) 66.
- ³¹ *ibid.* 247.
- ³² *ibid.* 320.
- ³³ Renald Showers, "The Imminence of Christ's Return" in *Israel My Glory*, February-March, 1996, 8.
- ³⁴ Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970, 1978) 59ff.
- ³⁵ Thomas D. Ice, "Margaret MacDonald" in *Encyclopedia of Premillennialism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996) 224f; F.F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972) 199. Points out that Tregelles was not converted until he was 19 years of age in 1832 so had no first hand acquaintance with anything earlier. It will be remembered that Bruce was a life-long Plymouth Brother.
- ³⁶ Horatius Bonar, *Prophetical Landmarks* (London: James Nisbet, 1876).
- ³⁷ Robert L. Thomas, "The Doctrine of Imminence in Two Recent Eschatological Systems," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December, 2000) 452-467); also Wayne A. Brindle, "Biblical Evidence for the Imminence of the Rapture," in *ibid.* 13 8ff. Gordon Lewis in his *Integrative Theology* co-authored with Bruce Demarest gives a strong argument (Volume III, 419) for "No countdown" for the Rapture, i.e. it could happen at any moment. There are no events prior to its occurrence. His position for the "pretribulation rapture of the institutional church" is inferred from the New Testament demand for the constant readiness of the church, 418.
- ³⁸ ed. George H. Fromow, *Teachers of the Faith and the Future: B. W. Newton and Dr. S.P. Tregelles* (London: Sovereign Grace Testimony, 1969) 59. The broad historic picture is drawn in Thomas Stewart Veitch, *The Story of the Brethren Movement* (London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.). Quite a rich study.
- ³⁹ B. W. Newton, *Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms* (London: Houlston and Sons, 1873) 254.
- ⁴⁰ S. P. Tregelles, *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming* (Scottsdale, PA: n.d.). 30. Tregelles did hold to the "reserved 70th seven" perspective, first propounded by Hippolytus. On another key approach, Bruce Ware of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, in his "Is the Church in View in Matthew 24-25?" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June, 1981, 158-172, grapples with the critical issue as to where is it Israel and where is it the Church in the Olivet Discourse. His position is that it is Israel essentially (the

pretibulation view), but with Walvoord he would affirm that the disciples can represent either Israel in the end-time or the church, depending on the immediate context.

⁴¹ W. Sibley Towner, "Apocalyptic" in ed. William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer, *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Louisville: WJK, 1995) 15.