

THE PNEUMATOLOGY
OF
JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800- 1882)

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Drew University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy

Larry Edward Dixon
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey
1985

© 1985

LARRY EDWARD DIXON

All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	ii
PREVIOUS STUDIES ON JOHN NELSON DARBY AND HIS THEOLOGY	viii
Chapter	
I. THE LIFE OF JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800-1882): "THE TERTULLIAN OF THESE LAST DAYS"	1
II. MAJOR CONTROLLING THEMES OF DARBY'S PNEUMATOLOGY . .	79
III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF DARBY'S PNEUMATOLOGY TO THE REST OF HIS THEOLOGY	171
IV. CONCLUSION	260
APPENDIX ONE: THE CHURCH'S "JEWELS": HAVE THEY BEEN FOUND AGAIN? A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN CALVIN, JOHN WESLEY, EDWARD IRVING, AND JOHN NELSON DARBY	281
APPENDIX TWO: THE IMPORTANCE OF JOHN NELSON DARBY AND THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN MOVEMENT IN THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGY	340
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	367

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my appreciation to those who have contributed greatly to the completion of this dissertation. I am grateful to my dissertation committee: Professor James Pain (chairman), Professor Michael Ryan, and Professor Russell Richey for their guidance and encouragement. Professor Richey's kind and insightful comments provided much of the inspiration for the focus and structure of this project.

It is difficult to put into words my thanks for the manner in which my wife Linda supported me during my graduate years. To our children, Brian and Amy, who endured many hours of Dad's being away from home, I express my gratitude. A special thanks is due to both sets of parents for their standing with me during these two years of research.

Lastly, I thank Dr. Michael Bauman, my colleague and friend, for his many words of challenge and his role as my personal "thorn in the flesh" to complete this project.

To all others who have had a part in this work, may I employ Darby's words to express my thanks:

"True joy is
to labor unnoticed
and to serve unseen."

INTRODUCTION

John Nelson Darby considered the doctrine of the person and work of the Holy Spirit to be that area of truth most needful of recovery by the Christian Church. The following quotations show that not only did he consider Pneumatology to be the critical issue of his day, but also to be the foundation and power by which the Christian life is to be structured and lived out in this world.

The statement which I make is this, that I believe the notion of a Clergyman to be the sin against the Holy Ghost in this dispensation. I am not talking of individuals willfully committing it, but that the thing itself is such as regards this dispensation, and must result in its destruction: the substitution of something for the power and presence of that holy, blessed, and blessing Spirit, by which this dispensation is characterised, and by which the unrenownedness of man, and the authority of man, holds the place which alone that blessed Spirit has power and title to fill, as that other Comforter which should abide forever.¹

The notion of a Clergyman involves the dispensation, where insisted upon, in the sin against the Holy Ghost. . . . The idea of a Clergyman, that is, of a humanly appointed office, taking the place and assuming the authority of the Spirit of God, necessarily involves (in its condemnation of what the Holy Ghost does do) in the sin against the Holy Ghost: and I defy any one to shew how it can be otherwise.²

¹William Kelly, ed., The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, 34 vols. (Kingston-On-Thames: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.), vol. I, p. 38. Hereafter cited as Collected Writings.

²Ibid., pp. 39-40.

So critical did Darby consider this area of theology that he compared it to Luther's Reformation battle for the doctrine of justification by faith:

There is, I fully believe, as real a question of God's truth as in Luther's days: I do not say as important a one; because in Luther's time the question was one of the ground of individual salvation- of the basis of our standing with God. Whereas the question now at issue is the position and standing of the Church, of the saints gathered when they are saved . . . The question now is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as forming and embodying the Church in unity . . . Besides, there are truths to which God recalls the saints as being important at such or such a time, as leading to peculiar and needed blessings, or as bearing of peculiar evils or dangers, and against which therefore the malice of the enemy will be particularly directed, to oppose or undermine them. Such I believe the doctrine of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church to-be at this time.³

For Darby, the need to recover the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was that which should have been engaging the attention of contemporary theological minds. According to Darby,

The present great truth, redemption being known, is the presence of the Holy Ghost, what made it expedient Christ should leave the disciples; the future truth- in present hope- the coming of the Lord for the⁴ saints, and then His own rights over the world.

Darby believed that the vital nature of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit had been overlooked or covered-up by his theological predecessors. Although God used the "imperfect

³Ibid., vol. III, pp. 341-342.

⁴Letters of JND, vol. II, p. 449. Hereafter cited as Letters.

truth" of the Reformation, "now," he says, "[the truth of God] works where all is confusion, to bring in divine order and faith through the word."⁵

Many of Darby's statements reveal that his own personal experience provided the intense drive for the recovery of biblical Pneumatology. As he reflected upon his initial contact with those who would form the "Plymouth Brethren", Darby recounted that it was the principle of "two or three gathered together", in the power of the Spirit, which first pulled him into the orbit of that young movement.⁶ This reference to Matthew 18:20 ("where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them") became a kind of shibboleth for the Brethren, and was often linked by them to the doctrine of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. As Darby later remembered it,

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore, the essential principle of unity with His presence for . . . wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.⁷

A further statement shows the importance that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit assumed in Darby's own ministry. Speaking of the two doctrines of the presence of the Holy Ghost and

⁵Ibid., vol. III, p. 131.

⁶Ibid., vol. II, p. 209.

⁷Ibid., vol. I, p. 94

the second coming of Christ, Darby emphasizes that

these are the two truths brought out in these days, throwing much light on the truth of the first coming. They have been consciously my theme these fifty years and more.⁸

As he reviews (probably around the year 1875) his half-century in the Christian ministry, Darby uses similar language and says that,

The great principles which have guided me (both flowing from one great truth: the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven): [were] the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church and His testimony in the world.⁹

Throughout his writings Darby emphasizes that a proper understanding of, and response to, the truths about the Holy Spirit are the key to living the Christian life. For example, Darby states:

As to the practical state of the church, I know of no truth more important- the christian state hangs upon it. It is through the presence of the Comforter I know I am in Christ . . . baptised into one body . . . sealed.¹⁰

In another place Darby emphasizes this same idea:

All I look for is that this principle should be owned, because it is owning the Holy Ghost Himself, and that to me is everything.¹¹

⁸Ibid., vol. II, p. 499 (letter written in 1879).

⁹Ibid., vol. II, p. 359.

¹⁰Ibid., vol. III, pp. 469-470. For our discussion of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, see pp. 145-148 and pp. 208-210, *infra*. For a brief treatment of Darby's doctrine of deliverance and the Spirit's sealing, see pp. 149-157.

¹¹Ibid., vol. I, p. 96.

In another place Darby testifies that

A thousand precious things concerning my state with God and the Father depend on the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and my consciousness of these things abounding as life through Him. He is the Comforter come down withal, on which all our condition depends.¹²

Furthermore, he states that "He is the power of all good here. . . . He is the power of testimony."¹³ "This presence of the Holy Ghost down here", Darby asserts, ". . . is the key and centre of all that belongs to the christian state."¹⁴

All direct action of God as to the creature, and finally in divine things, from creation on, is by the Spirit in scripture: no good thought in us but from the Spirit, no wisdom.¹⁵

A further illustration of the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to Darby is revealed in his belief that this area of biblical truth is worth battling over. Said Darby, "it is time we should rouse ourselves and buckle on our armour, if we have what is worth contending for."¹⁶

Why is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit so important to Darby? How does his Pneumatology relate to the rest of his theology? What are the distinctive features of his understanding of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit? If Pneumatology is really "worth fighting for," an understanding of this warrior's life and background will aid us in

¹²Ibid., vol. III, p. 467.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., vol. II, pp. 359-360.

¹⁵Ibid., vol. III, p. 199.

¹⁶Ibid., vol. I, p. 104.

developing an overview of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

In chapter one we will survey the research which has been done on Darby and his theology; acquaint ourselves with the general details of Darby's life and the formation of the Plymouth Brethren Movement; and, though this dissertation does not have as its primary concern the sources of Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we will briefly point out some of the influences which possibly informed his thinking in this area of theology.

PREVIOUS STUDIES DONE
ON JOHN NELSON DARBY
AND HIS THEOLOGY

Only eleven writers, apparently, have treated either the theology of Darby or the historical emergence of the Plymouth Brethren (with emphasis on Darby's formative role). That he is an important theologian who had a great impact on various areas of biblical and theological studies will be shown in our second appendix ("The Importance of John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren Movement in the History of Conservative Theology"). In this section we will take notice, in chronological order, of the studies of various aspects of Darby's theology which have been done up to this present investigation.

The earliest dissertation is one which focuses upon Darby's doctrine of the ministry. Done by Albert Arnal in 1889, it is entitled "Le Ministère au Point de Vue Darbyste" (These Fac. de Theol. Prot. de Paris).

John Howard Goddard wrote his Th. D. dissertation in 1948 (Dallas Theological Seminary) on "The Contribution of John Nelson Darby to Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology." Of its 434 pages, only three list his bibliographic sources. In the third chapter ("A Summary of Darby's

Bibliology, Theology Proper, Angelology, and Anthropology"),
Goddard briefly states that,

While the writings of Darby contain a plethora of material concerning the work of the Spirit, particularly in connection with the assembly, there is relatively little regarding His person. While affirming that He is a person, Darby submits that His personality is often unintentionally overlooked because His being within the believer is mixed up with the working of the believer's mind. Darby holds that the Spirit is equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son but offers nothing concerning the thorny question of His procession.¹

While Goddard does treat Darby's view of the baptism of the Spirit, the purpose of his thesis is not to give a detailed summary of Darby's Pneumatology.

Also in 1948 a B.D. dissertation simply entitled "The Plymouth Brethren" was done by Gordon B. Woodcock for McMaster University.

Clarence Bass wrote his Ph. D. dissertation for the University of Edinburgh in 1952. Entitled "The Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of J.N. Darby, with Special Reference to its Contribution to the Plymouth Movement", it was published by Eerdmans in 1960 under the title Backgrounds to Dispensationalism. Except for his comments on Darby's ecclesiology, Bass says little about Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

¹John Howard Goddard, "The Contribution of John Nelson Darby to Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology." Th. D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1948, p. 47. Hereafter cited as Goddard, "Contribution."

Five years later (in 1957), Daniel P. Fuller evaluated one of the more thoroughly researched areas of Darby's theology. His dissertation was entitled "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism" and was done at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In addition to the biography done by Turner in 1944, only one thesis seeks to supplement a survey of the details of Darby's life. This Th. M. thesis by Howard E. Sturgeon is entitled "The Life of John Nelson Darby" and was done in 1957 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Though Sturgeon is helpful in suggesting the possible influence of men such as John Walker on Darby's thought, the purpose of his work clearly is not to develop Darby's Pneumatology.

Clifton Doggett Gray wrote his Ph. D. dissertation on "The Meaning of Membership as Perceived by Plymouth Brethren" in 1963. Done at Boston University, this work surveys the rise and development of a splinter-group within the Brethren movement, commonly designated as "Plymouth Brethren II." Gray then evaluates this group from the perspective of the psychology of religion. His comments relate only tangentially to Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit.²

²For example, in evaluating the ecclesiastical rift between Darby and George Mueller. According to Gray, "The argument was caused not so much by divergent doctrine as it was by the clashing personalities of the two men and the absolute lack of any kind of organization, central or local" (p. 175). Gray's study does relate to Darby's apparent aversion to human organization in the local church and his understanding of the Spirit's "presidency."

Michael Robert Hagan's Ph. D. dissertation (University of Washington, 1967) concentrates on one prominent aspect of Darby's theology. Entitled "The Concept of Christian Ministry As Revealed in the Writing of John Nelson Darby, (1800-1882)", Hagan's work is quite helpful in providing an overview of Darby's teaching on ministry and preaching. His short section on "The Holy Spirit in Ministry" (pp. 127-131) will merit treatment later in this work. Hagan's conclusion regarding Darby's view of preaching is worth noting. He says that Darby's perspective

was a carrying to a logical end some of his doctrines, such as of the uniqueness and supremacy of the Scriptures and the objective reality and activity of the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.³

With regard to the eschatology of Darby (perhaps the area of his theology which has received the most attention), William Bell's dissertation "A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology," done at New York University in 1967, takes the position that the concept of a pretribulation rapture⁴ is not to be viewed

³ Michael Robert Hagan, "The Concept of Christian Ministry As Revealed in the Writing of John Nelson Darby, (1800-1882)." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1967, p. 264. Hereafter cited as Hagan, "Ministry."

⁴ The term "pretribulation rapture" may be defined as the belief that Christ will return to "catch away" His saints prior to the Tribulation and the subsequent setting-up of His millennial kingdom on the earth. Based largely on I Thessalonians 4:16-17, this doctrine includes the beliefs that the first stage of the Second Coming will be secret and that it may occur at any moment. The Brethren fondly quoted Darby's statement that "there is no event between me and heaven" (Letters, vol. I, p. 330).

as part of historic Christian orthodoxy, but finds its basis in J. N. Darby and the Plymouth Brethren Movement.⁵

In 1968 Robert Worcester Shinn wrote "The Plymouth Brethren and Ecumenical Protestantism." As a Th. D. dissertation for Union Theological Seminary, this work both surveys and analyzes the characteristics of nineteenth-century Brethrenism. The primary characteristics Shinn discusses are the Brethren beliefs that:

- (1) The Bible is the only rule of faith and life;
- (2) "Believers' baptism" is an expression of one's inner faith (though some early Brethren were paedobaptists);
- (3) The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated every Sunday;
- (4) Ecclesiastical organization must be downplayed and an emphasis put upon the "presidency" of the Holy Spirit;
- (5) An ordained ministry is unscriptural and should⁶ be replaced by a reliance upon lay leadership.

The purpose of Shinn's dissertation is not only to understand the historical circumstances which gave rise to the Plymouth Brethren Movement but also to stress what Shinn believes is a pressing need for ecumenical dialogue on the part of the Brethren with other religious groups, both

⁵William Bell, "A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology." Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1967, pp. 2, 14.

⁶Robert Worcester Shinn, "The Plymouth Brethren and Ecumenical Protestantism." Th. D. dissertation, Union-Theological Seminary, 1968, pp. 59-71. This fifth characteristic Shinn believes is based on the conviction that "the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit throughout the group renders unnecessary and even positively un-Scriptural the role of the single 'ministry' of any one person." (p. 71).

Evangelical and non-Evangelical. In concluding his thesis, Shinn writes:

The Brethren desperately need to have developed in them a sense of historical consciousness so that their insularity will not continue to hamstring their positive potentialities.⁷

Though Shinn's purpose is not to present an overview of Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, this writer will interact with the work of Shinn when his observations relate to Darby's Pneumatology.

Arthur K. Robertson, Jr., treated Darby's doctrine of sanctification in his Ph. D. dissertation completed at New York University in 1975. His work is entitled "The New Testament Doctrine of Sanctification as Found in the Published Writings of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)," and provides much helpful material on such prominent aspects of Darby's theology as his understanding of sanctification (positional, progressive, and ultimate), the church's nature and role as a sanctifying agent in the life of the Christian, his understanding of the two natures of the human being (his doctrine of anthropology), and his doctrine of the church. Though not a systematic treatment of Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Robertson's dissertation does touch upon such issues as the filling of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, Darby's doctrine of "deliverance", and his understanding of worship and the Spirit.

⁷Ibid., p. 190.

To our knowledge, no systematic treatment of Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit has yet been done. A complete understanding of this aspect of his overall theology is very important. Darby considered the biblical teaching on the person and work of the third member of the divine Trinity to be a neglected and even perverted area. Darby's view is illustrated, for example, by one of his better-known tracts. Aggressively entitled "The Notion of a Clergyman: Dispensationally the Sin Against the Holy Spirit", this tract attacked the ecclesiastical structures of Darby's day from the perspective of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.⁸

Darby's statements on the person and work of the Holy Spirit are scattered throughout the corpus of his writings. Three volumes specifically (volumes three, twenty-one, and thirty-one) focus on essays on the Holy Spirit, but our research will encompass a survey of all of the theological writing done by Darby on this subject.

⁸ Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 36-51. For example, Darby says that in the New Testament era the "sin against the Holy Ghost was the ascribing to the power of evil that which came from the Holy Ghost: and such is the direct operation of the idea of a 'Clergyman'" (p. 39).

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800-1882):

"THE TERTULLIAN OF THESE LAST DAYS"⁹

As a man who preached in three languages, delivered thousands of sermons, translated the Bible into several languages, and wrote theological essays enough to fill fifty-two 400-page volumes, Darby is generally considered the formative and normative theological spokesman of the Plymouth Brethren.

Darby's writings consist of works of Biblical exposition, essays on religious subjects, notes of sermons, critiques of the writings and sermons of contemporaries, and many examples of personal correspondence; he also penned a number of hymns. He first published his dispensational views in 1836 in the periodical The Christian Witness under the title "Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations."¹⁰ His English translation of the New Testament was used by two of

⁹ Hy. Pickering, Chief Men Among the Brethren (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), p. 21. One author says this description was given because of the many controversies in which Darby was involved during his lifetime (W. G. Turner, John Nelson Darby, London: C. A. Hammond, 1944, p. 7).

¹⁰ Howard E. Sturgeon, "The Life of John Nelson Darby." Th. M. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957, p. 20. Hereafter cited as Sturgeon, "Life." See also Arnold D. Ehlert, A Bibliographic History of Dispensationalism. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965). Hereafter cited as Ehlert, Dispensationalism.

the revisers of the English Revised Version.¹¹ Darby translated the New Testament into Italian and, though it has been said¹² that Darby translated the whole Bible into French, German, and English, the fact is that, although he translated most of the books of the Old Testament into English, the project actually was finished after his death by editors who utilized his German and French versions.¹³

Darby also wrote on political issues. According to his biographer, his essay, "Progress of Democratic Power, and its effect on the Moral State of England",¹⁴ exercised an influence in high political circles.¹⁵ Regarding Darby's Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Bishop Ellicott once asked "Where is there any single work of any author affording such help to the study of Scripture?"¹⁶ Darby wrote under his own name, under the initials "JND" (a common

¹¹W. G. Turner, John Nelson Darby. (London: C.A. Hamond, 1944), pp. 53-54. Hereafter cited as Turner, Darby.

¹²J. D. Douglas, ed., The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (Chicago: Zondervan, 1974), p. 283.

¹³Arthur K. Robertson, Jr., "The New Testament Concept of Sanctification As Found in the Published Writings of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)", Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1975, pp. 27-28. Hereafter cited as Robertson, "Sanctification."

¹⁴Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, pp. 333-336.

¹⁵Turner, Darby, p. 55. Sir T. D. Acland, an intimate friend of Gladstone, "described it as the most wonderful forecast and just appraisal he ever read of what is to come and coming" (p. 55).

¹⁶Sturgeon, "Life", p. 52.

practice of the Plymouth Brethren),¹⁷ and also anonymously. Darby often wrote anonymously because, as he said, "there was no good in anything God was not the author of."¹⁸

Concerning the effect of Darby's writing, Turner relates that "a heterodox teacher with whom Darby . . . dealt very faithfully, remarked 'J.N.D. writes with a pen in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other.'¹⁹ Much of Darby's writing, unfortunately, is made up of concatenated sentences, parenthetical statements which often interrupt the train of his thought, and a general lack of clarity. He excused these stylistic infelicities with the disclaimer, "my writings are my course of arrival at truth, not my exposition of it when attained."²⁰ He also believed that the difficulty with his writing style should not dissuade those who really sought the truth:

I think if people would give themselves the trouble of reading my tracts through, and waiting to be taught of God, they would find, perhaps what was not always clear till it was explained, yet edification, and not a stumbling-block.²¹

¹⁷ Arnold D. Ehlert, Brethren Writers-A Checklist with an Introduction to Brethren Literature and Additional Lists. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1969).

¹⁸ Letters, vol. III, p. 390.

¹⁹ Turner, Darby, p. 31.

²⁰ Letters, vol. I, p. 305. For critiques of Darby's writing style, see Sturgeon, Life, p. 54, and Clarence B. Bass, Backgrounds to Dispensationalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960), pp. 58-62. Hereafter cited as Bass, Backgrounds.

²¹ Letters, vol. I, p. 447.

Darby's Family Background and Education

Born in London on November 18, 1800, John Nelson Darby was the youngest son of John Darby of Leap Castle, King's County, Ireland (earlier of Markley, Sussex). His mother died when Darby, the youngest of six sons, was only six years old. Like his brothers, Darby received his elementary education at Westminster School, where he learned the Anglican catechism. Unlike his less fortunate schoolmates, who studied only under the assistance of government funding, Darby enjoyed the prestige of family position. In his elementary and grammar school education, Darby pursued traditional studies and the classics. Robertson points out that such studies were often devoid of practical application to the contemporary needs of society and were largely oriented toward preparing men for the clergy.²²

In 1815, when his father moved the family to Ireland, Darby entered Trinity College, an Anglican institution in Dublin. There he specialized in classical studies and mathematics as a "Fellow Commoner", a title indicating that he had wealthy parents, paid double fees, and dined with the Fellows.²³ He graduated with a B.A. in 1819, receiving a Classical Gold Medal, the highest award in that discipline.

²²Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 9.

²³Ibid., p. 10, quoting from p. 48 of Michael Robert Hagan, "The Concept of Christian Ministry Revealed in the Writing of John Nelson Darby, (1880-1882)." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1967. Hereafter cited as Hagan, "Ministry."

After completing law studies, Darby was called to the Irish Chancery Bar in 1822. His brother-in-law, Serjeant Pennefather, was Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and was anticipating Darby's help in bringing order to the chaotic legal system in that country. The two courts of law in Ireland at that time were the Court of Equity (which was staffed by the finest legal minds) and the Court of Chancery (which, staffed from the Bishops of the Church, was a final court of appeals). Darby's brother-in-law was the highest official in the Court of Equity. Had he fulfilled his brother-in-law's desire, Darby would have been forced to stand against the Church.²⁴ As we shall see, Darby assumed an aggressive stand against both the Established and Dissenting Churches, but for reasons of theology rather than reasons of law.

Darby's Two Renunciations

At about the age of 18, Darby began to experience severe spiritual anxiety and, as a result, began to entertain misgivings about his career.²⁵ What may be termed Darby's "first renunciation" came around 1825, when he renounced the practice of law. Such a break with his family's life-style promptly caused his father to disinherit him. This event appears to coincide with what could be

²⁴Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 11.

²⁵Turner, Darby, p. 13.

described as his conversion. Commenting on this crisis-point in his life, Darby says that he began to embrace certain convictions which "God Himself . . . wrought in my heart by His word."²⁶

In 1825 he took Deacon's Orders in the Irish Church, and was ordained by Archbishop William Magee. He later described this period as one of utter devotedness to the Church of Ireland. The Irish flavor of his spiritual fervency surfaced in his practice of fasting, in his taking the Sacrament only from ordained Irish clergymen, in his belief in Apostolic Succession, and in his acceptance of such ideas as that the channels of grace were to be found only in the Church. At that time Darby excluded Luther and Calvin from the Church on the basis that the union of the Church and State was "Babylonish", that the Church ought to govern itself, and that, though the Church was in bondage, it was still the Church.²⁷

Darby became Curate at a large, struggling parish of Calvary in the mountains of County Wicklow. Living in a peasant's cottage, he won the hearts of the poor. It is reported that he spent his income on charity, taught the peasantry almost every night until midnight, and ate

²⁶ Letters, vol. I, p. 73. See also Turner, Life, p. 13, where he indicates Darby's conversion occurred at the age of eighteen. The entire period from 1818 to 1825 was marked by an inner spiritual conflict at the end of which Darby says he "found salvation and peace" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 344-345).

²⁷ Turner, Darby, p. 11.

whatever food was offered to him.²⁸ His efforts were rewarded by a tremendous spiritual awakening, especially among the Roman Catholics, which extended beyond his own parish. Darby later said that the Catholics then "were becoming Protestants at the rate of 600-800 a week."²⁹

A short while later, however, Darby's success among the Catholic converts was undercut by a new Irish church policy. The Pastoral Letter of Archbishop Magee, issued in 1826, required all converted Roman Catholics to swear allegiance to King George. This letter because of its design, Darby thought, turned the Irish clergy into a police force for religion.³⁰ Magee's Erastianism created doubts in Darby's mind about the whole system of the Established Church.³¹ Darby could not have reacted stronger to Magee's proclamation. As many years later Darby said about Magee's action:

His course was ruinous- really stopped the deliverance from Popery of masses, perhaps of all Ireland; they were leaving from seven to eight hundred a week. He required the oath of supremacy and abjuration: it stopped as by a shot!³²

²⁸Ibid., p. 16.

²⁹Letters, vol. I, p. 397.

³⁰Turner, Darby, p. 24.

³¹Robert Worcester Shinn, "The Plymouth Brethren and Ecumenical Protestantism," Ph. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1968, p. 50. Hereafter cited as Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren."

³²Letters, vol. I, p. 397.

After one year as a curate, Darby received priest's orders, a position he held for two years. Around 1827, Darby began to question further the nature and authority of the Established Church. His thoughts were crystallized when Archbishop Magee issued a decree to Parliament denouncing Catholicism and claiming special favor and protection for his clergy from the Roman Catholic Church. Magee's demand was based on the idea that Romanism was opposed to the State, while the Anglican system was allied with, if not subservient, to it. Darby revolted at what he considered such a low conception of the church and circulated a tract denouncing Magee's position as unscriptural, but to no avail.

Disillusioned, Darby returned to his curacy, anguished over the fact that the Archbishop required all converts to swear allegiance to the English king. Darby's success with the Catholics ceased almost immediately and he began to ponder leaving the Church. Darby retired to study the position of the church in world affairs and published his findings in an 1828 pamphlet entitled "Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ."³³

Darby's "second renunciation" came at this time as a result of intense Bible study. His heart had been longing for what he called a "spiritual communion," one faithful to "Scriptural principles." In 1827, while on one of his

³³Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 20-35.

pastoral rounds, Darby fell from his horse and, after undergoing surgery, convalesced in his uncle's home in Dublin. During this long period of recuperation, "the disturbing thoughts as to the Established Church and his own clerical position returned with unabated force and urgency."³⁴ He then undertook a detailed study of the book of Acts and concluded that the organization of the Church of England was inconsistent with that of the New Testament.³⁵ Darby also rejected the existence of an official ministry. Speaking of the first-century church, Darby said that "no symptom of an ordained ministry appears."³⁶

Darby increasingly came to realize that the Scriptures taught the existence of only one church, composed of all true Christians. He rejected, therefore, both the Anglican idea that all citizens of a country were members of the Church, and also the Dissenting idea that membership was limited to those who subscribed to a particular set of doctrines.³⁷ In 1828, this "Goliath of Dissent",³⁸ as some labeled him, resigned from the Anglican clergy.

³⁴Turner, Darby, p. 17.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³⁶Collected Writings, vol. XIV, p. 289.

³⁷Hagan, "Ministry", pp. 48-50.

³⁸W. Blair Neatby, The History of the Plymouth Brethren (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 49. Hereafter cited as Neatby, History.

THE FORMATION OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

After his convalescence, Darby was asked by the Bishop of Cashel if he had joined the Dissenters (since he had left, at least inwardly, the Established Church). Darby's response was: "I have nothing to do with the Dissenters, and am as yet my own church."³⁹

In the winter of 1827-1828 Darby began to meet with a number of men who supplied that "spiritual communion" based on "Scriptural principles" that he so earnestly desired. Such men as J. G. Bellett, A. N. Groves, Francis Hutchinson, Edward Cronin, and others comprised two such groups, which met regularly for informal Bible study and fellowship.

Veitch says of Edward Cronin:

Just as God used in the sixteenth century Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic monk, to restore to the Church the forgotten truth of justification by faith alone, so God used a converted Roman Catholic doctor to restore to His People forgotten truths concerning His Church and its Scriptural fellowship and worship.⁴⁰

A careful order of service was laid out at the beginning of this fellowship in order to allow its members to attend church services elsewhere and then come to the group for communion. Primarily because they objected to the human ordination of the clergy, and because they had been

³⁹Turner, Darby, p. 18.

⁴⁰Thomas Stewart Veitch, The Story of the Brethren Movement (London, n.d.), p. 12. Hereafter cited as Veitch, Story.

unsuccessful in their efforts to locate suitable fellowship elsewhere, Darby's spiritual intimates decided to form their own religious coterie.

A sense of the "Spirit's leading" pervaded these early meetings. According to Edward Cronin, those early meetings were "seasons of joy never to be forgotten-- for surely we had the Master's smile and sanction in the beginning of such a movement as this was!"⁴¹ The principle which the Brethren utilized in their services, Shinn says, was that "human order and human distraction was [sic] to be at a minimum so that the presence of the Spirit might operate unhindered."⁴²

Darby was present in those early meetings only occasionally. The numbers began to increase, however, and the original settled order of worship was replaced by what some viewed as a completely free character of proceedings.

Recognized eldership was renounced. According to J.G. Bellett,

The settled order of worship which we had in Fitzwilliam Square, gave place gradually. Teaching and exhorting were first made common duties and services, while prayer was restricted under the care of two or three, who were regarded as elders. But gradually all this yielded. In a little time, no appointed or recognised eldership was understood to be in the midst of us, and all service was of a free character, the presence of God through the Spirit being more simply believed and used.⁴³

⁴¹quoted in Neatby, History, p. 23. Shinn also remarks that "this was a group which testified to a 'divine leading'" in his "Plymouth Brethren", p. 69.

⁴²Shinn, Ibid., p. 53

⁴³Neatby, History, p. 35.

Darby's final break with the Church of England cannot be dated precisely. One prominent possibility could be his resignation from the Anglican clergy in 1828. The year 1833 may be the proper date, however, for in 1832 Darby clashed with the Sabellian Archbishop Whately. Darby openly opposed Whately's "Irish Education Measure",⁴⁴ which proposed to restrict severely the teaching of the Scriptures in Irish schools. Darby furthermore experienced an outright breach with members of the Church of Ireland at Powerscourt in 1833.⁴⁵

In 1830 Darby went to Oxford and associated with George Wigram, who became one of Darby's life-long friends. Wigram's chief published work was The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance to the Old Testament, and a cognate one to the Greek New Testament.

Darby met Benjamin Wills Newton (born in 1807 of Quaker stock) in Plymouth, where Newton, Wigram, and a Captain Hall held "reading meetings". As a result of Darby's visit, these men began to "break bread" in 1831. The principles followed at Plymouth were similar to those of the Dublin meetings. During this same period (c. 1834), the periodical The Christian

⁴⁴Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, pp. 281-305.

⁴⁵F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1968), pp. 110-111. Hereafter cited as Coad, History.

Witness, to which Darby frequently contributed, was first published. No less than fourteen lengthy articles from Darby's pen appeared in the first number of The Christian Witness.⁴⁶

Though they shunned denominational names, these early brethren, nevertheless, needed a designation of their own. Darby often referred to Christ's and the Apostles' use of terms such as "brethren," "holy brethren," or "beloved brethren." By 1840, about 800 were attending the meeting known as "the Brethren at Plymouth", from which the name "Plymouth Brethren" originated.⁴⁷

Similar groups met in England at about the same time as the Plymouth meeting. Veitch (quoting an unnamed source) says regarding the beginning of the Bethesda meeting in 1832 with Mueller, Craik, and others (making a total of seven in all) that these united "without any rules, desiring to act only as the Lord should be pleased to give light through His Word."⁴⁸ This meeting at Bristol, co-pastored by George Mueller and Henry Craik, was especially prominent. This group (and others as well) came into being separately from those meeting in Dublin or Plymouth. To both the original and

⁴⁶Turner, Darby, p. 25.

⁴⁷In Ireland the movement is referred to as "Darbyism" because of Darby's influence. The term Darbisten is often used in Germany to designate those who follow the teachings of the Irish ex-clergyman. Cf. Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 19.

⁴⁸Veitch, Story, p. 36, italics his.

succeeding members of the Plymouth Brethren, the concurrent genesis of such similar groups gave "evidence" of the Holy Spirit's active role in bringing the Brethren into being for "such a time as this." As Veitch says,

No one can definitely say whether the first meeting of the Movement was in Dublin, Plymouth, Georgetown, in Italy, or elsewhere. The spontaneity of the Spirit's movements is the thing most apparent.⁴⁹

Andrew Miller elaborates on this movement's early attraction:

Many no doubt who left their respective denominations and united with the 'Brethren' had very undefined thoughts as to the nature of the step they were taking. But all was new; they flocked together and gave themselves to the study of the Word of God, and soon experienced the sweetness of Christian communion, and found the Bible, as they said, blessed work of God's Spirit, the influence of which was felt not only throughout the country, but on the Continent and in distant lands.⁵⁰

But the new movement, which was born to provide a spiritual fellowship according to Scriptural principles, unfortunately experienced setbacks due to divisions within its membership.

In 1838 Darby left for a seven-year evangelistic tour of Switzerland. In March, 1840 he went to Lausanne to oppose Methodism. As one writer has said,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 31. Quoting from Andrew Miller, Short Papers on Church History from Apostolic Times to the Twentieth Century. (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1929).

Here his lectures on prophecy made a great impression, and many congregations were founded in cantons Vaud, Geneva, and Berne. When the Jesuit intrigues caused a revolution to break out in canton Vaud in February 1845, the Darbyites suffered persecution, and the leader's life was in great jeopardy. He thenceforth took a more active lead among the English brethren, but his heart seems⁵¹ ever to have turned towards Switzerland and France.

Shortly after his return to Plymouth, Darby became embroiled in theological and ecclesiological controversies with B.W. Newton. At first this dispute was carried on by means of a pamphlet war. The major issue concerned Newton's "dominance" of the Plymouth meeting, though there is evidence, that, as Veitch says, "the chief question in dispute was the relation of the Church to the Great Tribulation."⁵² Darby charged Newton with error and with enforcing his authority upon the assembly, a charge Newton reciprocated. Apparently Darby feared a possible return to clericalism within the meetings. In referring to the contention between himself and Newton, Darby says,

The principles now in print [the author apparently being Newton] would suffice to deter any one who owned that⁵³ the Spirit of God was in the assembly of the saints.

For example, Darby disapproved of designating regular speakers for the meetings, a practice that he believed violated the Spirit's "leading." Veitch says that in 1845 there were twelve

⁵¹The Dictionary of National Biography, pp. 493-494.

⁵²Veitch, Story, p. 44.

⁵³Letters, vol. I, p. 121.

hundred in fellowship in the Assembly in Plymouth and that Newton and Mr. Harris had come to be recognized as elders and pastors of the Assembly.

They, by arrangement, ministered on alternate Sundays. This was clearly a retrograde step towards the clerisy they had renounced, and was a restriction upon the liberty of ministry in the Assembly.⁵⁴

Shinn points out that eventually the movement (under Darby's influence) was marked by a "complete liberty of ministry and sheer spontaneity."⁵⁵ Furthermore, Shinn says that the principle involved was that

Human order and human distraction was to be at a minimum so that the presence of the Spirit might operate unhindered. . . . Charisma is not seen in extravagance ('speaking in tongues') but in the negation of human order in favor of extreme simplicity.⁵⁶

In December, 1845, Darby broke with Newton and set up his own "table" (for communion) in Plymouth, an action that later led to the division between the brethren loyal to Darby (called the "Exclusives") and those who would follow a more tolerant position on ecclesiastical authority (called the "Opens"). The latter group would include as one of its leaders George Mueller, the man of faith who founded Ashley Down, one of

⁵⁴Veitch, Story, p. 43.

⁵⁵Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren", p. 57.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 69.

Britain's most famous orphanages.

F. W. Grant, in commenting upon the way the Spirit had initiated the Brethren Movement in 1825, said, after all the many divisions, that

the Hand of God is upon us is but too evident. Our shame is public. It requires no spirituality to see that exactly in that which we have professedly sought we have failed most signally. The Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace is just most surely what we have not kept.⁵⁷

Darby's ecclesiology led to the creation of the "Central Meeting", a kind of supervisory commission, composed of representatives from the various assemblies of London and its suburbs. Meeting on Saturdays, this group of men sought to settle all local ecclesiastical problems of London for the following day, such as the admitting of candidates, financial issues, and excommunication of individuals guilty of specific offenses, such as fellowshipping at an excommunicated assembly. Subsequently, the decisions of the London Central Meeting became binding on the whole of (Exclusive) Brethrenism.⁵⁸

Darby's pamphlets, "The Sufferings of Christ" (1858) and "The Righteousness of God" (1859) plunged him into various controversies, and as a result, many of his strongest English

⁵⁷Veitch, Story, p. 102. Italics his.

⁵⁸Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 22. Darby's advocacy of such a London Central Meeting appears to conflict with his earlier rejection of a federation of assemblies. For our evaluation of this apparent change in Darby's Ecclesiology, see pp. 269-278, *infra*.

English supporters deserted him in 1860. Darby's position was that Christ had suffered in a three-fold way:⁵⁹

- (1) He had suffered pre-eminently on the Cross when He made atonement for sin and endured God's wrath;
- (2) He suffered for righteousness as a living man from men.
- (3) He had endured non-atoning sufferings at the hand of God.

Darby admitted that the third category is not found in the New Testament but rather may be gleaned from the book of Psalms.⁶⁰ So important did Darby consider his understanding of Christ's sufferings (especially what he termed the "non-atoning sufferings") that, when other Plymouth Brethren challenged his orthodoxy on this subject, he replied, "If I could I would have that truth with brethren, if not, without them."⁶¹

An extensive traveler, Darby visited Germany on a number of occasions and took part in a translation of the Old Testament into German in 1869. He visited Canada in 1859, 1864, 1868, and 1870. After visiting the United States in 1870, 1872, 1873, and 1874, he went to New Zealand in 1875 and also visited the West Indies. Between 1878 and 1880 he busied himself with translating the Old Testament into French,

⁵⁹See The Dictionary of National Biography, p. 494.

⁶⁰See Psalm 69:26, and Veitch, Story, p. 72.

⁶¹Letters, vol. I, p. 463. Italics mine.

residing for a long time at Pau. Turner says that Darby traveled more for Christ than any other Christian except Paul and John Wesley!⁶²

In the 1860's and 1870's, the Exclusives grew numerically, drawing many young men from the Established Church. The influx, however, of such outstanding leaders as C. H. Macintosh, Andrew Miller, and Charles Stanley, began to cause Darby's supremacy to disintegrate; some began to feel free to disregard his decrees.⁶³

On April 29, 1882, this "powerful genius"⁶⁴ died. His writings, amassed from the age of 28 to the year of his death, amount to some fifty-two volumes of tracts, letters, lectures, and verse, and testify to his familiarity with such languages as Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, and German, and to his broad knowledge of the areas of philosophy, ecclesiastical history, and the sciences.⁶⁵

⁶²Turner, Darby, p. 17.

⁶³Robertson, "Sanctification", pp. 22-23.

⁶⁴Neatby, History, p. 2.

⁶⁵Bass, Backgrounds, pp. 60-61.

POSSIBLE INFLUENCES ON DARBY

AND THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

No man forms his theology in an intellectual or cultural vacuum. Circumstances (both inside and outside the religious structures) and individuals exercise influences on that theologian. Though many elements of Darby's theology support the belief that he was an innovator, constituting, at least to some degree, a break with much of the theological labor that had preceeded him, certain influences should be briefly noted which possibly informed his thinking.

This dissertation does not presume to delineate, in any final fashion, every factor conceivably impacting upon Darby. We will briefly discuss, however, the following elements: the theological world into which Darby came, the Pneumatological scene, theologians with whom Darby and the early Brethren had significant contact, and, what certainly seems to be the most important factor, Darby's own theological pilgrimage.

The Theological World into Which Darby Came

The attention of mid-Victorian England was especially engaged by two major questions which helped to form the background of Darby and the Plymouth Brethren Movement. The first question was, quite simply, is Christianity true? The

Victorian world rested on the assurance that its public laws and private morals, its mental philosophy and social convention were firmly anchored in that which was worthy of one's commitment of faith.⁶⁶ The publication of Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859, although not the primary factor in this loss of assurance, was its symbol. Doubt as to the truthfulness of Christianity had been growing before 1860 in the Victorian soul, but only after that year began impacting upon the life of the nation.⁶⁷ Some began to wonder whether atheism might be true. Such a possibility was, in Chadwick's opinion,

torment to the later Victorian soul, that a philosophy which nearly everyone confessed to be dangerous might nevertheless be found probable.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), p. 1. Hereafter cited as Chadwick, Victorian.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 2. Reactions to Darwinism were intense. One theologian asserted "If the Darwinian theory is true, Genesis is a lie, the whole framework of the book of life falls to pieces, and the revelation of God to man, as we Christians know it, is a delusion and a snare" (quoted by Andrew Dickson White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom, 2 vols. [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960]; reprint ed., vol. I, p. 71). White quotes Cardinal Wiseman who said "Now it is for the Church, which alone possesses divine certainty and divine discernment, to place itself at once in the front of a movement which threatens even the fragmentary remains of Christian belief in England" (Ibid., p. 72). Chadwick points out that Darwin was only a sign of a movement bigger than biological science, bigger than intellectual inquiry (Chadwick, Victorian, Ibid.).

⁶⁸Ibid.

That a professed atheist was permitted to take a seat in the House of Commons in 1886 is to be attributed to the issues raised more by the second question concerning the relationship of the Church to the State rather than to this first question of the truth of Christianity.

The second question concerned the development of the English constitution and its application. How democratic shall the constitution be? If the nation is to be democratic and representative, must not all religions be treated equally before the law? This issue of the alliance of Church and State was especially based in the nationalism which developed during the age of the Reformation when the English "grew articulate about their nationality."⁶⁹ The governing classes, because of political turmoil, foreign menace, and civil war began to equate Roman Catholicism with disloyalty to England and Protestant dissenters with disloyalty to the king. After 1673 every member of Parliament, every member of a municipal corporation, and every other senior officer of state had to assent to the established church. Political and religious anomalies, however, existed in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales and a group of Protestant dissenters was, by an annual act of indemnity, allowed until 1828 to sit illegally in the House of Commons.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁰Ibid.

An almost casual repeal of the old test and corporation acts (which would have excluded dissenters from Parliament if it had not been for the annual acts of indemnity) occurred in 1828. The question for many (except for some in Ireland and Wales and also among Independents or Quakers) was not whether there ought to be an established church, but rather does equality before the law include religious equality?

These two questions were also being raised by what one writer calls "a babel of competing sects."⁷¹ The use of more effective means of vying for converts to new points of view is another factor not to be underestimated.

The world moved out of an age of toleration, where a single church dominated, into an age of equality where speakers and writers sought to capture the public mind.⁷² The change coincided with the new power of the press.

The strongest religious force in British life throughout the mid-Victorian age was the evangelical movement.⁷³ As inheritors of the conversionist preaching of John Wesley to labouring crowds, these direct descendents of Wesley formed the largest group outside the establishment. The fire of evangelicalism warmed every denomination (including Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers) outside the Methodists.⁷⁴ To many Victorians,

⁷¹Ibid., p. 4. ⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 5. ⁷⁴Ibid.

Evangelical doctrine was the authentic voice and the scriptural piety of Protestant Reformation. It looked to be the sharpest arrow to pierce the soul of labouring heathen.⁷⁵

In summary, then, the leading issues before the nation, in the succession by which they troubled England, were:

- (1) whether representative government was compatible with an established church;
- (2) whether Christian churches, established or dissenting, could adjust themselves to industrial revolution, rapid population growth, and empire overseas; and,
- (3) whether the Christian church taught the truth.⁷⁶

The Ecclesiastical Scene

Apart from the two general questions mentioned above, a brief discussion of three specific religious forces will help us to understand some of the theological atmosphere of Darby's day. These three forces may be termed the High Church tradition, the Oxford Movement, and the Dissenters.

The High Church Tradition

The term "high" was used shortly before the Revolution of 1688 and originally meant one who was "stiff" for the Church of England, i.e. one who would be careful and precise in observing the rules of the Church about prayer and fasting and would stand for the privileges of the Church against the Dissenters.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Owen Chadwick, ed., The Mind of the Oxford Movement (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 14. Hereafter cited as Chadwick, Oxford.

The Church of England lost its political privilege and support because, rather than adapting rapidly to the popular opinions of the day, it became identified with the waning power of the landed aristocracy. At the beginning of the century, the Church was noted for its spiritual lethargy; its religious teachings were considered little more than moralizing. Often referred to as the "high and dry Church," it was criticized for the seeming indifference of some of its clergymen. The clergymen, who were frequently country gentlemen and not trained ministers, reportedly often ignored the needs of their parishioners, especially the poor.⁷⁸

The High Church tradition sought security in the past; its touchstones were the stability of the institutions and

⁷⁸George T. Stokes, John Nelson Darby, "Contemporary Review, July-December 1885. Such a charge is substantiated by a study of the popular literature of the day. Stokes refers to the poetical work the "Parson's Horn Book" which scurrilously portrays the higher clergy as lackeys of the Devil who, for the love of hunting, neglect their ministerial charges (pp. 540-541). C. K. Francis Brown's A History of the English Clergy 1800-1900 (London, 1953) speaks of clergy living away from the parishes for whose care they were paid. Some were paid for more than one parish, leaving the work to poorly paid, uneducated assistants. These situations led to reforms which included requirements regarding education, ordination, and the service of ministers and to additional audits of funds and of building plans, especially for neglected areas.

Chadwick comments on the fluctuating status of high churchmanship. It was, he states, "weak under William and Mary, powerful under Queen Anne, impotent under the first two Georges, and rising to power again at the end of the century with the growing fear of radicalism and the dissent which radicalism was held, not without reason, to accompany" (Oxford, p. 14).

the authority of the historic church. Because great strides had been made in patristic studies since the end of the sixteenth century, it is not too much to say that

The advance of patristic scholarship befriended the conservative and traditionalistic elements everywhere in Protestantism; and where more significantly than within the Church of England,⁷⁹

A sub-category of this tradition, the Oxford Movement, was a second force which marked the ecclesiastical scene.

The Oxford Movement

As primarily more a "movement of the heart than of the head," the Oxford Movement saw creed and prayer as inseparable and linked dogmatism to worship.⁸⁰ Stressing its doctrine of apostolic succession, this movement benefited successively from the contributions of John Keble, John Henry Newman, and E. B. Pusey.⁸¹

Although popular opinion at the time resented the

⁷⁹Chadwick, Oxford, p. 17.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁸¹Keble published The Christian Year in 1827. Newman dated the beginning of the Oxford Movement from the day of Keble's sermon on "National Apostasy." Newman's Apologia has been called "the most profound exposition of the Tractarian doctrine of faith" (Ibid., p. 43). Pusey's mystical language and his "passionate moral earnestness" are reasons why Chadwick states that "the pastoral and devotional power in the Movement proved to be far more effective, in the long run, than its intellectual power" (Ibid., p. 48). Chadwick summarizes the overall contributions of these three leaders by saying that "Newman represented the moral and intellectual force in the Movement, Keble the moral and pastoral, Pusey the moral and devotional" (Ibid.).

hostility of the Tractarians to the Reformation,⁸² the Movement's emphasis on pastoral and liturgical concerns lends support to the suggestion that the Oxford Movement was "the most important factor in the deepening of the religion of the English Church in the nineteenth [century]."⁸³

The Oxford Movement's success, however, was devotional rather than doctrinal. Its failure to really affect the religious belief of Englishmen (apart from introducing new modes of worship) was due not to any loss of faith of its teachers but rather to what one calls the "new stars in the firmament of Christian theology -the new science, Darwin, the new history, the Biblical critics."⁸⁴

The Dissenters

The third ecclesiastical force marking Darby's time was a multi-faceted movement known as the Dissenters. Although a

⁸²In 1838 Keble and Newman published Froude's Remains and "had allowed to go forth to the world, together with sentences vehemently denouncing Rome, sentences which were shocking to the popular mind of the English" (Ibid., p. 53). Froude had written of that "odious Protestantism [which] sticks in people's gizzard" in August of 1833. He stated in December of 1835 "really I hate the Reformation and the Reformers more and more" (Ibid.).

⁸³Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), quoted in Hagan, "Ministry", p. 243.

⁸⁴Chadwick, Oxford, p. 59. Summarizing the contribution of the Oxford Movement, Chadwick says that "it is not likely that any sound Christian thinking will again lose that integral connection between faith and the conscience, that essential link between religious propositions and moral judgments, which is one contribution of the Oxford Movement to English thought" (Ibid., p. 61).

survey of the history of religious dissent would be profitable, we will limit our study to two major parties connected with Dissent in the nineteenth century, the Methodist societies and the Independents.⁸⁵

The Methodists

Though puzzled by his acts which led toward separation, the Methodists inherited Wesley's distaste for separation from the established church. A Methodist of 1834 said that Wesley was "like an oarsman who faced the Church of England while he rowed steadily away."

The Methodist societies fell into two camps after Wesley's death: the "Radical Methodists," who feared their influence would wane if they did not align themselves with dissent; and the "Conservative Methodists," who found a gospel ministry in Methodism and, like the dissenters, tolerated the establishment.

Significant among Methodist dissenters were the Primitive Methodists. Founded in 1811, they were by 1851 five times as large as any other seceded Methodist group and

⁸⁵ For a historical survey of dissent from the Reformation to the French Revolution, see Michael R. Watts's The Dissenters (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). Our two-fold division of dissent at the time of Darby excludes the Presbyterians (including those of Unitarian beliefs), the Baptists, the Society of Friends, and the Latter-Day Saints. For an overview of these groups, see Chadwick, Oxford, chapter VI, "The Dissenters", pp. 370-439.

nearly a third as numerous as the Wesleyan Methodists. As simple street revivalists, the Primitive Methodists were sometimes derisively termed "Ranters" because they marched singing through the streets.⁸⁶

The Independents

This second group among the dissenters was marked by what Horton Davies calls religious "primitivism," a term which describes their desire to return to a simpler, Bible-based worship. Among them Davies numbers the Primitive Methodists, the Catholic Apostolic Church, the Salvation Army, the Plymouth Brethren, and the American-founded Disciples of Christ. Noted for its "radically world-condemning ethic", this branch of the dissenting movement was marked by a

- (1) strong Biblicism;
- (2) charismatic character (emphasis on divine leading in the meetings, sometimes resulting in an emotional bent);
- (3) belief in the impending second advent of Christ combined with an evangelism in view of that second coming;
- (4) ecumenical impetus (an emphasis on the doctrine of the one true church); and,
- (5) concern for the centrality of the Sacraments⁸⁷ (for all groups except the Salvation Army).

⁸⁶ "When Victorians talked of Ranters," says Chadwick, "they meant Primitive Methodists" (Ibid., pp. 386-387).

⁸⁷ Hagan, "Ministry", pp. 24-26, citing Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, vol. IV, pp. 139-143.

The Plymouth Brethren Movement is logically considered within the dissenting movement. Darby particularly stresses each of the elements above and frequently emphasizes his movement's rejection of the contemporary Erastianism.

Throughout his fifty years of ministry Darby stresses his belief that the Plymouth Brethren Movement provides a "third way," that is allied with neither the Established nor the Dissenting branch of the Church.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See, for example, Letters, vol. I, pp. 113. Darby states that

"Everything established is breaking up on the one hand; and on the other, scripture being much more studied, the various dissenting systems are not found in it. To gather according to the word, that becomes the needed service, and this requires both grace and power: it requires the Lord, and I feel all the importance of this, and one's utter powerlessness, save as He works" (Ibid., p. 525).

Believing that the dissenting branch of the Church is "in ruins" (see p. 101, *supra*), Darby often expresses his conviction that God has raised up the Brethren as His testimony to certain recovered truths "for such a time as this." As such, they are to be understood, says Darby, as God's instrument of gathering "saints into [the] unity [of the Holy Spirit] out of the great baptised mass" (Letters, vol. II, p. 292). "Feeling that Christendom is corrupt," states Darby, "we are outside the church-world" (Ibid., p. 439). In one letter he describes the Plymouth Brethren by saying "we are the only orthodox left in England"! (Ibid., p. 467).

Frequently in his theological writings Darby addresses the questions of the truthfulness of Christianity (see especially his view of the Bible, pp. 246-259, *infra*) and of the relationship of the Church to the State (see such essays as "The Church and the World" [Collected Writings, vol. XV, pp. 298-379]; "On the Formation of Churches" [Ibid., vol. I, pp. 138-155]; and "The Claims of the Church of England Considered" [Ibid., vol. XIV, pp. 176-242]).

The Pneumatological Scene

The great scholar, Bishop Thirlwall, around 1870, said "the great intellectual and religious struggle of our day turns mainly on this question, Whether there is a Holy Ghost."⁸⁹ Bishop Westcott, referring to this remark added,

I will venture to define this statement more closely and say that the struggle turns upon our belief in a Holy Ghost sent in the Name of Jesus,⁹⁰ Christ according to His own emphatic promise.

The nineteenth century context in which Darby developed his understanding of the "presence and operations" of the Holy Spirit, is, in the opinion of one of the twentieth century's leading dispensationalists, "a rich field of investigation in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."⁹¹ Darby was not alone in his concern for the "recovery" of a proper Pneumatology. Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), a leader in the Broad Church Movement, said that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is

the very main thing of all. We are living under the dispensation of the Spirit; in that character God now reveals Himself to His people. He who does not know God the Holy Ghost cannot know God at all.⁹²

⁸⁹W. H. Griffith Thomas, The Holy Spirit of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 1. Hereafter cited as Thomas, Spirit.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹John Walvoord, The Holy Spirit (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1954), p. 250. Hereafter cited as Walvoord, Holy Spirit.

⁹²Thomas, Spirit, p. 2. Italics mine.

George Smeaton, who was ordained in 1839 to the Church of Scotland, left the State Church in 1843 to form the Free Church of Scotland. As a professor at Aberdeen (1854), he later (1857) became a professor of Exegetics in New College, Edinburgh. In The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Smeaton says,

The doctrine of the Spirit not less than the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's merits, is the article of a standing or falling church, and without the recognition of it no religious prosperity exists or can exist.⁹³

Has the doctrine of the Holy Spirit really received the attention it deserves? A careful study of the New Testament will show that more notice is given to the Holy Ghost than to many other doctrinal issues which have historically engaged the attention of theologians and churchmen. As W. H. Griffith Thomas says,

In truth, the Holy Spirit is in several ways the unique and ultimate Fact and Force in Christianity. He is the culmination of everything in the revelation of Divine redemption. . . . The Holy Spirit is the only means of guaranteeing religion as personal communion with God. The Divine revelation given historically in the Person of Christ is mediated and made real to the soul by the Holy Spirit. This, again, is a mark of uniqueness in Christianity, since only therein is religion realised as a matter of personal communion with the Deity.⁹⁴

Thomas continues,

After making every allowance for historical circumstances, it is surely not without significance that the Apostles' Creed contains ten articles on the Person and Work of Christ, with only one on the Holy Spirit. And when we consider the scarcity of references in the New Testament

⁹³George Smeaton, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (London: T & T Clark, 1889; reprint ed., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 410. Hereafter cited as Smeaton, The Doctrine.

⁹⁴Thomas, Spirit, pp. 1-2.

to the Holy Communion, contrasted with the prominence given to it in the history of the Church, we have another significant illustration of the comparative neglect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁵

A thorough survey of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the Apostolic Age to the present day is not within the scope of this dissertation. It is valuable, however, to notice several contributions made from the Protestant Reformation onward which "set the stage" for much of the Pneumatological work in the nineteenth century.

The Reformation

Prior to the Reformation, much of the Church's attention was given to the Person of the Holy Spirit, rather than to His work.⁹⁶ Some have suggested that the nineteenth century focuses especially on the work of the Third Person of the Trinity (particularly as it relates to regeneration) because of the Reformers' return to the Augustinian doctrine of the total depravity of man.⁹⁷ The Puritan scholar Geoffrey Nuttall states that a

return of interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and a fresh conviction of its centrality for Christian faith and experience, are characteristics of the Reformation.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁹⁶ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 116.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 117.

⁹⁸ Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), p. 4.

Luther's emphasis on justification by faith caused him to say much about the Spirit's work in this connection. Calvin particularly emphasized those aspects of the work of the Spirit which are associated with the Trinity and the ministry of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers.⁹⁹

One aspect of the Reformers' stress on sola scriptura was their emphasis on the need for illumination by the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the Roman Church which held that only the priest could rightly interpret the Word of God, the Reformers taught that all believers could be instructed in its truths by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In considering the various creeds which grew out of the concerns of the Reformers, Ryrie cites such formulations as the Anglican Articles, the Formula Concordiae (including the Augsburg Confession), the Helvetic Confession, and the Westminster Confession as support for his statement that "it was not until the time of the Reformation that there was a developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹Ibid. For a brief discussion of Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Spirit and a comparison of his understanding of the "miraculous gifts," see our first appendix, pp. 283-297, *infra*. For the similarity between Calvin's and Darby's doctrines of inspiration and the Spirit, see pp. 252-254, *infra*.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

Both the Socinians and the Arminians set forth reactions to the Reformers' doctrine of the Spirit. The Socinians in the sixteenth century rejected the idea that the Persons of the Trinity possessed a single essence. They not only denied the pre-existence of the Son but also defined the Holy Spirit as "a virtue or energy flowing from God to man." Walker points out that although Socinianism was suppressed largely through the work of Polish Jesuits, it "found some supporters in the Netherlands and even more in England, where it was to have no little influence."¹⁰¹

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), reluctant to defend supralapsarianism, gave to man a freedom which did not harmonize with a pure Calvinism. Insisting that man was able to "initiate his salvation after God had granted him the primary grace to enable his will to cooperate with God,"¹⁰²

¹⁰¹Walker, A History, p. 398. Cairns says that "the modern Unitarian Church is a lineal descendant of the Socinians of Poland, who were first called Unitarians in Transylvania about 1600" (Christianity, p. 384).

¹⁰²James Arminius, Works, trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Buffalo: Derby, Miller & Orton, 3 vols., 1853), Vol. I, p. 329, Vol. II, pp. 472-473, quoted by Cairns, Christianity, p. 352. See also Ryrie, Spirit, who says that Arminianism replaces the work of the Spirit in regeneration with the human will (p. 118). After the Synod of Dort, the School of Saumur, attempting to tone down the Synod's Calvinism, stressed that "in regeneration and conversion an effective illumination of the mind is all that is required and all that actually takes place. There is no supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit," says Berkhof, "directly on the will of man" (L. Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1937, p. 221).

he, in the opinion of some, laid the foundation for the charge that salvation became a work of man rather than a work of God. The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) condemned Arminian theology and emphasized in the strongest terms the need for the working and power of the Holy Spirit. For example, Canon iii.3 states,

All men are conceived in sin, and are born sons of wrath, incapable of adhering to anything that is good, disposed to evil, dead in sins, and the slaves of sin; and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they neither desire nor are able to return to God, to amend their depraved nature, or to incline to His amendment of it.¹⁰³

W. H. Griffith Thomas emphasizes the fact that Arminianism continued to grow and "in the English Church in particular this view was introduced and fostered under the influence of Archbishop Laud."¹⁰⁴

The Puritan Era

The Puritan era further developed and sought to live out the truth of the actual presence and ministry of the Spirit of God on the earth. Several particular areas of Puritan Pneumatology are germane to the background of Darby's study. Geoffrey Nuttall stresses that

At the heart of Puritan piety is thirst for the living God, who has given us mortal life; who sent His Son that we may have immortal, eternal, abundant life; and whose Spirit may be known in a living community now.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Quoted in Howard Watkin-Jones, The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1929), pp. 261-262.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas, Spirit, p. 104.

¹⁰⁵ Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Puritan Spirit (London: Epworth Press, 1967), p. 95. Hereafter cited as Nuttall, Puritan.

That the Puritan was deeply convinced of the need for living a righteous life in dependence on the Spirit foreshadowed Baxter's later call to "serious holiness." The Puritan was one who had "faith in the reality of some degree of maturity or fulfillment" in that desire.¹⁰⁶ Speaking of the first Quakers, William Penn said that "they were changed men themselves before they went about to change others."¹⁰⁷

Similarities between Darby's understanding of worship and that common to Puritanism are striking and will be further considered in chapter two of this dissertation. Nuttall points out that

In Quaker worship there is, ideally, nothing but a waiting together upon the Spirit until one or another, man or woman, is inwardly moved to minister vocally in exhortation, exposition, testimony or prayer- vocally, because by Quakers the sharing of silent prayer and meditation is itself, rightly, regarded as ministry... 'to go to meeting determined to speak or determined to keep silence are both unquakerly': the Spirit's leading will be given in coetu fideli; therefore, though the mind and heart should be prepared, the decision to minister vocally must not be taken beforehand.¹⁰⁸

Nuttall further remarks that "from one angle this may be seen as a laicizing, a universalizing, of Christianity, and thus as a continuance of what was begun in the Reformation."¹⁰⁹ The very sight of those who come into a meeting of Quakers, Nuttall says, "sitting with bowed heads in silent waiting upon, and for, the Spirit is to be faced, at once, with an unmistakable and striking witness to faith."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 96. ¹⁰⁷Ibid. ¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. ¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 99.

Though not one to list the sources (apart from biblical passages) which led to his anticlericalism, Darby would have agreed with the Puritan concept that

ideally and primarily ministry is conceived not as an office, with status attached, not even as a function, but more prophetically as itself a grace-gift of the Spirit, one among many; not the irrevocable possession of a particular man or group of men but something to be shared as widely as possible; to be neither scorned when given only occasionally or temporarily nor yet honored above what is right.¹¹¹

Certain tenets of the Puritans concerning the relationship of the Spirit to the Word are virtually identical to the sentiments expressed by Darby. The Puritans held that

the Word without the Spirit, even the preached word, let alone the written word, if the Spirit attend not the preaching, can be as near death as the Spirit without the Word can be near mere humanism.¹¹²

Darby had an aversion to creedal formulations reminiscent of the urging of the Puritans that we be on our guard lest the letter of the law take the place of the Spirit. As Nuttall points out

The primitive confession, "Jesus is Lord," is enough, they would say. They warned against allowing "the Word" to degenerate into "the law", for the law can enslave, whereas the Spirit makes free.¹¹³

A further similarity between Darby and Puritanism concerns the concept of God's progressively unfolding particular truths, truths which lie within the pages of holy scripture, and which are especially needful for the contemporary church. Darby states,

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 97-98. ¹¹²Ibid., p. 100. ¹¹³Ibid.

In the perfection of the word, there are, I have no doubt, truths and lights necessary for the critical circumstances, for the trying days, in which we are found, which God gave not to His servants at the time of the Reformation; truths which, at least, they made no use of, dragged away by the circumstances in which they were, and which, on the contrary, we could not perhaps pass by if we would ensure the blessing of the Church at this moment.¹¹⁴

The Puritan expectation was that "the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word." Nuttall remarks,

Despite [a] tendency to antinomianism, Puritan piety in general held fast to the conjunction between the Spirit and the Word; but it insisted on a continuity of the Spirit's action which to other Christians was often unwelcome. It is the same Spirit that worked in those who wrote the Bible and in the first Christians which still works in us. Puritans were unsympathetic to the comfortable argument that there was an extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit among the first Christians which is no longer to be expected by ourselves. They disliked the conception of the word as final, though accepted the idea of it as necessary and sufficient. God still speaks "as well without the written word as with, though according to it"- [which was] a phrase used by Oliver Cromwell to stress their concept that God still inspires.¹¹⁵

Nuttall summarizes this section on the Puritan's view of the Word and the Spirit by emphasizing that

In Puritanism what religiously and theologically springs from concentration on the doctrine and experience of the Holy Spirit may be seen more philosophically or psychologically as a concern with immediacy, as an insistence on the non-necessity of a vehiculum or medium.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Collected Writings, vol. IV, p. 92.

¹¹⁵ Nuttall, Puritan, pp. 100-101.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 103.

In the area of "grieving the Spirit", the Puritan understanding perhaps finds a parallel in Darby's pacifism.¹¹⁷ Again the similarity between the views of Darby and the Puritans is striking. Though speaking specifically of the Quakers, Nuttall says,

They desire above all not to grieve His Spirit; consequently they cannot despise the most despicable of men, for 'he who despises, despises not men but God who has given us His Holy Spirit'." [Therefore] Christians are brought into life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars. Christian Pacifism . . . [is but] an extreme example of . . . an empowering of men so to live in the Spirit . . . that fighting, war, is just not possible for them.¹¹⁸

Though the Puritan period in England did much to call attention to the New Testament doctrine of grace, it is an oversimplification to say that

This force passed away and gave place to the Restoration period, with ecclesiasticism in the Church of England and subjectivity in Quakerism.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Though the purpose of this dissertation is not to detail Darby's view of the Christian and war, he makes several statements which advocate Christian pacifism. For example, he says, "It is clear to me that a Christian, free to do as he will, could never be a soldier, unless he were at the very bottom of the scale, and ignorant of the christian position" (Letters, vol. II, p. 110). Anthony Norris Groves (and other early Plymouth Brethren) resigned from the Church of England because of their pacifistic views (See Coad, History, pp. 15-22).

¹¹⁸ Nuttall, Puritan, p. 99.

¹¹⁹ W. H. Griffith Thomas, The Holy Spirit of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 109. Hereafter cited as Thomas, Holy Spirit.

The English Church Restoration, however, was Arminian in its essence. Thomas's generalization that Quakerism "tended to set aside the authority of Holy Scripture in their emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the 'Inner Light' of the soul",¹²⁰ does seem to be valid.

The subject of the Holy Spirit was treated at this particular time in history by two men, Thomas Goodwin and John Owen. Goodwin's emphasis was on the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian life while John Owen, the Nonconformist Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, incorporated the Reformation principles regarding the Holy Spirit in his Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit.

Pietism and Revivalism

In the latter part of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries Pietism "did much to reassert the true position concerning the Holy Spirit."¹²¹ This movement, particularly in Germany, provided an alternative to the prevailing Deism and rationalistic philosophy advocated by Spinoza and other German scholars. Criticised for stressing the practice of Christian principles at the expense of the correctness of theological

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 106. Cf. Hugh Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), chs. 3-5; and Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, eds., Early Quaker Writings (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), Parts B and E.

¹²¹ Thomas, Holy Spirit.

opinions, "Pietism," said one writer, "was indifferent where orthodoxy was passionate, and passionate where orthodoxy was indifferent."¹²²

Revivalism under such men as Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, Newton, and Jonathan Edwards reasserted the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation and the Christian life. John Wesley particularly insisted on what is called the "witness of the Spirit." One writer seeks to account for this period's missionary expansion in England and America as "undoubtedly the result of [the] insistence upon the Holy Spirit in relation to the Gospel of Christ."¹²³

Rationalism

Rationalism swept over Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is said by some that the nineteenth century was more concerned about the spirit of man than about the Spirit of God. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), though he emphasized the need for personal religion, denied the personality of God. Schleiermacher states:

This idea of God . . . being thought of as too like us, as a thinking and willing Person, is drawn down into the region of opposition. It therefore appears natural that the more like man God is conceived, the more easily another mode of presentation is set over against it. Hence, we have an idea of the Highest Being, not as personally thinking and willing, but exalted above all personality,

¹²² Howard Watkin-Jones, The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1929), p. 49.

¹²³ Thomas, Holy Spirit, pp. 106-107.

as the universal, productive, connecting
necessity of all thought and existence.¹²⁴

Defining the Holy Spirit as "the union of the Divine Essence with human nature in the form of the common Spirit animating the life in common of believers,"¹²⁵ Schleiermacher's position is that the rejection of the biblical doctrine of the personality of the Triune God is not detrimental to true religion. "This rejection of the idea of a personal Deity," he says, "does not decide against the presence of the Deity in his [the Christian's] feeling."¹²⁶

Albert Ritschl (1822-1889), described as "the most influential German theologian of the last third of the nineteenth century,"¹²⁷ revived the Monarchianism of Paul of Samosata. A summary of what he believed and taught is found in his Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung. Rejecting metaphysics as an aid to Christian truth, Ritschl employed the theory of knowledge advocated by the philosopher Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881). Insisting that things cannot be known as they are in themselves, Lotze held that they are known truly only in their attributes or

¹²⁴Frederich Schleiermacher, On Religion, trans. John Oman (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 95.

¹²⁵Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 2:569.

¹²⁶On Religion, p. 97.

¹²⁷Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Nineteenth Century in Europe, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 2:26.

activities. Therefore Ritschl believed that contact with Christ occurs in the Christian community and only as such He is truly known. To "ask questions about His pre-existence, His two natures, or His relationship to the Trinity was to ask what the experience of the early church could not answer, and what only metaphysics could assert or deny."¹²⁸ Ryrie's evaluation of Ritschl's theology that it was "a theology without metaphysics, which necessarily affected his view of the Spirit,"¹²⁹ though brief, is certainly worthy of consideration.

The Oxford Movement

Horton Davies, in summarizing the distinctive characteristics of the Oxford Movement, sets forth the major differences between the Tractarians and the Evangelicals. He suggests that the Tractarian Movement,

- (1) attached a profound value to sacred tradition and the history of the Christian Church in both East and West in the first five centuries;
- (2) conceived of the Church itself as an independent divinely originating and divinely sustained society, characterized by the notes of unity, catholicity, and, above all, apostolicity;
- (3) in its understanding of faith was more objective, for it concentrated on the acts of God accomplishing human salvation in history and upon the dogmas of belief rather than on their subjective appropriation;
- (4) gave sacramental life and liturgical worship an even higher place than the Anglican Evangelicals had given them;

¹²⁸Walker, A History, p. 494.

¹²⁹Ryrie, Spirit, p. 118.

- (5) and, although this was chiefly characteristic of the second generation of Tractarians, emphasized the value of ceremony in worship, as appealing to the mixed nature of man, spirit, mind, and body which had been hallowed in the Incarnation.¹³⁰

Walvoord states that, although the Tractarian movement in England was an attempt to counteract liberalism, it "accomplished nothing in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."¹³¹

Thomas says that because the Tractarian movement sought protection in the authority and continuity of the Christian Church as expressed and proved by Apostolic Succession, that

its emphasis on this position tended, as sacerdotalism invariably does, to ignore the definite presence and spiritual power of the Holy Spirit. Whether we consider its Roman Catholic aspect, as represented by Newman and his fellow-converts, or its Anglican counterpart, as represented by Pusey and others, it is marked by a decided absence of reference to the New Testament conceptions of the Holy Spirit in the individual and the community."¹³²

Though the enemy which the leaders of the Oxford Movement set out to resist and to baffle was "Liberalism",¹³³ few advances were made in the study of Pneumatology. Characterized as primarily "an uprising, on the part of a few religious and highly gifted men, in behalf of that conservative, patristic, sacramental form of Anglican

¹³⁰ Davies, Worship, p. 254.

¹³¹ Walvoord, Holy Spirit, p. 251.

¹³² Thomas, Holy Spirit, p. 111.

¹³³ George Park Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 452.

piety and theology,"¹³⁴ the Movement stressed the authority of tradition, of the undivided Church, and of the need for adoring Christ in the Sacrament. One fruit of the Oxford Movement's energy was the Tracts for the Times, the medium which reflects the ecclesiastical journey of John Henry Newman. Newman's particular concern was the recovery of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, once declaring "I fear we have neglected the real ground on which our authority is built- 'our Apostolical Descent'".¹³⁵

The stress on the doctrine of Apostolic Succession did not aid those in the Tractarian Movement to develop a biblical Pneumatology. However, Archdeacon Manning in his work Holy Spirit, published in 1875, who with R. I. Wilberforce seceded to Rome, grounded his allegiance to Rome on his understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Spirit. He related his belief that it is in the Church, in the visible Apostolic Organization, that the Spirit has His abode.¹³⁶

Moody and the Second Great Awakening

The twentieth century dispensationalist John Walvoord considers the latter part of the nineteenth century the high point in the study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Referring to the revivals in England, Ireland, and America between the years 1856 and 1859, he states that these

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 453. ¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 455. ¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 467.

contributed to the creation of holiness movements which "gave full attention to the doctrine of the Spirit."¹³⁷ The Keswick movement in England (with its corresponding work in America) Walvoord designates as one of the "permanent benefits" of that revival period. The evangelist D. L. Moody (1837-1899) had a great impact on the Church and its attention to the power of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁸

Moody's role in what has been termed the "Second Great Awakening" was part of the rediscovery of the centrality of the Holy Spirit in true revivalism. America, Scotland, and England were all affected by the revivals of the latter half of the nineteenth century. One writer describes this period:

There was a resuscitation of a Church-consciousness on the subject of the Holy Spirit such as had not been known from the days of the Reformation . . . of that revival moment which gladdened the English-speaking Churches of last century, we may say that it was above all things Biblical; that it was not a mere revival of ancient forms, measures, and engagements; that it was not, like Jansenism, a mere resuscitation of Augustinianism, valuable as that was, but a return to the Bible, which gave it an elevation, energy, and success which it could not otherwise have had.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Walvoord, Holy Spirit, p. 467.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 251. See also George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 72-80. Marsden points out that almost all of Moody's lieutenants associated with the rise of dispensationalism wrote works on the Holy Spirit and that Moody himself had undergone an intense "second experience" in 1871, which Moody considered the filling of the Spirit (pp. 72, 78). A regular feature of the Northfield conferences were the challenges by Moody to the participants to "yield themselves wholly to God" and to "get full of the Holy Spirit" (p. 79).

¹³⁹ Smeaton, The Doctrine, pp. 340-341.

Concerning the increased study of the Holy Spirit during the nineteenth century, Smeaton continues

One author treated the subject of the Spirit after another, free from the misty notions of sacramental grace and the blighting Arminian views which may be traced in all the previous period. The exposition of the subject by Henry Venn in his Complete Duty of Man, by Robinson of Leicester in his Christian System, by Romaine in his remarkable discourse on the Holy Spirit, leave nothing to be desired. For amplitude of statement and unembarrassed freeness of doctrinal view, they show how great a change had taken place. Courses of lectures on the Spirit were prepared and delivered. Prayers were offered for the Holy Spirit. Haldane Stuart of Liverpool sent out a yearly invitation to pray for the Spirit.¹⁴⁰

The Catholic Apostolic Church

The Catholic Apostolic Church ("Irvingites") provide further material for research into the state of Pneumatological study preceding Darby's work. Begun by Edward Irving (1792-1834),¹⁴¹ this group's primary membership consisted of Non-Conformists of the mid-1800's. An eloquent Scottish Presbyterian minister, Irving had prayed in 1821 with James Haldane Stewart, an ordained lawyer in the Church of England, for an outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Church.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 341. The publishing of the following books reflects this renewed interest in the study of the Spirit: George Smeaton's The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (1889), H. C. G. Moule's Veni Creator (1890), J. E. Cumming's Through the Eternal Spirit (no date), C. R. Vaughan's The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1894), and A. B. Simpson's The Holy Spirit or Power from on High (1895).

¹⁴¹ For the life of Edward Irving, see Margaret Oliphant's The Life of Edward Irving (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1864) and Arnold Dallimore's Forerunner of the

With leading men from other denominations, Irving and Stewart voiced their belief that the Church needed above everything else a deeper experience of the work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴²

Stewart published in 1821 a tract Hints for a General Union of Christians for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and subsequently issued a larger pamphlet entitled Thoughts on the Importance of Special Prayer for the General Outpouring of the Spirit.¹⁴³ Haldane Stewart helped prepare the way for Irving's homilectically taking London by storm.

Many fashionable society folk flocked to hear Irving when he began to preach at the Caledonian Chapel in London. The membership swelled as he made pronouncements on his favorite subject (prophecy), necessitating the construction of a large church in Regent Square in 1827. The philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) attended the preaching of Irving and once proclaimed,

I hold that Edward Irving possesses more of the spirit and purpose of the first Reformers, that he has more of the Head and Heart, the Life, the Uction, and the genial power of Martin Luther, than any man now alive.¹⁴⁴

Charismatic Movement: The Life of Edward Irving (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983). Hereafter cited as Dallimore, Forerunner.

¹⁴² Harold H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1967), p. 9.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ Dallimore, Forerunner, p. 60.

Irving was convinced that a significant cause of the Church's plight was the absence of the pentecostal gifts of the Holy Spirit. In describing his arrival at this conclusion, Irving says,

I continued still very little moved to seek myself, or to stir up my people to seek these spiritual treasures. Yet I went forward to contend and to instruct whenever the subject came before me in my public ministrations . . . that the Holy Ghost ought to be manifested among us all, the same as ever He was in the primitive Churches.¹⁴⁵

When on April 30, 1831, "speaking in tongues" occurred in Irving's London church, Irving exclaimed,

I did rejoice with great joy when the tidings were read to me . . . that the bridal attire and jewels of the Church had been found again.¹⁴⁶

In 1832 Irving was deposed from his Presbyterian ministry for stressing a humanity of Christ which was no different than that of fallen humanity. Stressing that Christ's "miraculous conception . . . does not deprive him of a substance of sinful flesh and blood- that his flesh and blood is the same with the flesh and blood of the brethren,"¹⁴⁷ Irving, though affirming the sinlessness of Christ, had Christ in sinful flesh. Emphasizing that the Lord's battle on earth was a real one against sin,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., quoting Oliphant, Life of Irving, pp. 275-276.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 127, quoting Irving's "Recent Manifestations," Fraser's, January, 1832.

¹⁴⁷ Edward Miller, The History and Doctrines of Irvingism, 2 vols., (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), p. 85.

Irving stated that to have had "God mixed up with His human nature" would have given Him an unfair advantage over ordinary human beings. This position of Irving's relates to his Pneumatology, for Irving held that

The Holy Spirit, by whom Christ obtained victory, is equally available to all of us, and we may experience the same baptism with the Spirit and be endued with the same power as that exercised in Christ.¹⁴⁸

Soon after being deposed, Irving devoted himself completely to the establishing of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Governed by six "Apostles" (completed to twelve in 1835) who were believed to have been prophesied by Scripture, the church adopted an elaborate ritual in 1842, one aspect of which was the regarding of those Apostles as organs of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁹ The conviction in the Church was that Ephesians 4 promised Christ's giving of Apostles for the purpose of building up His Church. Believing that the apostolate should be revived, the Irvingites sent out their Apostles as missionaries in Europe and America.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Dallimore, Forerunner, p. 96.

¹⁴⁹Walker, A History, p. 500.

¹⁵⁰Latourette, The Nineteenth Century, p. 344. Irving's personal influence upon Darby and the Plymouth Brethren will be considered briefly in our next section, "Theologians Influencing Darby and the Brethren." The Pneumatologies of Darby and Irving will be compared in our first appendix.

The Plymouth Brethren

The contributions by the Plymouth Brethren to the study of Pneumatology receive either overwhelming praise (particularly by those of a dispensational persuasion) or scant mention (mostly by those not in the dispensational camp). One illustration of the former is the comment by the dispensationalist Charles Ryrie:

It is to the Brethren that we owe a proper understanding of the baptizing work of the Spirit and the distinct nature of the New Testament church. The church owes much to their testimony to the importance of the Word of God, the illumination of the Spirit, and the position which the believer has in Christ by the work of the Spirit. . . . Theirs was a necessary witness to the presence, power, and guidance of the Spirit in the church.¹⁵¹

Plymouth Brethrenism began as a movement to unite all real Christians. Faced with a divided Christendom, it was an endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit." From the beginning its members insisted on the Second Coming of Christ as the Church's present hope and the presence of the Holy Spirit as the principle of unity of God's people. Summarizing some of the contributions of the Brethren, one writer says,

The Church as a whole owes much to the testimony of the Brethren on the importance of the Word of God, the judicial standing of the believer in Christ by the Spirit, and the Coming of Christ as the blessed hope of the Church.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹Ryrie, Spirit, pp. 118-119.

¹⁵²Thomas, Holy Spirit, p. 111.

Though they were marked by a "fissiparous tendency", they are credited with setting forth the Holy Spirit as the characteristic of this dispensation.¹⁵³

Sharply disagreeing with Ryrie on the importance of the Plymouth Brethren Movement in recovering a biblical Pneumatology, Smeaton in his work on the Holy Spirit considers Irvingism and Plymouth Brethrenism only in passing, because "they claim, in a peculiar sense, to owe their origin to the Holy Spirit." "They are so vastly inferior to their pretensions, however," he says, "that they rather awaken a feeling of regret and pity."¹⁵⁴

Though critical of the Plymouth Brethren as a movement, Smeaton recognizes that they have, especially through such writers as Darby, William Kelly, and J. L. Harris, contributed much to the study of Pneumatology.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 112. Thomas agrees with one Plymouth Brother who said of the Brethren that "their appreciation of the Holy Spirit's presence, power, and guidance is the grand and distinctive character of their theology."

¹⁵⁴ Smeaton, The Doctrine, p. 355.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 356. The following criticism by Smeaton is worth noting:

"While many excellent things have been said by all these writers on the distinction which must always be carefully drawn between Christ's work for us and the Spirit's work in us, on the inhabitation of the Spirit in the hearts of Christians, and on the communion between Christ and His people by the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, there are three points where their doctrinal views on the Spirit are mischievous in the last degree. (1) They have very much resuscitated the Cocceian notions as to the alleged low platform of the Old Testament saints. . . .

There were other groups prior to the Plymouth Brethren which strove for a greater sense of the Holy Spirit's presence.¹⁵⁶ That the Brethren did not develop their understanding of the Spirit in isolation from some of these other groups will be demonstrated in our next section.¹⁵⁷

Theologians Influencing Darby and the Brethren

Though it is not our purpose to explicate the sources of Darby's Pneumatology, the understanding that there were contemporaries of Darby who may have informed his thinking about the Holy Spirit will provide further insight into the development of this area of his theology. Such individ-

(2) They make a presumptuous claim to be in their assemblies under the presidency of the Holy Ghost, as they phrase it; and, accordingly, they venture to carry out the decrees and resolutions come to under this imagination with a confidence little less than apostolic. (3) They take exception to what most other Churches, not swamped by Ritualism, have always regarded as one of the most important and blessed duties- to prayer for the Holy Ghost. . . . This sect, by an obvious misinterpretation of Scripture, objects to the practice of praying for the Spirit, because forsooth He was given at Pentecost" (Ibid.).

¹⁵⁶ See Latourette, The Nineteenth Century, pp. 344-345 where he states that the Brethren "were preceded by individuals and groups in the British Isles, America, and France who were praying, seeking the power of the Holy Spirit, and studying the Scriptures."

¹⁵⁷ See also Rowdon, The Brethren, pp. 1-26.

duals as John Walker, Thomas Kelly, Anthony Norris Groves, J. G. Bellett, Henry Bellenden Bulteel, and others deserve our attention. A survey of Darby's own theological pilgrimage will conclude this chapter.

John Walker, Thomas Kelly,
and the Separatists

Darby's desire in 1827 for a spiritual communion based on Scriptural principles was not one which he alone possessed. The circumstances immediately preceding Darby's joining with men such as Groves and Bellett reveal that there were others who were dissatisfied with the spiritual and ecclesiastical status quo of the State Church. Darby's awareness of others seeking to return to the fellowship of the early church is shown in a letter dated April 30, 1833:

One young clergyman from the north, who has formed a society precisely on the principle we recognise, only as a clergyman not having the Lord's supper, came to know how he would effect a correspondence between all the other like ones, in order to their mutual recognition as brethren for fellowship when they went into any such places and to get them visited for profit. I hear the north is dotted with little bodies, meeting as you do, though I do not know the places. ¹⁵⁸

Though Darby does not specify the identity of the "little bodies" to which he is referring, the activities of such men as John Walker and Thomas Kelly could hardly have escaped his notice.

¹⁵⁸ Letters, vol. I, p. 17. Italics mine.

John Walker was a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, a classical scholar of some repute, and chaplain of Bethesda Chapel, the headquarters of the followers of Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon in the Irish capital.¹⁵⁹ As a staunch Calvinist, he published in 1802 An Expostulatory Address to the Members of the Methodist Society in Ireland, a pamphlet which put him into conflict with Alexander Knox, at that time an upholder of Methodism.

According to his own account, Walker, concerned at the poor moral qualities of professed evangelicals by comparison with what he knew of the behaviour of the early Christians, came to find his position in the communion of the Established Church untenable.¹⁶⁰ Seceding from the Church in 1804, he established a sect called Separatists or Walkerites. Their principles were similar to the Brownists of Queen Elizabeth's time.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹George T. Stokes, "John Nelson Darby", The Contemporary Review, vol. XLVIII, July-December, 1885, p. 539. Hereafter cited as Stokes, "Darby."

¹⁶⁰Neatby, History, p. 26.

¹⁶¹Stokes, "Darby", p. 540. Stokes speaks of the Separatists as "a canker-worm" which attacked the life of the Evangelical Movement (pp.538-539). He says further that the

"Separatists pursued the leading Evangelical teachers everywhere; poaching upon their congregations, robbing them of their most devout adherents, and representing themselves as specially spiritual in contrast with the Evangelical clergy, whom they described as hankering after the fleshpots of Egypt" (p. 539).

Expelled from Trinity College on October 9, 1804, Walker resigned from three religious societies, but continued to read and expound the Scriptures in Bethesda Chapel. He excluded hymns and prayers in those services since he felt unable to engage in any form of worship that was open to a mixed company of believers and unbelievers.¹⁶²

Walker rejected the identification of baptism and Church membership, holding that the only basis of Church membership and communion was God's secret election and its manifestation in conversion. He rejected ordination and an appointed ministry, and practised closed communion, refusing to admit any save his own followers to Holy Communion.¹⁶³

Walker and his followers practiced:

- (1) The weekly (specifically on the first day of the week) celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Walkerites referred to it as "the Breaking of Bread";
- (2) The practice of teaching and admonishing one another, with no distinction between clergy and laity;
- (3) The exercise of church discipline and the holy kiss;
- (4) The view that as in Apostolic days, there should be one church in each place, though Walker denied that his church in Dublin, and those associated with it, comprehended all the true disciples of Christ in the country;
- (5) The denial that the Christian gospel was intended to improve the conditions of the world. The Walkerites directed their hope to the second advent of Christ;
- (6) The freedom to differ on the sacrament of baptism. Walker was undecided about the biblical practice and apparently held to believers' baptism.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶²Harold H. Rowdon, "Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Vox Evangelica*, III, editor Ralph P. Martin, (London: The Epworth Press, 1964), p. 77. Hereafter cited as Rowdon, "Secession."

¹⁶³Stokes, "Darby", p. 539.

¹⁶⁴Rowdon, "Secession", p. 77.

Thomas Kelly (born in Dublin in 1769) received his education at Trinity College. His father was a judge of the Irish Court of Common Pleas; like Darby years later, Kelly initially pursued legal training, but his spiritual conversion led to his seeking, and, in 1792, attaining ordination.

The places of worship which Kelly established at Althy, Portarlinton, Wexford, and other locations in Ireland practiced baptism administered only on one's profession of faith, rejected ordination, and exercised extempore speaking in the congregation, though arrangements were evidently made at times for specified persons to exercise ministry.¹⁶⁵

Though there were a number of similarities in doctrine between the Walkerites and the followers of Kelly, a union of the two forces did not materialize. The story is related that a conference was held between the Walkerites and the Kellyites to discuss terms on which a union between the two groups might be effected. The negotiations were broken off by the absolute refusal of Kelly and his friends to entertain a term of fellowship on which the other side peremptorily insisted. The article of belief to which the Kellyites declined to commit themselves was "that John Wesley is in hell."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁶⁶Neatby, History, p. 27. See Stokes, "Darby", p. 550 where he discusses Walker's "rabid" Calvinism and his 1804 address to Alexander Knox in which he placed all non-Calvinists out of the pale of salvation.

The definite linking of Walkerite and Kellyite meetings with Darby and the Plymouth Brethren is difficult to establish with any measure of certainty. While some of these churches during this period of dissent were secessions from the Established Church, others arose out of existing independent churches. Stokes emphasizes the fact that John Walker, as a teacher of Darby from 1815 to 1819, exercised an influence on Darby which has not yet been fully investigated. Through Alexander Knox, Stokes says, the Oxford movement connects itself with Wesley, as Darby is connected with Whitefield through Walker.¹⁶⁷

Rowdon agrees with Stokes' concern that, although the history and growth of the Methodism of this era has received much study, almost unnoticed in this period of dissent has been the contribution made by clergymen who seceded from the established church. Rowdon's evaluation of the contribution of men such as John Walker and Thomas Kelly aids in understanding what he terms "the emergence and development of a radical form of dissent which emerged during the period- the movement which was dubbed 'The Plymouth Brethren'."¹⁶⁸

Similarities in doctrinal concerns are certainly apparent when one compares Darby and the Walkerites. Peter

¹⁶⁷ Stokes, "Darby", p. 550.

¹⁶⁸ Rowdon, "Secession", p. 76.

Roe's volume The Evil of Separation from the Church of England, published in 1815, consisted of letters written by evangelical clergy in Ireland and England against new forms of dissent which had appeared in those years. Though these letters did not specify those new forms of dissent, they give insight into certain views which would later characterize the Brethren Movement.¹⁶⁹

Believing that the Church of England was not based on Scripture and particularly disturbed at its establishment, these dissenters rejected crown appointments and were particularly exercised about the poor discipline of the Established Churches. They disallowed the worshipping together of believers and unbelievers, a belief which has been described as "their favourite principle." Substituting for a formal liturgy a freer style of worship, they were marked by the positive principles of the idea of the "gathered church", weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, the practice of mutual exhortation without a distinction between clergy and congregation, and even held to the "kiss of peace."

¹⁶⁹ Rowdon, "Secession", pp. 76-77. Rowdon says that "Although Roe gave no clue as to the identity of the separatists whom he was opposing, it is clear that they included the followers of John Walker. The religious body which Walker established accepted the name of Separatists, and the view held by him fit the picture drawn in Roe's volume." Ibid., p. 77. See also Walker, Letters on Primitive Christianity; in which are Set Forth the Faith and Practice of the Apostolic Churches. By a Member of the Relig-

The British Quarterly Review of October, 1873, referred to Dublin as "a powerful focus of separatist movements all through the early years of this century", and specified Kellyism as well as Walkerism.¹⁷⁰ Rowdon argues that although Plymouth was an influential center in England for the early Brethren Movement, the Movement itself really had its beginning in Dublin. He says,

It was in Dublin that the first tentative steps were taken towards establishing a movement that looked to the Bible, and the Bible alone, for the solution of the ecclestical and religious problems of the day. And it was in Dublin that the most dynamic of its leaders was gained- the indefatigable John Nelson Darby.¹⁷¹

Neatby emphasizes that Brethrenism cannot in any proper sense be affiliated to either Walkerism or Kellyism. There is not a word in the narratives of any of the early Brethren to indicate that they consciously received any influence from them. "But," says Neatby,

That such movements existed is proof of the wide diffusion of the ideas that went to form Brethrenism, and to which Brethrenism in its turn was destined to give a far more durable embodiment, and a far more extensive influence. On all hands, probably, the prevailing Erastianism was quickening in fervent spirits the aspiration after a pure communion.¹⁷²

ious Body commonly called Separatists, 1834.

¹⁷⁰Rowdon, "Secession", p. 78.

¹⁷¹Rowdon, The Brethren, p. 37.

¹⁷²Neatby, History, p. 28.

Walkerism absorbed the most fervent elements of the Irish revival, although there was without question some vigorous evangelical ministry with the Established Churches. Because of its intense sectarianism, Neatby points out, Walkerism was considered too extreme by the Brethren.¹⁷³ Groves was concerned that the Brethren were becoming too much like the Walkerites, expressing his sentiments in a letter to Darby in March of 1836:

Though I feel you have departed from those principles by which you once hoped to have effected them . . . still my soul so reposes in the truth of your heart to God that I feel it needs but a step or two more to advance and you will see all the evils of the systems from which you profess to be separated, to spring up among yourselves . . . you will be known more by what you witness against than what you witness for, and practically this will prove that you witness against all but yourselves, as certainly as the Walkerites or lassites: your Shibboleth may be different, but it will be as real.¹⁷⁴

That a number of comparisons may be made between Darby and the Walkerites demonstrates that they shared an earnest desire for the recovery of a biblical concept of the church. Walker's definition of the church is worthy of notice. Defining a true church as a

collection of disciples; who are gathered together into one body by their agreement in that Truth, who unitedly confess it, walk under its influence, and are regulated by its influence,¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Coad, History, p. 291.

¹⁷⁵ Rowdon, "Secession", p. 78. Quoting from John Walker, An Address to Believers of the Gospel of Christ on the Conversation which Becometh It, 1804, p.25.

Walker held that the church, as an "insulated body", is to be composed of members who must be separate from unbelievers, heretics, and those who walk disorderly. Like Darby, Walker looked for the drawing together of all true disciples in separation from both the world and the false church.¹⁷⁶

How widespread were Walker's ideas and practices? The 1834 edition of Walker's Letters on Primitive Christianity claimed churches in London, Leith, and Dublin.¹⁷⁷ Stokes says that some groups of Walkerites were still in existence in 1885 when he wrote his study on Darby for The Contemporary Review. Speaking of the Walkerites, Stokes says,

This sect decayed, indeed, but its principles survived and exercised a very corroding influence on the labours of the Evangelical party all through the first quarter of this century.¹⁷⁸

Stokes points out that geographically the Separatist societies, "in virtue of their more logical position-flourished and increased, especially in the West of England, Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol, as well as in Dublin and many other places throughout Ireland."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸Stokes, "Darby", p. 539.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 540.

Groves, Bulteel,
and Others

The formation of the Plymouth Brethren was especially due to two men, Anthony Norris Groves and J. G. Bellett. Groves, born in 1795, was a friend and patron of Dr. Kitto, the Biblical critic. Though he had established himself as a successful dentist at both Plymouth and at Exeter, Groves was so impressed by the preaching of the Evangelical clergy at Plymouth that he entered Trinity College, Dublin, around the year 1825 to take holy orders. At that time Groves came into contact with Bellett and Darby at the drawing-room meetings for prayer and study of Scriptures.¹⁸⁰

Challenged by his reading of the Bible as to the use of his worldly possessions, Groves embodied his convictions in the booklet Christian Devotedness, published in 1825. The thrust of this tract was, in his own words, "The Christian motto should be- labour hard, consume little, give much, and all to Christ."¹⁸¹

His wife, who had not shared his initial burden for missions, was soon convinced of Groves' position and encouraged her husband in his ministerial studies. Meeting

¹⁸⁰Stokes, "Darby", p. 542. Stokes says that these meetings were largely under the influence of what may be described as Separatist views.

¹⁸¹Quoted in Coad, History, p. 17. Though it is difficult to determine the effect of this tract on Darby, George Mueller, who married Groves' sister in 1830, was deeply influenced in his "faith" ministry by Groves' booklet. See also Neatby, History, pp. 54-55.

with members of the Established Church (including J. G. Bellett, Francis Hutchinson, and Edward Cronin) for informal study of the Bible and fellowship, Groves made the suggestion in 1827 that seems to have laid the foundation of Brethrenism. J. G. Bellett related the event in the following terms,

Groves has just been telling me, that it appears to him from Scripture that believers, meeting together as disciples of Christ, were free to break bread together as their Lord had admonished them, and that, in so far as the practice of the apostles could be a guide, every Lord's Day should be set apart for thus remembering the Lord's death and obeying his parting command.¹⁸²

Though it is an overstatement to say, as did several nineteenth century writers on Brethrenism, that Groves was the movement's real founder,¹⁸³ the two major principles that gave birth to the movement were apparently primarily his contribution: the "breaking of bread" every Lord's Day and the belief that liberty of ministry is from the call of Christ and does not depend on the ordination of men.¹⁸⁴

J. G. Bellett, also born in 1795, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, the same years as Darby had been

¹⁸²Neatby, History, p. 7.

¹⁸³See, for example, Rowdon, The Brethren, p. 38.

¹⁸⁴Bass, Backgrounds, p. 67. Darby apparently joined this group around 1827; Groves and his family left England for Bagdad in 1829. See Mrs. A. N. Groves, Memoirs of A. N. Groves. (London: G. Morrish, n.d.).

under the instruction of John Walker (1815-1819).¹⁸⁵ After studying law in London, Bellett was called to the bar but apparently did not practice. Having entertained Groves while the latter was studying for his dental exams, Bellett was greatly influenced by the developing ecclesiology of Groves in the years 1827-1828. Bellett relates that in 1828 Groves said to him,

This, I doubt not, is the mind of God concerning us, that we should come together in all simplicity as disciples, not waiting on any pulpit or minister, but trusting that the Lord would edify us together, by ministering as He pleased¹⁸⁶ and saw good from the midst of ourselves.

Bellett continues,

At that moment he spoke these words I was assured my soul had got the right idea, and that moment- I remember it as if it was yesterday, and could point you¹⁸⁷ out the place- it was the birth place of my mind.

Another leader among the dissenters who had a formative influence on the Plymouth Movement was Henry Bellenden Bulteel. Born the same year as Darby (1800), Bulteel was a fellow of Exeter (1823-1829) and experienced conversion about the year 1827 under the ministry of Dr. Hawker, the celebrated Calvinist preacher in Plymouth.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵Rowdon, The Brethren, p. 39.

¹⁸⁶quoted in Coad, History, p. 28.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 29. Italics mine.

¹⁸⁸Rowdon, "Secession", p. 81. Rowdon says that Hawker exercised a powerful ministry at St. Ebbe's and numbered W. E. Gladstone among his undergraduate following.

Bulteel rocked the University of Oxford on February 6, 1831 by his sermon in St. Mary's Church, in which he boldly asserted Calvinist doctrines and fearlessly indicted the Church of England. His indictment focused on what he termed her unworthy ministers, her subjection to the state and her denial of the Calvinism which, he claimed, was professed in her Articles.¹⁸⁹

Bulteel's sermon had quite an impact on several early Brethren. B. W. Newton, who looked over Bulteel's sermon before it was delivered, said of the occasion, "it was the turning-point of my life."¹⁹⁰

Darby defended Bulteel's university sermon against the strictures of Dr. Burton, Regius Professor of Divinity.¹⁹¹ Darby's goal was to prove that the teaching of the Church of England at the time of the Reformation had been distinctly Calvinistic (rather than Lutheran, as Burton had argued), that Bucer and Peter Martyr had exercised a Calvinistic influence on the English leaders, and that Bishop Jewell was an undoubted Calvinist. The pamphlet was widely received and Darby once remarked "that is the only pamphlet by which I made any money."¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 80-81.

¹⁹⁰Rowdon, The Brethren, p. 66.

¹⁹¹Originally published under the pseudonym "Oudeis" (Oxford, 1831), it is 67 pages long and is found in his Collected Writings, vol. III.

¹⁹²Turner, Darby, p. 70.

Bulteel came under Edward Irving's influence in 1831 and accepted the Irvingite belief that the Pentecostal gifts of the Spirit had been given again and rejected the Calvinistic doctrine of particular redemption.¹⁹³ Bulteel later renounced his Irvingite views.

The companionship and influence of George Mueller to Darby deserves brief mention. Mueller, born in 1805, attended the last of the Powerscourt meetings in 1833 and, according to one source, "was at that time the English leader of the Separatist movement."¹⁹⁴

One of the leading figures of what has been termed the Western Schism, James Harington Evans (born in 1785), experienced and participated in a small-scale revival in his parish in Milford around the year 1809. Though opposed by his rector, Evans (along with a Thomas Snow) continued to preach, emphasizing the objective nature of the Gospel (as opposed to mere subjective feeling).¹⁹⁵

Henry Drummond, who had assisted many evangelical enterprises, built a chapel for Evans in John Street, Grays Inn Lane, where Evans commenced his life-work in 1818. Greatly valuing the free exercise of spiritual gifts in church meetings, Evans

was deterred through fear of becoming identified with Irvingite aberrations, and therefore, little was

¹⁹³Rowdon, "Secession", p. 81.

¹⁹⁴Stokes, "Darby", pp. 543-544.

¹⁹⁵Rowdon, "Secession", p. 79.

done to implement this conviction. Similarly, he saw a plurality of elders to be Scriptural, but found it difficult to secure.¹⁹⁶

Evans gained the respect of a wide circle of friends.

Rowdon says that

One of these, George Mueller of Orphan House fame, wrote in his journal for 3 March, 1835, "This evening I preached comfortably in John-street Chapel for Brother Evans. I never preached in any place where I so much felt that he who stately ministers was more worthy than myself."¹⁹⁷

Mueller became a pivotal figure among the Brethren and with the "Opens" served as the counterpart to Darby's position with the "Closed Brethren" in the schism of 1845. One of Evans's own congregation, a young solicitor named Robert Chapman, who had left London to serve as a Baptist minister in Barnstaple, became an honoured figure in the same movement.¹⁹⁸

Another respected Irish clergyman, Edward Hardman, also came under Irving's influence. He wrote a two-volume commentary on the New Testament and, though acquainted with Darby, accepted Irving's views on spiritual gifts. Darby describes him as "Hardman, a dear brother in the Lord, a clergyman"¹⁹⁹ in a letter dated August of 1833. Hardman published a pamphlet on I Corinthians 12-14 as a corrective to his previous treatment of that passage in his commentary.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Letters, vol. I, p. 22.

As a result, Archbishop Trench of Tuam withdrew Hardman's licence. Hardman became an evangelist and served as an "angel" of the Irvingite congregation which was formed in Dublin.²⁰⁰

From the previous considerations, it becomes obvious that there were gatherings of believers who were seeking a spiritual fellowship not found in the established church which antedated the formation of the Plymouth Brethren but which were not completely isolated from that formation. Concerning Darby's original quest for a "spiritual fellowship based on Scriptural principles", one writer says that Darby indeed found such

in a society, or rather an unorganized collection of societies, which had been for many years growing and developing, and which under his guidance was destined to take final shape in the sect now called the Plymouth Brethren.²⁰¹

Research on John Walker and the Walkerites shows certain connections between Darby and this group. Though it has been said that Darby gave the name "Separatist" to his followers,²⁰² the writings of Darby have not confirmed that statement.

Many have suggested that Darby derived much of his

²⁰⁰Rowdon, "Secession", p. 82.

²⁰¹Stokes, "Darby", p. 538. See Rowdon, The Brethren, concerning others such as James Buchanan and the Haldane brothers, pp. 22ff and Rowdon's "Secession", pp. 82-84 concerning William Tiptaft and J. C. Philpot.

²⁰²Sturgeon, "Life", p. 18.

prophetic system from Irving.²⁰³ Though Darby's parish was next to Powerscourt, and there were contacts between the early Brethren and the Irvingites, the debate continues concerning the origin of much of Darby's eschatology.

Darby's Own Theological Pilgrimage

Though Darby was certainly not isolated from the theological activities which surrounded him, in many ways it appears that he was an innovator in certain areas of doctrine. His role as an innovator may be accounted for partially by certain factors in his own spiritual pilgrimage, factors which reveal that his deepest spiritual needs were met, not by the traditional church, but rather by his interaction with what he considered the simple teachings of the Bible. A brief look at several factors in his life, such as his conversion, his experience of "deliverance", his confidence in the Bible as God's Word, and his own life of study will lend support to the thesis that his Pneumatology is best explained on the basis of his own interaction with his major textbook, the Bible.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 7. S. P. Tregelles says that the "rapture" idea originated by utterance of Irving in his Church (see George Elton Ladd, The Blessed Hope, pp. 40-44). Bell believes that Darby was probably the author of the pretribulation rapture doctrine ("A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology", New York University, 1967).

Speaking of the year 1825 as his moment of "conversion", as "the transition" in his life,²⁰⁴ Darby refers back to the time that caused him to examine the Scriptures to find answers to his questions about the Established Church. With similar language he speaks of 1827, that period of convalescence from the horse accident, as the stage in his life when he "found salvation and peace" and when he became convinced of certain great principles: the authority and certainty of the Word; the personal assurance of salvation; the church as His body; the Second Coming; the assembly on earth; and the fact of a new dispensation.²⁰⁵

Darby felt quite strongly that the biblical doctrine of "deliverance from the flesh" had not been taught properly from the Reformation onward.²⁰⁶ He believed that he was "delivered from the bondage of sin" in the years 1827-1828.²⁰⁷ Darby's doctrine of deliverance may be defined as "the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (who) provides the Christian with power by which he might live by his new nature and thereby hold the power of his sin nature in check."²⁰⁸ In 1879 Darby said "What set me free in 1827

²⁰⁴ Letters, vol. I, p. 285.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 344- 345.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., vol. III, p. 131. See also Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 87.

²⁰⁷ Letters, vol. I, p. 185.

²⁰⁸ Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 101.

is still the theme on which my soul dwells."²⁰⁹

Darby was quite transparent about his desire to teach this concept of deliverance wherever his ministry took him. Convinced that the Brethren had recovered (by God's grace) the Pauline doctrine of the unity of the Church with an ascended Christ and the important truth of deliverance and the accompanying peace of soul, Darby often summarized the success of his pioneering work in North America and other countries with the words "and many found peace."²¹⁰

Referring to his own experience of "deliverance", Darby relates how his confidence in the Bible as the completely trustworthy word of God developed. He says,

At the same period in which I was brought to liberty and to believe, with divinely given faith, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, I passed through the deepest possible exercise as to the authority of the word: whether if the world and the Church (that is, as an external thing, for it yet had certain traditional power over me as such) disappeared and were annihilated, and the word of God alone remained as an invisible thread over the abyss, my soul would trust in it. After deep exercise of soul I was brought by grace to feel I could entirely.²¹¹

Darby's confidence in the Bible is illustrated in many places in his Collected Writings. He sometimes seems to oppose the reading of the Bible to the work of research and study. To a friend he once wrote,

²⁰⁹ Letters, vol. II, p. 499.

²¹⁰ Ibid., vol. I, p. 475; vol. II, p. 8, etc.

²¹¹ Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 38.

You have studied too much, and read the Bible too little.
 . . . The cream is not found through much labour of
 the mind of man. . . . It should be read with God.²¹²

In another place he says, however, that though the "cream is on the surface, [that does not mean] that we do not search and study."²¹³

Aware that he and the Brethren could be accused of originating, rather than recovering, the doctrines they emphasized, Darby stressed that the initial motivation which led him to become involved in the formation of the Brethren was simply that of meeting the needs of his own conscience. The recovery of these truths, Darby said, is to be traced to no "other idea than that of satisfying my conscience, according to the light of the word of God." The text of Matthew 18:20 ("Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"), he stated, "furnished the solution of my trouble."²¹⁴

So convinced of his proper understanding of the teaching of the Bible was Darby that he seldom made a distinction between what Scripture teaches and the interpretation which he and the Brethren gave to it. Part of his justification for such certainty is found in his assurance that God had raised up the Brethren for "such a time as this"

²¹²Letters, vol. III, p. 256. Italics mine.

²¹³Ibid., p. 134.

²¹⁴Ibid., p. 301.

and that God was the one who had given him and the Brethren their particular theological convictions. Darby said that he found the "truth giving the scope and true character of Christianity, and the special truths which compose it (because) it was there" in the Word.²¹⁵

In 1843 Darby explains the raising up of the Plymouth Brethren by saying "God . . . has acted in the midst of us . . . it was His work."²¹⁶ Reluctant to accept any credit for the movement, Darby said in 1868,

I am surprised often how God makes good principles I maintained and gave out full forty years ago, because it was scriptural truth, without seeing all the consequences. . . . God was in it, for it was not my wisdom, but the word of the Lord abides for ever.²¹⁷

Darby speaks of his "own deep convictions, formed I do not doubt by God in my soul."²¹⁸ In 1844 Darby referred to the previous seventeen years of the consequences "of the convictions . . . God Himself has wrought in my heart by His word."²¹⁹ In 1852 he speaks of the time twenty-seven

²¹⁵ Notes and Comments, vol. II, p. 1.

²¹⁶ Letters, vol. I, pp. 68-71.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 524. That the principles would be received throughout many places in the world surprised Darby. He once stated that those early Brethren "never thought to go beyond thus meeting the need of our consciences and hearts according to the word. God was doing a work I had no idea of myself, and it spread over the world" (Ibid., p. 515).

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 431, 451. ²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

years previously when he entered the Brethren, not, as he says, for its success, but for its truth. "I did so because the Spirit and the Word shewed me it, and that it was following Christ."²²⁰

Darby's own life of study reveals that he possessed a broad knowledge of ecclesiastical history, ancient and modern languages, and philosophy. His personal library was composed of church histories, lexicons and grammars for biblical and non-biblical languages, New Testament codices and manuscripts (including copies of Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and a six-volume copy of the Complutensian Polyglot), and works of the Fathers and the Reformers. Specific works on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit were apparently not part of Darby's library.²²¹

Apart from his refutation of works such as Phases of Faith and his occasional references to statements by certain Church Fathers, Darby seldom cites other writers of theology in his own articles. Though never one to be reluctant to debate eschatology, he exerted most of his literary energy in exegeting what he believes the Scriptures teach about

²²⁰Ibid., p. 205.

²²¹The study of Darby's personal library would be a worthwhile project, though one must be careful in drawing conclusions about what sources he may or may not have consulted. A list of over four hundred separate items in his library auctioned by Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge in 1889 was obtained from Boston College and is entitled Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Nelson Darby, Dryden Press,

the end times. Concerning his doctrine of the ministry, he occasionally attacked by name those who represented "clerisy,"²²² utilizing their writings as a foil by which to set forth his own views. Perhaps because he was convinced that the truths of the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit were especially entrusted by God to the Brethren for dissemination, Darby gives the impression that his study of this area of theology was conducted almost solely within the pages of Scripture.

Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is explained best on the basis that he not only took the Bible seriously, but considered it the "only true light . . . the fountain of light";²²³ "the authority of Christ in the church";²²⁴ "the only sure guide in (these last) days."²²⁵ In describing the beliefs of the Plymouth Brethren, Darby said,

His (Christ's) word, namely the scriptures inspired of God, that is to say the Bible, is the authority which forms their faith; it is also its foundation, and they recognise it as that which should govern their conduct.²²⁶

J. Davy and Sons, 137, Long Acre, London, 1889. The editor of Darby's Collected Writings, William Kelly, once remarked that Darby "did not mind buying costly books, if he believed them of value for his work" (Turner, Life, p. 77).

²²²e.g., Mr. P. Wolff in Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 206-313.

²²³Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 358.

²²⁴Letters, vol. III, p. 198.

²²⁵Ibid., p. 471.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 305.

Convinced that God had raised up both him and the Brethren to testify not so much to the great body of orthodox truths, but rather to the two distinctive doctrines of the Second Coming and the presence of the Holy Ghost,²²⁷ Darby reminisces in 1879 about these two truths, truths which had guided and motivated his long life of ministry:

They started me in my path of service; the assurance of salvation came with them, and the christian character, as of a new creation.²²⁸

The primary task of this dissertation, that of synthesizing the major controlling themes of Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is our task in chapter two.

²²⁷Ibid., vol. II, p. 362.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 499.

CHAPTER II

MAJOR CONTROLLING THEMES OF DARBY'S PNEUMATOLOGY

To organize and synthesize Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit (or any area of his theology) is a goal of which the Irish ex-clergyman would have highly disapproved! Darby had little regard for clear-cut categories of theology and even less respect for those who ply its trade. He challenges his readers to search the Word of God and insists that such a search will reveal that "theology and theologians are worth nothing at all."¹

Although Darby portrayed theologians as those who seek to obscure the simple truths of the scriptures, he also sought to explain the lack of perspicuity in his own writings by saying: "It is not accurate language I look for, but faith working in the conscience."² "To define everything", Darby once remarked, "is what I do not presume to do."³ Not only is he unconcerned with theological precision in his writing, but he states that God may use imperfect, perhaps even erroneous expressions, to communicate blessing!⁴

¹Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 243.

²Letters, vol. III, p. 467. See also vol. I, p. 379 where he says that "pretending to accuracy destroys reverence and leads to infidelity."

³Ibid., vol. I, p. 282.

⁴Ibid., p. 98.

He disparagingly speaks of "discussing" God as that practice of theologians which causes the Almighty to lose His essentiality in our minds. Viewing philosophy and faith as opposing disciplines, Darby insists that "the grand aim of Satan in all heresy, [is] to take the mind off its state of recipiency into a state of judging of mere propositions."⁵

Much of his aversion to the theological enterprise is due apparently to his Anthropology. His understanding of humanity's depravity involves the belief that the person's total being, including his mind, has been affected by the Fall. We should be marked by a general distrust of humanity's intellectual abilities, Darby insists, for "it is remarkable how the reasoning of man fails and comes to nothing in the pursuit of divine truth."⁶ Even when the object of the individual's study is the Bible, Darby warns us that "we must distrust conclusions from scripture, for ever man's mind enters into them."⁷ He is particularly repulsed by biblical study which is disconnected from the Church's responsibility for evangelism. He says,

⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁶Ibid. Cf. vol. III, p. 431 where Darby speaks of the "naked poverty and littleness" of "the arbitrary suppositions of men."

⁷Ibid., vol. III, p. 370.

Often the intelligence occupies itself too much with the word, without question of souls, and without having to do with souls, and it is speculation.⁸

Darby particularly wishes to protect the biblical teaching on Christ from those (like Edward Irving) whom he says are "meddling metaphysically with the Lord's Person."⁹ In discussing, for example, the doctrine of the hypostatic union, Darby says that it is an area which can easily become a labyrinth for man's mind.

It is as if one were to dissect the body of one's friend. . . . It is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus.¹⁰

When he became embroiled in controversy about his concept of the "non-atoning" sufferings of the Lord in 1858-1859, Darby says he entertained "no thought . . . of making the blessed Lord a field of battle on which to defend myself."¹¹

In summary, Darby's perspective is that men and women need "to cultivate a healthy spirit, which does not search after questions, but piety. . . . Thorns", Darby emphasizes, "never nourish us."¹²

⁸Ibid., vol. I, p. 320. Italics mine.

⁹Ibid., p. 469.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 282. See also p. 283 where he says that the Christian's task is not to define, but to adore and feed on what the Holy Spirit gives us in the word.

¹¹Ibid., p. 453.

¹²Ibid., p. 249. Italics mine.

John Howard Goddard has well said,

In spite of the fact that Darby never failed to speak disparagingly of theology as a science and would doubtless have issued a vehement demurrer if any-one had ever called him a theologian, he was, nevertheless, a theologian in the best sense of the term.¹³

Though Darby frequently insists that theology is replete with dangers, he personally contributed thousands of essays (in several languages) and translations of all or parts of the Bible to the domain of theological inquiry. He was deeply concerned about communicating the truths which he believed the Plymouth Brethren had recovered. These truths, he stressed, "the evangelical body has lost . . . not merely the [doctrine of the] church . . . but even . . . our whole standing as Christians."¹⁴

He was worried, however, that those who began to identify themselves with the Brethren would substitute the reading of his writings (and that of other Brethren) for the reading of the Word of God. In speaking of his five-volume work Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Darby says "I fear souls may content themselves with it, instead of using it as a help to read the blessed word with."¹⁵ He warns brethren in a letter dated November, 1866, not to pen more literature than was necessary for spreading the needed truths.

¹³Goddard, "Contribution", p. 2.

¹⁴Letters, vol. I, p. 394.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 118.

Brethren must not over-write themselves: better to have what is right, good and fresh, than a quantity. I am not aware that I have written more than what God has given me for others' use when He has done so.¹⁶

What is our justification for seeking to synthesize Darby's teachings on the Holy Spirit? Though he would have disapproved of such a project, Darby has exercised a tremendous influence on Fundamentalist¹⁷ thought, and, therefore, our task is a worthwhile one. His writings in their present form, as another has so aptly expressed it,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 468.

¹⁷ The terms "Fundamentalist" and "Fundamentalism" have received a variety of definitions. The concept that Fundamentalism is "an interdenominational movement in Protestant theology which was originally designed to conserve the principles inherited from all branches of the Reformation" (Robertson, "Sanctification", p. 3) is, at best, only a general description. Harold B. Kuhn's historical explanation is helpful:

"Organizationally, Fundamentalism took shape as a consequence of the World Conference in Christian Fundamentals which convened at Philadelphia in May of 1919. Taking the name, The World's Christian Fundamentals Association, the organization required of its members adherence to nine points of doctrine, namely: (1) the inspiration of Scripture, (2) the Trinity, (3) the deity and virgin birth of Christ, (4) the creation and fall of man, (5) a substitutionary atonement, (6) the bodily resurrection and ascension of Christ, (7) the regeneration of believers, (8) the personal and imminent return of Christ, and (9) the resurrection and final assignment of all men to eternal blessedness or eternal woe" (Harold B. Kuhn, "Fundamentalism" in Everett F. Harrison, ed., Baker's Dictionary of Theology, 1960, p. 234, quoted in Robertson, "Sanctification", pp. 3-4).

Darby's contributions to the history of conservative theology will be our concern in our second appendix.

"are difficult to understand and consequently many who would otherwise be interested in them have ignored them."¹⁸ Darby freely acknowledged the lack of clarity in his writings, once admitting in a letter to a friend,

I am using your mind as a piece of blank paper, on which I jot down my thoughts, and it is quite possible there are better ones [sic], but you see what a letter for a man who has no time.¹⁹

An abridgement of Darby's thought on the person and work of the Holy Spirit would be of great value because of the amount of overlapping there is in his Collected Writings. Many of his essays are polemical in nature and are characterized by a repetition of argument. Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is scattered throughout his fifty-two volumes.

Our Procedure

In attempting to achieve a complete picture of even one area of a theologian's thought, one danger which must be avoided is that of imposing a structure or organization upon the data which is deductive rather than inductive (i.e., a

¹⁸Goddard, "Contribution", p. 4.

¹⁹Letters, vol. I, p. 137. See also his statement to his friend William Kelly, the editor of his Collected Writings: "You write to be understood, I only think on paper" (Turner, Life, pp. 72-73). His apparent impulsiveness in writing is partially explained by his comment "as sometimes anything resting on the mind corrodes there, I write at once as to what seems to me the truth" (Letters, vol. I, p. 527).

construct which finds its basis primarily in the mind of the researcher rather than one which emerges from the data being gathered). By seeking to achieve our construct from Darby's own statements on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we are able to outline the major controlling themes.

As Darby viewed his own ministry and that of the Plymouth Brethren Movement, he made a number of statements concerning that which he considered critical areas of doctrine to be recovered for this "dispensation."²⁰ At times he stresses eschatology as that area most needful of recovery for the church in the present age. As he emphasizes his belief that we are living in "the last days", he says,

²⁰By the term "dispensation" we mean "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God" (C. I. Scofield, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, Oakland: Western Book and Tract Co., n.d., p. 18). Scofield, the editor of the Scofield Reference Bible was an avid student of the writings of Darby. "Dispensationalism" is the term used to describe those who follow the hermeneutical scheme popularized by Darby and Scofield and includes the following elements: an attempt for a consistently "literal" interpretation of Scripture; the acknowledgment of a definite dichotomy between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church; a specific eschatology which includes a belief in a pretribulation rapture, a future (yet literal) thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, and a division of history into specific periods of God's dealing with man (often seven such "dispensations"); a "restricted" view of the church (e.g. that it is not revealed in the Old Testament, that it forms a "parenthesis" in the total scheme of redemption, etc.); and a "Jewish" concept of the kingdom (including a distinction between the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven"). For a positive presentation of modern dispensationalism, see Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965). For an historical evaluation of the rise of dispensationalism from a non-dispensation-

For me, the near coming of the Saviour, the gathering together of His own, and the sanctification and joy of those who are manifested, are always the thoughts predominant in my soul.²¹

As he in 1863 described his conversion experience over a half-century earlier, he summarized what truths God brought to his mind at that time.

I am daily more struck with the connection of the great principles on which my mind was exercised by and with God, when I found salvation and peace, and the questions agitated and agitating the world at the present day: the absolute, divine authority and certainty of the Word, as a divine link between us and God, if everything (church and world) went; personal assurance of salvation in a new condition by being in Christ; the church as His body; Christ coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation. . . . all this was when laid aside at E.P.'s in 1827; the house character of the assembly on earth (not the fact of the presence of the Spirit) was subsequently. It was a vague fact which received form in my mind long after, that there must be a wholly new order of things.²²

In a further comment on his experience in 1827, he says that Isaiah chapter 32 "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."²³ He subsequently lists some of the doctrines which he believed God wanted emphasized in this new state:

alist, see Clarence B. Bass, Backgrounds to Dispensationalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960). Further material on the history of dispensationalism can be found in Ehlert, Dispensationalism. See also James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought (London: Yale University Press, 1977).

²¹Letters, vol. I, pp. 31-32.

²²Ibid., pp. 344-345.

²³Ibid., vol. III, p. 299.

What was to be done? I saw in that word the coming of Christ to take the church to Himself in glory. I saw there the cross, the divine basis of salvation, which should impress its own character on the Christian and on the church in view of the Lord's coming; and also that meanwhile the Holy Spirit was given to be the source of the unity of the church, as well as the spring of its activity, and indeed of all christian energy.²⁴

In looking back at the work he and other Brethren had accomplished in North America, Darby makes the following comments. In 1867 he evaluates the effort in the United States and says "people are beginning to feel something better is wanting, and come to see that Christianity according to scripture is quite another thing."²⁵ Regarding his work in Boston in 1875, he evaluates the meetings he held by saying "Several have found peace, and what the true gospel ground is, and also the Lord's coming."²⁶ He described his labors while in Hamilton, Ontario with these words: "They are getting peace, seeing what the church is."²⁷ Regarding the work in Toronto: "Several have found peace . . . and a full salvation, a translating into the kingdom of God's dear Son, the church, the Lord's coming."²⁸ Speaking of the labor in Guelph, Darby lists the following

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 384. Italics mine.

²⁶Ibid., p. 433.

²⁷Ibid., vol. I, p. 335.

²⁸Ibid., p. 336.

as accomplishments: "the real penetrating of truth into souls around . . . the clearness of the gospel, the question of the church, and the Lord's coming."²⁹

Darby is not the least bit reluctant to compare the truths being emphasized by himself and the Brethren with the doctrinal battles fought by the Reformers. He stresses that there are three great branches of Christian truth. They are (1) the death and resurrection of Christ (which branch forms the basis for our justification); (2) His having ascended and being seated on high (which gives the grounds for the formation of the church); and, (3) His coming again (for the purpose of receiving His saints and judging the world). He continues by comparing the work of the Plymouth Brethren to that of the Reformers, and states,

The Reformation did not go beyond the first, the preaching of justification by faith. The last two were not even touched, so to speak. [Today we need] the distinctive calling of the church [and] . . .³⁰ the character of the Lord's coming again for us.

In setting forth a construct for Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, our criterion will be the categories which he employed in his essays. Because Pneumatology is such a

²⁹ Ibid., p. 342.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 370-371. See also Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 342-343 where he says that Christ may be viewed as a crucified Christ, as an exalted Christ, and as a coming Christ. Luther and the Reformers stressed the first view of Christ (their emphasis on justification by faith), Darby says, but the Plymouth Brethren set forth the truths of the second and third views of the Lord.

vital area of truth for Darby (he speaks of it as "the distinguishing truth of this dispensation"),³¹ his teaching on the person and work of the Third member of the Trinity is found throughout his writings.

Representative titles of some of his essays will disclose a general picture of how he approaches this area of theology. Darby views the Spirit, first of all, in His relation to the world in such treatises as "The Presence of the Holy Ghost on Earth Consequent on Christ's Exaltation to the Right Hand of God";³² "Christ on High, and the Holy Ghost Here Below";³³ "The Will of God, the Work of Christ, and the Witness of the Holy Ghost";³⁴ and, "Does the Spirit Work Alike in All Men?"³⁵ This category will include Darby's understanding of the world and his view of the convicting work of the Spirit.

A second general way in which Darby treats the doctrine of the Holy Spirit concerns the Church. Biographically, Darby speaks of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church as "the grand doctrine of which the whole testimony of those

³¹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 348.

³² *Ibid.*, vol. XXI, pp. 100-120.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-160.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 392-398.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. XXXI, pp. 379-380.

so-called brethren was founded."³⁶ The essay "A Few Remarks Connected with the Presence and Operation of the Spirit of God in the Body, the Church"³⁷ provides much insight into Darby's ecclesiology. Another such article, "A Letter to the Saints in London as to the Presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church",³⁸ gives further information on Darby's understanding of the church's being the dwelling-place of God on the earth. "Brief Remarks on the Spirit and the Assembly"³⁹ also concerns itself with questions of the church's responsibility to the Spirit. Within this category of the Spirit and the Church, a certain amount of attention must be given to Darby's ecclesiology, including issues such as his doctrines of the "church in ruins", of worship, of discipline in the church, of the ministry, of the relationship of the Spirit and the Word, and of the Church and eschatology.

The third major category of Darby's Pneumatology involves the Spirit and the Christian. "Remarks on the Presence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian"⁴⁰ is representative of the essays Darby wrote to stress what he

³⁶Ibid., vol. III, p. 343.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 319-340.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 341-357.

³⁹Ibid., vol. XX, pp. 363-366.

⁴⁰Ibid., vol. III, pp. 314-318.

believed the Scriptures teach concerning the relationship of the believer to the Spirit of God. A vital truth which he sought to spread wherever his travels took him was his understanding of the doctrine of deliverance. He deeply felt that the evangelical world lacked a biblical understanding of this truth.⁴¹ Articles such as "On Sealing with the Holy Ghost"⁴² and his many comments on Romans chapters 6-8 will be investigated along with his general teaching on such concepts as "filling", "indwelling", "grieving" and "quenching" the Spirit.

The Spirit and the World

In speaking of the "world", Darby primarily means the system which opposes God and the truths of God. Defining the world as "an immense system built up by Satan around fallen man to keep man insensible to his ruin,"⁴³ Darby is aware also of the Christian's proper relationship to it. Its effect on the Christian is expressed by his statement in one of his letters that

The whole system of the world is a stumbling-block to turn the heart from God- dress, vain show, flattery,⁴⁴ even the commonest things which tend to elevate nature.

⁴¹Letters, vol. III, pp. 437-438. See also Ibid., p. 455.

⁴²Collected Writings, vol. XXXI, pp. 254-280.

⁴³Letters, vol. III, p. 480.

⁴⁴Ibid., vol. I, p. 400. See also his essay "What Is the World, and What Is Its End?" in Collected Writings, vol. XXXIV, pp. 110-121.

So fervently did Darby seek to resist anything which appeared to belong to this system of the world that he refused to vote and discouraged other Christians from becoming involved in political affairs. Connecting his perspective with the Spirit's work in the world, he says,

If the Spirit does but act, it matters little: God produces effects of His grace, and the world judges them, passes on, and perishes in its wisdom. Some Christians perhaps yield also to the philosophical and systematizing influence of the age. I hope our brethren will avoid this, as much as they avoid politics. Scientific reasonings upon what is passing do not save souls, neither do they lift up Christians who have fallen. We are the servants of God: God will prepare, and God will direct all the circumstances; we need not even occupy our minds with them, save in order to admire in it the good hand of our God. Our part is to follow the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and to be guided by the word. . . . What we must seek for is the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, and not be either democrats, or aristocrats, or despots.⁴⁵

Speaking of elections in France, Darby warns brethren not to become involved in them, for such an act would be making them take part in the course of the world.

It seems to me so simple that the Christian, not being at all of this world, but united to Him who died and rose again, has no business to mix himself up with the most declared activity of the world, by an act which affirms his existence as belonging to the world, and his identification with the entire system which the Lord is about to judge . . . voting, as an act of identification with the world . . . ought to be avoided as a snare by all Christians who [understand] the will of God and their position in Christ.⁴⁶

Evaluating in 1867 the work which had been accomplished in New York, Darby writes of his unhappiness with the worldly

⁴⁵Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 217-218.

⁴⁶Letters, vol. I, pp. 129-130.

character of American Christians.

[America] is a terrible country, morally and spiritually, but there are many true souls who groan and suffer from the state of things. Worldliness, heresies of all sorts, politics—this is what characterises Christians. . . . the word has no authority; they seek the amusements of the world like⁴⁷ the people of the world, and politics perhaps still more.

Darby's perspective on the Christian and the world reveals his deep concern for the propagation of the Gospel to those under its system. Speaking of the believer's place in the world in one of his letters, he says, "Here we are in an old world, sick with sin . . . it is . . . the same, alas, alas, alienated world which turns our hearts from Him."⁴⁸ Living in a "usurped world",⁴⁹ the Christian is to recognize that he belongs to "another world."⁵⁰ Because "the Lord is coming," Darby insists, "we belong to heaven"⁵¹ and the Church, which "belongs to Him in heaven, will not mix herself up with the world."⁵² God is weaning the believer in every way from this world for "this is only a place we are passing through, where Christ was cast out."⁵³

⁴⁷ Ibid., vol. III, p. 383.

⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 230-231.

⁴⁹ Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 19.

⁵⁰ Letters, vol. I, p. 374.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 318.

⁵² Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 391.

⁵³ Letters, vol. I, p. 456.

The allurements of society are not to divert the Christian from his task of living for Christ in this world. Darby speaks of coming to grips with this truth in his own life:

I have to watch . . . not to slip into the stream of society- it is no use . . . I desire to be a Christian and nothing else, passing on, knowing no man after the flesh.⁵⁴

In gaining an understanding of Darby's view of the world, his comments on history and the cross are worth noting. The cross closed "all present earthly associations", of the world to God,⁵⁵ Darby says. Christ's death "has put an end to all the relations of Christ with the world, according to the flesh."⁵⁶ Referring to the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts chapter 7, Darby understands it as a microcosm of "the history of man, who always resists the Holy Ghost."⁵⁷ "Man's moral history is closed in Christ, but not his actual [history] till judgment."⁵⁸

The Spirit's ministry to the world is primarily through the Church and that ministry could only begin after Christ

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 233-234.

⁵⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 103.

⁵⁶ Letters, vol. II, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. I, p. 263. Darby defines history as the testing of man to show that "he was enmity against God" (Notes, vol. II, p. 4).

⁵⁸ Letters, vol. I, p. 362. See also Ibid., p. 361 where he states "the judgment of the world (morally, not its execution, of course) took place in the cross."

had ascended back to heaven after His death and resurrection. On this latter point Darby is especially emphatic:

The Holy Ghost could not thus come indeed at all till the Head was glorified on high. The subject of His testimony was not yet there. . . . The body [the Church] ⁵⁹ could not be formed before the Head was there on high.

Though the Holy Spirit acted in the world from the beginning of creation, He did not descend to take His place and to personally dwell on earth until the glorification of Christ.⁶⁰ In His ministry to the world the Holy Spirit is understood by Darby to function in two primary ways: (1) as the witness of Christ's accomplished work and present exaltation at the right hand of God; and, (2) as the power to unite the members of Christ's body.⁶¹

More specifically, Darby understands the foremost work of the Spirit in the world to be that of conviction of sin so that those who hear and believe the Gospel might receive forgiveness from God. Emphasizing that the "primary work of God's Spirit [is] on the conscience of the unconverted",⁶²

⁵⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 288.

⁶⁰ Ibid. See Darby's statement in the same volume that the Holy Spirit takes the place of Christ down here and that His work is more powerful than Christ's because of Christ's finished work and exaltation (pp. 348-349).

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 373.

⁶² Ibid., p. 132. Defining the conscience as "the knowledge of good and evil entered into at the fall" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 454), Darby stresses that it is that faculty

Darby views the Spirit's function in the world as helping us to see that we are sinners, lost in ourselves, possessing no good before God, and unable to practice even those things which we know are right.⁶³

Darby describes the process and effects of the Spirit's ministry of conviction in an essay entitled "Carnal Confidence and the Confidence of Faith":

When conviction of sin comes, when the Spirit of God sets a man in consequence in God's presence, he finds out both what he has been doing, and what he is. . . . He finds out . . . that his natural condition is a condition of sin and rebellion against God, and that he cannot remedy it. . . . There is this consciousness of unworthiness before God because of having recognised His holiness, and that He ought to be holy; but there is also the desire to go to Him— a seeming inconsistency, but that which is really of the Spirit of God. . . . The heart is turned to God; it sees His holiness, sees that He ought to be holy, and so takes God's part against itself. There is no desire that He should be less holy, that it might, so to speak, slip into heaven; and therefore it justifies God, instead of seeking to condemn Him that it may justify itself. . . . Instead of justifying self, there is the justifying God and condemning self. Thus the heart is set right. . . . There is not [yet] the peace that God does give and will give; still the heart is set right.⁶⁴

of man which

"takes full account of what passes in the heart and of what we are, so that we are brought to renounce all attempt to find peace in the state of our souls. We need to be pardoned, saved; we place ourselves at the foot of the cross" (Ibid., vol. I, pp. 151-152).

He speaks of the relation of individual conscience with God as "the great and true principle of Protestantism" (Ibid., p. 236) and describes the conscience as "the inlet to light" (Ibid., p. 190).

⁶³ Letters, vol. I, p. 355.

⁶⁴ Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 254.

Because Darby's major concern in his writings on the Holy Spirit is the Spirit's presence and operations in the Church, he does not dwell on this ministry of conviction in the world by the Spirit.⁶⁵ The above quotation sets forth, however, Darby's view that the Spirit is the divine agent who leads the sinner into the knowledge of both his sinful condition and his sinful conduct. He convinces the sinner of his impotence to save himself and of God's holiness (which leaves man without excuse). The sinner is brought by the Spirit into the conflict of wanting to turn to a holy God but realizing that his sinful condition makes his being received by that God impossible apart from Christ.

The Spirit and the Church

The question in Luther's time was the value and efficacy of Christ's work; or, in other words, justification by faith. What existed he assumed to be the Church. The question now is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as forming and embodying the Church in unity.⁶⁶

With these words Darby sets forth what he believes is the area of biblical teaching most needful of recovery by the Church. As a "first principle of Christianity,"⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Darby's lack of an in-depth treatment of the Spirit's work of conviction is shown by his rather brief comments on the major passage on this aspect of the Spirit's ministry (John 16:8-11).

⁶⁶ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 341-342.

⁶⁷ Letters, vol. I, p. 329.

it is "the presence of the Holy Ghost . . . which has made us to be the church."⁶⁸ Characterizing the truth of the Reformation as "foundational, but elementary", Darby speaks of the truth given now by grace as that which sets the Reformation truth "again on its true basis, builds up and brings out that needed for the latter days."⁶⁹

Summarizing his understanding of the place of the Brethren's testimony in these days, he lists two "immense principles" which form their distinctive witness: "the church, its own proper standing; and the manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost."⁷⁰

Darby's Definition of the Church

Although he finds value in a brief definition of the church as being "the aggregate of the elect on earth at a given period,"⁷¹ Darby prefers to thoroughly explain his concept of what he calls the "habitation of God on the earth." A variety of descriptions are employed by Darby as he reflects on the nature of the church. It is "a body on earth whose unity [is] the foundation of blessing . . . and

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 291.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 185.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 255.

⁷¹Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 272.

its maintenance the duty of every Christian";⁷² it is "the place of God's presence on the earth";⁷³ it is "the seat of the power of God in the world."⁷⁴ Though it is not defined by the number of its members, Darby denies on the one hand that "a single man holding the truth (is) the Church"⁷⁵ and emphasizes on the other hand that "to acknowledge the church of twos or threes is for me an essential thing."⁷⁶

Though he is not guilty of holding the concept of a "heavenly church" as he has been charged,⁷⁷ he does teach apparently that the Church will continue eternally in heaven after this earth is judged.⁷⁸ As the presence of God on the earth, the Church for Darby is literally God's "being at home in the midst of His people . . . [and is] the source of our power and blessing."⁷⁹

Darby is quite adamant that the Church did not begin

⁷²Letters, vol. I, p. 423.

⁷³Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 246.

⁷⁴Letters, vol. I, p. 242

⁷⁵Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 359, 380.

⁷⁶Letters, vol. I, p. 331.

⁷⁷e.g., Bass, Background, pp. 144ff. Darby says that the body of Christ is really here on the earth; "there are no healings in heaven." (Letters, vol. I, p. 511).

⁷⁸Speaking of the Church he states that it is a "body in which the glory of God will be reflected throughout all ages." (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 377). See *Ibid.*, pp. 373, 293, and Letters, vol. I, pp. 511, 527-528.

⁷⁹Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 247.

until the day of Pentecost (Acts chapter 2). He explains that the Church had to await its inception until the Jews of Jesus' day rejected Him so that God could set them aside and form the Church. God had been "testing man under His government, before creating a heavenly system, based upon an accomplished redemption."⁸⁰ "This union," Darby emphasizes, would have been a sin before the rejection of Christ, before the cross."⁸¹ Though the Church had existed in the eternal counsels of God before Acts chapter 2,⁸² it was a mystery not revealed under the Old Testament; a truth not accomplished before Christ's death.⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. III, pp. 386-387. Christ was the first to announce the commencement of the church in Matthew 16:18 ("Upon this rock I will build my church"), says Darby, and concludes "therefore the Church was yet to begin" (Ibid., p. 365.). See Ibid., vol. XII, p. 246 and Letters, vol. I, p. 515. That the Church in Darby's system has taken the place of Old Testament Israel is shown by his statements that "God, ready to judge the Jews and Jerusalem, transferred His elect, daily, into another system, into the church" and "it was thus that God put an end to the kingdom of Saul to make room for David; and to Judaism to make room for the Church" (Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 275 and 278). The crucifixion of Jesus has put an end to the distinction between Jew and Gentile; "no one is a Jew in heaven" (Ibid., p. 384). Though God will deal with national Israel prophetically in the future, Darby insists that "Christ overthrew the Jewish dispensation" (Ibid., p. 279).

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 387.

⁸² Ibid., p. 386.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 388. The Holy Ghost formed the body on the day of Pentecost, "not by spiritual progress, but by coming personally down, and baptising into one body" (Letters, vol. III, p. 200). As to the church being a mystery not revealed in the Old Testament, Darby says,

A number of terms are employed by Darby to clarify his understanding of a biblical definition of the Church. Words such as "the assembly", "the house", "the temple of God", "the body of Christ", "Christ's building", "the bride of Christ", and others are used to emphasize his belief that historically a fundamental error has been made by many in confounding the Church which Christ is building with the house which is being built by man.⁸⁴ The house that is being built by man is precisely that which not only denies a finished salvation by Christ⁸⁵ but also "does not own the presence of the Holy Spirit."⁸⁶ That Darby is referring to both the Established and Dissenting branches of the Church is evident in his comments throughout his early tract

"The Old Testament, which gives us the history of the ways of God upon earth . . . does not reveal to us this mystery. The Church, as such, does not come as part of the course of the ways of God upon earth. The object of the counsels of God from before the foundation of the world, she had been hid in the depths of these counsels, till Christ, having been rejected upon the earth, might become her heavenly Head" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 383).

⁸⁴Letters, vol. III, p. 470. For surveys of Darby's doctrine of the church see Bass, Backgrounds (chapters 4-6); Goddard, "Contributions" (chapters 9-11); and Hagan, "Ministry" (Part II, chapters 4 and 5).

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., vol. I, p. 294. Darby stresses that those who belong merely to this "nominal church, not members of Christ, will be spued out of His mouth" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 361).

"Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ."⁸⁷

Darby's Doctrine of The "Church in Ruins"

Though a number of scholars have written on Darby's concept of the "Church in ruins",⁸⁸ none have really connected this important aspect of his ecclesiology with his belief that the Spirit has been grieved in this dispensation. In examining Darby's doctrine of the church in ruins, it will be necessary to attempt to define what he means by the concept, to locate a beginning point for the onset of the ruin of the church, to list some of the effects of this grieving of the Spirit, and to discuss what the Christian's response should be to the church's condition.

Darby uses a number of expressions to describe the situation of the church.⁸⁹ Not only does he say that it

⁸⁷ Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 20-35. Darby rejected both groups because of their failure to follow Scriptural directions for ministry based on the presence of the Spirit (See Ibid., vol. III, p. 323.).

⁸⁸ e.g., Bass, Backgrounds, chapter 4; Sandeen, Roots, pp. 36, 54, 67, and 73.

⁸⁹ Darby's own spiritual pilgrimage helped greatly in his formulating his "church in ruins" doctrine. During his period of convalescence in 1827, Darby spent much time re-thinking his Ecclesiology and evaluating the contemporary Established and Dissenting Churches in the light of his study of the book of Acts (especially chapters 2 and 4). He states that "Acts afforded me a practical picture of the early church; which made me feel deeply the contrast with its actual present state" (Turner, Life, p.17). At this

has become a "den of thieves,"⁹⁰ but he also uses the biblical metaphor of the church as a bride to say that the church "is shorn of well nigh if not all her glory and ornament, and well has she deserved it."⁹¹ He further says "what is now a fallen dispensation was once the beloved bride of Christ."⁹² He likens it to a man whose health is ruined.⁹³ Eschatologically, Darby even says "the present state of the church [is] the great beast . . . [and that] Christ [will] spue the church out of His mouth."⁹⁴

period in his life, Matthew 18:20 assumed a preeminent place in his own thinking. He says "For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was that, where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. (Letters, vol. I, p. 113). He candidly speaks of his first coming to this doctrine: "As to the ruin of the church, the theory came for me after the consciousness of it, and even now, the theory is but a small thing to my mind; it is the burden which one bears" (Letters, vol. I, p. 42). That his personal conviction of the ruin of the church was the focal point in his subsequent life of ministry is undeniable. He often lamented the weakness of the church in the world, saying, "I feel more deeply daily the utter ruin Christendom lies in all round" (Letters, vol. II, p. 343). He unabashedly spoke of the keenness of his perception of the church's condition, once remarking,

"I do not think there is one that has a more profound sense of the ruin of everything than myself, but there is One that is never ruined, and as able to be what is needed for the church now as at the beginning, and as faithful" (Letters, vol. II, p. 465).

⁹⁰ Letters, vol. II, p. 294.

⁹¹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 322.

⁹² Ibid., p. 280.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 273.

⁹⁴ Letters, vol. II, p. 99.

In speaking of the Holy Ghost's presence in the body, Darby says that "the state of ruin in which we are throws obscurity on all these things."⁹⁵

The onset of the ruin of the church Darby insists, may be located chronologically between Paul's two epistles to Timothy:

We see very clearly, in comparing together the two Epistles of Timothy, the difference between the order of the house of God, such as it had been established by the apostle, and the walk taught by the Spirit of God, when disorder had come in after Paul's decease. The first epistle presents to us the established order; the second, the walk requisite in the disorder, when the Lord alone knows them that are His . . . Then [in I Timothy], the mighty action of the Spirit of God manifested His children, and set them in their place in the church. But in the times of which the Second Epistle of Timothy speaks, 'the Lord knoweth them that are his,' there may be some hidden in systems not according to His will . . . We have the character of a remnant in these last days, but of a remnant which recalls the first principles on which the church was founded at the beginning.⁹⁶

If we query how the church came to its condition of being in ruins, Darby gives several answers. In one place he implies that the ruin is caused by the loss of the sanctity of the Lord's Supper and the place of discipline in the church.⁹⁷ In another section he says that the substitution of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul for an earnest, present expectation of the Lord's coming is one of the causes.

⁹⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 250-251.

⁹⁶ Letters, vol. I, pp. 479-480.

⁹⁷ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 288-289.

He speaks of this practice of teaching simply the soul's "going to heaven" and emphasizes that it was originally brought in by Platonism and philosophy in the third century:

It was the substitution of the immortality of the soul, instead of, and to the rejection of Christ's coming and the resurrection, which . . . was in fact the ruin of the church.⁹⁸

In other places Darby speaks of the church's condition as being brought on by man's refusal to follow God's organization⁹⁹ and states that "the great cause of the state of the professing church [is] unbelief in the presence of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰⁰

An essential element in Darby's understanding of the church in ruins is his belief in the pristine purity of the early church. Darby refers to the first-century church as that which possessed "the perfect corporate system of working by joints and bands, through the power flowing from the Holy Ghost as a centre."¹⁰¹ "At the beginning,"

⁹⁸ Ibid., vol. I, p. 490.

⁹⁹ Ibid., vol. II, p. 236. In another place he says that the cause is "not that the church got corrupted, but that the original principle of what is now called the church was a departure from the scriptural and divine ground" (Ibid., p. 245). The system which God "set up right at first . . . has been utterly corrupted" by sinful man (Ibid., p. 294).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 228. Because it is the Holy Spirit who effects our union with Christ, Darby elsewhere says that "the loss of this [union with Christ by the Holy Spirit] by the Church is the secret of their state; and it is mainly that which brethren have recovered, which God has brought out in these last days" (Letters, vol. II, p. 4).

¹⁰¹ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 333-334.

Darby says, "the Holy Ghost was leading on together all believers as being of one heart; but flesh needs a counterpoise."¹⁰² Darby's belief is that the church failed immediately the apostle Paul was gone; "as an historical body [the church] never knew what it was to be perfected for ever, and did not continue to own the Holy Ghost."¹⁰³

Speaking of the early church, Darby says:

When it pleases God to do so, He works with very imperfect truth, provided it be Christ; it is one of the present difficulties. At the first, full truth flowed from the centre and drew souls up to it; now it works where all is confusion, to bring in divine order and faith through the word.¹⁰⁴

The entire Church is involved in the ruin. Though Darby states that "the failure of the outward professing church is a positive declaration of scripture,"¹⁰⁵ to those who say that it is only Christendom, and not the true Church, that is in a state of ruin, Darby says

The evil has begun in the Church; Christians have, in principle, fallen into Judaism. The door has been opened to false brethren; and this, by degrees, has formed Christendom! Thus the Church has lost its unity, its power, and its holiness, and has ceased to bear witness to God in the world; and what is called 'the church' is now the centre and the power of evil and corruption in the world.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁰³Letters, vol. III, p. 439.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 470.

¹⁰⁶Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 277-278.

Though he held a very high view of the place of the Brethren in communicating God's truth to the contemporary world, Darby (perhaps because of his belief in the inevitable failure of humanity in each dispensation)¹⁰⁷ feels he must include the Plymouth Brethren as part of the church in ruins. He speaks of the "a state of misery in which we all are,"¹⁰⁸ and is not reticent to admit that the Brethren have failed to maintain the testimony God gave them.¹⁰⁹

In stressing his belief that the Plymouth Brethren share the responsibility for the ruin of the church, Darby warns them against pride by saying,

Do they say all is in ruins? Well, do they take part in it as Daniel did, or do they fancy they are going to be something out of it, and so deny that it is so? The ruin is our ruin if we are identified with Christ's glory in the world.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Darby's dispensationalism involves the certainty of humanity's inevitably failing the test which God gives to it. Darby insists that as is true throughout God's dealings with His creature, whatever has been committed into his care dispensationally has been spoiled by him: "Alas!" he says, "decline is the continual tendency, but the Saviour never declines" (Letters, vol. I, p. 168). In another place Darby states, "I have no doubt the brethren have been used to bring out the testimony of God in these last days. I have always hoped and prayed the Lord might come before they failed, as everything since Adam has done" (Letters, vol. II, p. 390). This failure on humanity's part throughout God's dispensational dealings is shown throughout history (Letters, vol. II, pp. 99, 274, and 390).

¹⁰⁸ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 273.

¹⁰⁹ Letters, vol. II, p. 103.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 388.

The Bethesda controversy in the 1840's provides the historical circumstances which convinced Darby that the Brethren were no exception to the principle of the unfaithfulness of man:

He [God] has in every way since 1845 sifted it [His work among the Brethren], in appearance diminished its body and position before men. . . . It has gone through the fire- we may be sure from the goodness of God- a needed fire. . . . I am sure we failed in walking up to the advanced position in testimony in which God had placed us. Our gracious God took us in hand, dealt with us, and made us little.¹¹¹

Further Darby says,

I believe that a testimony of God was confided to brethren in these latter days which they had to maintain in the unity of the church. God, I believe, has in no way given up this testimony, but I believe, brethren (we all) have grievously failed in maintaining it, and God's glory in it.¹¹²

There are a number of effects of this dispensational grieving of the Holy Spirit which has left the church in ruins. In general terms, the church is in a state of disorganisation¹¹³ and confusion;¹¹⁴ "man has more and more eclipsed the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church."¹¹⁵

Darby uses some of his strongest language to emphasize that

The Church has lost its unity, its power, and its holiness, and has ceased to bear witness to God in the world;

¹¹¹ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 254-255.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 219.

¹¹³ Ibid., vol. II, p. 236.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., vol. III, p. 439.

¹¹⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 233-234.

and what is called 'the Church' is now the centre and the power of evil and corruption in the world.¹¹⁶

Darby says specifically that because the Holy Ghost has been grieved by this dispensation, "much of that in which He shewed His power is lost."¹¹⁷ "The Church," Darby states, "has lost many of His manifestations,"¹¹⁸ but the Spirit remains and is sovereign in the church.¹¹⁹

Governmentally, there is no longer any apostolic authority in the church because

It is specially the order of the governmental part which I believe has failed, and we are to get on without that, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has therefore not provided for such a state of things.¹²⁰

We are to respond to the church's condition by acknowledging its state and taking in her sorrows.¹²¹ We are to weep in anticipation of the solemn judgment of that which God established on the earth (Christianity).¹²² We have to give our testimony in the midst of acknowledged ruin and, Darby stresses, "the more we feel it, the better."¹²³

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp.277-278.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 348-349.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 352-353.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 302. See our first appendix, pp. 281-336, *infra*, for Darby's view of the Spirit and miraculous gifts.

¹²⁰Letters, vol. I, p. 112. We will discuss Darby's doctrine of the ministry in our next section.

¹²¹Ibid., vol. II, p. 349.

¹²²Ibid., p. 95.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 338-339.

Speaking biographically concerning the Brethren, Darby says,

[As the] witnesses of the weakness and low state of the church, we have owned our lost state [as opposed to groups such as the dissenters, etc. who have not owned their state] and therefore can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place where He can do it.¹²⁴

God will bless and maintain us, says Darby, only

If we take the place we are really in. That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation. . . . I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle . . . the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of united love by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost.¹²⁵

Darby further warns the Brethren that

[The gathering of saints must be maintained on the ground] of the condition the church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas.¹²⁶

Discussing the critical area of church discipline, Darby says that rather than being discouraged by the failure of another, such failure may be beneficial because

It puts us in our place of nothingness our true place. The church of God has failed; but God only the more glorified.¹²⁷

The importance of "taking the place the church is really in" cannot be emphasized too strongly, Darby feels. In looking back at his own spiritual road, he says,

¹²⁴Ibid., vol. I, p. 94.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 112.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 113.

¹²⁷Ibid., vol. II, p. 383. Speaking of the respect the Brethren were beginning to receive in Dublin, Darby says "I pray the Lord may keep them . . . not to lose their nothingness. . . . The Lord keep us little in our own eyes!" (Letters, vol. II, p. 423).

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore, the essential principle of unity with His presence for . . . wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence. . . . When there is an attempt at displaying the position and unity, there will always be a mess and a failure. God will not take such a place with us. We must get into the place of his mind to get His¹²⁸ strength; that is now, the failure of the church.

Secondly, we are to understand that, as with each of the previous dispensational dealings of God with man, total restoration (dispensationally) is impossible. "The repentance of a particular church," Darby states, "is not the restoring of a fallen dispensation."¹²⁹ In the establishment of a professional clergy Darby sees a denial of the church's condition:

The attempt to restore gift by, or rather to substitute for it, the quietness which decent human attainment may give, is just to avoid the holy, humble, God-owning confession of the state we have brought the Church to. It is building again (and worse) the things which we have destroyed.¹³⁰

An essential aspect of understanding that there is no possibility for restoration is Darby's concept of a remnant. He sometimes speaks of a "little flock" which God is using as a demonstration of His truth:

Not that the vessel should be repaired, and set right, but that the true church, those at least who in heart are waiting for the Lord,

¹²⁸ Ibid., vol. I, p. 94.

¹²⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 278.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 323.

will be always more true in their position,
will understand the Lord's heart better, will be
more united amongst themselves, a "little flock."¹³¹

Darby unquestionably felt that the Brethren were the
"remnant" which God was using to call out souls and
establish them in the truth. His study in the book of Acts
had convinced him that the contemporary church was not in
harmony with the principles which guided the first-century
believers. He describes the Plymouth Brethren Movement as "a
remnant which recalls the first principles on which the
church was founded at the beginning."¹³²

Thirdly, we are to work within the church in ruins, more
specifically, within the remnant community. Jeremiah 15:19
was often employed by Darby to remind the Brethren of their
responsibility to "separate the precious from the vile."¹³³
As those who are to walk "in the character of a remnant in
the midst of a ruined dispensation,"¹³⁴ the Brethren,
according to Darby, are to view themselves as those whose
responsibility it is to gather up stray souls, to rescue
those "hidden in systems not according to His will."¹³⁵

¹³¹Letters, vol. I, p. 168.

¹³²*Ibid.*, p. 480.

¹³³*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 388. Italics mine. See also his
statement that "we come on the scene when everything is
already spoiled . . . we must seek to separate the precious
from the vile" (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 198).

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 428.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 228.

"Our real work," says Darby, ". . . is to get Christians clear practically of a great corrupt baptised body."¹³⁶

A fourth aspect of a proper response to the church's condition is to recognize that God can work despite the church's weakened condition. In fact, Darby says, God delights in working through the weakness of man. "We do not know how to be weak, that is our weakness," says Darby, referring to Paul's "thorn in the flesh" experience of II Corinthians 12.¹³⁷ In fact, says Darby, "a perfect instrument and mode of action according to the thoughts of God . . . would be out of place; it would not even do His work."¹³⁸

¹³⁶Ibid., vol. II, p. 228. In one place Darby speaks of the Church of England as "a great unformed mass arranged by men, with many children of God doubtless in it" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 103). "What is special to brethren, so called," says Darby, "is the presence of the Holy Ghost forming the unity of the body down here, and gathering saints into this unity out of the great baptised mass" (Ibid., p. 292). Darby expresses his irritation at those who "keep souls in the various systems while taking advantage of the light which brethren have and preaching their doctrines. . . . [Such is] a new wile of the enemy" (Ibid., p. 304).

¹³⁷Ibid., vol. I, p. 116. In another place he states: "Broken vessels are often better than whole ones, to shew the sufficiency and grace of Christ. . . . You must be content to be a broken vessel. . . . One should be broken, otherwise God has to act downwards, so to speak, in breaking." (Ibid., vol. II, p. 126).

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 156. See also where he says that God "will cause His grace to shine forth by translating into the glory those who are faithful in the confusion; but the creative energies of a perfect order are not suited to the confusion and moral culpability which result from having spoiled that order" (Ibid.).

Recognizing that God can work in the church despite its ruined condition leads Darby to emphasize a fifth aspect of a proper response. He especially stresses his belief that, because God's primary means of working in the church is through the Spirit, we are not to deny the Spirit's presence in the church, though the church is in ruins. The effects of the church's being in ruins are severe; there is disorder, confusion, and imperfection, yet neither the sovereignty over nor the presence of God the Holy Spirit in the church should be denied. Darby says,

[The Holy Spirit] abode in the Church as in a temple, acting sovereignly for the good of the body, according to the will and the wisdom of God. That all the means of the manifestation are in a state of disorder, that the state of ruin in which we are throws obscurity on all these things, this it is on which I have insisted; but to use it in order to deny the presence of the Comforter is to do the work of the enemy; it is the spirit of unbelief and of impenitence.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 250-251. Darby spares no blows in attacking the clergy for allowing mere human arrangement to take the Holy Spirit's place (Letters, vol. I, p. 104). "The system of a clergy . . . can only subsist by denying absolutely every gift of the Holy Ghost" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 300). The source of true ministry, Darby says, "according to the Bible, [is] clearly . . . from God by the free and powerful action of the Holy Ghost" (Letters, vol. III, p. 300). In the "economy of grace," Darby insists, "the Spirit of God is the great agent in us" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 105). In concluding a tract entitled "The Holy Ghost in the Church," Darby states:

"It is a contest, on one side, between respect for the word, faith that owns the Holy Ghost, and the desire that ministry be free and powerful for God, while freely serving men; and, on the other, the making ministry to depend upon men, and of attaching to it (without there being gifts) an authority as from God, an authority such as to give the right of excluding all possibility of the action of the Holy Ghost" (*Ibid.*, p. 313).

The ruin of the church is, in fact, the precise means by which God's grace, through the abiding presence of the Spirit, is shown.

The thought that the Holy Ghost abides for ever with the Church gives us an unlimited source of hope -that God will do all that is necessary for the blessing of the Church in the state where it is . . . I fully believe in the cutting off of the dispensation, because of the failure of the Church; but I put no limit to what God, meanwhile, may do in grace towards believers.¹⁴⁰

A sixth aspect of a proper response is that we understand Christ's tremendous love for the church despite its condition. Its continuance is assured by Christ's headship and by the Holy Spirit's presence in the body. Darby emphasizes that "Thus in all states of ruin it cannot cease, till He cease to be the Head, and the Holy Spirit to be as the guide and the Comforter sent down."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 299. That the effectiveness of the church in Darby's understanding does not rest on its size is shown by his statement that God is competent to "help and direct His church were there but three met on earth . . . They might be a brighter testimony than three thousand" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 221-222). That the church's power does not reside in its human resources Darby emphasizes when he says that we are to look to God "to draw out of what materials exist what He can form to help the saints" (Ibid., p. 298).

For a brief comparison between Darby and Edward Irving in this area of the church's "weakness," see our first appendix, pp. 316-339, *infra*.

¹⁴¹Letters, vol. I, p. 96. Desiring that we focus our attention upon the Lord who builds His church (and not upon that which is being built), Darby points that the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is not so much to manifest God's rights and His glory, nor to show God working in the midst of evil- but to show Christ's affections for the Church (Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 294-295).

In taking the place where the church really is, in identifying himself with its condition, Darby finds great comfort in the fact that

Christ's love to the Church is permanent, not resting on the suitableness of the medium to display power, but on the Church's own need of that gracious and tender love.¹⁴²

Darby's Doctrine of the Ministry

Though this area of Darby's theology has been researched by others,¹⁴³ his understanding of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian ministry has not been fully explored.

Darby's view of the Holy Spirit's importance in true ministry is reflected in his definition of ministry. Though he offers the short description of ministry as that of "making Christ known as we know Him,"¹⁴⁴ he emphasizes the dynamic operation of the Spirit and states his belief in

the Holy Ghost, not merely as sanctifying competent persons, but as acting as a living Person in the Church of God, and God present in the Church through the Spirit.¹⁴⁵

That Paraclete who was to be in Christ's stead would be one who would sustain the early Christians and be with

¹⁴² Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 135-136.

¹⁴³ See, for example, Michael Robert Hagan, "The Concept of Christian Ministry Revealed in the Writing of John Nelson Darby, (1800-1882)." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1967.

¹⁴⁴ Letters, vol. I, p. 495.

¹⁴⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 347.

them forever. Darby elaborates,

This was not merely natural qualities sanctified by grace, and man acting by the Spirit; it was a living divine Person acting for them, and by them.¹⁴⁶

Darby says that ministry may be viewed as either the exercise of a gift or as a charge.¹⁴⁷ He speaks of the apostles and prophets as those who exercised a "foundation-ministry," in establishing the church:

As foundations, they have accomplished their work. . . . There was in them something else, namely, the exercise of their authority in power, and this was attached to their person.¹⁴⁸

To hold that the ministry of the apostle continues, Darby says, is "to disown the importance of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost."¹⁴⁹ Darby's doctrine of the ministry is best illustrated by his question "if the Holy Ghost dwells in the habitation [the church], is He to do nothing there, or direct everything?"¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 348-349.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. Darby does, however, equate the term "apostle" with the term "missionary" in another passage. Apostles and prophets exist now, he says, but "in a subordinate and inferior sense." Their function is not to be channels of new revelation, but rather "by a special energy of the Spirit [to] unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church" (Ibid., pp. 141-142). In another section Darby says the apostles were the "authoritative regulators of the Church by revelation"; their foundation work is complete; "the word of God is written for us" (Ibid., p. 140).

¹⁵⁰ Letters, vol. III, p. 200.

To properly understand Darby's doctrine of the ministry, one must see his reaction against the contemporary clerical system. He left the Anglican Church for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his rejection of the concept of human ordination. Perhaps his most famous anti-clerical statement is the following:

If the Apostle Paul were to come here now, he would not, according to the established system, be even allowed to preach, not being legally ordained; but if a worker of Satan, who, by his doctrine, denied the Saviour, came here, he could freely preach, and my christian friend would be obliged to consider him as a fellow-labourer; whereas he would be unable to recognise the most powerful instrument of the Spirit of God, however much blessed in his work of leading multitudes of souls to the Lord, if he had not been ordained according to the system.¹⁵¹

Darby reserves his harshest language for the clergy, "that plague par excellence of the church, the great barrier to the progress of souls."¹⁵² He speaks of the "yoke" of clericalism,¹⁵³ stating that the spirit of the clergy is that which "dries up the soul."¹⁵⁴ It is little wonder that Darby, realizing that the clergy would be conducting the

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 300.

¹⁵²Ibid., vol. I, p. 236.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 39. Darby's complete statement merits quotation:

"Beware of the traditions of men, and of the spirit of the clergy; all that dries up the soul, dishonours the Lord, and nourishes the flesh, by the sense of human respectability, 'the pride of life.' But at the

service, refused to attend his own father's funeral!¹⁵⁵

How may we account for Darby's vehement anti-clericalism? Though he had been successful in his time of curacy in County Wicklow in the late 1820's, his inability to reconcile the policies and position of the State Church with what he read in the book of Acts led him, as he stated, for conscience's sake, to seek a "spiritual fellowship based on scriptural principles."¹⁵⁶ After he had become involved in the early Brethren movement, he reminisced,

What really characterised that work . . . was the bringing in a mass of biblical truth long hidden, some . . . never current in the historical church.¹⁵⁷

A central truth of which he and the Brethren were testimonies was the relationship between the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts in the church. Darby's belief that Christianity "works by what it brings, not by what it finds"¹⁵⁸ especially applies to his understanding of the Spirit's sovereign bestowal of gifts to all who are members of Christ's body. A professional clergy, a system which in Darby's view "banishes the Holy Ghost," can only subsist, "by denying

same time, honour fully all the gifts God has given to whoever [sic] it may be."

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. II, p. 479.

¹⁵⁶ For Darby's need to "satisfy his conscience," see Letters, vol. II, p. 386 and Letters, vol. III, p. 301.

¹⁵⁷ Letters, vol. II, p. 356.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 263.

absolutely every gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁵⁹

Any prohibition by a professional clergy of one's liberty to preach or exercise one's gift, is viewed by Darby as meddling "with the prerogative of Christ."¹⁶⁰ God expects us to exercise our gifts in the liberty of the Spirit for then, says Darby, "God is everything and man nothing."¹⁶¹

Darby refutes the substitution of "man's arrangements" for the Spirit's "system" of using spiritual gifts in the body in his tract "The Notion of a Clergyman: Dispensationally the Sin Against the Holy Ghost."¹⁶² Written in the early 1830's (but not published until several years later), it defines a "clergyman" as a "humanly appointed office taking the place and assuming the authority of the Spirit of God."¹⁶³ Defending the work which was being done by those not ordained, Darby says to those in clericalism,

If clergymen have the exclusive privilege of preaching, teaching, and ministering communion . . . then must it [i.e. the positive results of the work of those not ordained] be evil. That is, the notion of a Clergyman necessarily involves the charge of evil on the work of the Holy Ghost, and therefore, I say, that the notion of a Clergyman involves the dispensation, where insisted upon, in the sin against the Holy Ghost.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 300.

¹⁶⁰ Letters, vol. I, pp. 50-51. ¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 508.

¹⁶² Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 36-51. Not only is the system of a clergy a denial of the Holy Spirit operating in the church through spiritual gifts, but it also destroys "absolutely the applicability of scriptural directions to the assemblies of the saints" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 322).

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 40. ¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

The salient features of Darby's doctrine of the ministry, his view of gifts, and his understanding of the dynamic operations of the Holy Spirit in this area of the church's life are frequently discussed by Darby.

Comparing his own view of the ministry with that held by John Calvin, Darby notes that "according to Calvin, for the Church to exist, it is absolutely necessary there should be gifts now."¹⁶⁵ Darby appreciates Calvin's distinction between ordinary and extra-ordinary gifts and the difference Calvin made between charges and gifts, yet Darby criticizes Calvin for going beyond Scripture.

Calvin admitted the things that he found in the word, then added traditions and customs. He created a system which the light that then existed bore with.¹⁶⁶

Today, says Darby, the scriptural teaching on gifts has been forgotten. Men are appointed to invented offices and those who possess gifts are hindered from exercising them. The confusion of mixing gifts and offices has resulted in the "clergy." In emphasizing this confusion between gifts and offices, Darby teaches that

It is, then, perfectly certain that gifts, and the service which believers render by gifts, are completely independent of the possession of office; and that those to whom God has communicated these gifts are obliged to use them for the edification of the saints. The scripture gives the rules according to which the exercises of the gifts ought to take place.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., vol. III, p. 236.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 212. Italics mine.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. XIV, p. 13.

Though ministry is different today from that of the days of the apostles,¹⁶⁸ there is more blessing for us to depend on the word and the Spirit using gifts in the body than to rest on "man's arrangements."¹⁶⁹ Defining ministry as the "Holy Ghost animating the whole [the Church] and acting in the parts [individual believers],"¹⁷⁰ Darby says that the Spirit's acting is called charisma in the members,¹⁷¹ a term also used for the "spiritual gifts" sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the church. "This acting of the Holy Ghost in the members," Darby believes, "is proper gift."¹⁷² As the "instrumentality of blessing,"¹⁷³ spiritual gifts are the Spirit's diligent use of means whereby unity may be "manifested in the positive action of the Holy Spirit in all the members."¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸In Collected Writings, vol. III, Darby states that ministry since the days of the apostles has undergone a modification. We cannot establish bishops today with the same authority as that exercised by Paul and Timothy (p. 235). We cannot appoint elders because the church does not have apostles or their delegates today; therefore we have no one who can order or settle everything as an apostle would do. Our recourse is that where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, the word meets the needs of God's people (p. 281). "The extraordinary power of apostles and prophets does not continue -they were the foundation of that power -the word by them does [continue]" (p. 136). We are not to attempt to imitate the apostolic times, but rather to be obedient to the word (p. 140).

¹⁶⁹Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 353-354.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 332. ¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 351. ¹⁷³Ibid., p. 300.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 340.

Every believer possesses at least one gift¹⁷⁵ and is responsible for its development¹⁷⁶ and proper use.¹⁷⁷ Though some of the gifts have ceased as a result of the grieving of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation,¹⁷⁸ those

¹⁷⁵"God gave gifts to every man according to his several ability. God prepares the vessel as well as places the gift in it" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 301). It is particularly in this connection that Darby's emphasis on the priesthood of the believer comes into play. Thoroughly rejecting the concept of a human priesthood which would stand between the soul and God (*Ibid.*, vol. XV, p. 241; see also *Ibid.*, vol. XVIII, p. 111), Darby emphasizes that "all believers are partakers [of the office of priesthood] (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 76) and all qualified for preaching during this dispensation of the out-pouring of the Spirit may do so (*Ibid.*).

¹⁷⁶The clerical system hinders the development of spiritual gifts (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 300). The privileges of gifts involve the responsibility of personally exercising what the Holy Spirit has given (*Ibid.*, pp. 294-295). We are to "trade with the talent" which we have received; "that is what each should do on his own account, and he owes it to Christ" (*Ibid.*, p. 306). We are not to neglect the gifts which we have (I Timothy 4:14) but are rather to stir them up (II Timothy 1:6). "The whole of these directions," Darby says, "prove that the possession of charisma was to be accompanied by the use, the diligent use of means, so that profiting should appear" (*Ibid.*, p. 329).

¹⁷⁷Concerning the use of one's gifts, the word of God is that which regulates the use of gift for ministry (*Ibid.*, pp. 305-306). Our gifts are to be exercised for the edifying of the body (Letters, vol. I, p. 57) and are to be used in love (not for personal display) (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 130). Darby warns that one should not "go beyond one's gift" by which he means the failure to exercise one's ministry according to his measure of faith (Romans 12:3), the ceasing to think soberly of oneself (*Ibid.*, p. 338), and what he calls the "working beyond your communion" (Letters, vol. II, p. 38).

¹⁷⁸Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 348-349. Because the ruin of the church and the grieving of the Spirit occurred during the time of Paul, the "sign-gifts" (miracles, tongues, healings, helps, and governments) "have dis-

useful for the building up of the body of Christ remain and are being actively used by the Spirit in His operations among the people of God.¹⁷⁹

Though Darby and the Plymouth Brethren have been charged with moving from a "one-man ministry" to a "no-man ministry" by their emphasis on the presidency of the Holy Spirit,¹⁸⁰ Darby was not against the recognition of

appeared with the apostolic age" (Ibid., pp. 139, 302). Those gifts "which were signs to the world have disappeared, but not those by which Christ gathers and nourishes His church" (Letters, vol. II, p. 361). Darby quickly emphasizes that though we have lost those gifts of a "sensibly miraculous character . . . their absence does not touch . . . the presence of the Holy Ghost in the body" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 338).

¹⁷⁹ Darby's primary passages for the gifts which remain are Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. The lists of gifts in those texts are not exhaustive, but representative (Ibid., p. 331). Darby lists nineteen gifts (including those "foundational gifts" which have ceased): apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, tongues, interpretation, helps, governments, speaking, ministry, exhortation, presiding or ruling, shewing mercy, discerning spirits, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge (Ibid.).

¹⁸⁰ By the phrase "presidency of the Holy Spirit," though he does not care for the term, Darby means that He is truly present and active in the church and "His leading should be followed" (Letters, vol. III, p. 200). Evaluating the Second Powerscourt Conference (held in September, 1832) Darby said that there was "a remarkable recognition of the Spirit . . . [and of] 'the gifts'" and that many prayed "for the more abundant presence of the Holy Ghost, by which alone, error can be brought to light, and the believer guided into all truth . . . The elucidation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit . . . and the presiding presence of the Holy Spirit [were] most marked" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 5. *Italics mine*). Though the statement "We meet on the principle that God the Holy Ghost . . . alone has a right to speak in the meeting" is incorrectly attributed to Darby by Reid (p. 60), and is not found in his writings, it is

leaders in the church nor against offices as such.¹⁸¹

True ministry according to Darby relates both to the Son of God and to the Holy Spirit. Christ is the source, object, and subject of all true ministry. It is He who gave the gifts. Darby believed that the limited number of true ministers of Christ was due to a lack of devotion to the Savior rather than to a lack of competency.¹⁸² The subject

consistent with Darby's desire that the Holy Ghost preside actively in the church, guiding both the work and the workmen (Ibid., vol. III, p. 245). For contemporary critiques of Darby's and the early Brethren's doctrine of the presidency of the Holy Spirit, see Thomas Crokery, Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of Its Principles and Doctrines (London: William Mullan & Son, 1879), Book II, chapter I; and William Reid, Plymouth Brethrenism- Unveiled and Refuted (Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Company, 1876), chapter IV.

¹⁸¹Though "regular authority, established by the apostle and armed with his sanction, no longer exists" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 235-236), Darby does not oppose the idea of brethren who "enjoy the consideration of the believer" administering the Lord's Supper (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 308). Darby says that "stated ministry has never been denied, but always in exercise amongst us -always owned in principle" (Ibid., p. 353). "To recognise a labourer according to his gift in his field of labour is a positive duty; he who does not will suffer for it" (Ibid., p. 241). He envied those who had the gift of evangelism (Letters, vol. II, p. 9) and spent time training young men for pastoral work (see Ibid., vol. I, pp. 299 and 516; Ibid., vol. II, pp. 152, 156, and 272). Concerning pastoral work, Darby said early in the movement (1839), "I think the visiting part myself, quite as important, if not the most important part of the work" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 31).

¹⁸²Hagan, "Ministry", p. 127. See also Letters, vol. III, pp. 192-193.

of true ministry is to be not doctrine nor even the Scriptures, but Christ Himself.¹⁸³

The Spirit's mission in true ministry is to point to Christ by means of the gifts He has given.

[As the] spirit of witness of all that Christ is and has done, and . . . of the Father's perfect acceptance of both,¹⁸⁴ [He] indwells the church as a whole and provides the link¹⁸⁵ between it as the body of Christ and Christ as its head.

Though other facets of Darby's doctrine of the ministry deserve discussion,¹⁸⁶ we have limited ourselves to his major emphasis, i.e. the Holy Spirit as the One who actively uses the gifts He has bestowed to build up the body of Christ. Darby summarizes what he felt was the choice set before the people of God:

The difference between the influence of true ministry, and that of the clergy, who have borrowed the name, is as clear and simple as possible. Ministry presents God to the soul, and places it in His presence. It desires to do this, seeks to do it, hiding itself in order to succeed. The clergy places itself between God and the soul, and seeks to keep its position before souls. Every spiritual soul will clearly discern its place. It finds God in

¹⁸³Hagan, "Ministry."

¹⁸⁴Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 81.

¹⁸⁵Hagan, "Ministry", p. 130.

¹⁸⁶The major confrontation between Darby and B. W. Newton, for example, would be worthy of study for it appears to have been a clash of differing views of the ministry. Darby, after returning from his seven-year Switzerland campaign, accused Newton of "having too much authority" in the meeting at Plymouth (Newton was doing most of the preaching) and of what Darby termed "pure popery" (Newton was attempting to gain complete control of the assembly in Plymouth) (see Bass, Backgrounds, p. 80 and Letters, vol. I, p. 120).

the one case; in the other, it sees Him despised and set at a distance, in order that the usurped influence of man may be exercised.¹⁸⁷

With such strong language Darby seeks to protect the doctrine of the presence and operations of the Spirit of God in ministry. The contemporary clerical system usurps the place of God the Holy Spirit and is based upon the desires of men for power and prestige. Biblical ministry according to Darby involves an immediacy of the individual soul in the presence of God.

Darby's distinction between the arranged and formal (the "actions of men") and the spontaneous and informal (the "actions of the Spirit") merits study (see Coad, History, p. 126). Also worthy of further thought are the similarities between the Brethren's doctrine of the ministry and certain tenets of Quakerism (e.g. that form hinders the Spirit; the concept of "impulse" [for Darby's ideas on "impulse," see Letters, vol. II, p. 42 and Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 216ff], etc.).

That Darby's view of the ministry had certain negative (and abiding) effects even on the "Opens" is undeniable. Coad's discussion of the Brethren doctrine of the ministry (History, chapter 19) is helpful and points out that "in their recoil from any form of settled ministry, [a proper view of the ministry among recent Brethren] has been replaced by a haphazard 'system' of peripatetic preaching, which bids fair to weaken them more quickly than any other peculiarity" (Coad, History, pp. 73-74). Positively, their doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and their understanding of each believer possessing gifts Coad calls their greatest incentive for the participation of the laity (Ibid., p. 273).

¹⁸⁷ Letters, vol. I, pp. 238-239.

Darby's Doctrine of Worship

Within the context of Darby's understanding of the Spirit and the Church, his statements on the Spirit's role in worship bring to the fore, perhaps even more than his doctrine of the ministry, the importance of the presence and the operations of the Spirit.

Though there are many vague notions about worship, Darby emphasizes that biblical truth on the subject is essential for the simple reason that worship will be our eternal occupation! The very character of heaven will be worship.¹⁸⁸

In describing worship as "God put in His place, God enjoyed in and for Himself as God,"¹⁸⁹ Darby expresses his concern that worship be based upon the certainty of one's right relationship with the Creator and marked by a spontaneity of praise.

True worship is in a known relationship, praising, adoring, thanking, blessing God in the consciousness of His favor. . . . It is the outgoing of heart in delighting in God, and adoring Him for all He has done when we think of that, but flowing from what He is to us; and we are actually in His presence, never forgetting surely how we got there.¹⁹⁰

Much of what is understood as worship is sin, Darby says, because it is not based on the work of Christ:

¹⁸⁸ Collected Writings, vol. VII, p. 87. In another place Darby states that "the joy of love in the presence of God in worshipping Him is our eternal aim" (Ibid., p. 108).

¹⁸⁹ Letters, vol. III, p. 382.

¹⁹⁰ Notes and Comments, vol. I, p. 299.

All pretension to worship God now, unless through redemption and the death of Christ, is sin -it is insensibility to our alienation from God, and in our state of sin, pretending we can come to God as if nothing had happened; Christ's offering of Himself, and being made sin, lays the sole ground of all worship.¹⁹¹

Though he insists that intellectual ability is not essential for worship and that "the feeblest Christian is therefore perfectly competent for worship,"¹⁹² Darby also suggests that it is better to be able to explain one's relationship with God in terms which can be understood.

Two grand elements of Christian worship which must ever be kept before the believer are, firstly, the presence of the Holy Spirit (i.e., that He indwells both the individual believer and the body as a whole) and, secondly, the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice (which is commemorated in the Lord's Supper).¹⁹³

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 298.

¹⁹²Collected Writings, vol. VII, p. 101.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 113. For Darby's doctrine of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, see pp. 157-160, *infra*. Darby's comments on I Corinthians 6 provide a summary of his understanding of indwelling (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 69; vol. VII, pp. 97-99; vol. XII, p. 123; vol. XIV, p. 2; and, vol. XVI, pp. 145-146).

We will notice briefly Darby's doctrine of the Lord's Supper in this section on worship (pp. 128-137, *infra*). Essays which treat this aspect of worship include: Collected Writings, vol. XIII, pp. 377-379; vol. XX, pp. 282-287; and, vol. XXVII, pp. 257-258. An examination of his comments on I Corinthians 11 is especially important (see for example Collected Writings, vol. XXXI, pp. 27-36).

The exercise of spiritual gifts is not worship, says Darby. Although the Holy Spirit may act to exhort and teach the members through gifts, this is less than true worship.¹⁹⁴ "All the services, all the gifts," he states, "are inferior to worship."¹⁹⁵ In fact the highest kind of worship does not involve any form of human priesthood.¹⁹⁶ The creature's work for God, his preaching, and even the Christian virtue of prayer is not, properly speaking, worship. Worship, in its essence, entails praises and thanksgivings, the mentioning of God's attributes and acts.

After he contrasts Jewish and Christian worship, Darby emphasizes that Judaism, as a system, has been nailed to the cross.¹⁹⁷ The proper principle for the believer today is to worship on the basis of Christ's promise in Matthew 18. Explaining this meeting of "two or three in the name of Christ," Darby says that true worship must avoid the three errors of (1) human attainment which rejects simple dependence upon God (the Established Churches), (2) the narrow ground of peculiar views (the Dissenters), and

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., vol. I, pp. 231-232.

¹⁹⁶Letters, vol. II, p. 398.

¹⁹⁷Collected Writings, vol. VII, p. 92.

(3) fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift (the Brethren's temptation).¹⁹⁸

True worship depends on two truths. The first is the principle that Christ bore away our sin (and therefore we can boldly enter into God's presence to worship) and the second is the fact that Christ has gained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit who aids us in our worship. Only those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and have received the Spirit can draw near to God and adore. The presence of the Spirit enables us to realize our freedom of access to worship without fear.¹⁹⁹

How important is the Holy Spirit in worship? "His Spirit abides with us," says Darby, "in order that we may be able to render spiritual worship."²⁰⁰ Exulting in this truth, Darby says,

What a blessing to have His very Spirit, the Spirit of liberty and of adoption, as our power of worship, as the inspirer of praise, of confidence, and of adoration!²⁰¹

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer does not eliminate the need for the believer to be spiritually prepared for worship.

The true blessedness of worship depends upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, upon the spiritual condition of those who are present as taking part in it.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 117. ¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 103.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 116. ²⁰¹Ibid., p. 105. Italics mine.

²⁰²Ibid., p. 106.

The following statement seems to imply that the Spirit does more than aid the believer in worship; it appears to suggest that true worship is virtually the action of the Spirit (and not that of the redeemed person):

The Holy Spirit is the energy, the sole living source, of all that takes place in worship so far as it is genuine. This principle, indeed, is true universally; it is true of all the exercises of spiritual life. We live by the Spirit. We walk by the Spirit. We worship in spirit and in truth. It is the Spirit who contends against the flesh. It is the affection of the Spirit which is the expression of the whole of the inward Christian life. But in Christian worship, the members of Christ being united together, the Spirit acts in the body. All that which is real and blessed comes from Him. Sovereign in action, but acting according to the spiritual capacity of each, He uses this sovereign power in order to express the feelings which are suitable to the assembly before God, to nourish and strengthen them by His grace When Christians are thus met together as members of Christ's body, each acting in his place through the Spirit, the opportunity is presented for the exercise of the gifts of the members, which are for the edification of the body.²⁰³

Not only does the Spirit guide the believer's worship, but He puts within the believer the feelings ("sentiments") appropriate to worship. Darby says,

Not only do we, when being born again, receive a new nature, which is holy and capable of sentiments suitable to the position in which grace has placed us before God, but we receive the Holy Spirit, who shews, and reveals, and communicates to us divine things,²⁰⁴ and inspires sentiments such as they should awaken.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 107.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 97. Italics mine.

He makes this point even clearer when he says,

By the Holy Spirit, the love of God, whence all these accomplished blessings have flowed, is shed abroad in our hearts. He is the originator in us of all the thoughts and all the affections which respond to this love.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 98. Italics mine. The Spirit's work in producing godly affections in the believer is a prominent theme in the writings of Darby. He is the One who "produces zeal and affections" (Letters, vol. I, p. 207). Though Darby emphasizes that Christ's blood is the assurance of our salvation and not our dull feelings (Ibid., vol. III, p. 455), he says that "the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 295). The prerequisite for such "blessed affections" is the assurance of an accomplished redemption (Ibid. p. 260). The Spirit produces feelings of alarm and havoc when He first convinces the sinner of his sin; Darby is surprised that many are brought peacefully to the Lord (Ibid., p. 60). The concept of not being able to know of a certainty who are God's children "is a most horrible principle that . . . destroys all godly affections" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 313). "The sentiment of the Church is that which the Spirit Himself expresses. The Spirit is upon earth and animates the Church, being the true source of its thoughts. The Church, animated by these very thoughts, expresses her own affections under the influence of the Holy Spirit" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 381). As the One who "sends forth our affections towards Jesus," the Spirit also "draws out our affections" toward Him (Ibid., vol. XII, p. 25). Through the Spirit "Christ exercises our affections . . . to make Himself everything to our souls in every way" (Letters, vol. I, p. 136). Christ is the One who is "working in our affections by His Spirit" (Ibid., p. 161). The place whereby these affections are learned is the church where "all the sweetest affections" already are (Ibid., p. 196). Trials, which normally would have produced "human feelings," are employed by God to produce "divine feelings -feelings 'according to God'" (Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 249). The relationship between the sentiments produced by the Spirit and the unity of the church is seen in Darby's statement that "The Holy Ghost . . . enters . . . into all the sympathies, and acts in all the affections which redemption has created and left room for and which become the unity of one body, and binds it all together" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 327).

Though the Holy Spirit has a very active ministry to the believer (He gives us [1] the assurance of our redemption, revealing to us the glory of Christ as presented in the Scriptures; [2] the consciousness of our union with Christ on high; and [3] sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts),²⁰⁶ He is to be particularly in control when the church is met for worship.

When Christians are thus met together as members of Christ's body, each acting in his place through the Spirit, the opportunity is presented for the exercise of the gifts of the members, which are for the edification of the body.²⁰⁷

Although the language which he uses seems to over-emphasize the role of the Spirit at the expense of the responsibility of the redeemed human being, Darby stresses the relationship between the Spirit and spiritual believers. It is the Spirit, Darby says, who "acting in spiritual men in order to express the spiritual affections of the assembly, is the mode in which worship is rendered to God."²⁰⁸

What part does human initiative play in the act of worship? Darby is quite wary of anything in worship which draws attention to gifts or to the human being's responsibility in ministry. If the question, for example, is raised whether

²⁰⁶ Ibid., vol. VII, p. 98.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 108.

to focus upon the Father or Son in worship, Darby emphasizes that the believer is to be guided by the Holy Spirit alone. "Effort," says Darby, "in such things has no place."²⁰⁹

There is, furthermore, no room for individualistic emphases. We are to be exercised on the behalf of all who compose the assembly because worship is that of the body and not simply of the individual.

This will make us feel our entire dependence upon the Comforter -the Spirit of truth -for truthful service to God in communion . . . the worship which is rendered should be the worship of all.²¹⁰

The Lord's Supper, that ordinance which was communicated to the Apostle Paul by special revelation, is to be central in the life of the assembly and the individual Christian.

It is a part of the Lord's mind in the entire Christian walk, to which He attaches importance in view of our moral condition and of the state of our spiritual affection individually, as well as those of the assembly.²¹¹

Darby's doctrine of the Lord's Supper may be briefly summarized:²¹²

- (1) The Lord's Supper is a symbol of Christ's death and is the external sign of the church's unity;
- (2) It is a remembrance of what Christ was on the cross, not what He is. The elements represent the separation

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 115.

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 116.

²¹¹Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. IV, p. 251.

²¹²Goddard, "Contribution", pp. 247-248.

- of the body and blood in death. Although our communion is with a risen Christ, the Supper is a memorial of His sufferings and death;
- (3) As a sign of the unity of the body of Christ, all Christians (who are not "under discipline") are invited to take part in the Supper. Membership in an assembly is not necessary for it is the Lord's table, not that of the assembly;
 - (4) Because the assembly is the guardian of truth and holiness in the house of God, it is under obligation to keep the Table pure. Therefore all who wish to participate in the Supper are subject to the discipline of that assembly whether they are members or not;
 - (5) Ordination is not necessary on the part of those who officiate at the Supper;
 - (6) Though the Supper was originally celebrated daily, according to Darby, he believes that once a week is the minimum now;
 - (7) Transubstantiation and consubstantiation are alike rejected by Darby.

Darby is quite specific that there is no sacramental grace in the elements and that there is no physical change in them. "What we break is bread," he says, "and nothing else."²¹³ Although Darby does use language such as: "when I eat Him as dying for me"²¹⁴ and "we eat His body, and we drink His blood,"²¹⁵ he says that to feel that somehow a living Christ is present in the elements is to "overthrow entirely the intention of this institution, and even Christianity itself."²¹⁶

²¹³ Letters, vol. III, p. 468.

²¹⁴ Ibid., vol. II, p. 18.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

²¹⁶ Ibid. See also his statement that "It is most important to understand that it is a dead Christ, who in this state exists no longer, because we cannot have any relationship with a Christ living on the earth" (Ibid.,

Christ is shown to us as dead in the elements,²¹⁷ and because it is a dead Saviour who is represented there, it shows that "I am living with Him now in heaven."²¹⁸

On the other hand, Darby says that "the Lord is really present with us in [the Lord's Supper] spiritually according to the intention of the institution."²¹⁹ In harmony with his moderately Calvinistic theology, Darby emphasizes the idea that we receive spiritual nourishment when we properly partake of the Supper:

I discern then the body of the Lord, but the body of the Lord given -His blood shed -His death! It is not an ordinary repast, a simple remembrance, if you will, but an institution that Christ has given to His own; not that they may find in the elements anything else than the bread and the fruit of the vine, but that their faith may in the sweetest way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, nourish itself by Jesus.²²⁰

Darby's Doctrine of Church Discipline

One final matter should be considered in the light of Darby's doctrine of the Spirit and the Church. The issue of church discipline was very important to Darby. Theologically he held to the idea that "we are bound to keep God's house

p. 19.

²¹⁷Ibid., p. 16.

²¹⁸Ibid., p. 21.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 16.

²²⁰Collected Writings, vol. XX, p. 286.

clean, to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. . . . God will have the place of His dwelling clean."²²¹ Though the church is in ruins, the church's future hope is the coming of its Savior and in light of that event should be exercising discipline.

The full glory of the house will be manifested when Christ comes in glory, and not till then; but we should desire that, as far as possible, by the energy of the Holy Ghost, there should be correspondence in spirit and manner with what shall be hereafter.²²²

Church discipline, according to Darby, is not to be a judicial process, for the trial of some crime, by certain laws. This would not be on "the ground of grace,"²²³ says Darby, for "there is nothing more abhorrent to God than a judicial process."²²⁴

Because church discipline is not a humanly conceived judicial process, but rather a "question of the energy of the Spirit,"²²⁵ and, because the church is not a voluntary association in which man has the right to make his own rules,²²⁶ man's will is not the basis for church discipline.

²²¹Ibid., vol. I, p. 338.

²²²Ibid., p. 347.

²²³Ibid., p. 339.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 343.

²²⁵Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 348.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 339. Darby speaks of man's will as "that which brings in everlasting destruction" (Ibid.).

There is no such thing as voluntary action on man's part, in the things of God; it [discipline] is acting under Christ, by the Spirit. The moment I get man's will [in discipline], I get the devil's service and not Christ's.²²⁷

As the "dwelling-place of the Spirit,"²²⁸ the Church is God's witness to the world of His holy standards and is to exercise discipline in the power of the Holy Ghost, else "it is nothing."²²⁹

God holds us responsible to judge those within and not to allow evil in God's house.²³⁰ Darby warns the Brethren, "Do not relax fidelity to Christ and the truth for the sake of avoiding narrowness."²³¹ Using an Old Testament analogy, Darby reminds the Brethren that

Christ is sacrificed for us, and we are keeping the feast. . . . no leaven was allowed in the house at all. Redemption is not an unholy thing. I must have sinlessness along with redemption. . . . Here we are keeping the passover, and we must not have leaven, for sin and Christ cannot go together.²³²

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 75.

²²⁹Ibid., vol. I, p. 348.

²³⁰Letters, vol. III, p. 312.

²³¹Ibid., p. 367.

²³²J.N.D., "The Assembly Acting in Discipline." (Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.), p. 11. Hereafter cited as "The Assembly."

Emphasizing the importance of discipline in the church, Darby states in another place:

"The world is the theatre of Satan's power; the assembly, delivered from his power, is the habitation of God by the Spirit. If the enemy had

Darby speaks of several kinds of discipline which have been "ordinarily confounded amongst Christians."²³³ He lists these as: (1) individual remonstrance in righteousness (going as a person wronged, e.g. Matthew 18); (2) the discipline of the Father (a fatherly care which makes allowance for weakness and inexperience, as over an erring child); and (3) the discipline of the Son (that is, ecclesiastical discipline which acts in the responsibility of keeping the house clean and is the acting of the conscience of the body).²³⁴

Apart from keeping the house of God free from sin, Darby gives at least three other reasons for the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. Discipline, properly exercised, is a sign of the spiritual condition of a particular assembly. Darby says:

If a case rise, and the assembly is spiritual, the Lord will make it clear. . . . where a congregation of saints is spiritual, what is false and hypocritical cannot last there any length of time at all.²³⁵

succeeded in drawing aside by the flesh a member of Christ . . . he is put outside . . . in order that the flesh of the Christian . . . should be physically destroyed and broken down" (Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. IV, pp. 233-234).

²³³ Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 339.

²³⁴ Ibid., pp. 340-342.

²³⁵ "The Assembly", p. 13.

In another place Darby states,

If there is spirituality in the body, evil cannot continue long; it is impossible that hypocrisy, or anything else, should continue, where there is spirituality.²³⁶

Another major reason for exercising ecclesiastical discipline is, in Darby's words, for the purpose of "proving ourselves clear" of the particular offense. We prove ourselves clear of the offense and clean of the effect of the sin when we follow God's system of discipline.²³⁷

Lastly, Darby teaches that proper ecclesiastical discipline is an expression of a genuine love for those who, though indwelt by the Spirit, are caught in some sin. "If a saint gets into trouble," Darby employs, "he is Christ's sheep; and I am bound, in whatsoever way I can, to get him out of it."²³⁸

Darby is quite emphatic that the purpose of ecclesiastical discipline is primarily restorative. He says

²³⁶ Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 342.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 338. See also his statements that "If it is assembly, the Lord is there, and you must prove yourselves clear in the matter. If the assembly will not put the evil out when it is a case of gross sin, I should have no more to say to it: they would not prove themselves clear" ("The Assembly", pp. 6-7) and "The assembly is the first thing, to prove themselves clear in the matter" (Ibid., pp. 14-15). Darby frequently speaks of the "conscience" of the assembly, saying that after proper inquiry (by a few of the brothers), "the conscience of the assembly must be brought into action" (Ibid., p. 8).

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 342.

that "the great body of discipline ought to be altogether aimed at hindering excommunication, the putting of a person out."²³⁹

All discipline until the last act is restorative. The act of putting outside, of excommunication, is not (properly speaking) discipline, but the saying that discipline is ineffective, and there is an end of it; the church says, "I can do no more."²⁴⁰

Certain motives are to empower the church in properly exercising discipline. A jealous zeal for the honor of God is to mark the church. Darby expresses his belief that "the church is bound to be jealous with respect to the glory of the Person of Christ."²⁴¹

We must be characterised by a sincere love to maintain the holiness of God. In ourselves, says Darby, we are sinners, incapable and unworthy to discipline. Only this "prerogative of love"

can rightly relieve the spirit from the sense of an altogether false position in the exercise of discipline . . . love . . . to secure, at all cost of pain to itself, the blessing of holiness in the church.²⁴²

There is to be, furthermore, a sense of shame as the assembly identifies itself with the sin of the one put

²³⁹Ibid., p. 343. "The discipline of putting away is always done with the view of restoring the person who has been subject to it, and never to get rid of him." (Letters, vol. II, p. 199.

²⁴⁰Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 344.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 200.

²⁴²Ibid., p. 338.

under discipline. Darby says "I believe there is never a case of church discipline but to the shame of the whole body."²⁴³ This sense of corporate responsibility is further expressed when he says,

I do not think any person or body of Christians can exercise discipline, unless as having the conscience clear, as having felt the power of the evil and sin before God, as if he had himself committed it.²⁴⁴ Then he does it as needful to purge himself. The church is never in the place of exercising discipline until the sin of the individual becomes the sin of the church, recognised as such.²⁴⁵

Lastly, a local assembly is never to be marked by indifference to the exercise of discipline by another congregation. The major division of the Plymouth Brethren into the "Opens" (following the leadership of George Mueller) and the "Exclusives" (following the leadership of Darby) focused on what is called the "Bethesda Question."²⁴⁶ Believing that if discipline has been justly and divinely exercised by another meeting, Darby says "surely saints elsewhere are to act upon it."²⁴⁷ Illustrating the prominence this issue assumed in the history of the

²⁴³Ibid., p. 341.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 346.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 344.

²⁴⁶For a survey of the issues involved in the Bethesda Question, see Coad, History, ch. 10 "Developments in Bristol", pp. 155-164.

²⁴⁷Letters, vol. I, p. 204.

Brethren, Darby states that "respecting the action of an assembly prima facie is the way of wisdom and what God owns."²⁴⁸

As God's habitation on the earth, the Church is corporately indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Church discipline is to be exercised not only for the sake of the believer who needs restoration, but also because the Church is where God really is dwelling, the "place where God sets His blessings besides individual conversion."²⁴⁹

The issue of church discipline is important to Darby not only because of his doctrine of the church, but also because of his belief of the place of the Brethren as

²⁴⁸Ibid., vol. II, p. 399. "The principle of indifference to good and evil, to error and truth, is as bad as the wrong action, and even worse" (Ibid., p. 200). Darby speaks of some assemblies who are not "taking a little trouble for Christ's glory" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 222). "Whilst a local assembly exists actually in a personal responsibility of its own, . . . its acts, if they are of God, bind the other assemblies, as in the unity of the one body" (Ibid., p. 199). In another place Darby says, "Supposing discipline to have been justly, and consequently divinely exercised, surely saints elsewhere are to act upon it; or confusion and disorder, and slighting the saints and Christ Himself in antinomian liberty, is the result" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 204). The idea that other assemblies need not concur with the discipline of another fellowship denies the truth of the church and its unity. Note Darby's use of the analogy of typhus concerning those who refuse to be bound by the action of another meeting (Ibid., vol. II, p. 219). Because there is only one true church of God on the earth, Darby, referring to a Christian under discipline, could say "[I] hold him to be outside the church of God on earth" (Ibid., p. 215).

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 229.

God's witness in the world. "Our path," Darby says, "is holding forth the word of truth, the immediate presence of God, which will be a light through it all."²⁵⁰

The Spirit and the Christian

In this last section of this chapter we will examine the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the child of God. We will limit our discussion to several areas in the life of the individual Christian which illustrate the concern of Darby for a recovery of a biblical Pneumatology.

Darby not only defines a Christian as one who "has the Spirit,"²⁵¹ but also speaks of the true presence of God on the earth in His saints, by the Spirit as

that immeasurably important and divine fact [which is] . . . to be the source of all our present blessing²⁵²
-[it is] what alone makes Christianity what it is.

Before we look at the issue of deliverance we will note several areas of Pneumatology which are emphasized by Darby.

The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

Describing the baptism of the Holy Spirit as "incorporation" into the body of Christ by the Spirit,²⁵³

²⁵⁰Ibid., vol. I, p. 277. ²⁵¹Ibid., vol. II, p. 406.

²⁵²Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 238.

²⁵³Letters, vol. III, p. 466.

Darby equates the terms "receiving the Spirit" and "the baptism of the Spirit." Though there is variety in the terminology used in the scriptures, Darby says, the meaning is that they are "partakers of the same thing."²⁵⁴ It is through the baptism of the Holy Ghost that one becomes a member of the body of Christ.²⁵⁵

To pray for the Holy Spirit with respect to His baptism is inappropriate, says Darby.

I believe that the request for the Holy Spirit is a proof that the professing church denies itself, and more than ever now, that God has, in a remarkable manner, manifested the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth.²⁵⁶

The Spirit has been given in virtue of the ascension of Christ and, being given, "the Spirit is here."²⁵⁷ The baptism of the Spirit is not to be understood in any figurative way that denies this dispensation's "immediate presence of God."²⁵⁸ Nothing should be believed that denies

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 418.

²⁵⁶ Letters, vol. I, p. 291.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 292.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 277. See also his statement that "His spiritual actings are not confined to this dispensation; but His presence as sent and dwelling on earth is, if scripture be true" (Collected Writings, vol. X, pp. 246-247). Darby also strongly emphasizes the fact that God's taking up His abode on earth is a new thing (Ibid., p. 236) and that scripture gives no thought of God dwelling in the midst of His people until redemption was accomplished (Ibid., p. 240).

the truth that "[God] has acted in an extraordinary manner, has almost shewn Himself to sight, so to speak."²⁵⁹

Darby looks at the baptism of the Holy Spirit from two points of view: the historical occurrence on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the personal appropriation of the meaning of that event in the Christian living after the historical birthday of the Church.

Because the promised coming of the Spirit occurred on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit "cannot come twice in this order of things, because He was to dwell for ever."²⁶⁰ It was the baptism of the Holy Spirit which made the early Christians a real corporate body, forming the assembly of God.²⁶¹ The descent of the Holy Ghost initiated and publicly inaugurated the assembly; the assembly's true living character is the body of Christ and is so through the baptism of the Holy Ghost.²⁶²

Darby sets forth the means of the individual Christian receiving the Spirit:

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 291.

²⁶⁰Ibid., III, p. 465. Darby explains the subsequence of the baptism of the Spirit in the experience of Cornelius in Acts 10 by saying "Cornelius was a special case, God demonstrating that He would receive the Gentiles" (Ibid., pp. 465-466).

²⁶¹Collected Writings, vol. XIV, p. 20.

²⁶²Ibid., p. 24.

The pouring out of the Spirit is what happened on the day of Pentecost . . . but individuals receive it on believing in Christ's work for the remission of sins.²⁶³

After Pentecost, believers are "introduced into an already baptised body."²⁶⁴ Lest a post-Pentecostal believer feel he is somehow outside the unity of the body created by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, Darby stresses that "all since called by God have their part in it."²⁶⁵

Darby's understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a once-for-all historical event in which post-Pentecostal believers partake and yet as that which is made personal by faith in the work of Christ became normative not only for the rest of the Brethren movement, but also characterized much of later Fundamentalism.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Letters, vol. III, p. 466.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Collected Writings, vol. XIV, p. 25. The believer who was not present on the day of Pentecost is not at a disadvantage, says Darby. In fact that believer has the privilege to show forth the unity of that body formed at Pentecost weekly by means of the Lord's Supper, which is "the external sign of it [the unity of the one body]" (Ibid., p. 31).

²⁶⁶ For example, the twentieth-century dispensationist Charles Ryrie says that the question of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (including the debate concerning certain spiritual gifts) "is the most confusing aspect of the entire doctrine of the Holy Spirit" (Spirit, p. 74). As "the one work of the Spirit which is not found in any other dispensation," the baptism of the Spirit is not a subsequent work of grace, is not to be sought as an experience, but is the means by which God "places one into the Body of Christ" (Ibid., pp. 75-77). James Gray echoes the position of Darby when he says "In my opinion, the baptism of the Holy Ghost

Darby's Doctrine of Deliverance

The doctrine of deliverance is a key issue for Darby. He not only felt that virtually the entire Evangelical world was lacking this truth,²⁶⁷ but also firmly believed that God had raised up the Brethren to recover

came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) once and forever, and it is of that baptism that all believers partake as soon as they come to Christ by faith" (D. H. Dolman, Simple Talks on the Holy Spirit [New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1927], p. 6, quoted in John Walvoord, Holy Spirit, p. 145). The evangelist D. L. Moody, however, believed he experienced a "second work of grace" by which he meant the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. Moody related his experience of 1871 to Reuben Torrey, stating that it was so overwhelming that he "had to ask God to withhold His hand, lest he die on the very spot for joy" (Reuben Torrey, "Why God Used D. L. Moody," [pamphlet], Sword of the Lord edition [Murfreesboro, Tenn., n.d.], quoted in George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 78).

²⁶⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 322. Most believers he found in America, Darby said, were "as if outside God's house . . . desiring, hoping, praying that it may be well with them . . . but not in adoption within, seeking to live up to their place . . . I do anything but despise this, I was a good while so myself; but it lowers the whole tone and character of Christianity" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 354). Speaking autobiographically, Darby says that he learned to connect more closely the doctrine of regeneration with the Person of Christ; that Christ gives a real life, i.e. a new position for man before God -deliverance (Ibid., p. 299). Darby believed that he and the Brethren were proclaiming what many had never heard before - "the real gospel" - and expressed his joy in 1869 that "considerable numbers have found peace" (Ibid, vol. II, p. 8). The Church is in desperate need of "another work, another truth besides forgiveness" (Ibid., p. 209). That truth involves the "immediate consciousness" of being in Christ and it is to be "the normal christian state" (Ibid., p. 246).

and disseminate this doctrine.²⁶⁸ As those who have recovered the Pauline teaching of union with an ascended Christ,²⁶⁹ the Plymouth Brethren are to "bring . . . what may raise the whole tone of Christianity before souls, the Christianity that takes us by redemption into association with Christ."²⁷⁰

Because the subject of deliverance is such an important one to Darby, he oftens dwells upon what this doctrine means and how it should affect the individual believer. He defines deliverance as

The enjoyment of the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ; it is to have passed from the old man . . . into the second Man, Christ risen . . . the foundation being that, in the death of Christ, God has condemned sin in the flesh. The element of power is the presence of the Holy Spirit.²⁷¹

Brethren, Darby says, are to be "grounded not only in the forgiveness of their sins, but also in the precious fact that we are dead and risen with our precious Saviour. This is deliverance."²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 185, 500.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., vol. II, p. 4. Relating a conversion with a man in Toronto in 1865, Darby describes him as one who "got his soul all cleared . . . He told me he saw plainly that what brethren taught was the recovery of Paul's doctrine. So it really is. I am daily more convinced that evangelicalism with partial truth is the abandonment of what Paul taught. I feel far more deeply the ground on which I am than ever" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 398).

²⁷⁰ Ibid., vol. I, p. 277. ²⁷¹ Ibid., vol. II, p. 431.

²⁷² Ibid., vol. III, p. 368.

Deliverance has a double aspect. It is both deliverance from before God, and, deliverance from the law of sin.²⁷³ In its essence the doctrine of deliverance involves "unclouded favor and fully known love . . . eternal redemption."²⁷⁴

An additional definition is provided by Darby to stress his belief that deliverance involves the

settled assurance of conscience before God . . . to know and believe that He has redeemed us in love, and taken us in the resurrection of Christ out of the whole state and condition I was in before; that He justifies me, not that I am justified before Him -and both are right, but the former only is liberty.²⁷⁵

Concerning his own experience of deliverance, Darby relates that when he was a lawyer, he was "induced to be ordained" for the ministry, and,

not yet knowing deliverance, I was governed by the feeling of duty towards Christ, rather than by the consciousness that He had done all and that I was redeemed and saved.²⁷⁶

He continues,

When a parson, I had preached that sin had created a great gulf between us and God, and that Christ alone was able to bridge it over; now, I preached that He had already finished His work. The necessity of regeneration, which was always a part of my teaching, became connected more with Christ, the last Adam, and I understood better that it was a real life, entirely new, communicated by the power of the Holy Spirit; but, as I have said, more in connection with the person of Christ and the power of His resurrection, combining the power of a life victorious over death, with a new position for man before God. This is what I understand by "deliverance."²⁷⁷

²⁷³Ibid., p. 435. ²⁷⁴Ibid., vol. I, pp. 260-261.

²⁷⁵Ibid., vol. III, p. 309. ²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 297.

²⁷⁷Ibid., p. 299.

The purpose of this paper is not to fully develop all the implications of Darby's doctrine of deliverance.²⁷⁸ It is, however, within the scope of this work to notice the role of the Holy Spirit in this major area of Darby's theology.

As the One who produces "longings after deliverance,"²⁷⁹ the Holy Spirit makes the believer aware, through His anointing ministry, of his complete acceptance with God. Darby says,

It is not simply being born of God, but, through the anointing of the Holy Ghost consequent on redemption, the consciousness of being in Christ and Christ in me -the state of Romans 8 in contrast with the state in chapter 7, which is a renewed but undelivered man still under the law.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ See Robertson for a thorough discussion of Darby's doctrine of deliverance which he terms "experiential sanctification." He states that a believer in Christ is brought to experiential sanctification by means of the following steps: (1) He admits his own failure to overcome the life-controlling power of the indwelling sin nature and to live a righteous life for God; (2) He then learns of and trusts in his positional sanctification in Christ, claiming his new legal position before God and accounting his flesh to be legally dead and his true self to have a new legal life in the risen Christ; (3) The Holy Spirit is sent by Christ to him and he receives glimmers of a new life with deliverance from the power of the flesh; (4) Encouraging him to trust more, these glimmers of that new life will sometimes expand into the full glow of moments of full deliverance in which the believer has no consciousness of the flesh in himself. Though Darby is not suggesting a kind of sinless perfectionism, he does stress this "new power" by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by which the believer can moment by moment overcome the flesh and experientially become more like Jesus Christ (Robertson, "Sanctification", pp. 101-102; see especially chapter 4- "Deliverance from the Power of the Flesh: The Gate to Experiential Sanctification", pp. 84-102).

²⁷⁹ Letters, vol. III, p. 322. ²⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. II, p. 209.

Darby understands the book of Romans as that which deals firstly with what we have done (Romans 3:20 to 5:11) and, secondly with what we were in the flesh and what we no longer are (Romans 5:12 to the end of chapter 8).²⁸¹ As a subject "which one is ever obliged to dwell on,"²⁸² Romans 7 and 8 illustrate the need for deliverance and peace in the Evangelical world, the "getting out of Romans 7" (deliverance from the power of sin)²⁸³ on the one hand, and the "getting into Romans 8" (peace in the newness of life).²⁸⁴

The sealing of the Holy Spirit is that operation of the third member of the Trinity by which He attests to Christ's finished work²⁸⁵ and puts the believer "into a wholly new standing."²⁸⁶ "The intelligence of deliverance is the consequence of sealing"²⁸⁷ for our state and condition of being alive in Christ, says Darby, is not known until sealing.²⁸⁸

²⁸¹Ibid., vol. III, p. 369.

²⁸²Ibid., vol. I, p. 346.

²⁸³Ibid., vol. III, p. 439.

²⁸⁴Ibid.

²⁸⁵Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 28.

²⁸⁶Letters, vol. II, p. 419.

²⁸⁷Ibid., p. 351.

²⁸⁸Ibid., p. 406. "An unsealed Christian is unknown in scripture. It is not conversion, but the Holy Ghost coming

The ministry of the Spirit to the believer assures him of his position in Christ.²⁸⁹ Dispensationally, Darby says, "the Spirit is the seal of our new position in Christ, promised in the prophets and by the Lord, and received by Him for us after His ascension (Acts 2:33)."²⁹⁰ This work by the Spirit is unique to this dispensation.²⁹¹

Certain results are evident if a believer understands the sealing of the Spirit and the doctrine of deliverance:

If I as a believer recognize myself as dead, in a new position in Christ, treating the flesh as dead, then I am manifesting my sealing. As we live in the Spirit we give evidence of the Spirit's work in us, not as respecting salvation, but as respecting deliverance.²⁹²

Not to know our deliverance, says Darby,

lowers the whole tone and character of Christianity To know that we are risen with Christ, in Him before God, alters all. It sets us free before Him, and free from the power of what was contrary to Him.²⁹³

to dwell in us so that our bodies are temples"; it is a matter of faith, states Darby, just as believing in Christ's work and its efficacy (Ibid. vol. III, p. 90).

²⁸⁹ Ibid., vol. III, p. 119.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 394.

²⁹¹ It was not God's intention for the Old Testament believers to enjoy the doctrine of deliverance. Always fearful of the church's distinction being forgotten Darby says, "Alas! many Christians are in a Jewish state in this respect" (Ibid., p. 348). Deliverance was not available to Old Testament saints, because it is based on the gift of the Spirit whose coming was "consequent on an accomplished redemption" (Ibid., p. 394). Christ's ascension allowed the Holy Spirit to come in His place; the Spirit seals the believer on the basis of Christ's accomplished redemption (Ibid., p. 394).

²⁹² Letters, vol. III, p. 395. ²⁹³ Ibid., vol. I, p. 354.

Darby testifies of his own experience of deliverance and how it produced an unshakeable confidence in the word of God. Speaking of that point early in his ministry, Darby says,

I was not set free according to Romans 8 . . .
 I went through a day's mental process as to
 the word, at the time I was set free . . . God's
 word has ever since been God's word, from God.²⁹⁴

The greatest benefit of the doctrine of deliverance, according to Darby, is that of the assurance of salvation. It is "impossible," says Darby, "that [a Christian] be too clear about it [his salvation]."²⁹⁵ Referring to the doctrine of assurance as "divine leisure,"²⁹⁶ Darby stresses that "the Holy Spirit always places us beforehand in the pure and fresh region of a redemption which leaves no longer any question of sin for us."²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴Ibid., vol. III, p. 454. For a discussion of Darby's doctrine of the Bible and the relationship of the Spirit and the Word, see pp. 248-259, *infra*.

²⁹⁵Ibid., vol. I, p. 169. "Uncertainty as to what is all-important is misery," Darby says (Ibid., vol. II, p. 297). The basis of one's assurance is not one's own works ("I reject utterly self-examination for peace," states Darby in Ibid., vol. III, p. 449); nor the evidence of the Spirit's fruits in us (Darby calls this the confusing of the work of the Spirit with the work of Christ, see Ibid., vol. II, pp. 426-427; but rather the word of God (Ibid., vol. I, p. 62), the acceptance by God of the blood of Christ (Ibid., vol. III, p. 455), and the testimony of the Holy Spirit to our hearts (Ibid., vol. II, p. 419).

²⁹⁶Ibid., vol. I, p. 152.

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 148.

Many Christians, Darby felt, are ignorant of redemption and assurance and are therefore afraid to say they are children of God. Yet, he insists, they have the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of Christ, and therefore they can know that they are His.²⁹⁸

Because the doubting of one's salvation is taught in the church,²⁹⁹ the only corrective, Darby emphasizes, is a return to what the scriptures truly set forth on this important issue. Darby's specific doctrine of the sealing of the Holy Spirit and its consequential assurance of deliverance are the truths which he believes are most needful of proclamation.

Lastly, Darby places great importance on the doctrine of deliverance and its resultant assurance as the basis for living for Christ in this world. He states that "perfect acceptance in Christ is the starting-point for all our service as for all our hopes."³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Ibid., vol. III, p. 395. Darby's concern for this doctrine of assurance is shown by his statement that

"Redemption and assurance of faith have been so set aside in evangelical teaching (though not at the Reformation -assurance was insisted on then as alone justifying faith) that many persons who have the Spirit of Christ . . . are afraid . . . to . . . say they are children" (Ibid., -vol. III, p. 395).

²⁹⁹ Ibid., vol. II, p. 351.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., vol. III, p. 439.

There remains for us four brief areas of Darby's understanding of the Spirit: the Spirit's ministries of indwelling and of filling; and, the believer's responsibility not to grieve or quench the Spirit.

The Indwelling of the Spirit

One of the recovered truths for which Darby stood was that of the church of God being God's habitation through the Spirit. Against this truth, Darby says, "all the effort of the enemy is now directed."³⁰¹ "All the strength and energy of the Church [is] derived from the presence of the Holy Ghost,"³⁰² Darby emphasizes. This presence or corporate indwelling of the Church by the Spirit receives much of his attention.

It is the presence of the Holy Ghost, as sent, which constitutes and is the power of the unity of the body. Grace acting in the members may aid to maintain this in the bond of peace; but the great and blessed doctrinal truth we have in Ephesians, and I Corinthians, and elsewhere, is that the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter sent down from heaven, is the constituent power of unity to the body . . . The other character of its presence is making the outward assembly on earth the habitation of God.³⁰³

As "the immediate power . . . in all God's works,"³⁰⁴ the Holy Ghost "directs the church according to the mind of Christ."³⁰⁵

³⁰¹Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 351.

³⁰²Ibid., pp. 298-299. ³⁰³Ibid., p. 352.

³⁰⁴Letters, vol. II, p. 408. ³⁰⁵Ibid., p. 104.

Though the Church is indwelt corporately by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3:16), the truth of the individual believer being His temple and being personally indwelt (I Corinthians 6:19) is often spoken of by Darby.³⁰⁶ In fact he states that "If there were only one believer on the earth, he would be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but he would not be an assembly."³⁰⁷ Darby felt it easy to believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in the body of Christ, the Church, but is overwhelmed by the Bible's teaching that the Spirit would dwell in poor, vile sinners.³⁰⁸

The truth of the personal indwelling of the Spirit for Darby is based in the work of Christ for "the true ground of God's dwelling with man" is redemption.³⁰⁹ Upon that foundation (the perfect work of atonement by Christ), the individual believer can be personally indwelt by the Spirit of God. Such a presence in the life of the believer Darby describes as "the highest honor that [God] could [confer] on [humanity]."³¹⁰

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 360.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., vol. I, p. 527.

³⁰⁸ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 350. "When I think of man, I think readily of what he is in his infirmity . . . But when I think of the Church, I do not think of the first Adam state. I think of the fruit of Christ's redemption. Here, my heart says, the Holy Ghost ought to be" (Ibid.).

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 345.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

This personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the individual is not something for which the believer is to ask, but is rather that which automatically occurs at the moment of his conversion. Such a request for the Spirit is an expression of unbelief as to His personal presence in the Church and in the believer, says Darby.³¹¹ Darby is not opposed to asking that the Spirit may act more powerfully in us, but that kind of request Darby says really pertains to the Spirit's ministry of filling.³¹²

As "the immediate agent of all that God does",³¹³ the Spirit is the One who carries out the lordship work in us, and is properly addressed as "Lord", for "in the practical sense the Holy Spirit acts as Lord. We are led by Him."³¹⁴

In summarizing the effects of the Spirit's personal indwelling of the believer, Darby speaks of John 7:38 ("Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive"), and states,

This presence of the Holy Ghost is connected with life, joy, the sealing of our persons, and the certainty of salvation . . . and strength to resist temptation, and fruits against which there is no law.³¹⁵

³¹¹Letters, vol. I, p. 292.

³¹²Ibid. For a discussion of the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit, see our next section.

³¹³Ibid., vol. II, p. 86. ³¹⁴Ibid., pp. 83-84.

³¹⁵Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 350.

In an essay entitled "Is the Comforter Come? and Is He Gone?" Darby again emphasizes that

Our body . . . is a temple through our receiving Him; it is not mere action from without, but His dwelling in us . . . The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. He is the earnest of our inheritance. We are led of the Spirit, guided into all truth by Him.³¹⁶

The Filling of the Spirit

Darby defines the filling of the Holy Spirit in the following ways:

It is the Spirit which is in me, so taking possession of all my mind and faculties that nought else is there, and the things He reveals occupy the mind, and there is power from God in the soul as to them.³¹⁷

In writing to the Ephesian believers, Paul, Darby says, gives them the means by which they might deal with the difficulties of a world which is at enmity with God.

Commenting on Ephesians 5, Darby states:

If they [the Ephesian believers] were not to lose their senses through means of excitement used in the world, they were to be filled with the Spirit, that is, that He should take such possession of our affections, our thoughts, our understanding, that He should be their only source according to His proper and mighty energy to the exclusion of all else.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Ibid., vol. X, p. 240. For Darby's belief that "the acting of the Holy Ghost in the members is proper gift" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 350, see our discussion of Darby's doctrine of the ministry (pp. 116-127), supra.

³¹⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 466.

³¹⁸ Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. IV, p. 461.

As the "true" and "proper" state of the Christian life,³¹⁹
being filled with the Spirit involves

The Spirit giving the sensible apprehension
of the glory and the things of Christ, so
as to elevate the soul to that which is
above . . . so that there is no consciousness³²⁰
of anything inconsistent with it in the mind.

In another place Darby describes this ministry of the Spirit
as

Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith . . . so
that our thoughts, and feelings, and affections
should flow from that source through the Holy
Ghost. That is what is meant by being "filled with
the Spirit." We all have the Spirit, but we are not
all "filled with the Spirit." He is the one source³²¹
of everything where the heart is filled with Him.

As a repeatable experience in the life of the believer,
the filling ministry of the Spirit in its essence is simply
the believer being under the Spirit's control.

It is no longer a question of us, of our affections,
of our thoughts . . . the soul is filled with
the fulness of God, which leaves no room for any-
thing else; there is no discord in the heart, to
spoil the essential character of divine love. God,
complete in Himself, excludes all that is contrary³²²
to Himself; otherwise He would be no longer Himself.

Sometimes describing the experience as being in "the third
heaven,"³²³ Darby says that being filled with the Holy
Spirit may bring what he terms "moments of blessedness":

³¹⁹Collected Writings, vol. VII, p. 246.

³²⁰Ibid. ³²¹Ibid., vol. XXI, p. 217.

³²²Ibid., vol. III, p. 315.

³²³Ibid., vol. VII, p. 246.

When in real enjoyment of God, we may for a moment lose sight of the existence of the flesh, because then the soul (which is finite) is filled with that which is infinite.³²⁴

As a ministry of the Spirit which depends upon the believer's obedience to Ephesians 5:18 ("Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit"), the filling of the Spirit is to be sought. Speaking of this acting of the Holy Ghost in power, Darby says,

For my part, I feel enough that it fails me in many respects to acknowledge its reality, and feel the need of seeking it more and more, while deploring my want of faith.³²⁵

The experience of filling is not limited to the apostles or to a special class of Christians. All believers are to be filled (controlled) by the Spirit. It is different from being indwelt by the Spirit; filling involves the Spirit's "having possession" of the Christian's total life.

To have the Holy Ghost is one thing; to be filled with the Holy Ghost is another. When He is the one source of my thought, I am filled with Him. When He has possession of my heart, there is power to silence what is not of God, to keep my soul from evil, and to guide in every act of my life and walk; so that in both I am kept apart from the world.³²⁶

Darby answers the question how one may tell if he is not filled with the Spirit by saying

When we have not much power for prayer, or even to follow others, and our hearts get full of distracted thoughts

³²⁴ Ibid., vol. III, p. 317.

³²⁵ Ibid., vol. IV, p. 270.

³²⁶ Ibid., vol. XVI, p. 285.

-when there is little energy in our souls for praise and worship, we have but a feeble measure of the power of the Spirit; we are not filled with the Holy Ghost.³²⁷

The filling ministry of the Holy Spirit, though not identical to simply understanding the word of God, is grounded in the special revelation which God has given.

I believe that power [of the Spirit] is something different from the knowledge of the word, although such knowledge is the light according to which this power acts.³²⁸

Darby's doctrine of the Spirit's filling illustrates once again his concern that the Spirit's presence as the other Comforter may be viewed with utmost seriousness.³²⁹ He asks rhetorically,

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid., vol. IV, p. 270.

³²⁹ An illustration of this is Darby's understanding of II Peter 1:4 which states that believers are "partakers of [God's] divine nature." What has been virtually an unapproachable mystery to many commentators Darby views as something real in which we partake and connects this concept to our relationship to the Holy Spirit (Letters, vol. III, p. 320). Although this partaking of the divine nature does not mean our somehow metaphysically being brought into the Godhead (Collected Writings, vol. XXVIII, p. 204), nor is it identical with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ibid., vol. III, p. 84), it does involve our affections, desires, and qualities of life in the Spirit (Letters, p. 321). "In a word it is the reproduction as to its nature of Christ's life" (Collected Writings, vol. XXVIII, p. 205). "To walk in christian life," Darby says, "we must be what we admire . . . We must be divine, in the sense of the communion of His nature" (Letters, vol. I, p. 164). "The very essence of practical Christianity is our partaking of the divine nature, and having God's moral attributes conferred on us, or implanted with His nature in us" (Collected Writings, vol. X, pp. 53-54). Darby connects this concept with the filling of the Spirit and says that because God has given us of His Spirit,

Does not the Holy Ghost act upon the affections?
 Does He not reveal Christ immediately to the heart?
 Does He not lay duties upon the heart in a pressing way? Does He not produce thoughts in my soul?³³⁰

This area of the Spirit's ministry entails every aspect of the Christian's life and service. Darby summarizes:

That He may be the source of all that is thought, of all that is done, and that all that the heart, which is His vessel, produces may be the fruit of His presence; that there may be no doubting, no shutting up in the career of love, that Jesus may be faithfully confessed before men. The heart is set free from its own love, and loves according to the love of Christ. Liberty, true liberty, is found, and the practical life, and its fruits are the fruits of the Spirit.³³¹

The Grieving of the Spirit

Much has already been said about the dispensational grieving of the Spirit and how the church is now "in ruins."³³² Darby's comments on Ephesians 4:30 ("Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption") reveal his concern that the Spirit

"God, in virtue of His presence and of His power, makes us morally partakers of His nature and character, by the Holy Ghost in us, whilst giving us the enjoyment of communion with Himself, and at the same time introducing us into His fulness . . . We dwell in God, and God in us, by the Holy Ghost; and thus, as far as we are capable of it, we enjoy what God is in Himself, and become the manifestation of Him (the limit to this manifestation being only in the vessel in which God has taken up His abode)" (Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 315-316).

³³⁰ Collected Writings, vol. IV, p. 270.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. XXV, p. 338. ³³² See pp. 101-116 above.

is One whom the believer affects by his conduct as a Christian. Darby discusses what he calls "two great elements" or principles of the Christian life. The first is "putting off the old man and putting on the new"³³³ by which he means the understanding of the believer being a "new creation" in Christ, having "the divine nature." The second principle Darby sets forth is the truth of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer. This principle is connected by Darby to the command not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God" in Ephesians 4:30.

Darby enumerates several ways by which the Spirit is grieved. He is grieved when the believer fails to live by faith and allows his old nature (his "flesh") to control his action:

If one does not act according to faith one shrinks back, one loses joy, or at least the light of the Holy Spirit. . . . When we do not go forward when God has shewn the way, because of some difficulty, the flesh acts, and the Spirit is grieved. Have confidence in Him, and rejoice in His love.³³⁴

The Spirit is also grieved when the believer lives for the things of sense, thereby losing the joy of the Spirit:

Where there is a cleaving to, and seeking of, the things of sense, it necessarily keeps us lifeless and languid, even sometimes as though there were no Spirit in us at all . . . Oh! brethren, we are losing much of the joy and consolation of this divine Spirit, by our own inconsistencies, and love of what grieves Him.³³⁵

³³³ See Robertson, "Sanctification", chapter IV, pp. 84-102.

³³⁴ Letters, vol. I, p. 181.

³³⁵ Collected Writings, vol. XII, pp. 30-31.

The ultimate result of grieving the Spirit is that His role as Comforter will necessitate His acting as a Rebuke of God's people. Darby says:

If [the Holy Spirit] is grieved, the effect is that power is gone, and the conscience is bad; the Spirit then becomes a rebuker.³³⁶

The Quenching of the Spirit

The believer's responsibility to the Holy Spirit is not only to be aware of His indwelling, to be controlled by His presence, to not grieve the One by whom he has been sealed, but he is also not to quench the Spirit. The text which presents this concept in the New Testament is I Thessalonians 5:19 where Paul commands the believers to "Quench not the Spirit."

Darby defines the quenching of the Spirit in his commentary on I Thessalonians. Speaking of the "public actings of the Spirit in [the Thessalonians'] midst," Darby says,

The apostle's exhortations to these simple and happy Christians were . . . brief. They were not to hinder the action of the Spirit in their midst (for this is the meaning of

³³⁶ Ibid., vol. XXVII, pp. 151-152. Elsewhere he states: "Since fulness of joy can only be realized by the action of the Spirit, it is easy to understand that, if grieved, He will become a Spirit of reproof, judging the ingratitude with which such love, as the love of God is requited, instead of filling the heart with that love" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 318).

quenching the Spirit); nor to despise that which He might say to them, even by the mouth of the most simple, if He were pleased to use it.³³⁷

Because personal responsibility to Christ in the area of exercising one's gift is so important in Darby's doctrine of the ministry,³³⁸ the failure to understand the Spirit's speaking through another believer is a very serious offence against the rights of God.³³⁹

Darby emphasizes that the Holy Spirit, as God's immediate agent in the Church and in the Christian, guides in the ministry of the word to believers who are gathered to be taught:

It is not pretended that God keeps infallibly now as He did in forming the written word . . . [but we hold that] He works now, so as to give competency, and to guide in speaking, and lead to speak, or to be silent.³⁴⁰

The context of not quenching the Spirit in Darby's view is that of God's rights in the Church. The believer

³³⁷ Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. V, p. 112.

³³⁸ The believer is to have "full personal responsibility and liberty" to exercise his gifts; that direct responsibility to Christ cannot be usurped by anyone! "The title and the right are God's . . . the responsibility man's" (Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 126 and 129).

³³⁹ This is akin to the prohibiting of the exercise of gift which Darby calls meddling "with the prerogative of Christ" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 50-51). We are to "honour fully all the gifts God has given to whoever it may be" (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 39). "The Spirit may be quenched in the exercise of His gifts . . . it is the Holy Ghost Himself who maintains the rights of Christ, who represents Him" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 292).

is responsible before God to recognize a gift which is being exercised according to the mind of Christ, the power of the Spirit, and the standard of the written word.³⁴¹

Because the immediately following verse in I Thessalonians 5 states "do not lightly esteem prophecies," the connection between quenching the Spirit and Darby's understanding of the gift of prophecy is important. His position is that prophets continue to exist today though they are not the vehicles of special revelation. They are men who are empowered by the Spirit to apply the truths of the word of God to the assembly and as such agents of the Spirit are not to suppressed or stifled.³⁴²

³⁴¹Ibid., p. 129.

³⁴²The following quotation summarizes Darby's view of prophets existing in the church today:

"Prophets . . . may . . . be believed to exist. It is not that they now reveal fresh truths not contained in the word . . . but that there may be those who not merely teach and explain ordinary and profitable doctrine -truths, and guide by the Spirit into present truth, but who by a special energy of the Spirit can unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church where it is ignorant of it . . . can bring truths, hidden previously from the knowledge of the Church, in the power of the testimony of the Spirit of God, to bear on the present circumstances of the Church and future prospects of the world, shewing the things to come; only that these things are all actually treasured up in Scripture, but they can give them present application and force according to the mind, intention, and power of God, and thus be practically prophets . . . and thus be a direct blessing and gift of Christ to the Church for its emergency and need" (Ibid., p. 142).

Apostles and prophets exist now "in a subordinate and inferior sense" and are those who are "applying the mind of God to the saints" (Ibid., p. 143). Though comparisons between Darby's

We have noticed a number of aspects of Darby's Pneumatology and how the presence and operations of the Spirit are a "practical hinge" of the Church's life and ministry.³⁴³

With respect to the world, His primary ministry is a ministry of conviction, bringing the sinner to an understanding of his need of the work of the Savior on the cross for his sins.

Concerning the Church, the Spirit indwells it as His habitation and is its power of unity. Though the Church is in ruins and the Spirit has been grieved dispensationally,

He is nevertheless present and operative in it through the gifts which He sovereignly bestowed on its members.

We are not to seek to return to the pristine purity

Pneumatology and that of others (such as John Calvin) will be our concern in our first appendix, Calvin's comment on I Thess-

alonians 5:19 is worthy of notice at this point:

"Prophecies are not to be despised. By this, no doubt [Paul] intimates that the light of the Spirit is put out as soon as prophecies fall into contempt. . . . The Word is the instrument by which the Lord dispenses the illumination of his Spirit to believers" (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, vols. XX and XXI. [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977], I. ix. 96).

³⁴³ Darby states that the truths of the presence of the Holy Spirit and that of the Second Coming form that "hinge" (Letters, vol. II, p. 362). See also his statement that the presence of the Holy Ghost and the Second Coming of Christ are the "practical substance of christian truth" (*Ibid.*, p. 401). His emphasis on the Spirit's importance to Eschatology will be examined in our next chapter.

of the early church, but to acknowledge rather the Church's condition and to allow God to show His strength through our weakness. Worship is to be a major occupation of the believer; he is to depend especially upon the Spirit of God as he seeks to render his praises corporately to the Lord. Exercising discipline in order to "keep God's house clean," the church is where God Himself is dwelling through the Spirit, God's principle of unity is separation from evil.³⁴⁴

The Spirit's relationship to the Christian receives much attention by Darby. As one who "has the Spirit",³⁴⁵ the Christian is to view the Spirit as "the source of all [his] thoughts and desires."³⁴⁶ The Spirit empowers the believer (through filling) to live as the manifestation of Christ in the world. He affects the believer's mind, emotions, and will and, if submitted to, gives the believer victory over Satan.³⁴⁷

By means of these three major controlling themes Darby sets forth his doctrine of the Holy Spirit.³⁴⁸ Our concern in chapter three will be the relationship of Darby's Pneumatology to the rest of his theology.

³⁴⁴See his essay entitled "Separation from Evil: God's Principle of Unity" in Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 353-365.

³⁴⁵Letters, vol. II, p. 406. ³⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 460.

³⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁴⁸Other areas of Pneumatology (e.g. the "sin against the Holy Spirit", etc.) will be discussed within the context of Darby's overall theology in chapter three.

CHAPTER III
THE RELATIONSHIP OF
DARBY'S PNEUMATOLOGY TO
THE REST OF HIS THEOLOGY

In this chapter we will notice briefly the relationship between Darby's dispensationalism and his Pneumatology. We will then seek to relate his Pneumatology to eight specific areas of his theology.

The Relationship of Darby's
Dispensationalism and His Pneumatology

We do not intend to thoroughly set out Darby's dispensationalism but only to briefly examine how his dispensationalism relates to his doctrine of the Holy Spirit.¹

If the "gift of the Holy Ghost [is that which] marks the present dispensation in all its forms,"² how specifically does Darby's dispensationalism control his understanding of the Holy Spirit and His activity? Darby does not believe that the Holy Spirit acted uniformly across time. There are specific distinctions of the Spirit's

¹For a definition of dispensationalism, see footnote #20, pp. 85-86 supra. For an examination of Darby's dispensationalism from a sympathetic, twentieth-century dispensationalist, see Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965). Bass's Backgrounds is perhaps one of the most erudite of those who do not advocate a dispensational approach to the scriptures.

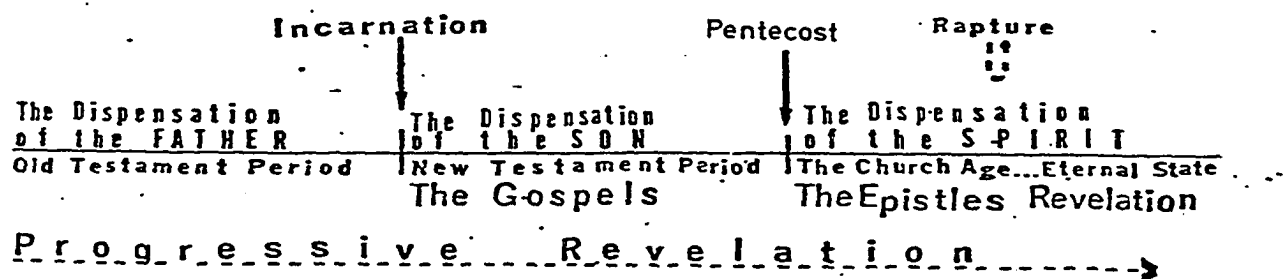
²Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 290.

activities which delineate the present dispensation as that which should rightly be termed the "dispensation of the Spirit."³

The Holy Spirit did not indwell believers in dispensations prior to the glorification of Christ. The historical event of Jesus' being glorified occurred in time; those prior to the event did not experience the inward ministry and testimony of the Spirit, confirming that they were in union with Christ.

It was not, of course, that there was any different work by which man could be saved (a believer knows this is impossible), nor another Spirit, for there is but one. But that Spirit could not then testify that the believer (to whom He witnessed and whom He influenced) was then in union with the risen Jesus, with the Man who was actually glorified as a present thing, as He does now to a believer's soul; for the thing did not exist to be testified of. If it be said, It was true to faith; I answer, It was not as true to faith that they were in union then, and knew Jesus as now glorified; for Jesus was not glorified, and therefore the Holy Ghost had not, on the footing of this union, taken up His abode in a believer's heart.⁴

³ Recognizing that diagrams have their limitations, we nevertheless offer the following as a suggested representation of how Darby views history and the respective prominence of each member of the Trinity:



⁴ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 96.

Darby says in another place that the Old Testament saints were not in the position to enjoy union with Christ. "They had received life from the Son of God," Darby says, "but union depends upon the coming of the Holy Ghost."⁵ Because the Old Testament saints lived in a time period prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit, they are relegated dispensationally by Darby to a kind of second class. He states:

The Holy Ghost has personally come down here and formed the body on earth, and there only it is at present known. The departed saints do not in this respect count, but the Holy Ghost is a divine Person, and, I have no doubt, holds their spirits in divine power for the time⁶ of glory, and even their dust for resurrection.

Darby emphasizes that the gift of the Holy Ghost is that "which marks the present dispensation in all its forms, its moral and miraculous effects."⁷ Although the "essential characteristic of Christianity [is] the ministration of the Spirit,"⁸ Darby expresses his belief that the Spirit's activity is not confined to this dispensation:

The operations of the Spirit are not limited to this dispensation; but the sending of the Comforter is, because Christ expressly declares it could not come till He went away, and when it did⁹ come, was to abide for ever, not go away like Him.

⁵ Letters, vol. II, p. 73.

⁶ Ibid., vol. I, p. 527.

⁷ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 290.

⁸ Ibid., vol. X, p. 255.

⁹ Ibid.

Referring to the Church age as "the economy of grace [in] which the Spirit of God is the great agent in us,"¹⁰ Darby compares the present dispensation with the Old Testament period. The Old Testament dispensation was "a precious light" which could, "through the faith which is in Christ Jesus" lead one to salvation.¹¹ The New Testament dispensation, however, is superior.

This absolutely clear and perfect light is found in the New Testament alone; but the Old, if we have learned to distinguish between the dispensation under which the saints lived in those times, furnishes very fine examples of faith, of obedience, of subjection to the will of God, of constancy in His paths.¹²

The "Gospel dispensation,"¹³ replaces the Old Testament dispensation. The latter was marked by promises, whereas, Darby says, in this Gospel dispensation "we get not at promises, but at God Himself."¹⁴ As the "dispensation of the Spirit,"¹⁵ this age is the dispensation "of the power of the Spirit of God."¹⁶

¹⁰Ibid., vol. III, p. 105. ¹¹Ibid.

¹²Letters vol. II, p. 109.

¹³Darby says that the Gospel dispensation was introduced by Christ in John 3 (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 103).

¹⁴Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. II, p. 2. The Church, Darby says, was not a subject of promises in the Old Testament (Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 247; see also Ibid.; vol. III, p. 383). The Church age is a parenthesis in the eschatological program of God (Letters, vol. I, p. 493); see also Collected Writings, vol. XI, p. 243.

¹⁵Collected Writings, vol. XXIII, p. 232.

¹⁶Notes and Jottings, p. 445.

Many privileges which belong to the believers of this dispensation were not available to the Old Testament saints. They did not possess a consciousness of God's manifested favor as the church now possesses.¹⁷ They were not immediately introduced into the knowledge and power of their relation to God, "as we are immediately on believing in Jesus."¹⁸ This lack of certainty or assurance of salvation for the Old Testament saint is connected by Darby to the sealing ministry of the Spirit which is limited to the New Testament dispensation. Because sealing was not available to Old Testament believers,¹⁹ "the Old Testament saints could not be said to be of Christ."²⁰ Because the Old Testament saints did not have the Holy Spirit as the guide into all truth (John 16:13), it was, therefore, not God's intention to give them "no more conscience of sins":

[The Old Testament saints] had not the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to guide into all truth. This makes all the difference as to intelligence. Further, it was not the intention of God, while the veil was unrent, to put the consciences of saints in the position in which the rending of it was to set them -so that "the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins."²¹

Darby faults many Christians of the present dispensation for their failure to see the privileged position of those who are rightly described as being

¹⁷ Letters, vol. I, pp. 122-123. ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. III, p. 394.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 396. Italics mine. ²¹ Ibid., p. 348.

sealed and being in Christ. "Alas!" Darby says, "many Christians are in a Jewish state in this respect."²² The dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church is extremely important to Darby here. Being a "part" of the body of Christ was not only incomprehensible to, but also hidden from, the Old Testament saint.²³ Dispensationally, Abraham could not be united to Christ;²⁴ those before this present dispensation were not sons or heirs of Christ, for they did not have the Holy Ghost in the New Testament sense.²⁵ The presence of the Holy Ghost, as seen from the dispensational perspective, is a major point of contention between Darby and virtually the rest of Evangelicalism:

It is exceedingly important to see the doctrine our opponents, with the mass of Evangelicals, hold as to the Holy Ghost -their total denial of what constitutes the essential difference of the christian position; and that, not only as to the Church, but as to the individual. What constitutes the essential difference of the present christian state (not its foundation, but its essential difference) is the presence of the Comforter. This it is the prophets had prophesied of; this it is Christ had promised; this it is He gave as the witness of His being²⁶ gone on high and set down at God's right hand.

²²Ibid.

²³Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 363.

²⁴Ibid., vol. X, p. 242.

²⁵Ibid., vol. III, p. 86.

²⁶Ibid., vol. X, p. 234.

Darby's dispensationalism guides his Pneumatology in that certain activities of the Holy Spirit awaited the glorification of the Son. The Day of Pentecost, for example, with its resultant giving of the Holy Spirit, awaited the ascension and glorification of Christ. In this sense believers in this dispensation have the gift of the Spirit, whereas believers of the previous dispensation did not.²⁷

Discussing Romans 8, Darby views this passage as very important in seeing the dispensational distinctions between the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament and His work in the New Testament. He says:

Thus, in Romans 8, where this presence of the Spirit as the very character of this dispensation is much brought out, after shewing His moral operations (i.e., as life in the soul), and the quickening of the body, then spoken of as personally dwelling in present witness with us, He bears witness that we are children, therefore heirs, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."²⁸

Darby sees this distinction between the Church's privileges and the standing of Old Testament saints to apply also to Jewish believers in the millennium:

It is no part of our faith that the blood of Christ gives an equal standing and relationship to all whom it cleanses—not even as on earth. It gives power to enter into the holiest. It did not on earth to the Old Testament saints; it will not to the millennial saints on earth. It is "a new and living way which is opened to us [the church] through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."²⁹

²⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 394.

²⁸ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 97.

²⁹ Ibid., vol. X, p. 253.

In summary, Darby's understanding of the scriptures is based on his dispensational hermeneutic. He believes that there is ample support for his system of interpretation³⁰ and feels that the Church, as the bride of Christ, is presented as a unique work of God, distinct from the believers of the Old Testament dispensation.³¹

Darby's dispensational scheme places the work of the Holy Spirit in the foreground of this present age. He speaks, for example, of humanity's history in the following manner:

I must know [humanity's] faults, his thoughts, what he is without law, under law, under the influence of affections which the Holy Spirit produces.³²

Every theologian is guided in his approach to the scriptures by principles of interpretation either explicitly stated or implicitly employed. Darby's dispensational hermeneutic controls his exegesis and leads him

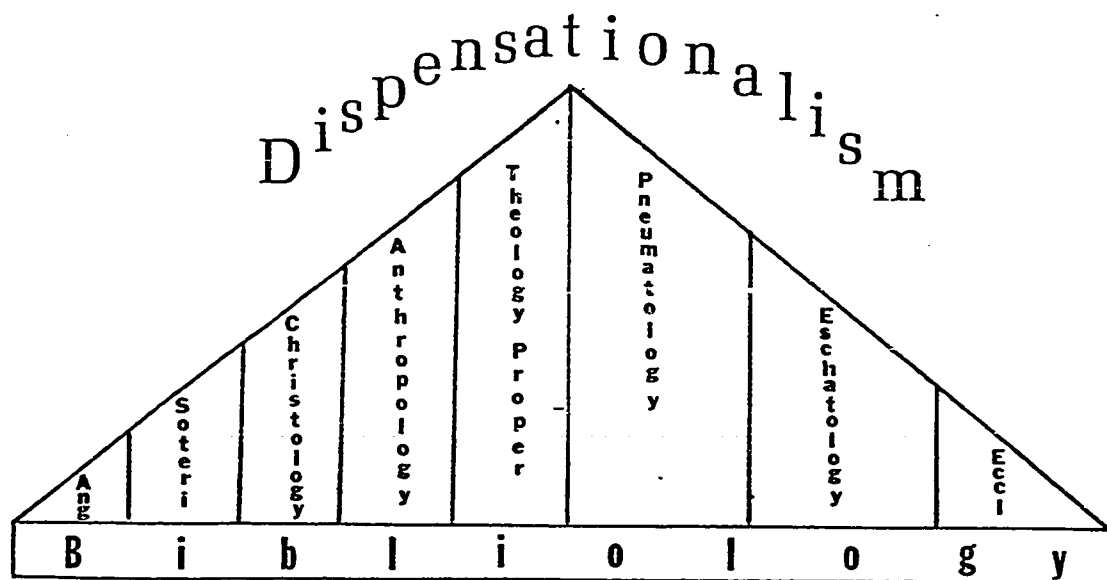
³⁰ See his references to his hermeneutical approach in footnote #12, p. 266, *infra*. Darby's understanding of progressive revelation (i.e. that God revealed what He wanted His creation to know in successive stages throughout scripture, with the culmination in the revelation of His Son [Hebrews 1:1-3]) and his dispensational approach go hand-in-hand.

³¹ Darby rejects the idea that all saints are the body and bride of Christ, stating, "Salvation is the same for all; but our special place must be learned from God's revealed purpose" (Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 254).

³² Letters, vol. I, p. 206. Italics mine. For other statements of Darby's specific enumeration of the dispensations, see Letters, vol. I, p. 308; vol. III, pp. 401 and 442; Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 383.

to conclusions which he believes are faithful to the teachings of the Bible.³³

³³The following is a representation of how we understand the relationship of Darby's dispensationalism to his overall theology:



Darby insists that his doctrinal formulations are solidly built upon the teachings of the word of God. The five areas of theology (from left to right) are those which Darby affirms but are not the primary focus of his writings. The last three areas (Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology) are the areas of doctrine which he feels are specifically needed by the contemporary church and which God is particularly revealing and recovering by means of His Spirit. The relative sizes of the segments in the pyramid are not to be understood as representations of theological importance or value to Darby, nor is the diagram implying that, for example, his Pneumatology is the source of his Eschatology, etc. Each of Darby's areas of doctrine are viewed by him from the perspective of his dispensational hermeneutic.

The Relationship of Darby's Pneumatology
to the Rest of His Theology

We have noticed in the previous section that Darby's dispensational hermeneutic gives rise to his belief that there are specific distinctions in the activities of the Spirit throughout time. Much of Darby's emphasis in this regard concerns his desire to protect the uniqueness of the Church in the plan of God. In this "Gospel dispensation" the Spirit is the member of the Godhead who is in the foreground of divine activity in the world and in the Church.

How important is Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit to the rest of his theology? In what ways does it relate to and influence his understanding of areas such as Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology?

The intensity of Darby's disdain for theologians is matched only by his love of what he believed the Bible really taught. Although his theology is not aided by the kind of clear and systematic presentation which one would desire,³⁴ his fervent adherence to the major doctrines of Evangelical Christianity is shown in the following statement of faith to the editor of the Catholic French newspaper Francaise in 1878:

³⁴"Definitions here are not man's part," Darby says; "he receives, thanks, and worships" (Letters, vol. II, p. 85). "Afraid of human accuracy in the things of God" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 526), Darby doubts whether "the purposes of God bend and limit themselves to human accuracy . . . To reduce it to human accuracy is, at times, simply to falsify everything" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 256). "Hard cold knowledge of doctrine is not what I seek" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 351).

I hold, and I can add that we firmly hold, all the foundations of the christian faith -the divinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, eternally blessed -the divinity and humanity of the Lord Jesus, two natures in one person -His resurrection and His glorification at the right hand of God -the presence of the Holy Ghost here below, having descended on the day of Pentecost -the return of the Lord Jesus according to His promise. We believe also that the Father in His love has sent the Son to accomplish the work of redemption and grace towards men -that the Son came, in that same love, to accomplish it, and that He has finished the work which the Father gave Him to do on earth . . . Other truths are connected with these, such as the miraculous birth of the Saviour, who was absolutely without sin . . . Although these are dogmas, we hold them as essential to living faith and to salvation, to the spiritual and christian life of which we live as born of God.³⁵

Darby's letter to the editor of the Francaise was not, however, for the purpose of discussing what the Irish ex-clergyman termed "foundation truths." He continues,

But you wish, sir, to know not only the great truths which we hold in common with others,³⁶ but also what distinguishes us from others.

It is, of course, in the area of distinctives that Darby believes the Church has lost the truths necessary for this dispensation. The distinctives which he believed the Plymouth Brethren had recovered for the Church included the expectation of an imminent, pretribulational, second coming ("rapture") by Christ; the priesthood of all believers (especially as it relates to the exercise of gifts); the doctrine of deliverance; and the truth of the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit.

³⁵Letters, vol. II, p. 432. ³⁶Ibid.

Although he does not provide us with an outline of his theology and frequently speaks against the systematizing of doctrine,³⁷ Darby does have certain divisions of theology which he follows. Continuing his survey of the rise of the Brethren for the editor of the Francaise, Darby states,

This is definitely the position of those brethren who rest on the authority of the word of God. Christ is seen, in this word, as the Saviour, in three different positions: -first, as accomplishing redemption on the cross; then, as seated at the Father's right hand, the Holy Ghost being thereupon sent down here; finally as coming back to take His own to be with Himself. These Christians believe, these things have the assurance of their salvation, having faith in the efficacy of this redemption; and finally, being sealed with the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every true Christian, they wait for the Son of God³⁸ from heaven without knowing the moment of His coming.

Summarizing what he believes distinguishes the Brethren from other groups within Evangelical Christianity, Darby says,

Absolute faith in the efficacy of redemption; the seal of the Spirit which gives the assurance of salvation and the consciousness of being children of God; the attitude of waiting for the Lord -this is what characterises these Christians.³⁹

Because Darby's theology is not organized along systematic lines and because he appears to hold that certain areas of doctrine are dispensation specific, we face a difficult task in organizing his theology into major

³⁷ Darby says in one place that because God has not communicated all truth, "we often lose it by attempting to put it into a frame" (Letters, vol. III, p. 257).

³⁸ Letters, vol. II, pp 438-439.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 439.

sections to which we can relate his Pneumatology. Although the ideal in such a project would be to so thoroughly study Darby's entire theology as to discover what (if any) overall structure guided him, we are not able to undertake such an additional project in this dissertation. For our purposes we will employ the following common divisions of theology, being careful not to make such categories impositions on Darby's theology: Theology Proper, Anthropology, Angelology, Christology and Soteriology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and Bibliology.⁴⁰ We shall discuss briefly the influence of Darby's Pneumatology where appropriate.⁴¹

Theology Proper

We will limit our discussion of this initial area of theological study to the Spirit's "place" within the Trinity and also comment briefly on His role in its activ-

⁴⁰The category of Angelology (including Satanology), for example, does not lend itself either to systematization (Darby does not really appear to have a doctrine of angels) or to comparison with his Pneumatology. For the sake of completeness, however, we will make some brief comments on this branch of systematic theology.

⁴¹Concerning the division of theology, William G. T. Shedd's discussion is helpful. He says that "[because] the true method of investigation in theological science [is] structural, the divisions in-it will be suggested by the principal objects themselves. In theology the investigator has to do with God, Man, and the God-man" (p. 6). He then suggests that the proper divisions should concern "the works and ways of the creator" (God), "the works and ways of the creature" (humankind), and "the works and ways of the redeemer" (Christ) (W. G. T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n. d.], *Ibid.*).

ities. In his article entitled "A Few Words on the Trinity,"⁴² Darby states,

Not that I have the least pretension to fathom this divine mystery where all are one God, all one God, God all three; yet the Father is revealed, the Son reveals, the Holy Ghost quickens and makes known. The Son who reveals is not different from the Father whom He reveals, or He would not reveal Him. By the Spirit who quickens and makes known, we are born of God and know God dwelling in us. He reveals Him to us by His own presence and is in every way the power of God, active in the creature.⁴³

Within the Godhead there are specific roles fulfilled by each of the members; the Spirit helps the believer to enjoy and understand (to some extent) the gracious acts of God.

In the Son by the Holy Ghost, by the work of Christ and the operation of the Holy Ghost, God is revealed; and in the love of the Father, righteousness and holiness are maintained and glorified, with capacity of communion in enjoyment of both the Father and the Son and intelligence of all these ways conferred by the presence of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁴

Although Darby does not feel that the finite creature can be very specific about the relations of the members of the Godhead to one another, he does emphasize that God is adequately revealed only as the Trinity.

The full revelation of the one God is only thus -Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This, this only, is what the one God is, one identity of will and being, so that they are essentially one and one only, yet distinct in willing and acting (and we can distinguish them in willing and acting: hence we commonly

⁴²Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, pp. 15-17.

⁴³Ibid., p. 16. ⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 16-17.

... speak of persons), yet never willing or acting but in the common will and unity of nature. I fear much human language on this. But I affirm that the only full revelation of the one true God is the revelation of Him in the Trinity.⁴⁵

Darby says virtually nothing concerning the issue of the Spirit's procession,⁴⁶ but emphasizes practically that His place in the divine economy "hinders His being the object addressed in prayer."⁴⁷

Anthropology

Although this dissertation does not have as its purpose the setting forth of Darby's doctrine of humanity,⁴⁸ we will notice several ways in which his Pneumatology influences his Anthropology.

Many of Darby's statements on Anthropology concern his understanding of the person's mind, will, and emotions.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁶ "The Father sends the Son, and the Son the Spirit" (Ibid., p. 16). See also Ibid., vol. X, p. 236, where Darby says that the Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son. Also in Letters, vol. III, p. 467, Darby states "He is sent by the Father in Christ's name, and by Christ from the Father."

⁴⁷ Letters, vol. II, p. 85. Darby does exhort believers, however, to "pray much for this Spirit; let your prayers abound for it, so shall you be able to discern all things" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 10). Our objective communion, Darby says, is with the Father and the Son, not the Spirit. "Yet," he stresses, "without the Spirit, and a divine Spirit, we could have no communion and no knowledge" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 86).

⁴⁸ For a fairly thorough discussion of Darby's Anthropology, see Goddard, "Contribution," pp. 50-54. See also Robertson, "Sanctification," pp. 60-69, for a discussion of the creation of humanity and the fall.

The mind of the creature is, in Darby's opinion, hardly a reliable guide, especially prior to one's conversion. "Of your own thoughts be distrustful,"⁴⁹ advises Darby, for "the mind of man is generally einseitig (one-sided)."⁵⁰

At conversion Christ takes the place of the reasoning of our minds,⁵¹ but the Christian is warned to be wary of his own intellect: "We must distrust conclusions from scripture," Darby states, "for ever man's mind enters into them."⁵²

The Spirit's ministry to the believer is that He uses the word of God, applying it to the conscience, so that "in Christ . . . all our thoughts are adjusted, set right."⁵³ The Spirit's work in progressive sanctification is to aid the believer in using his mind to reckon his "flesh" to be dead and his new "self" to be alive in the resurrected Christ.⁵⁴ Darby speaks of his own struggle in this area: "I have ever the right to reckon myself dead; to have no thought but what

⁴⁹Letters, vol. I, p. 365.

⁵⁰Ibid., vol. I, p. 500. In one place Darby says "it is remarkable how the reasoning of man fails and comes to nothing in the pursuit of divine truth" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 20). The creature is encouraged by another in his rebellion against God, for "this is the grand aim of Satan in all heresy, to take the mind off its state of reciprocity into a state of judging mere propositions" (Ibid.).

⁵¹Ibid., vol. III, p. 319.

⁵²Ibid., p. 370.

⁵³Ibid., vol. I, p. 148.

⁵⁴See Robertson, "Sanctification," pp. 91-94.

comes from the Spirit."⁵⁵ God's primary means of reaching His individual is the Spirit's work, not on the mind, but rather on the conscience. Darby states,

If the head thinks, it is always sceptical, can be nothing else, because it is altogether unable to comprehend God. He would not be God if human understanding could measure Him. God sets the conscience in activity in its true position through faith alone; we are subject, and acknowledge God in His transcendence.⁵⁶

As the "great and true principle of Protestantism,"⁵⁷ the "inlet to light,"⁵⁸ the conscience is the means by which the Holy Spirit brings the individual into the immediate presence of God and causes him to acknowledge his own nothingness before the Creator.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Letters, vol. II, p. 209.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 373.

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. I, p. 236.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 61. The operation of the Spirit in convincing the sinner of his sin also helps him to understand that Christ (by His death) "has accomplished without us all that was needed by the justice and love of God." Speaking of that finished work of Christ, Darby continues:

"It is absolutely accomplished; you can add nothing for joy or sorrow to the perfect work of Christ. All these exercises of soul may be very useful to bring us to the point of acknowledging our own nothingness, so that Christ may have His first place in our minds by faith, but they can add nothing to Him. Your peace will come from a calm and holy conviction that you are nothing, and that He is all, and that the Lord knew all that you were, and because you were all this, took your place in responsibility and suffered for you" (Ibid.).

The Spirit ministers also to the will of the individual. Discussing the issue of public speaking in the Church, Darby says,

Christianity cuts up by the root, because it pronounces the human will to be all wrong, and the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin. . . . Thus the idea of all having a right to speak in the Church could never enter into the Christian mind. It has no place in the scheme of Christianity, which begins its moral existence by the breaking down the human will as evil. The Holy Spirit has the right, which He exercises sovereignly, of distributing "to every man severally as He will"; and hence responsibility subject to the purpose of the Holy Ghost in all. ⁶⁰

Ministry, therefore, in Darby's understanding is the prerogative of the Spirit and not the mere ministerial arrangements of believers.

Darby's emphasis on the Spirit's sovereign work in the individual is shown in his statement that "will goes for nothing; we are worth nothing, and must recognise that it is all grace."⁶¹ "Man can neither do anything, nor promise anything," he says, "if the Lord does not give him strength for it."⁶²

The operations of the Holy Spirit in the emotions of the believer receive much attention by Darby. He emphasizes that the Spirit in His convicting ministry draws the

⁶⁰ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 127.

⁶¹ Letters, vol. I, p. 323. In another place Darby says, "our own will and making ourselves the centre is the spring of all our wretchedness" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 44).

⁶² Ibid., p. 471.

sinner to his need of Christ and that "the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge."⁶³

Although the sinner's emotions are an important means by which the Spirit brings him to his sense of lostness, they are not to serve as the assurance of his security in Christ after conversion. "Our feelings," Darby stresses, "are not the measure of what He is towards us."⁶⁴ Insisting to his readers that "it is not what you think of Christ's work, but what God thinks of it, that saves,"⁶⁵ Darby illustrates the relationship of one's feelings to the certainty of salvation by saying,

Christ has done all, and has left us nothing but thanksgiving and praise. If some one has paid my debts, my sorrow at the folly that contracted them, or my joy at their being discharged, adds nothing whatever to the payment of the debt, though both be natural and just. It is sometimes hard to esteem all our feelings as nothing, but it is only a remains of self. . . . We [must] feel on one hand the perfect security of our justification, and [on the other hand] the nothingness of all our feelings.⁶⁶

The Spirit is the One who works on the emotional life of the believer, assuring him of his salvation in Christ and

⁶³Ibid., p. 295. Darby does, however, encourage those in pastoral work to "not make a fuss about the first feelings, the flowers which precede the fruit, but to labour therein to feed the soul" (Ibid.).

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 59. For our discussion of Darby's doctrine of the Spirit and assurance, see pp. 232-235, *infra*. For a brief comparison of Darby's view of assurance with that held by John Wesley, see our first appendix, p. 306, note #69.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 62. ⁶⁶Ibid.

training him in the proper affections which he should have.⁶⁷

He works closely with the believer and is the One who

sends forth our affections towards Jesus, and leads us to desire His presence . . . The indwelling of the Spirit,⁶⁸ who is love, draws out our affections towards Jesus.

A key passage for Darby on this work of the Spirit in the emotional life of the believer is that of John 7:38 where Jesus says, "He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Darby comments,

Now this is to me a blessed expression: the use of it for the thoughts, feelings, condition, of the inner man, is familiar in Scripture . . . Herein the essential difference of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost as now, and when operating on prophets before. The possession of the Holy Ghost rested now on union . . . And as this union was connected with a divine nature communicated, the mind, thoughts, feelings, joys, sorrows, interests, consolations, fears, hopes, and streams of love which that nature entered into, were now the portion of the saint, and that, withal,⁶⁹ according to the power of the energy of the Spirit.

As we have already noticed in our discussion of Darby's doctrine of the Spirit and worship,⁷⁰ the Spirit is not only the believer's Helper in the proper worship of God now, but will also be his "power of enjoyment in heaven."⁷¹ The

⁶⁷It is interesting to note that Darby found the study of the Song of Solomon especially helpful in the "exercise and forming of the affections toward Christ" (Ibid., p. 179).

⁶⁸Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 25.

⁶⁹Ibid., vol. III, p. 90. ⁷⁰See pp. 129-138 supra.

⁷¹Letters, vol. II, p. 31.

Spirit has been given, as Darby states,

That I may go and understand and enjoy all
that Christ is, all that Christ has done, and
all that He has made my portion in consequence.⁷²

The Spirit bears witness to our spirits that we are the
children of God and can enjoy therefore the affections which
belong to a child.⁷³

The presence of the Spirit in the believer affects
every area of the Christian's life.

The Holy Ghost dwells in us, and there is the power to
overcome temptation, wisdom from God, power to realise
the presence of Christ, to live looking on the things
that are not seen, joyful liberty in our path with God.⁷⁴

Because the Holy Spirit's "action in spiritual power is es-
sential to our power in life,"⁷⁵ Darby places such an
emphasis upon the Spirit's presence in the Christian that he
seems at times to negate the individual believer's person-
ality:

⁷²Collected Writings, vol. XXI, p. 108.

⁷³Ibid., p. 112. An assurance of one's position in
Christ is essential, for

"the consciousness of that place into which [the soul]
is, in all its relationships . . . affects it in all
its thoughts and affections, according to the power of
the Holy Ghost which is in and with it" (Letters,
vol. II, p. 406).

"You cannot have the holy affections and true duties of
a child of God without being a child of God, and know-
ing that you are one. The Spirit of God 'beareth wit-
ness with our spirit that we are the children of God,'
and so I enjoy the affections which belong to a child"
(Collected Writings, vol. XXI, p. 112).

⁷⁴Ibid. ⁷⁵Letters, vol. II, p. 31.

Here it is no longer a question of us, of our affections, of our thoughts; but the soul is filled with the fulness of God, which leaves no room for anything else.⁷⁶

Angelology

Our purpose is not to set forth completely either Darby's doctrine of angels or his understanding of Satan (which area is frequently treated under this division of Angelology).⁷⁷ We again want to limit our discussion to the relationship of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit to both these areas of biblical teaching.

As a separate category of created beings other than humanity, unfallen angels, as distinct from fallen angels (demons) and Satan, are "glorious creatures."⁷⁸ "There is no restorability to angels,"⁷⁹ for, as we read in Hebrews 2:16, Christ did not "take hold of angels"⁸⁰ to deliver them.

⁷⁶Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 315.

⁷⁷See Goddard, "Contribution," pp. 47-50, for a summary of Darby's doctrine of angels and Satan.

⁷⁸Collected Writings, vol. XXVIII, p. 47.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, vol. XIX, p. 71.

⁸⁰The New Testament -A New Translation, 3d ed. revised, trans. John Nelson Darby (Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, -n. d.), footnote on Hebrews 2:16. Darby apparently makes no other comment on this verse except for his brief paraphrase of it in his Synopsis: "For verily the Lord did not undertake the cause of angels, but that of the seed of Abraham" (vol. V, p. 294). In another place Darby says, "Jesus is the great thought of God -God's thoughts are expressed to us in Him. It is not an unfallen angel but a

As the "servants of God"⁸¹ unfallen angels "minister, according to the will of God, to all His children who walk in the way of His will."⁸² Darby makes no explicit statements on the Holy Spirit's relationship to unfallen angels.

As the "prince of this world,"⁸³ "Satan has a whole multitude of demons under his authority [and is] the prince of demons."⁸⁴ As the "spring and power of evil,"⁸⁵ he opposes the plans and purposes of the Creator. Though he is under the direct control of God,

sinner quickened by the Spirit of God who can thus get into the deep thoughts of God" (Pilgrim Portions, H. G. ed., [selections from the writings of Darby], [Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n. d.], p. 156).

⁸¹Collected Writings, vol. XXV, p. 340.

⁸²Ibid. Speaking of the angels who miraculously helped Peter escape from prison in Acts 12, Darby says: "Can we expect similar intervention now? I do not believe that miracles are performed to-day; angels no longer appear; it was not a gift that could continue" (Ibid., p. 365).

⁸³Darby says: "This the present dispensation . . . is a dispensation in which Satan is the prince and god of this world -in which he sows tares among the wheat, and is in high places" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 90). Satan was marked out as the prince of this world at the cross when he led the world, Jew and Gentile, against Christ. The cross, rather than putting an end to the reign of Satan, was the grand demonstration that Satan would remain prince of this world until the Second Coming of the Messiah (Ibid., vol. XI, p. 226).

⁸⁴Though he is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, Satan does have power over the demonic world (Letters, vol. II, p. 157).

⁸⁵Darby states: "The possession of the Holy Ghost and the true light has shewn us the spring and power of evil -the

Satan has possession practically of the world, but God retains His rights . . . Satan does all he can to make the world believe that they are free and happy, that they are, or may be, righteous and good enough. But God has His rights.⁸⁶

Darby views the activity of Satan as against the church and against the individual believer. Concerning Satan's work against the church Darby says,

Satan originates nothing. This is God's prerogative. The work of Satan is to mar and break down what God has wrought . . . God created Adam. Satan spoiled the work through man's folly . . . He can originate nothing, but he can build up with vast sagacity an immense system, out⁸⁷ of the corruption, suited to the evil which is in us.

The "immense system" to which Darby is referring is precisely that of the Established Church which, in Darby's understanding, denies the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit through non-ordained believers who exercise their Spirit-given gifts. This work of Satan within the structure of the church is one which Darby often discusses:

Satan can exercise a fearful power, even over the children of God, if they remain in a system where [the power of Satan] acts, [especially when] they themselves conscientiously hold this system to be the Church of God, thinking that to remain in it is to obey the authority that God has established in the Church,⁸⁸ and to keep the unity which ought to be found there.

devil and Satan; and we see the Father opposed to the world, the Son to Satan, and the Spirit to the flesh" (Collected Writings, vol. XI, p. 378).

⁸⁶ Ibid., vol. XIX, p. 159.

⁸⁷ Ibid., vol. XX, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁸ Ibid., vol. IV, pp. 200-201. Darby's summary of Satan's work concerning the church is worthy of quotation:

God uses Satan in the life of the believer,⁸⁹ but the believer is not under Satan's control.⁹⁰ Satan's attack is through the avenue of the believer's "flesh."⁹¹ Denying one's old nature ("the flesh") and living in dependence upon the Spirit are therefore important keys to combating Satan's

"There are two distinct characters of work which Satan does . . . First, where power is not the true power of the Spirit, so as to detect and judge Satan's imagination, there he can easily set up the imitation of power, and that even where there is a measure of true faith and owning of God, but subjection, intelligent subjection by the Spirit to the word as of the Spirit, is not found" (Ibid., vol. XX, pp. 7-8).

The other form of Satan's working is the setting aside of the "sovereign operation of the Spirit of God . . . and that which acts outside the actually formed institution is condemned as denying the authority of God's institution and schismatical sin. Thus the actual possessors of the power of the institution, in its then state, really take the place of God . . . Divine condemnation attaches to all who act independently of them. Direct dependence upon God is unallowable . . . It is man eclipsing God, getting between Him and the soul . . . The first of these works of Satan then is the pretence to the extraordinary operation of the Spirit . . . The other is the orderly establishment of men in the place of that power" (Ibid., pp. 8-9).

Darby places the Montanists, Irvingites, and the early Friends within the first group; the Established Church is that which is characterized by the second description of Satan's activity in the church.

⁸⁹ Using the Old Testament example of Job, Darby says "Satan had been used as an instrument of God to bring Job into the condition of being made nothing of in his own eyes" (Ibid., vol. XVI, p. 371), Employing the New Testament example of Paul's "thorn in the flesh," Darby says that "God uses Satan as an instrument to work out blessing even for the church" (Ibid., vol. V, p. 292).

⁹⁰ Letters, vol. III, p. 425. ⁹¹ Ibid., vol. II, p. 317.

personal attacks. The basis of living in the Spirit is placing oneself under the authority of God's word.⁹²

Christ is the believer's example in combating Satan. Referring to Jesus' being led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Matthew 3), Darby says, "Here, then, we have the devil meeting man in the power of the Spirit of God."⁹³ That which Christ accomplished on the cross assures for the believer not only eternal salvation, but also the possibility of victory over the attacks of the devil.

The cross was the full enmity of man against God, under Satan's power; but he has been met; his power has been judged -it is all destroyed. If we go and listen to him in the flesh, he can ensnare us; but he has no power; if we only resist the devil, he will flee from

⁹² Referring to Satan's temptation of Eve by means of his question "hath God said?", Darby states:

"We cannot judge God's ways without judging God . . . We ought to keep God ever in His place of God in our souls, lest Satan should make gods of us, and set us judging God Himself. If God be displaced, we get into the place of those who are irresponsible, and as creatures become the prey of any more cunning than ourselves . . . It is the constant aim of Satan to slip in between God and our souls. In order to meet Satan, we must get into the place of entire responsibility to God" (Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 306).

We do this by "living in the Spirit" and placing ourselves under God's truth:

"According as our minds are not spiritual, and in any sort affect anything not the object of the Spirit, to which they are not led by Him, therein the simplicity of truth fails to keep them, and the power of the enemy can avail itself of its subtlety against them" (Ibid., p. 307).

⁹³ Ibid., vol. XXV, p. 52. For other references to this theme, see Ibid., vol. XXVII, p. 221 and Miscellaneous Writings vol. IV, p. 221.

us . . . The cross was the very thing that God allowed, so that in it his power might be destroyed.⁹⁴

Other areas of Darby's doctrine of Satan are worthy of notice,⁹⁵ but his teaching on the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the chief enemy of the Christian extends little beyond what we have surveyed above.⁹⁶

Christology

Darby exerted much of his literary effort presenting the Person and Work of Christ to both believing and unbelieving audiences. Essays on Christ's full deity⁹⁷ and

⁹⁴Ibid., vol. XXVII, p. 274.

⁹⁵Darby's discussion of Satan and Eschatology is quite detailed (see, for example, his "Enquiry as to the Antichrist of Prophecy", vol. V, pp. 215-224). He emphasizes that "Satan has no power in hell" (Ibid., vol. XVII, p. 352) and that "when Satan shall be in the lake burning with fire, he will not reign there; he will be there as the most miserable being" (Ibid., vol. V, p. 94).

⁹⁶Darby's lack of comment on I John 4:4 ("Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world"), a text made much of by other commentators contrasting Satan and the Holy Spirit, is interesting. Darby briefly comments:

"we get here the power of walk . . . The only ground of victory is the power of the Spirit of God in the affections and consciences of the saints . . . If I am not kept by the Spirit of God, I shall not be able to resist the daily solicitations of sin" (Nine Lectures on the First Epistle of John, 1948 ed., [Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1978 reprint], pp. 59-60).

⁹⁷e.g. "The Deity of Christ and What Constitutes Christianity; Being an Answer to the Inquiries of a Unitarian Student of Divinity," Collected Writings, vol. XXXIII, pp. 75-82.

humanity⁹⁸ are supplemented by articles written to help believers understand the relationship of Christ and the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹ This second area of his study is that which now engages our attention.

We will examine briefly three major areas of the relationship of the Holy Spirit and Christ: the Incarnate Christ and the Spirit (including Darby's understanding of Christ's earthly life of dependence on the Spirit, the Virgin Birth, and the "sin against the Holy Spirit,"); the Two Comforters; and, Christ as the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit. Finally, we will summarize the focus of the ministry of the Spirit as it relates to Christ.

The Incarnate Christ and the Spirit

Philippians 2, one of the major passages concerning the Incarnation, is discussed by Darby. Rejecting the German rationalists' view of the kenosis,¹⁰⁰ Darby asserts the divinity of Christ and states that

⁹⁸ e.g. "On the Humanity of Christ," Ibid., vol. X, pp. 181-184 and "Remarks on 'A Letter on Subjects Connected with the Lord's Humanity,'" Ibid., vol. XV, pp. 134-161.

⁹⁹ e.g. "Christ in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit Sent Down," Ibid., vol. XXXI, pp. 245-253; "Christ and the Spirit," Ibid., vol. XXI, pp. 204-214; "Christ on High, and the Holy Ghost Here Below," Ibid., pp. 155-160; "Christ the Hope, and the Holy Ghost, with Our Responsibility," Ibid., pp 151-154.

¹⁰⁰ Darby refers in Collected Writings, vol. XXIX, p. 190, to the "German speculations and heresy."

He gave up, not Godhead -that could not be -but the status and position of it, and came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.¹⁰¹

In this same essay ("The Humiliation of Christ") Darby says in Christ's Incarnation that He gave up His own will:

He was in the status, condition of Godhead, of which, not to speak of outward glory, will and acting from His own will . . . was proper and essential. But the full purpose of His will in free devotedness, and always so, was to give up His own will,¹⁰² and this according to eternal counsels; Psalm 40.

Christ's Life of Dependence on the Spirit

In Christ's earthly ministry the Second Person of the Trinity "acted through life by the Holy Ghost"¹⁰³ and His dependence upon the Spirit is seen especially in the working of His miracles.¹⁰⁴ Darby again hastens to protect the orthodox doctrine of the Son's full deity by stating,

Though He did His works by the Spirit,
and the Father that dwelt in Him did¹⁰⁵
the works, all fulness dwelt in Him.

¹⁰¹Ibid., vol. XXXII, p. 420.

¹⁰²Ibid. Italics mine.

¹⁰³Miscellaneous Writings, vol. IV, p. 68. In His incarnate state, "He can do nothing of Himself -is obedient, but He is the power of God, and quickens . . . whom He will" (Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, p. 411).

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 266. With equal firmness Darby wishes to protect the genuine (and everlasting) humanity of Christ by stating "He always was and is Son with the Father -was and is always God; and now is and ever will be Man, who emptied Himself" (Ibid. Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, p. 421).

Because of the Savior's humiliation and His dependence upon the Spirit in His incarnate state, Christ serves as the believer's perfect example in obedience. Speaking of Christ's temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 3), Darby says that Christ did not exercise His own will

not even to eat when He was hungry -He lives by every word out of the mouth of God. He humbles Himself and is obedient even unto death, and that of the Cross.¹⁰⁶

The whole of the book of Philippians, in fact, Darby says, gives us, in a remarkable manner, the experience of a Christian life in the power of the Holy Ghost . . . the life above seen down here in a man through the power of the Spirit of God.¹⁰⁷

As the source of Christ's strength in His earthly life, the Spirit is present also in each believer to provide the same encouragement in trials:

God was in Christ amid all kinds of misery and suffering, weariness and trial. Christ passed through them according to the power of God, and with sentiments of which the Spirit of God was always the source, although they were human in their sympathies.¹⁰⁸

As the "effulgence of [God's] glory and [the] expression of his substance,"¹⁰⁹ the Second Person of the Trinity made visible to creation the invisible God. The Third Person provided the power for that demonstration:

¹⁰⁶ Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, p. 420.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., vol. XXVII, p. 221.

¹⁰⁸ Letters, vol. I, p. 280.

¹⁰⁹ Hebrews 1:3 (The New Testament -A New Translation, trans. John Nelson Darby).

In the Father God remains in essential Godhead; in the Son, one with Him in the exercise of it; coming down to serve, the Object in which we know God and see the Father. God is objectively before us in the Spirit power, operative power in us to be able to apprehend, and have the love shed abroad in our hearts so that we dwell in God and God in us.¹¹⁰

The Virgin Birth

The means by which the Second Person of the Trinity entered into His own creation, emptying Himself of the status and position of His full deity, was the Virgin Birth. Examining Darby's understanding of this doctrine further shows the connection between his Pneumatology and his Christology.

Wary of attempts at theological precision concerning the Person of Christ,¹¹¹ Darby comments briefly on his understanding of the meaning and implications of the Virgin Birth:

Holy in His birth, conceived by the intervention of the power of God acting upon Mary (a power which was the divine source of His existence on the earth, as man), that which thus received its being from Mary, the fruit of her womb, should even in this sense have the title of Son of God.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Collected Writings, vol. XXXII, pp. 424-425.

¹¹¹ Speaking of the hypostatic union, Darby says, "So deep is my conviction of man's incapacity in this matter . . . It is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus" (Letters, vol. I, p. 282).

¹¹² Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. III, p. 286.

Although He came into the world to save sinners, Christ was not united with the sinful nature of humanity, but was protected by the Virgin Birth from such a union.

He was, by divine power and the operation of the Holy Ghost on that blessed and obedient handmaid of the Lord, born a holy thing, as man . . . We have here no union with sinful humanity; but, what was wholly unique, a sinless Man, born holy in a miraculous way.¹¹³

The Virgin Birth proved that Jesus was of divine origin. Commenting on Matthew 1, Darby says of Mary that "the child she carried in her womb was of divine origin, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost."¹¹⁴ His miraculous entrance into the world did not negate His genuine (though sinless) humanity.

The difference then of His humanity is not that it was not really and fully that of Mary (surely it was), but in that it was that by an act of divine power, so as to be such without sin; and further, in that instead of being separated from God in His soul, as every sinful man is, God was in Him, and He was of God.¹¹⁵

Christ's humanity was the medium of expression of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of the Savior's earthly life, Darby states that Christ was "such that the Holy Spirit was expressed in humanity in the midst of those circumstances."¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Collected Writings, vol. XXIX, p. 190.

¹¹⁴ Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. III, p. 31. "Jesus was born by divine power . . . He is Christ born of man . . . [He] underwent consequently the effect of all that surrounded Him, only according to the Spirit, and without sin" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 280-281).

¹¹⁵ Letters, vol. I, p. 281. ¹¹⁶ Ibid.

The close relationship of the Son to the Spirit is shown not only in the Virgin Birth, but also at His baptism¹¹⁷ (which marked the beginning of His public ministry), and throughout His life of service to lost humanity.¹¹⁸ One issue in Pneumatology which relates to the earthly ministry of Christ is known as the "sin against the Holy Spirit."

The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

Although Darby goes to great lengths to prove that the sin against the Holy Ghost in this dispensation is primarily the "notion of a clergyman" (i.e., the hindering of non-ordained believers from preaching, a professional clergy having a monopoly on ministry, the denying of the presence and operations of the Spirit, etc.), Darby's treatment of a major passage, Mark 3:22-29, merits our attention.

¹¹⁷"It is a wonderful passage [Matthew 3] bringing out the whole Trinity. The Son is there. The Holy Ghost descends upon Him in the form of a dove. The Father's voice is heard; and all brought out in connection with the Son become a Man, taking man's place according to the thoughts of God's delight" (Miscellaneous Writings, vol. IV, p. 221).

¹¹⁸"In all the works of God we find this co-operation of the Persons. The Son wrought; yet He could say, 'The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works:' and, 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you'" (Letters, vol. II, p. 85).

As the religious leaders of Israel declared that Jesus was empowered by Beelzebul, the "ruler of the demons" (Mark 3:22), rather than by the Holy Spirit, they were committing a sin against the Spirit not only as individuals, but also as official representatives of the nation of Israel.

Instead of owning there the finger of God [the Holy Spirit -see Luke 11:20 and Matthew 12:28], they ascribed [the power of Christ] to the prince of the demons -called the Holy Ghost a demon. It was the end of all hope for Israel, as regards his responsibility. Grace could forgive the nation, and will do it when the Lord shall return in glory; but now, as a responsible people, their story is ended.¹¹⁹

The sin was so serious that Jesus declared that it could not be forgiven. Darby comments:

To acknowledge the power, and attribute it to the enemy, rather than own Him who wielded it, was taking the place not of ignorant unbelief but of adversaries, thus blaspheming against the Holy Ghost . . . a sin that could never be pardoned . . . By blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, they brought themselves under hopeless condemnation.¹²⁰

Darby does not deal with the question of whether the sin against the Holy Spirit (of which Mark 3 speaks) can be committed by individuals today.¹²¹ Referring to his tract "Notion of a Clergyman -Dispensationally the Sin Against the Holy Ghost," he says,

¹¹⁹ Collected Writings, vol. XXIV, p. 249.

¹²⁰ Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. IV, pp. 220-221. In another place Darby says, "Nothing is excluded from forgiveness now except blaspheming the Holy Ghost in apostasy from Christ, that is, denying Him in nature" (Ibid., vol. XIX, p. 206).

¹²¹ The twentieth-century dispensationalist John F. Walvoord says little about the sin against the Holy Spirit

There will be found immaturity in it in expression. The sin against the Holy Ghost, though universally used, is not a scriptural expression. Every sin a Christian commits is a sin against the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost dwells in him, and he grieves the Holy One¹²² by whom he is sealed to the day of redemption.

Darby is, however, very clear in that same tract that "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost", i.e. the substituting of finite man for the infinite Spirit in ministry, is precisely the sin which characterizes this dispensation.¹²³

The Two Comforters

Darby often speaks of the promised coming of the Spirit as the "other Comforter" (John 14:16) who would take Christ's place in the world, ministering in a variety of ways to those who would follow Him. Although the word

in his book The Holy Spirit (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1954). Another twentieth-century dispensationalist, Charles Caldwell Ryrie, devotes a brief chapter to the question in his study The Holy Spirit (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 52-54. Ryrie states that the sin has three characteristics: (1) It was directed against the Holy Spirit; (2) It was determined by a special situation; and (3) It was eternally damning to the soul. Ryrie emphasizes that "The committing of this specific sin required the presence of Christ on the earth; thus to reduplicate it exactly today would be impossible" (p. 54). A form of this sin, however, may be committed today, says Ryrie: "Attributing the works of the Spirit of God to Satan was the unpardonable sin in Jesus' day, and rejecting the evidences of His power in any day is also an unpardonable sin" (Ibid.). "As long as a man has breath," Ryrie concludes, "he can be forgiven for any sin" (Ibid.).

¹²²Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 37.

¹²³See pages 102-128 supra.

παράκλητος has several meanings, Darby translates it as "Comforter", as he says, "for want of a better [term]."¹²⁴

Explaining his understanding of this term, Darby states,

It is one who carries on the cause of any one and helps him. This Christ did on earth; this (I John 2 [where Christ is called our "Advocate"]) He does now in heaven, and the Holy Ghost on earth: "[He] manages our cause, our affairs, for us." If "solicitor"¹²⁵ were not too common, it just answers the sense.

Darby further explains:

He [the Spirit] was One who, by being down here, was to take the place of Jesus when He went away; and was to take up and carry on the cause of the disciples as Christ had done, only more powerfully in a certain way because of Christ's work and exaltation.¹²⁶

Because Christ used the same term for the Spirit as that employed by John of Christ Himself in I John 2:1 ("we have an advocate with the Father"), Darby emphasizes that "this new Paraclete was to be thus their Counsellor, Guide, Orderer (as Jesus had been), manage their cause and affairs as dwelling with them."¹²⁷

Darby often points out that Christ spoke of the "advantage" of His going away so that He would be able to send the Spirit.

It is on the fact of this presence that the Lord grounds the advantage of His going away. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you."¹²⁸

¹²⁴ John 14:16 (The New Testament - A New Translation, trans. John Nelson Darby).

¹²⁵ Ibid. ¹²⁶ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 348.

¹²⁷ Ibid. ¹²⁸ Ibid.

Because Christ is now in glory,

The Holy Ghost is sent down into the world to maintain the witness and manifestation of His glory . . . and to be the earnest and testimony of His title to the earth. The Church on earth is the place and depositary of this.¹²⁹

Christ continues to work in the world, but His work is now done through the Holy Ghost. Whenever there is growth in the body, the church, Darby emphasizes,

It is that which Christ does after the accomplishment of His work, whilst He is seated on the right hand of God. It is through the Holy Ghost.¹³⁰

In certain ways the work of the Holy Spirit is superior to that which Christ accomplished during His earthly ministry. Darby makes much of Christ's statement to His disciples in John 14:17 that this other Comforter would not only dwell with them, but "'He shall be in you.'¹³¹ Furthermore, the Spirit would remain with them forever.

The Holy Ghost was . . . to guide, comfort, sustain, direct the disciples as Jesus had done . . . And further, He was not to leave them as Christ had; He was to abide with them for ever.¹³²

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 106-107.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 377.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 349. Referring to Christ's promise to the disciples that "greater works than these you shall do" (John 5:20), Darby says, "In the Epistles (so the Acts) . . . power [is] shown more than in Christ on earth, as He promised" (Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. II, p. 1).

¹³²Ibid., p. 348. In another place Darby says, "Christ could not remain with them, this other Comforter could; Christ was with them, not in them; that other Comforter would be in them" (Letters, vol. II, p. 407).

The Holy Spirit is to receive proper emphasis in this dispensation in lieu of the Savior's "absence." All that Christ is seeking to do in the Church and in the world rests on the activity of the Third Person of the Trinity. As Darby states: "All the blessing, communion, and testimony . . . is founded on the presence, personal presence, of this other Comforter."¹³³

Christ the Baptizer
with the Holy Spirit

The major passages which deal with the promise that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit are those connected with John the Baptist's testimony to Christ as the "Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world" (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; and Luke 3:16) and to Christ's command to the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:5).¹³⁴ The two Gospels of Matthew and Luke both state that Christ would baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire"; Mark's account and the statement in the book of Acts refer only to the promise of being baptized "with the Holy Ghost."

Although Darby understands these promises to be the

¹³³Collected Writings, vol. III, 348.

¹³⁴Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; and Acts 1:5 (The New Testament -A New Translation, trans. John Nelson Darby). Darby explains in a footnote to his translation of Matthew 3:11 his understanding of the preposition with: "ἐν, 'in the power of,' be it external or simply the nature and character of, but always including the latter."

setting forth of a general division of the life of Christ,¹³⁵ he closely connects this baptizing with the Holy Spirit to Christ's accomplishment of redemption:

Now [Christ] was going to baptize with the Holy Ghost, founded upon His own blood-shedding, because we could not receive the Holy Ghost until redemption was finished.¹³⁶

As the "forerunner" to the Messiah, John the Baptist compared his own ministry to that of the Savior in John 3:30 by stating "He must increase but I must decrease." Darby comments:

He [Christ] would not merely preach repentance accepted by the baptism of water; He would bestow the Holy Ghost, power, on those who received His testimony.¹³⁷

Darby explains the baptising ministry of Christ:

[Christ] baptizes with fire -this is the judgment proclaimed in verse 12 [of Matthew 3], which consumes all that is evil. But He baptizes also with the Holy Ghost -that Spirit which, given to, and acting in divine energy in man, quickened, redeemed, cleansed in the blood of Christ, brings him out from the influence of all that acts on the flesh, and sets him in connection and in communion with all that is revealed of God, with the glory into which He brings His creatures in the life which He imparts, destroying morally in us the power of all that is contrary to the enjoyment of these privileges.¹³⁸

¹³⁵"The first part [of Christ's life] was the taking 'away the sin of the world' as the 'Lamb of God;' the second, baptizing with the Holy Ghost" (Miscellaneous, vol. IV, p. 82).

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 69.

¹³⁷Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. III, p. 213.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 40.

The above quotation serves as a summary of what Darby holds as most vital for the life of the contemporary church. That this baptism of the Holy Spirit Darby believes took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) is shown by the following statement:

[Christ] baptised them with the Holy Ghost, as the witness of His glory in heavenly places, and the power which identified His disciples with Himself in this glory. It is very certain, from the words of Jesus Himself (Acts 1), that the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that nothing which the apostles had previously received was the fulfillment of this promise; for He says to them: "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."¹³⁹

The Focus of the Spirit's Ministry

In a number of ways Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is connected to his understanding of the Person and Work of Christ. Darby strives for a balance between these areas of theology, but emphasizes that the Spirit's primary function is not to direct attention to Himself, but rather to the Savior: "The Holy Ghost ever leads the eye to, and would keep it fixed on, Jesus . . . To reveal and glorify Him is the habitual aim of the Spirit."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 214.

¹⁴⁰ Pilgrim Portions, p. 74.

The impact of the Spirit's indwelling ministry in the believer is that of a certain confirmation that the work of redemption is complete:

His presence in the believer is a glorious testimony to the infinite preciousness of Christ's work, and His presence at the right hand of God the Father.¹⁴¹

The Third Member of the Trinity is the One who

takes up His abode in the believer, [and is] a spirit of peace and joy, a spirit of witness of all that Christ is and has done, and, we must add, of the Father's perfect acceptance of both.¹⁴²

Soteriology

We do not intend in this section to set forth a complete statement of Darby's doctrine of salvation.¹⁴³ Although we will notice briefly his doctrine of the atonement and the major aspects of his Soteriology, our task will be to point out his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in this area of theology.

Darby's Doctrine of the Atonement

Generally stated, Darby held to what some would call a "narrow view" of the atonement, i.e. that Christ's work of salvation did not extend throughout His earthly life, but is

¹⁴¹Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 350.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 81. See also our discussion of what Darby considers a confusing of the work of the Holy Spirit with that of the Savior in the area of assurance of salvation, pp. 232-235, *infra*.

¹⁴³See Goddard, "Contribution," pp. 55-135.

to be limited to what occurred on the cross.¹⁴⁴ He believed in the objective nature of the atonement, i.e. that it was "a work done outside us of eternal efficacy"¹⁴⁵ and that the blood of Christ is completely efficacious in the eyes of God.¹⁴⁶

More specifically, Darby's doctrine of the atonement can be characterized by the terms satisfaction, propitiation, and reconciliation.

The work of Christ on the cross is that which has satisfied the righteous demands of God's nature. Speaking autobiographically, Darby says,

God, His holiness, His majesty, His righteousness, His love, has found His rest in the work and Person of Christ: I have found mine there.¹⁴⁷

The work of atonement was necessary, Darby states, not only for the redemption of sinners, but also so that God's love could be freely expressed:

¹⁴⁴"We have to maintain redemption against the Puseyite heresy of making incarnation the saving work" (Letters, vol. II, p. 5). In another place he says, "The obedience of Christ during His life tended to the perfection of the sacrifice; it was not expiatory, but perfectly acceptable" (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 47). "Atonement," Darby states, "is wrought in the forsaking of God when Christ was made sin for us" (*Ibid.*, p. 435). It is precisely within the context of this issue that Darby so adamantly proposed his understanding of the "non-atoning sufferings" of Christ which He underwent in His earthly life. See Collected Writings, vol. VII, pp. 139-237 for Darby's view. For a discussion of the debate between Darby and others on this issue, see Neatby, A History, pp. 239-264.

¹⁴⁵Letters, vol. III, p. 374.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 62. ¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 151.

It was indeed necessary that the death of Christ should intervene, in order that the love of God could satisfy itself in flowing out in unhindered blessing . . . Such was the work upon the Cross; it was sufficient to let flow out all this love [from God].¹⁴⁸

Darby firmly believed that Christ's atoning work was a propitiating of God's righteous wrath against sinners. He speaks of Christ's "blood-shedding, [as] the only possible propitiation."¹⁴⁹ It is in the context of this aspect of Christ's work that Darby insists it incorrect to view Christ's work on the cross as something which changed God's mind, i.e. that God was the object of reconciliation. Speaking of Christ as the one who propitiated the Holy God, Darby emphasizes that "God had not to be reconciled, but His righteous holy nature required the sin to be put away."¹⁵⁰ Although "reconciling does suppose hostility,"¹⁵¹ God "did not need to have His mind changed."¹⁵²

Darby dislikes the expression "Christ has obtained justification from God," because "it presents God as un-

¹⁴⁸ Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. II, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Letters, vol. III, p. 300.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 448-449. "We never have God for the object of ἰλασμός in the New Testament" (Ibid., p. 461).

¹⁵¹ Ibid., vol. I, p. 473.

¹⁵² Ibid., vol. III, pp. 460-461. Real wrath, however, was in God: "He is angry, and His anger is turned away: He is righteous and just to forgive. Hence 'propitiate' is a true word, and God forbid it should be changed by any Socinian enfeebling of its force" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 473).

willing and even opposed to the thing, while it is the will and the heart of God which has provided the sacrifice."¹⁵³

A number of other expressions are used by Darby to describe the atonement: Christ was "made sin for us";¹⁵⁴ He "took our place in responsibility";¹⁵⁵ He "confessed our sins as His own";¹⁵⁶ He "has made a full expiation."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Ibid., vol. I, p. 47. The Reformers, Darby insists, were wrong in setting forth the view that Christ died to reconcile His Father to us. This is a confounding of God's relationship to us with what God is in His nature. To suggest that "God was against us and Christ [was] for us" is mischievous . . . The Reformers were [not] wholly clear of this . . . The sense of unchangeable holiness cannot be too strong, so that propitiation is needed; but what weakens the sense of love in God Himself, as the source and spring of all, destroys the nature of Christianity" (Ibid., p. 473). A propitiation (ἱλασμός) was needed "not surely to change His mind or make Him love (a horrid thought), but needed for His righteous and holy nature" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 449).

¹⁵⁴"Atonement is wrought in the forsaking of God when Christ was made sin for us" (Ibid., p. 435).

¹⁵⁵"Knowing beforehand all that we are and all our sin, [God] has given Christ for us, who has charged Himself with all, and us such as we are, and has accomplished without us all that was needed by the justice and love of God . . . The Lord knew all that you were, and because you were all this, took your place in responsibility and suffered for you" (Ibid., p. 61). See also his statement that Christ "has met our responsibility both as to guilt and power" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 2).

¹⁵⁶In the Psalms, "we distinctly hear Christ Himself pouring out the sorrows of His own soul to God, as thus bearing our sin . . . confessing them as His own" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 124).

¹⁵⁷"Christ has made a full expiation. Sin does not exist as between God and us. When He looks on the blood of Christ He cannot see sin in the believer, because when Christ shed that blood He put it away" (Ibid., p. 356).

Darby holds to a form of limited atonement in that he believes that Christ died for all but bore the sins of only the elect.¹⁵⁸

Darby is especially adamant that the work of atonement is completed.

[Christ] has accomplished without us all that was needed by the justice and love of God. It is absolutely accomplished; you can add nothing¹⁵⁹ by joy or sorrow to the perfect work of Christ.

The ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father is the proof that the work of atonement is completed.

If Christ had not completely discharged and effaced [sin], He could not be in heaven, for He could not sit at the right hand of God charged with our sins, though He was charged with them on the cross.¹⁶⁰

Darby's Doctrine of Salvation

Our task at this point is to understand how the objective work of Christ on the cross is subjectively appropriated by the sinner. This study will deal briefly with the issues of election, conviction of sin, faith, regeneration, quickening, repentance, salvation (especially the terms "conversion" and the "new birth"), and assurance.

¹⁵⁸"Christ died for all, but I cannot say that He bore, as a substitute, the sins of all . . . Christ has confessed the sins of those thus brought as if they were His own [sins]" (Ibid., p. 99). "Scripture is accurate here -a propitiation set out before all, and sure remission of all, if we come; but bearing sins never extended to those who are lost" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 372). See also Ibid., p. 449.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., vol. I, p. 61. ¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 62.

Darby's view of election is such that he attempts to avoid both the "Scylla of a limited gospel and the Charybdis of universalism."¹⁶¹ His middle-of-the-road position is that Christ died for all (propitiation) but bore only the sins of the elect (substitution). Although God stands outside time, and His decree of election was before the creation of the world, Darby emphasizes the need for the sinner to respond by faith to the offer of salvation. The scripture "puts a man as a creature, who belongs to time, into time, and deals morally with him."¹⁶² Darby does not elaborate further on his understanding of the decree of election and makes no explicit reference to the Holy Spirit in this area of Soteriology.

Conviction of sin is that special ministry of the Spirit by which He brings the sinner to sense his lostness before the Holy God and to seek a means by which God can righteously forgive him his sins.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹Goddard, "Contribution," p. 61. See his entire discussion of Darby's doctrine of election, pp. 85-91.

¹⁶²Letters, vol. III, p. 328. Speaking of Ephesians 4:18 ("Having the understanding darkened . . . because of the blindness of their heart"), Darby says "the great doctrinal mischief of the alleged rendering, 'because of,' [by some Calvinists] is, that it excludes faith from justifying, which is Calvinism, or ultra-Calvinism, but wholly unscriptural" (Ibid., p. 329, note). "We are not justified without believing, but by faith, through faith in His blood -not without it or before it -nor hence without being at the same time born of God" (Ibid., p. 327).

¹⁶³See pp. 95-97 supra.

Faith is defined by Darby in the following way:

It is the soul's reception, by divine power, of the testimony of God; who is thus known by it, as He has revealed Himself, and in whose presence consequently it walks, God having graciously revealed Himself as a Saviour, so that it is in peace in the presence of the Holy One, and in communion with Him.¹⁶⁴

Perhaps to maintain the objective nature of the atonement, Darby stresses that although faith "produces immense effects, it adds nothing to the thing it believes."¹⁶⁵

The Holy Ghost is the One who gives the sinner the power to believe.¹⁶⁶ Darby also refers to the church as possessing "the pure atmosphere of divinely given faith."¹⁶⁷ "The knowledge of God in Christ," Darby says, "is a divine work and gift . . . We owe all to sovereign grace."¹⁶⁸

Darby equates the term "regeneration" with the new

¹⁶⁴ Collected Writings, vol. XV, p. 241. In another place, Darby defines faith as "the divinely given perception of what is seen through the revelation of it to the soul by testimony in the power of the Holy Ghost" (Ibid., vol. X, p. 221). In an essay dealing with sanctification, Darby defines faith as "the word of God brought home to the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Ibid., vol. XXXIII, p. 51).

¹⁶⁵ Letters, vol. I, p. 62.

¹⁶⁶ Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 31. Commenting on Ephesians 2:8 ("For ye are saved by grace, through faith; and this not of yourselves; it is God's gift"), Darby says, "The believing is God's gift, not of ourselves . . . The object of the apostle is to show that the whole thing was of grace and of God - God's workmanship - a new creation. So far, grace and faith and all go together" (Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. IV, p. 426).

¹⁶⁷ Letters, vol. I, p. 81.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 376.

birth and believes that it is expressive of the new state of things which the Christian now enters in Christ.¹⁶⁹

The quickening ministry of the Holy Spirit is one which receives emphasis from Darby. As "the essence of everlasting blessing,"¹⁷⁰ the quickening of the Holy Spirit is the means by which God deals with the sinner's lost condition. Darby states that this action of the Spirit is "the communication of divine life, [which makes one] born really of God."¹⁷¹

Darby connects this quickening ministry of the Spirit with justification and with the Spirit's indwelling of the individual believer:

Our quickening, then, by the Holy Ghost being then our quickening together with Him, implies our absolute justification thereby -that is, by what He has wrought. Hence the Holy Ghost not only quickens, but can take up His abode in and with us, because He views us according to His value of the blood of Jesus (that is, infinite or perfect cleansing) . . . The Holy Ghost, then, consequent upon faith wrought in our souls by His divine and quickening operation, dwells in us, as consequent upon, and witness of, the blood-shedding of Jesus; by virtue of whose resurrection, as having borne our sins, we are quickened.¹⁷²

Darby does not believe that quickening is to be equated with salvation. As a preliminary action of the Spirit prior to actual salvation, this inward quickening, Darby says:

¹⁶⁹ Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 238 (note).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 241.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., vol. III, p. 68. ¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 69-70.

is never treated of in Scripture as salvation; the idea of regeneration has been lost. Cornelius was quickened beyond a doubt, but was told to send for Peter to hear "words whereby he might be saved."¹⁷³

The distinction which Darby makes between Christ's quickening whom He will and "being quickened together with Christ as risen" does not relate specifically to our study.¹⁷⁴ The means by which the Spirit quickens is, however, important in our study of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Further explaining his understanding of this ministry of the Spirit, Darby says:

The operation of the Spirit is not a mere acting on the faculties . . . but it is a quickening together with Christ out of my trespasses and sins, in which I find myself indeed morally dead, but Him judicially dead for me, and therefore forgiven and justified necessarily, as so quickened.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Ibid., vol. XXVIII, p. 368.

¹⁷⁴ Darby makes this distinction by stating: "When I am quickened with Christ as risen, I have left all that is the old thing behind me and have gone into a resurrection-state. The old man is crucified with Christ" (Ibid., vol. XXVII, p. 83). Darby says a Christian may be spiritually alive, but still be in Romans 7:

"When I speak of being quickened [in the general sense], it is the divine operation of a new life in my soul. But quickened together with Christ is different . . . It is not merely the fact that I have life; I have life in a new condition where Christ is. I have got into a new place before God -Christ's place -and all my sins are left on the other side of Christ's grave. I do not own the old man, it is the horrid thing that has been deceiving me" (Ibid., vol. XXXI, p. 227).

"Whenever [Paul] speaks of quickening in [his] epistles, it is not merely the fact of having life; He looks at us as dead in our sins, not responsible people, but dead, and God . . . dealing with . . . a new creation, totally new" (Ibid., p. 230).

¹⁷⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 80.

Darby expresses his understanding of the means by which this operation of the Spirit is accomplished:

The Spirit does operate . . . in convincing, renewing, and quickening us. This being done by the word,¹⁷⁶ it is by faith wherein . . . we are quickened.

As the believer's "power of enjoyment,"¹⁷⁷ the Holy Spirit, by means of his quickening ministry, produces certain results in the individual's life.

[Such a soul] enjoys, apprehends, is cognizant of, has a taste for, divine things, as being of God; but it knows and has the revelation of these things only by a superior power, which guides into truth, shews things to come, and¹⁷⁸ takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us.

The believer receives power to deal with his supernatural adversary Satan. By the Holy Spirit's quickening, "the power of the prince of the air has been superseded by the power of the Prince of life."¹⁷⁹ The future for the believer is not to be feared; it is then that the culmination of his quickening shall occur:

The believer shall be under no power of death as to its results, being translated into another position by the life-giving power of Christ. He that is quickened is

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Referring to Christian hymns being used by God to bring the sinner to Christ, Darby says: "The smallest atom of Christ suffices for the Holy Ghost to quicken by, if it be really Him" (Letters, vol. I, p. 295).

¹⁷⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 52.

¹⁷⁸ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 68-69.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., vol. XII, pp. 101-102.

quicken unto spiritual and everlasting life -now in spirit, then in person; it is an inseparable connection.¹⁸⁰

Darby's concept of repentance is a further aspect of his understanding how the sinner appropriates for himself the objective work of Christ on the cross. "I should be very sorry to weaken the full place of repentance," Darby writes a colleague, "for you will never build up a soul, if you have not smashed him."¹⁸¹

The importance of preaching repentance is stressed by Darby. It must not be proclaimed in such a way as to give the impression that repentance appears to be "man's action in preparing himself for [grace]."¹⁸² But, repentance "has to be preached, because there is God's claim over man and man's judgment of himself."¹⁸³

Darby defines repentance both negatively and positively. Repentance is not, first of all, simply the fear of God. "Mere fear," Darby states, "does not go far enough."¹⁸⁴ Repentance is not simply saying "I have done this, and I shall be damned for it"; as "just a legal repentance," Darby

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁸¹ Notes and Jottings from Various Meetings with J. N. Darby (Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.), p. 309. Hereafter cited as Jottings.

¹⁸² Letters, vol. II, p. 206.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Jottings, p. 309.

states that this is "-what Romanists call attrition, not con-

trition. I preach Christ, but I call upon men to repent."¹⁸⁵

The view that repentance is, secondly, merely a change of mind is also rejected by Darby:

The definition that it is merely change of mind is not enough; that would reduce it entirely to faith; but it is the soul judging itself before God -the eye turned inward, not outward, by the Spirit of God.¹⁸⁶

Repentance is also, thirdly, not merely an equivalent term for "belief" or "faith." "In scripture [repentance] does not mean believing; though man must believe in order to repent."¹⁸⁷ The relationship between faith and repentance is frequently discussed by Darby. He rejects the concept that repentance is a preliminary, a prerequisite to faith,¹⁸⁸ saying that among those who hold such a view, "the true place of repentance has become obscured, and its presentation enfeebled."¹⁸⁹ In another essay Darby states:

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 13. "Repentance is not change of mind as to God, though this may produce it, but self-judgment before Him, the soul referring to Him who is over us, with whom we have to do" (Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 224). "True repentance . . . goes beyond sorrow for having done wrong, or shame, or the mere work of the natural conscience" (Ibid., vol. XXV, p. 416).

¹⁸⁷ Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 216.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 215. "It is wrong to set it as a preliminary in man, though it may precede man's enjoyment of peace and solid assurance, and, I believe, must" (Ibid.).

¹⁸⁹ Jottings, p. 9. Darby speaks of repentance as

If [repentance] is put before faith, it unsettles the whole ground we stand upon before God; it is then something that I am doing in my own heart, and that won't do. When I preach repentance, therefore, I must preach it in Christ's name, and so I said "under grace."¹⁹⁰

Darby believes that it is quite logical that faith precedes repentance:

Some people . . . put repentance before faith; they say we must first have repentance before God, which is absurd upon the face of it; for if a person does not believe my¹⁹¹ message, there can be no repentance on the ground of it.

The connection between faith and repentance is essential and Darby relates it to the Spirit's ministry of conviction of sin:

You may say that, in one sense, no one can believe fully until he has repented, or repent until he has believed. There must be conviction of sin before forgiveness is received; nor will a sinner ever have conviction of sin until there is something for him to judge sin by, and that is what he believes.¹⁹²

"fruit of faith": "Faith in the objects presented -God's free and sovereign love, and the Saviour and His work -produces a subjective state which scripture calls repentance. This is not a preliminary to faith, but its fruit" (Ibid., p. 218). "Repentance . . . [and quickening]," Darby states, "may go together. If I believe, there is a reflex action and I repent" (Jottings, p. 12).

¹⁹⁰Jottings, p. 9.

¹⁹¹Ibid., pp. 308-309. "If I call on people to repent . . . they must believe in Christ in order to repent" (Ibid., p. 10). "Repentance is the judgment we form, under the effect of God's testimony . . . it is always founded on faith: I do not say the faith of the gospel. That may be its source; but we may repent through the testimony of God to the soul, and afterwards receive those glad tidings" (Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 220).

¹⁹²Jottings, p. 309.

In his positive definitions of repentance, Darby emphasizes the fact that God takes the initiative to turn the sinner from his sins:

When God turns, He acts on us and turns our will around. This leads us to repentance and judgment of our ways according to God; then there is remission.¹⁹³

True repentance involves both the sinner's standing in judgment against his own sinful condition and his recognizing the righteous claims of the God who is no man's debtor:

Repentance is the intelligent judgment that, under grace, we pass upon all that we have done, and upon all that we are. It is not mere sorrow for sin . . . It must be . . . a judgment passed upon ourselves in the knowledge of what God is . . . It must involve, too, that the claims of God are considered. The peculiar character of much of the gospel preaching nowadays, is, that it presents God as a kind of debtor to the world to save it, and that He must try and get people to pay Him the compliment of believing on Him. Repentance says, "I am lost, unless I repent, and believe, I shall be lost entirely."¹⁹⁴

God (rather than "self") is now one's final authority:

Practical repentance then is the estimate a man forms of . . . his own ways as a sinner . . . through the light of God penetrating into his soul, with some sense of goodness in Him, and setting up withal divine authority there.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. II, p. 274.

¹⁹⁴ Jottings, p. 308. Darby elaborates: "If in preaching I merely say, 'God loves you, and you are a poor sinner, here is grace for you' (and that I surely would say), and then leave repentance out, it is leaving the man's conscience out. . . . [Repentance is] the judgment we have passed upon ourselves, and all that we have done, and have been, in God's presence under grace" (Ibid., p. 9). "You cannot have your eye open on the Lord Jesus Christ," Darby says, "and not hate yourself as a sinner" (Ibid., p. 10).

¹⁹⁵ Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 224.

Because true repentance is not simply a fear of God, a change of mind on the part of the sinner, or merely an equivalent term for faith, the Bible presents it as far more than remorse about one's sin before God. Just as biblical faith is a gift and work of the Holy Spirit, so biblical repentance is one of His divine activities. The Spirit of God is the One who turns the sinner's eye upon himself in judgment of his sin.¹⁹⁶ Writing polemically against those who hold that the Christian is still "under the law," Darby summarizes the importance of a biblical understanding of repentance:

Practically Christianity is a wholly different thing, and repentance, though it may begin by the acknowledgment of sin, is the judgment the new man passes on the whole condition of the old . . . Such is the christian place; such is the christian hope, realized through the Holy Ghost, which dwells in us, enjoyed in the knowledge of the perfect love of God, according to which we know¹⁹⁷ that as He [Christ] is, so are we in this world.

In this section we will define some of the terms Darby uses to describe salvation and notice the role played by the Holy Spirit in the sinner's appropriation of it.

Darby frequently begins his definition of a term by stating, negatively, what it is not. Salvation, he says, is, for example, not simply quickening.¹⁹⁸ "Nor," Darby

¹⁹⁶ Jottings, p. 13.

¹⁹⁷ Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 145.

¹⁹⁸ "An inward quickening is never treated as salvation in Scripture" (Jottings, p. 186).

states, "does Scripture ever confound salvation with eternal life."¹⁹⁹ Being "born again" is not the same as the Spirit's action of indwelling the believer.²⁰⁰

Before one is able to really understand salvation, there is the necessity for one to grasp his lost condition before God. Darby emphasizes:

The first question we have before us is our guilt. Conscience must be reached, and that ought to be the first question for the soul.²⁰¹

Emphasizing to one questioner that "you will never know what it is to be saved until you know what it is to be lost,"²⁰² Darby stresses the need for the certain consciousness of one's "lostness":

As to salvation; it is important we should know ourselves lost; but I think you will find many that have not got the simple plain consciousness that they are lost -not really got it, I mean.²⁰³

Such an immediate consciousness of one's lostness is parallel to one's immediate assurance of salvation, upon belief in Christ:

If I get the consciousness of being lost now already, and that Christ dealt with that on the cross also; I

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰"We are not born again without the Holy Ghost; but His work and His indwelling are two distinct things" (Letters, vol. II, p. 232).

²⁰¹Jottings, p. 48.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 46.

then get saved, and that now, and that is just what people have not got thoroughly. They know neither what it is to be lost, nor what it is to be saved.²⁰⁴

Darby defines conversion as "the turning of the heart and will to God through grace."²⁰⁵ Although conversion itself may follow repentance (which Darby describes as "the full deliberate turning of the heart to God"),²⁰⁶ repentance itself is a work of the Spirit.²⁰⁷ An essential part of what may be termed Darby's modified Calvinism is his belief that the sinner cannot, of his own strength, turn to God for salvation; he must be drawn by the Father and given faith by the Spirit.

The testimony . . . is clear and certain that we are children of God through faith, and born, not of the will of man, but of God . . . If a man is disposed to open his hand [to receive salvation], conversion comes from the will of man . . . "There is none that seeketh after God" . . . Certainly God does not hinder any one from coming, but such is the disposition of the heart of man that he will not. This is why the work of God is necessary, and why it is said, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" . . . In short, by true faith we have life; we are children of God; but this is so because we are born of the Spirit, who works in us, and produces faith when we are begotten of God by His own will. To be begotten of God is by His operation, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.²⁰⁸

Regeneration, in Darby's understanding, is the "passing from one state to another"²⁰⁹ and, as the counterpart

²⁰⁴Ibid. ²⁰⁵Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 211.

²⁰⁶Ibid. ²⁰⁷See pp. 215-220 *supra*.

²⁰⁸Letters, vol. II, pp. 479-480.

²⁰⁹Ibid., vol. I, p. 534.

to being "born of the Spirit" (the "actual communication of divine life"),²¹⁰ is further described by Darby as being de facto death."²¹¹ Darby's understanding of the meaning of the cross and Christ's subsequent resurrection helps to explain his concept of regeneration. Stating that "God has sentenced the 'old man' in the cross of Christ, and brought in a totally new thing,"²¹² Darby explains:

I find Christ has risen again into a totally new place as man, and the place He has brought me into is His own present place. God has given me the earnest of the Spirit until I come into that place in full, but it is mine now. That is salvation . . . I am brought then to the cross, with the consciousness of guilt and sins, and of the enmity of my heart. But then, there, there was a death which on the one hand clears my sins away, and which on the other hand redeems me out of the condition I am in, and there I find salvation.²¹³

"Being born again," Darby says, involves the reception of divine life; "it is divine love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."²¹⁴ Writing in the first person, Darby states: "[When I am born again] I [still] have a life from Adam that is never mended one atom; but I have also a new life from Christ, which is a totally new thing."²¹⁵

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Ibid. "Regeneration . . . occurs . . . in Matthew 19:28, where it indicates the new condition of things on the earth; and then in Titus 3:5, where 'the washing of regeneration' refers . . . to a change of state or condition, not to life at all" (Jottings, p. 186).

²¹²Jottings, p. 52. ²¹³Ibid.

²¹⁴Ibid., p. 349.

²¹⁵Ibid., p. 351. Speaking of the verse "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6), Darby says, "one

Contrasting the first Adam with the Second Adam (Christ), Darby emphasizes that in salvation the believer gets a new condition; he is no longer "in the flesh."

We are saved . . . we have got salvation, not simply forgiveness (which we do have, of course, but that applies to the old condition); we have a new condition; we are in Christ the second Man, the last Adam; we are not in the flesh; and you will never know what salvation is -what it really means -until you understand²¹⁶ that you are not in the flesh, but are in Christ.

One is born of God, receives salvation, by the direct action of the Spirit and the word:

The word, as a testimony, is the seed of life when brought into the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost; because it is the revelation of Christ, and the bringing in, by that power, of Christ livingly there. It is Christ, by the word, by faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the operation being the operation of God. But it is by the revelation of Christ. Hence, we are said to be begotten by the incorruptible seed of the word (I Peter 1:23); and James 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."²¹⁷

As the One who "acts in us, through the word, to produce the new birth,"²¹⁸ the Spirit uses the word of God

is by His divine power quickened . . . I receive spiritually life from Christ, as I receive naturally life from Adam" (Letters, vol. II, p. 169).

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 53-54. "The Lord give us to see the connection between living by faith and the clear apprehension of what salvation is; that it is not merely forgiveness, though that is the first thing, but also, the taking the believer out of the place he was in, in the first Adam, and the putting him into Christ the second Man, and seating him in the heavenly places in Him" (Ibid., p. 54).

²¹⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 321.

²¹⁸ Ibid., vol. II, p. 232.

to bring us to a knowledge of our lost condition.²¹⁹

From the human perspective the response of faith is essential to the reception of salvation. Faith is given sovereignly to the sinner by the Spirit;

It is faith which lays hold, by the power of the Spirit of God, on that which is life, that is, Christ. We are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."²²⁰

The Church is the God-given place where the blessings of salvation may be found. Darby's doctrine of water baptism,²²¹

²¹⁹"The word is the revelation of what is in God, in His nature and character, His love, His ways, in short all that He communicates. And this is what God uses to quicken" (Jottings, p. 353).

"It is hard to say how the word merely works, save that it is God's method of the revelation of Christ, and where accompanied by the quickening power of the Spirit, it becomes thus the means of life . . . The written . . . word . . . is the divine power of the Spirit by which we are quickened" (Letters, vol. II, p. 408).

"God begets us; though it be by the word, we are born of the Spirit, the Son quickens us, the Spirit is the immediate power as in all God's works, but He is pleased to do it by the revelation of Christ by the word" (*Ibid.*, p. 408). In another place Darby says,

"[Because] it is by the word, and by means of faith ([that] the Spirit gives to the word the divine power which produces life, as the incorruptible seed of the living God enduring for ever), the word of God becomes the revelation of His Son in us, and Christ thus received is our life" (*Ibid.*, pp. 479-480).

²²⁰Letters, vol. III, p. 320.

²²¹Darby rejects the views that water baptism is a ordinance to be obeyed (Letters, vol. II, pp. 49, 51, 276) or that it is primarily a "testimony" to the unsaved (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 474). He defines baptism as "the formal and orderly entrance into the place of privilege" (*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 412). He strongly rebukes the Baptists for their "great and mischievous mistake [of] not seeing that there is a place of blessing set up by God, besides the fact of

especially his understanding of infant baptism,²²² made some of the Plymouth Brethren uncomfortable but reveals his belief that

[Baptism is the] door of entry, as an initial rite, [by which a person] is introduced into the divine sphere where these things are. God has been pleased to set up a system²²³ where these things are [e.g. forgiveness of sins, etc.].

individual conversion" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 471; see also p. 474). Agreeing with the Established Church, Darby believes that the term "christening" is the best one to describe the meaning of baptism (Ibid., vol. II, pp. 285, 292). As "a passing from the state of sinful man into the place where God's privileges [are], specially the presence of the Holy Ghost" (Ibid., p. 50), baptism admits one into what Darby calls "the great house", but not necessarily into the body of Christ (Ibid., p. 290). It is the means by which one is "received into the house to be brought up and educated in divine life" (Ibid., p. 279). Such "a sacramental introduction into the place of blessing . . . does not secure a person [in the things of God]" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 471). He compares baptism with the Old Testament rite of circumcision (Ibid., vol. II, p. 446); rejecting adult baptism as "unscriptural" (Ibid., p. 281); and, advocates paedo-baptism and household baptism (Ibid., pp. 283-284). He encourages any adult who, although christened as a child, comes to Christ in his later life, to be rebaptised "for conscience's sake" if the adult feels it is necessary (Ibid., pp. 284, 294).

²²² Darby speaks of "a relationship with God . . . which is not founded on personal conversion" (Letters, vol. III, p. 472) and states that he has "no doubt that little children are saved" (Ibid., p. 479). As an ordinance purposely "left in the background" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 47), Darby's burden is not to prove infant baptism, but to emphasize that "there is . . . something set up by God on earth where He has set His promises, His blessings -now His Spirit" (Ibid., p. 471). "There is no entering into the heavenly and eternal blessing," Darby stresses, "but by the reality of this [baptism], nor properly into the outward establishment of it in the earth but by the sign of this. This is the confession made by baptism" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 296).

²²³ Letters, vol. III, p. 204.

Because the Church did not begin until Pentecost, the saints of the Old Testament dispensation did not enjoy many of the privileges which believers of this dispensation possess.²²⁴

One final issue to discuss in the Spirit's role in Soteriology is that of one's assurance of salvation. Darby is firm in his belief that salvation is not, in a strict sense, the Holy Ghost's work, but Christ's work.²²⁵ It is specifically in the area of assurance of salvation that the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ have been confused. As the One who imparts divine life to the believer,²²⁶ the Spirit's role is exceedingly important; "we are not born again," says Darby, "without the Holy Ghost."²²⁷

²²⁴ Although the saints of the Old Testament may be described as "born again", they could not consider themselves children of God: "The Old Testament saints were born of God, but they could not call themselves children of God, because, redemption not being accomplished, the Spirit of adoption was not given; they could not take that position" (Letters, vol. II, p. 233).

"As to the Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel . . . And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out" (Jottings, p. 351).

²²⁵ Jottings, p. 186. See also pp. 238-239 infra.

²²⁶ See Letters, vol. II, p. 169. See also *Ibid.*, p. 408.

²²⁷ Letters, vol. II, p. 232.

Without the Spirit we could have no communion with God, but, Darby reminds us, our communion is not with the Spirit, but with the Father and the Son.²²⁸

The normal state of the Christian is, Darby says, "to live in the unclouded and conscious favour of God, and, if he lives in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit."²²⁹ Why, Darby asks, do so many doubt their salvation and have no certainty that they belong to the Savior? The major reason, he emphasizes, is that many put regeneration by the Holy Spirit in the place of redemption by Christ:

If my soul rests entire on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect infinite acceptance . . . Now, what men substitute for this is, the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me: the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest, in lieu of redemption; whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despond when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished -the sure (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God.²³⁰

We are not to look for assurance in the Holy Spirit's fruits in us, but to the finished work of Christ on the cross:

We cannot . . . look to our state and our fruit and our feelings, to know if we are His . . . [We are wrong when]

²²⁸Ibid., p. 85.

²²⁹Collected Writings, vol. XXIII, p. 279.

²³⁰Ibid., vol. III, p. 75.

we look to the work of the Spirit in us, and so to the imperfect fruits in us, of His working, which cannot give us rest, and ought not . . . Our rest comes not from our being what He wants, but [Christ's] being what we want. He has made peace by the blood of the cross. That is all settled for those who believe in Him . . . You look to getting the victory in order to get peace; we must get peace to get the victory -peace already made by Christ's work.²³¹

There is great assurance in the fact that the work of Christ is perfect and remains, though the believer may look in the wrong place for his certainty of salvation.

The soul may be a long while struggling under the sense of unanswered responsibility, it may cling to the law, it may mistake the work of the Spirit for the work of Christ, be looking for results in itself (we naturally look to our own righteousness, and even the saints often mistake holiness for the ground of peace), and the like: all that may take place in the soul, but it does not at all touch the perfectness of the work of Christ, or alter the strain of what Christ preaches as being at the right hand of God.²³²

Darby makes it abundantly clear that this confusion about the certainty of one's salvation can be properly dealt with only by a return to the biblical doctrine of the Spirit's sealing:

I fully receive that sealing by the gift of the Spirit, founded on the precious blood of Christ, which sets at liberty, by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts and we cry "Abba, Father" in the consciousness of being sons, know we are in Christ and Christ in us, loved as Jesus was loved -a wonderful place in which rest of heart is found. This I not only admit, but have pressed it some fifty years.²³³

²³¹ Letters, vol. II, pp. 426-427.

²³² Collected Writings, vol. XII, p. 245.

²³³ Ibid., vol. XXIII, p. 279.

The Spirit makes the believer aware of and confident in his redemption in Christ:

When we know redemption, we are delivered and free . . . The Holy Ghost has sealed us, as in the place where redemption sets us, and makes us have the consciousness of the salvation, of being saved, and is "the earnest of the inheritance."²³⁴

In properly understanding the Spirit's role in assurance, the believer has a solid basis for living for God in this world. This indwelling presence of the Spirit is a testimony, not to Himself, but to Another -to Christ and His finished work of atonement on the cross and subsequent presence at the right hand of the Father:

His presence in the believer is a glorious testimony to the infinite preciousness of Christ's work, and His presence at the right hand of God the Father.²³⁵ The Spirit, who takes up His abode in the believer, is a spirit of peace and joy, a spirit of witness of all that Christ is and has done, and, we must add, of the Father's perfect acceptance of both.²³⁶

Ecclesiology

The relationship of Darby's Pneumatology to his Ecclesiology has already been covered in some detail.²³⁷ With utmost seriousness Darby expresses his belief that,

²³⁴Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. IV, p. 77.

²³⁵Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 350. ²³⁶Ibid., p. 81.

²³⁷See our section "The Spirit and the Church," pp. 98-144 supra, which includes Darby's definition of the Church (pp. 98-101); his doctrine of the Church in Ruins (pp. 101-117); his doctrine of the ministry (pp. 117-128); his doctrine of worship (pp. 129-137); and his doctrine of church discipline (pp. 138-144).

although the Holy Spirit has worked in the world since creation, He did not come personally to dwell on the earth until Pentecost (Acts 2), the birthday of the Church.²³⁸

His coming awaited the finished work of the Redeemer:

The Holy Ghost had wrought in creation, in the fathers, in judges, in the prophets; but His coming was consequent on Man being in glory . . . This gives the full character of Christianity - a glorified Man in heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down to earth . . . while we wait for Him from heaven to take us actually there.²³⁹

Eschatology

This section will not present a complete overview of Darby's doctrine of final things²⁴⁰ but will rather focus upon Darby's emphasis on Eschatology, his view of the Church's role in prophecy, and the role of the Holy Spirit in this area of theology.

The Importance of Eschatology

Of the thirty-four volumes in his Collected Writings, four of them are classified as "Prophetic" by the editor William Kelly. Scanning the contents of the other thirty volumes shows that several of those classified as "Exposi-

²³⁸ Letters, vol. II, p. 232.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 468.

²⁴⁰ For a thorough discussion of Darby's Eschatology, see Goddard, "Contribution," pp. 274-401; William Bell's "A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology," Ph. D. dissertation, New York

tory" and "Doctrinal" also contain articles on Eschatology. Darby's concern for this branch of theology is illustrated by his statement that "The presence of the Holy Ghost, and the coming of the Lord, are the practical hinge of the true character and position of the church."²⁴¹

The Second Coming is "a part of Christian truth, as much as the atonement, though not like it the foundation of grace."²⁴² Although his writings cover the entire field of eschatological study, his emphasis is on the Rapture²⁴³ or

University, 1967 (hereafter cited as "Rapture"); and Clarence B. Bass' book Backgrounds to Dispensationalism, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1960), ch. V, "Darby's Doctrine of Eschatology."

²⁴¹Letters, vol. II, p. 362.

²⁴²Ibid., p. 498.

²⁴³The debate continues concerning the origin of the pretribulation rapture view. A number of scholars suggest that Darby was the originator of the doctrine. Representing this viewpoint, William Bell in his dissertation "Rapture" states: "Darby was certainly the popularizer of the pretribulation rapture position and was likely the author of it" (p. 14); "the doctrine apparently arose about 1830" (p. ii). Speaking of the prophetic conferences sponsored by Lady Powerscourt (which began in 1827), Bell says that "It was during this time that the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture emerged and began to be promoted vigorously by Darby and his followers" (p. 2). Continuing, Bell states that "the doctrine not only swept through the British Isles but also was adopted by many well-known Bible teachers in the United States, largely through the influence of Darby's six visits to this country between 1859 and 1874" (pp. 4-5).

Other writers suggest that the origin of a pretribulation rapture doctrine is to be traced to a Miss Margaret McDonald's prophetic utterance in Edward Irving's church in March, 1830. The textual critic Samuel P. Tregelles, an early Plymouth Brother, rejected Darby's dispensationalism, calling it the "height of speculative

Second Coming which he stresses "connects itself with every thought and relationship of the Christian in scripture."²⁴⁴

Although the believer is not to be looking for signs of the Second Coming,²⁴⁵ and the setting of suggested dates for

nonsense" (Bass, Backgrounds, p. 21) and makes the following comment on the source of the rapture doctrine:

"I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there should be a Secret Rapture of the Church at a secret coming until this was given forth as an 'utterance' in Mr. Irving's church from what was then received as being the voice of the Spirit. 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. It came, not from the Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God" (Samuel P. Tregelles, Hope of Christ's Coming, [London: 1864, p. 26], quoted in Ralph Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible [Riverside, California: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1971], p. 49).

See also Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970), p. 64, for others (viz., Thomas Crokery, James Grant, and Robert Cameron) who made the same claim that Darby's rapture doctrine originated with the utterance in Irving's church.

Others hold that Darby simply "rediscovered" and "redefined" a doctrine taught within the pages of holy scripture. Goddard in his "Contribution" states his belief that "Darby simply rediscovered a long-lost truth and was not an innovator" (p. 14). Bell points out that both Napoleon Noel (The History of the Brethren, [Denver: W. F. Knapp, 1936], pp. 2-27) and Harry Ironside (The Mysteries of God, [New York: Loizeaux Brother, 1908], pp. 50-51) held that pretribulationism was simply "rediscovered" and "redefined" by the Plymouth Brethren (p. 57). Darby himself says that the doctrine was revealed to him as he studied his Bible (specifically II Thessalonians 2:1-2) around 1850 (quoted in William Kelly's "The Rapture of the Saints: Who Suggested It, Or Rather On What Scripture?", The Bible Treasury, 1902-1903, IV: p. 315).

²⁴⁴ Letters, vol. II, p. 467.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 469. "Signs, I judge, are for those who have not been faithful enough to keep or find the bride's position" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 132).

the Rapture is inappropriate,²⁴⁶ Darby says that there is great value in the belief that "there is no event between me and heaven."²⁴⁷ He encourages another Christian in 1869 to "fix your mind calmly but steadily on His coming."²⁴⁸ Personally believing that "the Lord is about to come,"²⁴⁹ Darby emphasizes that "the present expectation of the Lord

²⁴⁶ Aware of other groups who had suggested dates for the end of the world or the rapture (e.g. the Adventists, see Letters, vol. II, p. 394; vol. I, p. 402), Darby says "Let it be remembered now that we have no date for the rapture of the church" (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 424). Coad says that "[Darby's] doctrine of the Church was built up under expectations of the imminent Advent of Christ which he dated on one occasion to 1842" (*History*, p. 119). Coad gives the source for this as "Darby's Etudes sur l'Epitre aux Hebreux (published in Switzerland), which appears on p. 142 of H. St. John's Analysis of the Gospel of Mark" (*Ibid.*). Darby says in his article "Studies on the Book of Daniel":

"Many eminent Christians have sought to calculate these dates, but my conviction is that all these will be found wrong in the fact. Some have indicated 1844, and some 1847; I have made them myself in my time. It is not, then, to blame others, that I say I do not think there is any basis for a true calculation; and I doubt whether the Lord has fixed any other date, than that of the half-week of Daniel, when the abomination of desolation is set up" (Collected Writings, vol. V, p. 204).

²⁴⁷ Letters, vol. I, p. 330. Bass challenges those who hold to a pretribulational rapture with their responsibility to this world:

"Belief in a pre-tribulation rapture tends to alter one's concept of the purpose of the church in the world. Dispensationalists, who insist that the purpose of the church is to call out the 'heavenly body' from the world, and that this body will be ultimately raptured away from tribulation, have forgotten that the church was placed in the world so that through it Christ's message might come to the world" (Backgrounds, p. 148).

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 43. ²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

is connected with all the feelings, all the duties, and all the relationships of the Christian."²⁵⁰

Eschatology not only helps the Christian to live his life in the expectation of the Lord's Second Coming, but it also clarifies the believer's relationship to the world.

Speaking of the rapture of the church, Darby says,

If my portion is in any way in this world, evil must be removed by judgment in order to enjoy it. But if I am entirely a stranger and a pilgrim, having no portion here, evidently there is no need of such judgment for my enjoyment of my portion. God Himself is this portion, for I have renounced all here. He has only to take me up to²⁵¹ enjoy when the time is come in His counsels to do so.

The Church's Role in Prophecy

The Church's role in prophecy is a critical issue for Darby; we will limit our discussion, however, to three of his emphases. The first emphasis concerns his view of the Church's special character. The belief in the rapture of the church before the appearing of Christ is the logical conclusion of the truth of the Church's special and peculiar character and connection with Christ, including its having being formed into one body by the descent of the Holy Ghost.

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 417. The Church's loss of the expectation of the rapture "was the origin of the church's departure from simplicity, and its fall into clerical authority and worldliness -the cause of the loss of its spiritual authority" (Collected Writings, vol. XI, pp. 156-157).

²⁵¹Collected Writings, vol. XIX, p. 136. In another place, he states: "I cannot be waiting for God's Son from

Understanding the Church's uniqueness is important to Darby because such an understanding is foundational for the proper interpretation of the word of God:

The question of the church and its privileges, as formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is important . . . and a right understanding of it a key to the interpretation of the word of God.²⁵²

A major aspect of Darby's dispensationalism (and its impact on his Eschatology) is his belief that the Church is not the subject of prophecy in the Old Testament. Asserting that God "predestined for her an existence outside the

heaven if I am linked up with the world" (Ibid., vol. XXI, p. 363). "Our passage through this world is no part of God's purpose; it is part of God's way, but His purpose is simply to put us in Christ, and for us to be perfectly like Christ in the glory which He has as Man" (Jottings, p. 190). Rowdon states that

"Their study of prophecy was a powerful factor in determining the attitude of the Brethren towards life in the world . . . The attitude they adopted is summed up in the phrase 'heavenly-mindedness' . . . [and they] concluded, in the words of B. W. Newton, that 'so far as we identify ourselves with the world, we surrender our claim to the peculiar and distinctive privilege of the Church, we lose the present discipline and the future reward, and plant ourselves in a world which, though not neglected, but often visited with goodness, remains still a barren field in the sight of God, and necessarily inherits judgment at the last'" (The Brethren, p. 301).

Rowdon's entire appendix two is helpful in this area (pp. 301-306). For a discussion of the Christian's relationship to the world, see also in this dissertation pp. 91-94 *supra*.

²⁵² Collected Writings, vol. XI, p. 119. Italics mine. The understanding of Darby's hermeneutics, therefore, is greatly dependent on grasping not only his dispensationalism, but also his Ecclesiology and Eschatology. His definition of the true church as "those waiting for the Lord" (Letters, vol. I, pp. 168, 516) therefore, is, hardly surprising.

course of [the] ages,"²⁵³ Darby explains his understanding of the relationship of the Church to prophecy:

I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depositary of prophecy . . . Prophecy gives the career of earthly events, the wickedness of man, or the dealings of God. But the church is not earthly; its life is hid with Christ in God; it has its place with Christ while He is hidden; when He appears it will appear; we await the manifestation of the sons of God . . . The church cannot be the subject of prophecy. It was not [in the Old Testament] . . . and now it is not -the subject, but the depositary of prophecy . . . It has no place in prophecy. We are properly nowhere, save in the extraordinary suspension of prophetic testimony, or period, which comes in between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel.²⁵⁴

Darby frequently insists that the Church will not go through the tribulation.²⁵⁵ Because

she is outside the judgments which the coming of the Lord will bring upon the world -outside the course of the prophetic events which will take place in a world of which she forms no longer part,²⁵⁶

Darby states, "I cannot be waiting [properly] for God's Son from heaven if I am expecting wrath."²⁵⁷ By understanding

²⁵³ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 386.

²⁵⁴ Letters, vol. I, p. 131.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 231 and 235. "The attempt to bring the church into the tribulation . . . [is] the confounding the church of God with the Jews and with the world, their hopes, and the trials that come upon them" (Collected Writings, vol. XI, p. 167). To deny the rapture of the saints before the Lord's appearing is to reject the biblical teaching of a distinct Jewish remnant. This is to reduce the church to the level of Jewish hopes and promises which is a setting aside the church itself. Such, Darby insists, is the great object of the enemy Satan! (Ibid. p. 122).

²⁵⁶ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 363.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. XXI, p. 363.

the truth of her being "caught away" prior to the tribulation period, the Church will see that she is not to be the subject of God's judgment, she will not get herself "mixed up" in the affairs of this world, and she will have a proper stimulus for growth in holiness:

Conscious of being the bride of the Lamb, she will have the affections proper to such a relationship; she will long for the coming of the Bridegroom to receive her to Himself. Thus, separated from the world by the Spirit who is the power and earnest of this hope, she will seek to realize it as much as possible upon the earth "He that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure."²⁵⁸

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Prophecy

The Holy Spirit is the One who, as Jesus promised, would "guide [the disciples] into all the truth . . . and [would] disclose to [them] what is to come" (John 16:13). Darby emphasizes the active role of the Holy Spirit as he describes prophecy:

Prophecy is not properly the revelation of the thing to the prophet, but the communication of it by the prophet as the Holy Ghost moved him to speak.²⁵⁹

Darby often links the two truths of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Second Coming.²⁶⁰ Referring to the events to occur in the last days, Darby says that the open

²⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. III, pp. 391-392.

²⁵⁹ Letters, vol. III, pp. 417-418. Because of the continuing teaching ministry of the Spirit, Darby states with little reservation: "The feeblest Christian now knows more than the apostles could when Christ was on earth" (Collected Writings, vol. XXI, p. 31).

²⁶⁰ See Letters, vol. II, pp. 498-9 and vol. III, pp. 52-53.

apostasy has not yet come, but moral apostasy has. This moral apostasy involves "the abandonment of the first condition of the church, and of the principles upon which it was founded." The principles of the authority of the word and faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost have been usurped by the system of a clergy being substituted for the Lord's rights over the conscience. Darby also points to the denial of justification by faith and the putting of the sacraments in place of the Spirit as evidences that the last days have arrived.²⁶¹

Although the Spirit is the One who disclosed the "things to come" to the writers of the New Testament and helps the believer today to be expectantly awaiting the rapture of the Church,²⁶² the Spirit possesses a specific role in restraining evil in the world. The text which deals with this role of the Spirit is found in II Thessalonians:

Now ye know that which restrains, that he should be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness already works; only (there is) he who restrains now until he be gone, and then the lawless one shall be revealed.²⁶³

²⁶¹Letters, vol. II, p. 94.

²⁶²"The Holy Spirit is a power that detaches us from everything, and binds us to that which is invisible" (Ibid., vol. I, pp. 290-291). "He [the Holy Ghost] causes us to wait for Christ" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 52). "All over the world the Spirit of God is working, and it awakes the bright hope that the blessed Lord is soon coming" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 500).

²⁶³II Thessalonians 2:6-7 (The New Testament -A New Translation, trans. John Nelson Darby).

Darby's commentary on this passage, though lengthy, is worthy of quotation:

Evil [is] bridled by the power of God acting in government here below: when the assembly is gone and the Holy Spirit no longer dwells here, the unbridled evil assumes definite shape in the man of sin . . . That which hinders is therefore the power of God acting in government here below as authorized by Him . . . The Holy Ghost was here below; the assembly, be its condition what it might, was still on earth, and God maintained the barrier . . . The evil is bridled: God is the source of authority on earth. There is One who hinders until He be taken out of the way. Now when the assembly (the assembly, that is, as composed of the true members of Christ) is gone, and consequently the Holy Ghost as the Comforter is no longer dwelling here below, then the apostasy takes place, the time to remove the hindrance is come, the evil is unbridled, and at length . . . the evil assumes a definite shape in him who is its head . . . The individual instruments who compose the barrier . . . may change every moment. He who was the one of them that existed when this epistle was written would not be so at the present time; so to have named him then would have been of no use to us in the present day.²⁶⁴

From the above quotation we see one link between Darby's Ecclesiology, Pneumatology, and Eschatology. Because the Church is the "habitation of God through the Spirit," when it is raptured, the Spirit (in His restraining ministry) is also withdrawn.²⁶⁵ God works through human government and the Church to restrain evil, but when the final apostasy takes place, the Spirit, the Restrainer, will be removed.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. V, pp. 136-137.

²⁶⁵The Holy Spirit is the One in this dispensation who restrains evil and guards divine authority in the world. "The rapture of the saints is the occasion of the hindrance being removed and all restraint loosed" (Ibid., pp. 138-9).

²⁶⁶"The assembly, the powers ordained of God upon the

What Darby communicated to many Christians was not so much a well thought-out or convincing presentation of "things to come" (although he certainly penned many essays in that endeavor), but rather an earnest expectation of the Lord's return for His bride, the Church. He proclaims:

I know He is coming. Why? Because I know Him there. This divine Person before my soul -this Christ -the man who, infinitely interested about my sins, died for me, He is waiting in heaven. It is now the patience of Christ. He is expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. So we are waiting. Our interests are entirely linked up with His, and thus we are waiting for Him, while He is waiting to come.²⁶⁷

Bibliology

Few issues, in Darby's opinion, are as important as a proper view of the scriptures. He states that "the acknowledgement of the holy scriptures is of the essence

earth, the Holy Ghost present here as the Comforter in lieu of Christ, have all (as regards the manifestation of the government and the work of God) given place to the self-willed unbridled man, and to the power of the enemy" (Ibid., p. 139).

C. I. Scofield states that the restrainer "can be no other than the Holy Spirit in the Church to be 'taken out of the way'" (C. I. Scofield, ed., The New Scofield Reference Bible. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], p. 1272). Woodrow points out that the early church fathers held that this restrainer force was the Roman Empire and argues that Paul does not mention the Roman Empire by name because the Thessalonians knew what the restrainer was and that such an identification would put them in danger. If the restrainer had been the Holy Spirit, says Woodrow, Paul could have easily said so (Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible, p. 156).

²⁶⁷ Collected Writings, vol. XXI, p. 360.

of the acknowledgement of God now, and our security."²⁶⁸

Many issues could be considered in this area of Darby's doctrine of the Bible (e.g. the issue of the canon, Darby's hermeneutical system, the relationship of the New and Old Testaments, etc.) but we will limit our discussion to his understanding of inspiration and the relationship between the Spirit and the word.

As he reminisces about the early days of the Brethren Movement, he declares: "we have the original divine instructions which founded, formed, and guided the church itself at first."²⁶⁹ Writing in 1855 he says that in those early meetings "the truths themselves were then revealed of God, through the action of His Spirit, by reading His word."²⁷⁰

Speaking of his own "deliverance" in 1827, he says: "I went through a day's mental process as to the word, at the time I was set free. . . . But God's word has ever

²⁶⁸ Letters, vol. I, p. 344.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., vol. I, p. 109. Speaking of the Brethren Movement, Darby says: "God has taken us back to the Scriptures" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 439). He refers to the Brethren Movement as "a remnant which recalls the first principles on which the church was founded at the beginning" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 480).

²⁷⁰ Ibid., vol. III, p. 299. "His [Christ's] word, namely the scriptures inspired of God, that is to say the Bible, is the authority which forms [the Plymouth Brethren's] faith; it is also its foundation, and they recognise it as that which should govern their conduct" (Ibid., p. 305).
Darby expresses his joy that
"the truth giving the scope and true character of Christianity, and the special truths which compose it, learned from Scripture because it was there

since been God's word, from God."²⁷¹ Darby elaborates:

During my solitude [due to a horse accident], conflicting thoughts increased; but much exercise of soul had the effect of causing the scriptures to gain complete ascendancy over me.²⁷²

In his controversial essay "The Notion of a Clergyman -Dispensationally the Sin Against the Holy Ghost," Darby states:

At the same period in which I was brought to liberty and to believe, with divinely given faith, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, I passed through the deepest possible exercise as to the authority of the word; whether if the world and the Church . . . disappeared and were annihilated, and the word of God alone remained as an invisible thread over the abyss, my soul would trust in it. After deep exercise of soul I was brought by grace to feel I could entirely. I never found it fail me since. I have often failed; but I never found it failed me.²⁷³

Darby's Doctrine of Inspiration

A proper understanding of inspiration is, in Darby's opinion, an essential aspect of "the divine character of Christianity."²⁷⁴ Describing the word of God as "the

and was the truth about man . . . has met every part of the system, infidel and erroneous, which has sprung up in these last days" (Note and Comments on Scripture, vol. II, p. 1. Italics mine).

²⁷¹Letters, vol. III, p. 454.

²⁷²Turner, Darby, p. 17.

²⁷³Collected Writings, vol. I, p. 38.

²⁷⁴Letters, vol. I, p. 189. He speaks of the "divinity" of the word in several places: writing in 1852, he says, "The perfection of the word, its divinity, ever develops more to my heart and understanding" (Ibid., p. 227). In an interesting statement on the age of the earth, Darby states:

seed of life,"²⁷⁵ Darby says it is "the communication of divine things to the understanding (rendered capable by the Spirit) of man."²⁷⁶

Darby often describes the word of God with language which expresses his full confidence in it. As "that only true light . . . the foundation of light,"²⁷⁷ the word of God is for Darby "the Holy Ghost's way of thinking and teaching."²⁷⁸ Although he is not opposed to the dissemination of Christian tracts or books, he insists that only the Bible can be trusted completely, for "the scriptures . . . remain as the treasury of the truth itself."²⁷⁹ "Scripture [is our] guard against [philosophy] . . . it alone is to be relied on."²⁸⁰ Darby emphasizes that "we cannot esteem the word too precious. It is that which God has given

"I believe the earth may have existed millions of years, nor does the Bible contradict it, but admit of it, and proves thus its divinity, for Moses knew it not" (Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. IV, p. 274).

²⁷⁵ Letters, vol. III, p. 320.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 257.

²⁷⁷ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 358.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 226. Regarding the Greek preposition in John 1:18 Darby says, "I do not believe the Holy Ghost has put the Ev there for nothing" (Letters, vol. I, p. 250).

²⁷⁹ Letters, vol. I, p. 329.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 21. See also Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 324.

us when the church went wrong."²⁸¹ The Bible alone is our "only sure guide in [these last] days."²⁸²

Darby discusses several terms central to his doctrine of the Bible. Speaking of the term revelation, Darby exclaims "What a thing it is to have one!"²⁸³ Revelation is the means by which God has finally disclosed His will to humanity:

That the sovereign goodness of God has given to us in His written word a sure and complete revelation of His thoughts is precious beyond all that man could say or be able to say . . . This word is the only guide . . . Nothing can be added to it, nor taken from it.²⁸⁴

Darby explains his reserve with the term infallibility:

I may say what is absolutely right, but I am not infallible. Whenever the apostles spoke by inspiration, they uttered in revelation what was absolutely right from God, but this did not make them infallible. God is, because in His nature He never can say anything but what is right. When God spoke by them, as every true Christian believes He did, they were absolutely right: but God remained the alone infallible [sic], who never could of Himself say anything wrong . . . Inspiration comes from the infallible One, but does not render the inspired one infallible, but only perfectly²⁸⁵ right and divine in what he utters as inspired.

²⁸¹Letters, vol. II, p. 66.

²⁸²Letters, vol. III, p. 471. ²⁸³Ibid., p. 454.

²⁸⁴Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 303.

²⁸⁵Letters, vol. I, pp. 105-106. "I believe God only is infallible -but all He had said, or caused to be written, is absolute truth, and comes from the Infallible" (Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. IV, p. 275). Darby says that God kept infallibly "in forming the written word" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 327). Not one to quibble unnecessarily about terms, Darby states:

Darby defines the term inspiration as "that work of the Holy Ghost which guards the pen and the thought of the writer."²⁸⁶ He speaks of his expectation concerning inspiration:

What I seek in an inspired book, is the perfect communication of the thoughts of God, such as He deigns to communicate them to me, and a perfect history of man, a history such that possessing the thoughts of God, I may perfectly judge of what man²⁸⁷ is, as God, the God of truth, would shew him to me.

Darby boldly states that "the Lord Jesus Himself preferred the authority of the written word, as an instrument, to His own words,"²⁸⁸ and comments on John 5:47:

I find the Lord (whose words all of us would bow to as divine) yet preferring, as to the medium of communication, the written word; "if they believe not his writings, how shall they believe my words" - "they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."²⁸⁹

Aware of attacks on the trustworthiness of the Bible in matters of history, geography, etc.,²⁹⁰ Darby never-

"It is perfectly right practically to say, the Bible is infallible, but, strictly, revealed truth cannot be infallible; it is simply, perfectly true. A person is fallible or infallible - God alone is so - He, while He acts in, uses a man, is, and makes the man while so exclusively using him, de facto infallible. But the man is not so" (Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. IV, p. 271).

²⁸⁶ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 304-305.

²⁸⁷ Letters, vol. I, p. 206.

²⁸⁸ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 304-305.

²⁸⁹ Letters, vol. I, p. 110.

²⁹⁰ To those who would find fault with the word of God, Darby says that upon careful examination "they will

theless believes that the Church does not judge the word, but is judged by it.²⁹¹ God is not under His creature's scrutiny, but the creature under God's:

The great mistake is supposing that [the doctrine of inspiration] is made to satisfy man according to his thoughts, and not to communicate God's [thoughts] with perfect certainty.²⁹²

Through his many apologetical articles Darby seeks to defend the accuracy and trustworthiness of the Bible. One's confidence in the Bible as God's word, however, is not to rest on even the best defenses from the most persuasive of apologists. In this connection Darby's understanding of the place of proofs of inspiration is worthy of our attention.

How can I tell if the Bible is infallible? asks Darby. He states that if we do not rest on divine conviction, we are completely dependent on the "competency of human judgment; and whose?"²⁹³ "The word," Darby says, "is its own

find scripture too strong and perfect a bond for man's reasoning to break it" (Ibid., p. 425). Darby wrote a number of apologetical essays; the entire volume six of his Collected Writings includes articles such as "The Irrationalism of Infidelity" (a reply to "Phases of Faith") (pp. 1-358); "The Inspiration of the Scriptures" (pp. 359-364); and "The Human Element in Inspiration" (pp. 365-377). All of volume nine is apologetical; it contains the 359-page treatise entitled "Dialogues on the Essays and Reviews" (including "What Has the Bible Taught? And What Has Geology Proved?" [pp. 87-115]) and an essay on "Inspiration and Interpretation" (pp. 223-359).

²⁹¹Letters, vol. I, p. 107.

²⁹²Ibid., p. 189.

²⁹³Notes and Comments on Scripture, vol. IV, p. 273.

proof."²⁹⁴ "It is a great mistake to think that nothing can give testimony to itself," Darby says, for "who ever took a candle to see if he could see the sun?"²⁹⁵ Darby emphasizes that God confirms His word by means of its appeal to the conscience (rather than to the intellect) of humanity:

The word of God proves itself to the conscience, and puts man by itself under the responsibility of crediting it, because God cannot speak without man's being bound to know and hear Him, for none speaks like Him. He may in grace use proofs and confirmations and witnesses, but man is bound to hear Him . . . The word of God judges, and is not judged . . . A man does not want authority to know that a two-edged sword is sharp.²⁹⁶

Speaking of his own experience of "deliverance", Darby relates his confidence in the Bible's trustworthiness:

At this time the word of God became for me an absolute authority as to faith and practice; not that I had doubted it previously, but it had now become such from conviction, implanted by God Himself in my heart.²⁹⁷

The Spirit of God grants faith in the word so that it may be received with confidence. Darby states that

²⁹⁴ Letters, vol. III, p. 431.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., vol. I, p. 189.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 108. Darby speaks of his surprise that so many come peacefully to the Lord (Ibid., pp. 59-60) for revelation is "a divinely wrought conviction . . . in the conscience . . . [The] Holy Ghost always produces a want when He acts" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 298). Darby refers to "the direct application of the word by the Holy Ghost to the conscience" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 295). "The Holy Spirit directs our thoughts to the scriptures of truth" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 322). "The word applied by the Spirit works in the soul to judge sin according to Christ's death" (Ibid., p. 455).

²⁹⁷ Ibid., vol. II, p. 433.

"faith in the word is the operation of God's Spirit giving it power . . . [it is] difficult to bring proofs out to many minds."²⁹⁸ Such confidence in the Bible is that which is brought about by the Holy Spirit alone:

Faith wrought by the Holy Ghost in the word . . . not by education, nor by the church . . . Direct faith in the word, that is in God, is the test of real Christianity.²⁹⁹

This divine confirmation by the Holy Spirit is the only sure foundation for confidence in the revelation which God has given.³⁰⁰ This link between Darby's Bibliology and his Pneumatology receives much of his attention. He exclaims:

²⁹⁸Ibid., p. 387. ²⁹⁹Ibid., p. 307.

³⁰⁰In another place Darby says: "Were [the word of God] in a way to satisfy the exigencies of men's minds, it would lose for me its divine proofs" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 189). Spiritual gifts or miracles do not confirm scripture: "The books of the holy Scriptures have not had this outward confirmation" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 304). Darby's position is quite similar to that of John Calvin's concerning the self-authentication of Scripture. Calvin says that

"while the church receives and gives its seal of approval to the Scriptures, it does not thereby render authentic what is otherwise doubtful or controversial . . . Scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste" (John Calvin, Institutes, I. vii. 2).

In a later section Calvin states:

"Scripture indeed is self-authenticated; hence, it is not right to subject it to proof and reasoning. And the certainty it deserves with us, it attains by the testimony of the Spirit. For even if it wins reverence for itself by its own majesty, it seriously affects us only when it is sealed upon our hearts through the Spirit. Therefore, illumined by his power, we believe neither by our own nor by anyone else's judgment that Scripture is from God; but above human judgment we affirm with utter certainty (just as if we were gazing

Oh! how is the word its own proof, and how has it its own power, though surely nothing but the Spirit of God can give it that power in us.³⁰¹

Darby continues:

The grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received,³⁰² it must have been true before it was received.

The Spirit and the Word

Although we have already noticed Darby's view that the Spirit gives the divine confirmation to the word of God and that He grants faith so that it may be received by the believer as God's revelation, several other matters concerning the Spirit's relationship to the word need to be mentioned.

Darby often refers to the "perfection" of the word: "The revelation from God has authority; it is perfect," Darby emphasizes, "and it cannot be altered without introducing error."³⁰³ He strongly urges that the Spirit and the

upon the majesty of God himself) that it has flowed to us from the very mouth of God by the ministry of men. We seek no proofs, no marks of genuineness upon which our judgment may lean; but we subject our judgment and wit to it as to a thing far beyond any guesswork!" (Ibid., I. vii. 2).-

³⁰¹Letters, vol. III, p. 431.

³⁰²Quoted in Help and Food, May 1956, p. 4.

³⁰³Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 227. See also

word should be seen, not as opposing, but rather as complementary, forces. Encouraging another believer in one of his letters to "give regularly . . . the first fruits of your time to the regular study of the word," Darby stresses his belief that "a taking the Spirit without the word is a false pretension to power, out of the place of obedience and heart subjection."³⁰⁴

It is equally incorrect to take the word without the Spirit. "There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the word apart from the Spirit,"³⁰⁵ Darby warns. The proper position for the believer is to understand that "the Holy Ghost never contends with Himself"³⁰⁶ and to take the stand that

The Spirit of God and the word of God must go together. The word of God will not do alone; for I may attempt to judge the Word by my own private judgment, and so get wrong. The Spirit

Ibid., pp. 304-305. Speaking of the Spirit, Darby says, "All He says is truth, and only what He says is truth. Just as Christ is ἡ ἀλήθεια in John 14; so, as a witness, is the Spirit" (Letters, vol. I, p. 398). Darby does speak briefly about a kind of accommodation of the scriptures to man, but not at the expense of the scripture's perfection: The word "is in such a way as to adapt Him to us" (Ibid., p. 245). "The scriptures . . . are the mind of God Himself, expressed in a way suited to men" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 505).

³⁰⁴Ibid., p. 302. "Now the word is inspired by Him [the Holy Spirit], and no path can be His which is not according to it" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 477).

³⁰⁵Pilgrim Portions, p. 11.

³⁰⁶Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 304.

of God will not do alone either; for I may mistake my own fancies for the Spirit; they go together. Then the moment the Word reaches my heart it is absolute authority, and the Word judges me.³⁰⁷

To take the Spirit over the word or the word over the Spirit are equally dangerous positions. Darby summarizes:

The Spirit and the word cannot be separated without falling into fanaticism on the one hand, or into rationalism on the other -without putting oneself outside the place of dependence upon God and of His guidance.³⁰⁸

"We need the Holy Ghost to understand even, and to use, that word," states Darby, for the word of God is "the sword of the Spirit to reach the heart."³⁰⁹ "The Spirit gives to the word the divine power which produces life."³¹⁰ Darby speaks of the word of God as the outward, and the Spirit as the inward, means of reaching the sinner's or the believer's conscience:

The word is the instrument . . . it is God's method of the revelation of Christ, and where accompanied by the quickening power of the Spirit, it becomes thus the means of life: what is spoken as the word communicated to the soul by the Spirit becomes life . . . it is the divine power of the Spirit by which we are quickened . . . Faith in the report, . . . is the outward means . . . The word in itself is merely the outward means or instrument, and by itself, though all truth be in it, produces nothing (unless to leave us without excuse).³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Nine Lectures on the First Epistle of John, p. 62.

³⁰⁸ Miscellaneous Writings, vol. IV, p. 12.

³⁰⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 303-304.

³¹⁰ Letters, vol. II, p. 480.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 408.

"The Holy Spirit alone can render it [the word] efficacious for life and practice"³¹² because the word is the "sword of the Spirit":

That this word is the only guide, as a written rule . . . this is a thing to which we cannot too firmly cleave; this it is that has the authority of God. Nothing can be added to it, nor taken from it . . . [However] we need the Holy Ghost to understand even, and to use, that word. It is the sword of the Spirit to reach the heart.³¹³

Darby says much the same in one of his letters:

[The Spirit] is the power of all good here . . . He is the power of testimony . . . The word itself is the sword of the Spirit . . . All truth is revealed, communicated as revealed, and received by the Holy Ghost.³¹⁴

Darby's doctrine of illumination shows his conviction that the church is to take the Spirit's role as its resident Teacher with utmost seriousness:

In walking with God, alone can we draw out its sweetness and feed upon it. I believe that the Spirit of God is a positive teacher in this respect, and may give, if He sees fit, developed thoughts of its contents; but if rivers are to flow³¹⁵ out we must drink for ourselves as thirsty for it.

The Holy Spirit in His ministry of illumination is the one who aids the believer in disentangling the things of God and the things of humanity (as, for example, in the Reformation).³¹⁶ Although Darby is insistent that God is no longer giving

³¹² Ibid., vol. I, p. 243.

³¹³ Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 303-304.

³¹⁴ Letters, vol. III, p. 467.

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 431.

³¹⁶ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 213.

supernatural revelation, Darby does hold to a progress in one's comprehension of spiritual truth contained within the word of God.³¹⁷

Because of the close relationship between the Spirit and the word, Darby emphasizes the power of testimony to Christ which these two possess:

The word, as a testimony, is the seed of life when brought into the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost; because it is the revelation of Christ, and the bringing in, by that power, of Christ livingly there. It is Christ, by the word, by faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the operation being the operation of God. But it is by the revelation of Christ.³¹⁸

The protection of the Church is based specifically on the co-operative working of the Spirit and the word:

This reference to that word, I hold to be the essence of the Church's safety, accompanied by the acknowledgement of, and dependence on, the Spirit of God, the Comforter -the plain written word.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ See, for example, his statement "I think new divine light continually breaks in" (Letters, vol. III, p. 320).

³¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 320-321.

³¹⁹ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 142. The safety of the Church also includes the regulation of spiritual gifts within; the Holy Ghost guides by the word, which maintains the responsibility of the believer. "[Gift] is to be within the Church exercised according to the mind of Christ, of which the Spirit is the power in the Church, and the written word the guide and standard" (Ibid., p. 129). For Darby's doctrine of ministry, see pp. 116-127, supra.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this last chapter we will briefly summarize what we have observed concerning Darby's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, draw several conclusions based on our research, and suggest a few areas in Darby's theology worthy of investigation which did not lie within the scope of this project. We will then conclude with a brief evaluation of Darby's Pneumatology.

The Value of Isolating
Darby's Pneumatology

As a justification for our systematic presentation of Darby's Pneumatology, we began this dissertation by emphasizing that to Darby the proper understanding of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit is that area of truth most needful of recovery by the Christian Church. Because of Darby's importance to conservative theology (especially of a Fundamentalist brand),¹ his understanding of Pneumatology is worthy of study, especially by those concerned with subjects such as Fundamentalism and Dispensationalism. Because his doctrine of the Holy Spirit is, firstly, scattered throughout the fifty-two volumes of his writings, and,

¹For a survey of the importance of Darby and the Plymouth Brethren Movement in the history of conservative theology, see our second appendix, pp. 340-366, *infra*.

secondly, because of Darby's lack of literary perspicuity, the isolation of his Pneumatology should prove helpful to interested theologians. Such an isolation discloses the primary importance of this area of biblical studies to Darby's theology in general. One can hardly read any of his articles on Ecclesiology, Eschatology, Christology, Soteriology, or other branches of theology without noticing some mention of the Holy Spirit and His activities. His Pneumatology impacts upon and influences his overall theology. The comprehension of this area of Darby's theology helps one to understand Darby's insistence on a lay ministry, his doctrine of deliverance and assurance, his high view of the Bible, his emphasis on the uniqueness of the Church, etc.

Our isolation of Darby's Pneumatology also reveals that he stresses God's dynamic relationship to the Church.² God has not simply set the process in motion by which His will is accomplished in the world; He is actively involved through the Holy Spirit and by means of His habitation, the Church, in working out His plan in history.

²Discussing the Reformation, Darby says:
 "To consider the historical church as that to which we ought to return, and as the standard of what we ought to do, would be to disown the living God who acted there, and who acts always; to disown the word He has given us as the sole standard of our faith- and the word sanctions none other; to disown, finally, the power and supremacy of the Spirit, and the care of Christ with regard to His Church, as if we could impose on Christ the historical idea that we make for

Darby's Mordecai-like "for such a time as this" historical consciousness³ is also partially explained by the isolation of his Pneumatology. Darby's doctrine of the recovery of truths resident in the scriptures (yet long overlooked by the Church) goes hand in hand with his dynamic view of the Spirit and His activities throughout history.⁴

The isolation of Darby's doctrine of the Spirit demonstrates the prominence of the third member of the

ourselves, of His action at a given period, as an instruction and a standard for us as to what He should do now" (Collected Writings, vol. IV, pp. 90-91). His belief in a kind of contemporary illumination is explained by his Pneumatology:

"At the epoch of the Reformation, God, all wise, put in relief the truths necessary for His Church. And while I receive them, I do not conclude that God has nothing to make known to me from His word necessary for the times in which we live" (Ibid., p. 91).

The chronological nearness of the Church Fathers to the Apostolic period is unimportant to Darby. He insists that our authority is to be the Holy Spirit through the word, and not the Fathers of the Church (Ibid., vol. XIV, p. 45).

³ Esther 4:14. Darby makes few comments in his writings concerning this Old Testament book. Although he never relates Esther 4:14 explicitly to himself or the Brethren Movement, the following statement may be an allusion:

"It has been often remarked that the name of God is not found in the Book of Esther. This is characteristic. God does not show Himself. But, behind the power and the mistakes of that throne to which the government of the world had fallen, God holds the reins by His providence; He watches over the accomplishment of His purposes and over everything necessary to their fulfillment; and He cares for His people, whatever may be their condition or the power of their enemies" (Synopsis, vol. II, p. 35).

⁴ "God has at all times so prepared the suitable circumstances, for the impulse His Spirit should give. The circumstances for the Reformation were all prepared beforehand. They were equally all prepared for Christianity" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 216).

Trinity in the New Testament dispensation. We are confident that further research in Darby's theology will show the prominence of the Father in the Old Testament age and of the Son in the Gospel period.

The isolation of Darby's Pneumatology also demonstrates that areas of his theology other than his dispensationalism and his doctrine of the secret rapture are worthy of research. Because his doctrine of the Holy Spirit influences his understanding of the Church, the ministry, worship, church discipline, preaching, etc., it deserves the serious attention we have given it here.

One further benefit of isolating Darby's Pneumatology is that such a setting apart of this area of his theology shows the interrelationship between his doctrine of the Spirit and his doctrine of dispensations. Both his dispensationalism and his Pneumatology are based on his serious study of God's activities throughout biblical history. Although we have not attempted to settle the question "is Darby the originator of dispensationalism?", we have shown that his dispensationalism is not to be viewed as isolated from but is rather to be understood as intimately connected to his other branches of theology (especially Pneumatology).

Although not stated, Darby is seeking to demonstrate that in like manner the Spirit prepared beforehand the circumstances which would bring the Plymouth Brethren Movement into being.

Pneumatology:
The Controlling Area
of Darby's Theology?

In light of the importance of Pneumatology to Darby, is it, then, the central area of doctrine for him? Is it the organizing principle of the whole of his theology? The position that Pneumatology is the focal point of Darby's faith goes beyond what we have noticed concerning the prominence of this area of theology in Darby. Pneumatology is certainly primary for Darby; it is not, however, more important than, for example, the truths of Christology. The question as to what is the overriding, controlling theme of Darby's theology lies outside the scope of this project and merits further research.⁵ Our observation is that at least the three areas of Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and Pneumatology share the dominant place in Darby's total theology.⁶

⁵Sandeen, Roots, seems to suggest that Darby's doctrine of the Church is the theological center from which all other theological concepts emerge: Darby's "theological development was sparked by his insights into the nature of the church," states Sandeen (p. 68).

⁶We have quoted Darby to this effect several times. See our citations in this dissertation, pp. iii, v, vi, and 85-89, *supra*. Darby's comments concerning the Plymouth Brethren's role in recovering certain truths of the Bible are also helpful here. See, for example, Letters, vol. I, pp. 254, 328, 480, 500; vol. II, p. 4; etc.

Suggestions for Further Research

Before we conclude our dissertation with an evaluation of Darby's Pneumatology, we wish to suggest several areas worthy of further research which have either not been discussed or have received only brief treatment in this work.

The question of Darby's sources for his theology is an intriguing one. Although we pointed out a number of possible influences on Darby in our first chapter,⁷ much work remains to be done. What theological emphases in the thought of John Walker, Thomas Kelly, or Edward Irving influenced Darby? What specific links can one establish between such leaders of New Testament Restorationist⁸ groups? We maintain that, although Darby was a theological innovator in a number of areas of doctrine, it is unlikely that he was unaffected by the aspirations of others (such as Walker, Kelly, Bulteel, etc.) for a return to apostolic Christianity. Two specific approaches offer promise in this regard: (1) a comparison of the commentaries of Darby with those of his contemporaries, and, (2) a study of his personal library to deter-

⁷See pp. 54-71, *supra*. Reid connects the Brethren to Irving and Walker in his Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted (Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Company, 1876), p. 10.

⁸For a brief discussion of the Plymouth Brethren Movement as a "New Testament Restorationist" group, see Donald F. Durnbaugh's The Believers' Church (New York: Macmillan, 1968), chapter VI "New Testament Restorationists," pp. 161-172.

mine what books provided theological stimuli for the constructing of his theology.⁹

Darby's exegetical method is certainly worthy of research. He often refers to particular texts which led him to his theological positions.¹⁰ Although some work has been done concerning the hermeneutical basis of dispensationalism,¹¹ to our knowledge, no one has studied Darby's own statements concerning his principles of interpreting the Bible.¹²

Further research is needed to determine the relationship between Darby's hermeneutics and his Pneumatology. We have discussed his concern that there be no dichotomy between the Spirit and the word.¹³ In the area of hermeneutics, how does the Spirit relate to the principles of interpretation which guide Darby in his exegesis? Can the Spirit,

⁹ See Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Nelson Darby (London: Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge), a list of his books which were auctioned on November 25, 1889.

¹⁰ Darby employs the following key passages as primary resources for his theological positions: Matthew 18:20 (where Jesus said "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"); Jeremiah 15:19 ("separating the precious from the vile"); Acts 2 and 4; Isaiah 23 (which provided part of the dispensational basis for his theology); Hebrews 10 (which Darby says was a text which kept him from becoming a Catholic); I Corinthians 12 (which led him to reject the concept of an invisible church); etc.

¹¹ See Bass, Backgrounds, pp. 149-154.

¹² See Letters, vol. I, pp. 102, 138, 179, 278, 320-321, 326, 402-403, 433-434, 438, 483; vol. III, p. 335; etc.

¹³ See pp. 261-265, *supra*.

for example, give the believer an interpretation of a passage which interpretation appears to violate the hermeneutics which are normally to control one's understanding of the Bible? Is He bound by certain principles of hermeneutics in His ministry of illumination?

Another area well-deserving of study is that of the relationship between Darby's doctrine of the Spirit and his view of homiletics. One writer surveying the rise of the Plymouth Brethren Movement points out that in its early stages it was marked not by a shift from disorganization to order but rather the reverse. The early settled order of worship became less organized and eventually there was a "complete liberty of ministry and sheer spontaneity."¹⁴ Both in the order of meetings¹⁵ and in the preparation and

¹⁴Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 57. Darby definitely went through a change in regard to recognized leadership. Although he later minimized the formal appointment of elders, in the early days of the movement he had addressed a letter to B. W. Newton as "Elder of the Saints meeting in Raleigh Street, Plymouth" (Shinn, *Ibid.*, p. 68. *Italics mine*).

¹⁵"Human order and human distraction was [*sic*] to be at a minimum so that the presence of the Spirit might operate unhindered" (*Ibid.*, p. 69).

With his rejection of a professional clergy ("The system of clergy, which hides itself under the name of ministry . . . can only subsist by denying absolutely every gift of the Holy Ghost" [*Collected Writings*, vol. III, p. 305]), Darby's doctrine of preaching would be worthy of research. Consistent with his understanding of spiritual gifts, Darby says that "the ability to preach in public is precisely the gift of God" (*Ibid.*, vol. XIV, p. 8). How did his doctrine of the Holy Spirit affect his understanding of homiletics? He states that the "routine of a sermon [*is not*] necessary to the course of the saints" (*Letters*, vol. I, p. 115) and rejects the idea of a designated speaker for church meetings (*Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 50-51). See Darby on the impulse of the Spirit (*Collected Writings*, vol. III, pp. 334-337).

delivery of sermons,¹⁶ the Spirit's operations were deemed primary. Newton had been opposed violently by Darby because Darby felt the former was adopting a professional "cleralism [sic] by promoting regular speakers and [a] pre-arranged program."¹⁷ Other homiletical issues worthy of research would include the question of the place of persuasion in preaching vis-à-vis the inner convicting work of the Holy Spirit, the general rejection of homiletical techniques (such as outlining, vocal dynamics, etc.) because of the Spirit's relationship to the preaching enterprise, and the Brethren's overall understanding of the public ministry of God's word.

One final area deserving further investigation concerns the doing of theology in dispensational circles. Are specific areas of theology dispensationally developed¹⁸ or

One source states that Darby and the Brethren "rejected all Church order and outward forms" (The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, F. L. Cross, editor, [London: Oxford University Press, 1957], "Darby", p. 373). This is not exactly true; Darby held to order and leadership within his understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ Statements opposing the use of the intellect such as the one cited by Shinn apparently discouraged the beforehand preparation of sermons: "The teaching of the Holy Spirit was referred to as the sacred 'light' that can enliven the soul better than the 'workings of the human mind for a thousand years'" (Shinn, *Ibid.*, p. 69, quoting Andrew Miller's The Brethren, Their Origin, Progress and Testimony [London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.], pp. 36 and 38).

¹⁷ Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 81.

¹⁸ Darby adamantly rejected the idea of development of doctrine:

dispensationally disclosed? Our study of Darby's Pneumatology would indicate the latter; i.e., that particular areas of doctrine, because of the principle of progressive revelation¹⁹ and the biblical scheme of dispensations, are dispensationally restricted. We have pointed out, for example, the doctrine of the assurance of salvation as one which was not the privilege of the saints of the Old Testament period. That biblical teaching awaited the glorification of the Son and the inner work of sealing by the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Further research, we believe, will demonstrate that other doctrines are dispensation specific.

"I deny absolutely development in divine things. In the human mind there is development; in the present truth there cannot be, for God has been revealed. There is no revelation more, nor meant to be any. Individuals may learn more and more, but it is there to be learned . . . Till revelation was complete, there were further truths unfolded, but it was by revelation. Once that complete [sic], all is closed; and Christianity completes it" (The Bible Treasury, November 1874, "Development," p. 176).

¹⁹The use or non-use of the Old Testament scriptures by dispensational groups would be a vital issue in such a study. The doctrine of progressive revelation is the belief that God revealed His truth in successive stages throughout the biblical revelation (Hebrews 1:1-3). Certain emphases in dispensational circles (such as typology and the belief that "the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed") seem to conflict with the doctrine of progressive revelation.

²⁰See our discussion of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit on pp. 149-156, *supra*.

A Theological Evaluation

Although the purpose of this dissertation has not been that of an overall evaluation of Darby's theology, some observations concerning our area of study may be helpful to those who would research other aspects of Darby's theology.

One must not forget in any study of Darby's writings that he does not set out to write a systematic theology. Although he does not completely repudiate the systematizing of doctrine,²¹ Darby does have a structure to his doctrinal formulations, but at times omits the discussion of passages which seem to relate to the theological issue at hand.²²

We have pointed out also Darby's lack of concern for literary clarity.²³ If "the heart makes the theologian,"²⁴ Darby certainly qualifies for the title, we believe, although we wish he had employed his will more effectively to produce a readable theology. His inatten-

²¹Note Darby's comment about Calvin's system in Ibid., vol. III, p. 211. Emphasizing that the testimony of the Brethren is to be their unity rather than their doctrinal formulations, (Letters, vol. I, p. 455), Darby warns against "going beyond scripture" in one's theology: "[Trusting our own grasp of fresh truths and their consequences may] carry our minds on to rocks hidden underneath the surface" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 23).

²²e.g. Darby's lack of exegesis of John 16:7-11 concerning the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. See our discussion on pp. 95-97, *supra*.

²³See pp. 3, 83-84 *supra*.

²⁴John T. McNeill uses this phrase to describe Calvin in Institutes, Introduction, p. li.

tion to literary form and style result in a limited circle of readers of his theology. Although the impact of his theology is broad,²⁵ it is our belief that his influence would be much greater on conservative theology if he had given more attention to his vehicle of communication.

Darby's writings demonstrate that he is primarily issue-oriented, that is, he devotes the majority of his attention to his contemporary situation and sets forth and defends his views on the basis of what he believes the Bible teaches. He treats issues which are of particular relevance to the Plymouth Brethren Movement, issues which highlight the truths which God is leading the Brethren to "recover."

One hardly can escape the conviction that in his theological writings Darby honestly attempts to be biblicistic. By this term we mean that for Darby the Bible is his primary theological source and that, by means of a "plain" or "normal" method of interpretation,²⁶ he desires to let it speak for itself.²⁷ He speaks optimistically of some who are

²⁵ See our second appendix, pp. 340-366, *infra*.

²⁶ For a discussion of the plain or normal hermeneutical method from a dispensational point of view, see Ryrie, Dispensationalism, chapter 5 "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism," pp. 86-109. Bernard Ramm's Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1956), pp. 89-92, is also helpful in this regard.

²⁷ As we have shown in our survey of Darby's doctrine of inspiration (see pp. 253-265, *supra*), he stands firmly in the conservative tradition in his view of the Bible as the word of God. By means of refutation (and, at times, ridicule) Darby takes to task modern critical theories which do not advocate his own convictions about the nature of God's revelation. Because he writes to those who hold the same doctrine of inspiration, Darby exerts his major ef-

getting into the truth of real Christianity . . . Growth in knowledge is needed. That is a return back to original truth as in the word, and the light it gives . . . Christianity must take its relative place of positive faith: faith wrought by the Holy Ghost in the word -direct faith in it, not by education nor by the church . . . Direct faith in the word, that is in God, is the test of real Christianity.²⁸

Darby's treatment of the scriptures, while not exhaustive or comprehensive, reveals his fundamental conviction that the Bible is to be the basis for one's theology. His doctrine of inspiration is the foundation for his taking the scriptures with utmost seriousness, although his system of treating the Bible by means of a dispensational hermeneutic can become so rigid as to prevent his appreciating the viewpoints of others who may not be of a dispensationalist persuasion. In our opinion, Darby is especially strong in his grasp of the

fort in exegesis rather than defense of the biblical text. Volumes VI and IX in Darby's Collected Writings contain several articles which set forth his basis for the rejection of higher critical theories.

²⁸Letters, vol. II, p. 307. For a suggested diagram which attempts to reflect the bibliocentric nature of Darby's theology, see Chapter III, p. 179, *supra*.

Darby often demeans education, although his background provided him a solid foundation in classical studies. Many of these anti-education statements are to be understood in their context of his rejection of a professional clergy:

"God can use learned men or ignorant men. He uses learning as he uses money -the man who seeks it will find his soul dried up, just like the man who seeks to get rich. God, moreover, chooses the foolish and weak things of this world to bring to nought the wise and mighty things. I do not think that the pursuit of learning by a man already called to the ministry will help him in his career. He that is not called, cannot study for the ministry; but all these reasonings flow from this: taking no account of the presence and of the importance of the operation of the Holy Ghost . . . The emulation of a young man who studies Greek and theology has hardly the imprint of those qualities required by the Spirit of God for elders" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 311).

overall theme of particular books of the Bible.²⁹ However, he does go too far at times with this approach. He states, for example, that because a book does not mention the resurrection and ascension of Christ, it is therefore of less value for the Church.³⁰

Darby's knowledge of the biblical languages and his awareness of textual problems are sometimes in evidence,³¹ yet, as one has stated, "he kept his Greek well hidden."³²

Darby's treatment of church history and of his theological predecessors leaves much to be desired.³³ In the

²⁹See, for example, his Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, passim.

³⁰See his essay "Comparison of Epistles" in Collected Writings, vol. XXVII, pp. 107-109. It is in this context that Darby speaks of the "different atmospheres" of the books of the Bible (Notes and Comments, vol. II, p. 1).

³¹See for example volume XIII of his Collected Writings which includes the following: "On the Greek Article" (pp. 30-84); "Additional Notes on the Greek Article" (pp. 85-90); "Brief Hints on the Greek Article" (pp. 91-105); "Greek Particles and Prepositions" (pp. 106-143); "Two Letters on the Greek Aorist in Translating the New Testament" (pp. 144-147); and "The Greek Aorist" (pp. 148-151); "The Sinai MS and Tischendorf's English New Testament" (pp. 204-205); "The Similarity of the Epistle of Jude and One Part of the Second Epistle of Peter" (pp. 216-231). Darby's New Testament - A New Translation shows his proficiency with the language of the New Testament and his grasp of many of the textual difficulties of the extant manuscripts. For an impressive list of critical texts, lexicons, and other tools for original translation work, see Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Nelson Darby, (London: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge).

³²Turner, Life, p. 34.

³³Shinn refers to Darby's disdain for church history and quotes the Irish ex-clergyman as once saying that "the year-books of Christianity are the year-books of hell" ("Plymouth Brethren," p. 15).

area of Pneumatology, he makes no references to the work of others and gives the impression that his theological statements possess the same finality as the Book upon which he has based those statements.

Darby's writings suffer from what one researcher calls theological "arrogance,"³⁴ that is, his treatment of church history and of his ecclesiastical contemporaries attempts to force the reader into either accepting all that Darby teaches or rejecting the positive contributions which he makes to conservative theology. This lack of theological humility is quite apparent.³⁵ Darby gives the impression that little written by Calvin (apart from the doctrine of justification by faith) applies to the former's theological situation. We could find few examples of Darby's referring to his theological predecessors with the intent of showing that his position is in line with what the great divines of

³⁴Ibid., p. 88.

³⁵Many of the issues we have touched on in this dissertation provide a partial explanation for this characteristic of Darby. Although we previously quoted the following statement by Miller (see page 268, note #16, *supra*), it also speaks to this issue of Darby arrogance:

"The teaching of the Holy Spirit [is] the sacred 'light' that can enlighten the soul better than the 'workings of the human mind for a thousand years'" (Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 69, quoting Andrew Miller's The Brethren, Their Origin, Progress and Testimony [London: Pickering and Inglis, n. d., p. 36]).

Such an understanding of the illumination of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated by Darby's historical consciousness, that is, his belief that he and the Plymouth Brethren were to be God's "testimony" for these "last days" (see pp. 181, *supra*).

the Church taught.³⁶ There is for Darby apparently little value to such an alignment with the history of conservative theology. One reason for this characteristic in Darby certainly seems to be his conviction that he and the Brethren were innovators³⁷ and recoverers³⁸ of truths hitherto not brought to light by the Spirit.

Is there evidence of change in Darby's theology or is his theology marked by a certain continuity of belief? Perhaps anticipating such questions, Darby relates his discovery of some of his tracts written in the 1820's:

I found tracts I had wholly forgotten, written thirty-three to thirty-eight years ago -all the truth as to the principles on which the fate of the world now hangs, I doubt not at all, put clearly out. Things have ripened, but that is all.³⁹

Darby shows some change as he continues the above statement:

We are too narrow-minded; still we ought to look for gathering power. I see a difference when I began. I was content to get the blessed position, and with two or three enjoy it in the freshness of the truth and Spirit of God. But now I would see all the Lord's gathered before He comes.⁴⁰

³⁶One of the few exceptions to this lack in Darby is his favorable mention of Chrystostom and his doctrine of the ministry (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 207).

³⁷Darby emphasizes, however, that the truths taught by the Brethren are nothing other than "a return back to original truth as in the word" (Letters, vol. II, p. 307). See also his rejection of any idea of development of doctrine in our previous section, p. 268, footnote #18, supra.

³⁸Darby speaks of the recovery role of the Brethren in such places as Letters, vol. I, pp. 254, 398, and 500; and vol. II, p. 4.

³⁹Ibid., p. 406. ⁴⁰Ibid.

Darby propagates to the end of his life the beliefs which he had embraced as a young Anglican priest.⁴¹ His three volumes of letters (which cover the entire span of his life and are carefully dated by their editor William Kelly) demonstrate very little change in Darby's theological positions. His early convictions provided the material upon which he elaborated for fifty years. The concept of a kind of progressive illumination, however, is taught by Darby both as it applies to history (i.e. truths needed by the contemporary church) and as he felt himself and the Brethren taught certain truths by the Spirit of God.⁴²

Although there appears to be very little change in Darby's theology over his fifty years of ministry, there is, however, evidence of some alteration, not in his theology, but in the application of his beliefs. He started in the 1830's with a broad soteriological basis for fellowship⁴³ but progressively tightened that circle of reception. The final result was a very narrow circle based to a large

⁴¹See Ibid., vol. I, p. 524 and vol. II, p. 499.

⁴²Darby speaks of his own growing grasp of the scriptures: "I almost fear sometimes that scripture gets too clear for me" (Ibid., p. 62). See also Ibid., p. 363 and his statement comparing the Brethren to the Reformers: "While I receive them [the truths brought out by the Reformers], I do not conclude that God has nothing to make known to me from His word necessary for the times in which we live" (Collected Writings, vol. IV, p. 91).

⁴³i.e. the Matthew 18:20 principle of "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Letters, vol. III, p. 301).



extent on Eschatology and Ecclesiology.⁴⁴

Darby displays little ability to distinguish between major areas of doctrine and minor issues of theological opinion. Though he affirms the need for charity among believers who differ, Darby tolerates little disagreement practically in theological areas which he feels are most needed by the contemporary church.⁴⁵

Although there is great unity, coherence, and even system in Darby's thought, certain ideas in his theology seem to conflict. How can one reconcile, for example, Darby's rejection of a federation of assemblies in 1828 with his insistence on a Central Committee overseeing the ecclesiastical affairs of London in 1848?⁴⁶ It is

Veitch in his Story gives in agonizing detail a survey of some of the divisions in the Brethren Movement (e. g., the New Lumpists, the Grant Division, the Stuart Division, the Bexhill Division, etc.) which were often caused by overscrupulous Brethren over minor doctrinal differences (pp. 73ff.).

⁴⁴ Darby was unrelenting in matters of church discipline. Writing to a Mr. Spurr of Sheffield in 1864 concerning a Mr. Goodall, Darby stated:

"I take part in this act [of church discipline], and hold him to be outside the Church of God on earth, being outside . . . what represents it in London . . . I come to Sheffield: there he breaks bread and is -in what? Not in the Church of God on earth, for he is out of it in London, and there are not two Churches on earth, cannot be, so as to be in one and out of another" (quoted in Veitch, Story, pp. 61-62).

⁴⁵ Referring to the editor of Darby's works, C. H. Spurgeon once said of William Kelly: "William Kelly had a mind made for the universe, but narrowed by Darbyism" (Veitch, Story, p. 77).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

difficult also to harmonize his belief that a fallen dispensation cannot be restored with his great emphasis on the pristine purity of the early church and the corresponding implication that the Brethren have recaptured the best elements of the apostolic period.⁴⁷

Because we have no apostles (in the narrow sense) today, it is impossible to "appoint" elders, Darby insists. At times he down-plays the public recognition of those who "are doing the work" of elders.⁴⁸ This position produces numerous problems in the area of leadership among Plymouth Brethren assemblies today which accept Darby's view.⁴⁹

Darby seeks to be eminently practical in his theology. This practical nature of his writings is characterized by a certain urgency.⁵⁰ Darby is thoroughly convinced

⁴⁷ See the following references for examples: Letters, vol. I, p. 398 and vol. II, p. 4. See also Durnbaugh's Believers' Church, pp. 161-172 concerning the Plymouth Brethren as a "New Testament Restorationist" group.

⁴⁸ Darby's conflict with B. W. Newton illustrates this point in several ways (see Letters, vol. I, pp. 89-90 and pp. 408 and 417). Shinn commends Darby for his emphasis on the laity's use of their diverse talents for ministry, but faults him for his "any-man" ministry and his failure to "acknowledge human life as a dignified medium for the expression of God's purposes" (Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 170). Darby does allow for the recognition of some leaders in the church (see Letters, vol. I, pp. 235-237).

⁴⁹ Veitch emphasizes this need for leadership in the Brethren meetings by stating that "God has committed the ministry of reconciliation not to unfallen angels, but to men - to sinners saved by His grace" (Story, pp. 106-107).

⁵⁰ Bass's explanation for Darby's hurried and unpolished literary style is that of the Irish ex-clergyman's passion for the truth (Backgrounds, p. 61).

that his message is of extreme importance; he has to be heard!⁵¹ As a man with a mission,⁵² Darby is certain that God has committed a "precious deposit" into the hands of the Brethren.⁵³ Such a conviction partially explains the utmost seriousness of his writings. There is no room, in Darby's opinion, for theological speculation; the practical truths of this dispensation (e.g., the presence and operations of the Holy Spirit, the priesthood of the believer, the diligent use of spiritual gifts, the expectation of the Lord's Second Coming, etc.) must be clearly taught and fervently believed!

Not only is Darby innovative in several areas of theology⁵⁴ but his influence is apparent in both dispensa-

⁵¹This may aid us in explaining Darby's emphasis by overstatement in the treatment of some issues (e.g., Darby certainly seems to overstate the role of the Holy Spirit in worship as we previously pointed out [see pp. 128-137, supra]).

⁵²Note his statement that "our real work is to get Christians clear practically of a great corrupt baptised body" (Letters, vol. II, p. 228).

⁵³Ibid., vol. I, p. 197.

⁵⁴Note Darby's statement concerning "a mass of biblical truth long hidden, some I believe never current in the historical church" in Ibid., vol. II, p. 356. His emphasis on a lay ministry, though not, by any means, without historical precedent (others such as the Huguenots and the Walkerites taught a similar view) is a major theme with Darby and receives much of his attention. Darby's teaching of a pretribulation rapture continues to divide those in conservative circles: was Darby the inventor of the theory or merely the popularizer of it? Although not innovative in areas such as Soteriology and Christology (see in this dissertation, pp. 180-183, supra, for his affirmation of the "great orthodox truths" of the church), Darby contributes a great deal of material to the areas of Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and the area we have discussed, Pneumatology.

tional and non-dispensational circles.⁵⁵

Our concern in this dissertation has been to systematically set forth Darby's understanding of the Person and Work of the Third member of the Divine Trinity. With words which Darby perhaps would employ to defend this area of his faith and to challenge us to a greater appreciation of the God who dwells in the midst of his people, we conclude:

They do not cease to assail our doctrine and to reproach and defame it with names that render it hated or suspect. They call it "new" and "of recent birth" . . . By calling it "new" they do great wrong to God, whose Sacred Word does not deserve to be accused of novelty . . . That it had lain long unknown and buried is the fault of man's impiety. Now when it is restored to us by God's goodness, its claim to antiquity ought to be admitted at least by right of recovery.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ See appendix II, pp. 340-366. Further research is needed to show the direct influence of Darby's writings on Cyrus Iverson Scofield, the editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, and on Lewis Sperry Chafer, the influential American dispensationalist and founder of Dallas Theological Seminary.

One must avoid the two-fold danger of attributing too much or too little to Darby's influence. A United Presbyterian report of several years ago contained the following statement:

"The Scofield Reference Bible (1910), and independent seminaries and Bible schools kept Darby's views alive and formed the seed bed from which have sprung seven current para-local church groups: Youth for Christ, Young Life, The Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts and Jews for Jesus" (Jerry White, The Church and the Parachurch [Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1983], p. 51, quoting from United Presbyterian Church in the USA, "Para-Church Groups: A Report on Current Religious Movements," New York, n. d., pp. 17-18.

⁵⁶ Institutes, "Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France," pp. 15-16.

APPENDIX ONE

THE CHURCH'S "JEWELS":
HAVE THEY BEEN FOUND AGAIN?
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS
IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN CALVIN,
JOHN WESLEY, EDWARD IRVING,
AND JOHN NELSON DARBY

We will not attempt to set forth a full presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit held by Calvin, Wesley, and Irving. Our purpose is rather to treat one important area (the question of "miraculous gifts") in their respective Pneumatologies, realizing that such a comparative study is but a brief introduction to future research projects.

The rationale for the selection of these three theologians is not complicated. Darby was a moderate Calvinist and had a certain respect for the Reformer's grasp of scripture. A number of writers on the Plymouth Brethren Movement have compared and contrasted John Darby and John Wesley. Darby and Edward Irving (who were essentially contemporaries) both stood on the "cutting edge" of much of the renewed concern for the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

Our procedure in this section will be to survey Darby's references in his writings to Calvin, Wesley, and Irving. We will focus our attention on what each theologian teaches concerning the "miraculous gifts," suggesting answers to such questions as: How does each writer define these gifts? Are these gifts available to the Church today? If so, in what sense? If not, for what reasons are they no longer present? We will compare each of the positions with Darby's view throughout our discussion.

Darby and
John Calvin

Darby's references to Calvin and Calvinism are only six in number. He rejects Calvin's teaching on baptism, unjustifiably accusing him, and the Reformers, of holding to a form of baptismal regeneration.¹

¹Darby emphasizes that the Reformers were men whose authority and theological positions must be scrutinized by the word of God:

"No one can say they [the Reformers] were freed from everything that had overburdened the truth. I do not see that these eminent men were so free from human views, and what governs human judgment according to this world, when they were framing systems for the countries they belonged to. . . . God has delivered us through the instrumentality of these men, some of whom laid down their lives for the gospel and their love to Christ and to souls. . . . But do not bring their doctors or their systems to me as authority. You are trenching on the authority of the word of God" (Collected Writings, vol. VII, pp. 205-6).

Darby particularly accuses Calvin of teaching a kind of baptismal regeneration. He quotes the Reformer:

"Baptism is to us as an entrance into the Church of God. . . . The Lord represents to us in it the remission of our sins, and, besides, our regeneration or spiritual renewal. Not that the water is the washing of our souls, for that belongs to the blood of Christ only, but by the sacrament that is signified to us . . . It is certain that in baptism the remission of sins is offered to us and we receive it . . . It is the faithful only who experience its efficacy. This grace is applied to us in baptism, inasmuch as we are then clothed with Jesus Christ, and receive then His Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 206).

Darby's selectivity of the quotations obscures Calvin's meaning. Calvin did not teach baptismal regeneration. For the full quote, see Calvin's Tracts (translated by Henry Beveridge, 3 vols., [Edinburgh, 1844-1851]), vol. II, pp. 85ff. In his misunderstanding of Calvin, Darby anticipates the question, did not the Reformers teach justification by faith? and responds:

"They did preach justification by faith for the deliverance of souls, and taught baptismal regen-

Darby disagrees with Calvin on several theological issues² and teaches that Calvin's doctrine of the Church³ was conditioned by the times in which he lived. Calvin acknowledged the truth as to the presence and operations of the Spirit in ministry in Darby's opinion, but Darby stresses that Calvin's clerical system, "adapted to [his] circumstances and to his own character," will no longer do; "more light has entered," Darby says; "the word has been searched; the energy of the Holy Ghost is at work."⁴

In this area of Ecclesiology, many comparisons could be made between Darby and Calvin. Calvin's delineation

eration when establishing a system, and tortured themselves to reconcile both" (Collected Writings, vol. VII, p. 207).

²Darby rejects Calvin's view that (in Darby's words) "Christ's living sufferings went to make up righteousness by atonement; that His life, as well as His death, was needed to complete our righteousness" (Ibid., p. 208). Darby's belief in the "non-atonement sufferings" of Christ has already been mentioned in this dissertation.

Darby is not hesitant in the least to set forth what he believes solves the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism with respect to the atonement, viz., the distinction that Christ died for all (propitiation) but bore the sins of only the elect (substitution) (Letters, vol. II, pp. 477-478; see also our discussion of Darby's doctrine of salvation, pp. 215-235 supra). Darby fails to distinguish between the beliefs of Calvin and those of his followers. Calvin held to an unlimited atonement; many Calvinists advocate that Christ died only for the elect.

³For Calvin's doctrine of the Church, see especially John Calvin, Calvin: Theological Treatises, trans. J. K. S. Reid, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXII. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.).

⁴Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 211.

between the external and internal ministers of the Word, for example, is quite similar to Darby's understanding of the presence and operations of the Spirit in the church. Calvin speaks of the human minister (the external minister) who is the Spirit's instrument in preaching the Word and in using the sacraments and of the Holy Spirit (the internal minister), who

freely works internally, while by his secret virtue he effects in the hearts of whomsoever he will their union with Christ through one faith.⁵

Calvin uses Acts 16:14 ("And the Lord opened [Lydia's] heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul") as a primary text to show the respective activities of the external and the internal ministers.⁶

Darby's understanding of the internal ministry of the Holy Spirit is a central tenet of his Pneumatology and is illustrated by his statement that

The Spirit is the Spirit of God; He is God, and is, therefore, the revelation of the presence and power of God in the soul -a revelation known through and in a new nature which is of Him. Consequently, that which is in the nature and character of God is developed where God dwells, i.e., in the soul of the saint.⁷

⁵ John Calvin, "Summary of Doctrine concerning the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments", Calvin: Theological Treatises, trans. J. K. S. Reid, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXII. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), p. 173.

⁶ John Calvin, Institutes, xxiv. 13.

⁷ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 315.

The primary area of Calvin's Ecclesiology in which we wish to compare Darby and Calvin concerns what often are termed "temporary" gifts. By temporary gifts we mean those spiritual gifts of ministry of a miraculous character which are discussed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 and which are held by some theologians to have "passed away" in the life of the contemporary church.⁸

Although Calvin's general teaching on the subject of spiritual gifts coincides with Darby's convictions on a number of points,⁹ we will confine our discussion to what both hold concerning the gifts of "discerning of spirits"

⁸For this study in Calvin, we are indebted to the work of Leonard Sweetman, Jr., in his "The Gifts of the Spirit: A Study of Calvin's Comments on I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11" in David E. Holwerda, ed. Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), Chapter 9. Hereafter cited as "The Gifts."

⁹Both men held that the purpose of spiritual gifts is that of promoting and maintaining the unity of the church (see Calvin's commentary on I Corinthians [12:4,7,11,24, 27,31; and 14:5,12,19] and his commentary on Ephesians [4:7,11] in The Commentaries of John Calvin, various translators, 46 vols. [Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843-55] (hereafter cited as commentary) and Institutes III. vii. 5-6). Darby's view of spiritual gifts in this respect is the same: "True ministry, by the power of the Spirit of God, brings God and His word to the soul" (Collected Writings, vol. XVIII, p. 287); as "the constituent power of unity to the body" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 352), the Holy Spirit animates the whole (the church) and acts in the parts; His acting in the individual members is called the charismata (Ibid., p. 332). Darby states that it was the lack of unity (due in part to an incorrect view of the ministry) which led him to leave the Established Church (Letters, vol. I, p. 420).

(I Corinthians 12:10), "miracles" (I Corinthian 12:10), "tongues" (I Corinthians, chapters 12-14), and "apostles" and "prophets" (prophecy) (Ephesian 4:11; Romans 12:6; and I Corinthians 12:10).

Believers, in Calvin's view, need one another. Sweetman points out that

"In Calvin's reading of Paul there is no room for the individual who in the privacy of his own spirit is confronted immediately by God and who in isolation from others answers God in the obedience of faith" ("The Gifts," p. 275).

Calvin's position is that

"On no one has God bestowed all things, but each has received a certain measure, so that we need one another; and by bringing together what is given to them individually, they help one another" (Commentary on Ephesians, 4:7).

Because Calvin held that God's generosity is expressed "in thinking everyone worthy of some gift" (Commentary on I Corinthians, 12:6),

"Calvin exhibits a sensitivity to the value of every individual as a functioning member of the Christian community. No Christian has been bypassed by the Spirit in His distribution of gifts. Every Christian, whatever his pedigree may be, is gifted by the Spirit" ("The Gifts," p. 277).

Darby also emphasizes that each believer has a spiritual gift. "This acting of the Holy Ghost in the members," Darby says, "is proper gift" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 351).

Each member is responsible to exercise his gift for the building up of the body of Christ. In his commentary on I Corinthians 12:28 Calvin warns against the "burying" of one's gift as if it were one's private possession. Referring to the same parable of the three servants in Matthew 25, Darby applies the principle to all believers that "each one is responsible both to use [one's gift] and to trade with it . . . If the love of Christ and His love to souls energize in our hearts, idleness and inaction are altogether impossible" (Collected Writings, vol. XIV, p. 5).

Calvin also speaks of working "within one's gift" in his commentary on I Corinthians 12:4-

"Paul therefore urges individuals to be content with their gifts, and to make the most of them. He forbids them to overstep their own bounds by selfishly striving to get something else."

Both writers agree that Paul's lists of gifts in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 were not meant to be exhaustive. Darby adds the gift of "evangelization" to Paul's lists in the above passages and states:

It is not actually mentioned in the gifts God has set in the Church. It is amongst the gifts which Christ conferred, on ascending up on high, for profit, and the work of the ministry.¹⁰

Darby's thought is much the same:

"Charisma . . . is spoken of as God's dealing to every man the measure of faith -this is to be the ground for every man to act upon; if he goes beyond it much or little, he is in the flesh and in folly" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 338).

Both theologians agree that a Christian leader's office is based on his possession of certain spiritual gifts.

"Because in Calvin's reading of I Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:4-8; and Ephesians 4:11, the gifts of the Spirit constitute the prerequisite for office, therefore no tension or competition can exist between those who possess the gifts of the Spirit and those who occupy offices in the institutional church" ("The Gifts," p. 281).

Darby's position is that much of the scriptural teaching on gifts has been forgotten. Men are appointed to invented offices; those who possess gifts are hindered from exercising them. The confusion, he says, of mixing gifts and offices has resulted in the system of the "clergy."

"True service to God is . . . where each member of Christ serves God . . . with the gift which Christ has communicated to him by the power of the Holy Spirit. If in the existing state of the Church the public re-establishment of the offices which scripture recognizes is not possible, God has nevertheless previously ordained all that is necessary, all that is good for such a state . . . It is, then, perfectly certain that gifts, and the service which believers render by gifts, are completely independent of the possession of office; and that those to whom God has communicated these gifts are obliged to use them for the edification of the saints" (Collected Writings, vol. XIV, p. 8).

¹⁰Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 135.

Calvin's position is that although Paul's lists in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 are not exhaustive, they are sufficient for Paul's purposes.¹¹ Because Paul's lists do not seem to be exhaustive, Calvin suggests that some gifts and offices apparently were temporary. Calvin states in his Harmony of the Gospels that

[The gift of performing miracles was given in the apostolic period] to add light to the new and as yet unknown Gospel. We see that [the use of miracles] ceased not long after, or at least, instances of them were so rare that we may gather that they were not equally common to all ages.¹²

Calvin's understanding of the gift of "discerning of spirits" (I Corinthians 12:10) involves the Christian community's critical oversight of the presence and reality of the gifts of the Spirit among specific members of that community. This gift, says Calvin, is not constituted of

the normal common-sense, which we make use of in forming judgments; but this is a special perspicuity, bestowed on a few people . . . not simply to prevent their being deceived by the lying faces or false airs.¹³

Darby's understanding of the gift of "discerning of spirits" is that it was a gift which was a supernatural means by

¹¹Calvin's Commentary on I Corinthians 12:8.

¹²Calvin's Harmony of the Gospels on Mark 16:17. See also Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 284.

¹³Commentary on I Corinthians 12:10. See also Calvin's Commentary on I John 4:1 where he states that "It is a remarkable work of God when He tames our obstinacy and makes us think alike and agree in a pure unity of faith." However, Calvin says in Institutes IV. ix. 13: "I deny it to be always the case that an interpretation of Scripture adopted by vote of a council is true and certain."

which the apostles exercised their authority:

He who discerned the spirits did just what those very words express: he judged if it was by a demon or by the Spirit of truth that any one spoke.¹⁴

Darby and Calvin do concur, however, in their understanding of the gift of "prophecy" and of the role of contemporary "prophets" (Romans 12:6; I Corinthians 12:10). Although Calvin does not dogmatically exclude the aspect of foretelling by today's prophet,¹⁵ his primary emphasis is that

prophets are those who are gifted with extraordinary wisdom [and possess an] aptitude for grasping what the immediate need of the Church is . . . [They¹⁶ speak] the right word to meet [that need].¹⁶

Darby's position is that prophets continue to exist today, not in the role of communicators of new revelation, but as those "who by a special energy of the Spirit can unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church."¹⁷

Concerning the gift of "miracles" (I Corinthians 12:10), Calvin is not dogmatic that miracles were limited to the Apostolic period, but suggests that "it is more likely that miracles were only promised for the time."¹⁸

¹⁴Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 228.

¹⁵Calvin's Commentary on Ephesians 4:11.

¹⁶Calvin's Commentary on I Corinthians 12:28.

¹⁷Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 142.

¹⁸Calvin's Harmony of the Gospels on Mark 16:17. Calvin does not deal with the textual problem of the ending of Mark's Gospel (which apparently should conclude with verse 8).

Calvin's argument is that because "instances of [miracles] were so rare (historically) . . . we may gather that they were not equally common to all ages."¹⁹

Calvin's belief is that miracles were designed to complement the proclamation of the Gospel in the apostolic period "to prevent the preaching of the Gospel being in vain."²⁰ He refers to Mark 16:20 ("And [the apostles] went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed") and states that this text "teaches what use we ought to make of miracles, if we are not to turn them into perverse corruptions; they must serve the Gospel."²¹

Because we have no miraculous gifts listed in Ephesians 4, Darby suggests that the Church no longer possesses the Pentecostal gifts such as miracles.²² "Sign-gifts" have "disappeared with the apostolic age," Darby emphasizes.²³ Darby's basis for believing that the miraculous gifts have

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 290, quoting Calvin's Harmony of the Gospels on Mark 16:17.

²¹ Calvin's Harmony of the Gospels on Mark 16:20.

²² Letters, vol. III, p. 198.

²³ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 302. Darby prefers the distinction "world gifts" (e.g. tongues) and "profit gifts" rather than the terms "miraculous" and "non-miraculous" gifts because he feels that the latter dichotomy implies that the Holy Ghost has ceased to act in the Church (Ibid., p. 131).

ceased is primarily his doctrine of the Church in Ruins (including the dispensational grieving of the Holy Spirit).²⁴ He stresses, however, that even though those gifts of a "sensibly miraculous character . . . we have lost . . . their absence does not touch the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the body."²⁵

Concerning the gift of "tongues" (I Corinthians 12-14), Calvin understands these to be "various languages which are the verbal mode of communication in specific cultures."²⁶ Calvin consistently maintains the position that "speakers in various tongues" describes those who have the ability to communicate effectively and precisely in a variety of known and operational languages.²⁷ Calvin interprets "tongues of angels" in I Corinthians 13:1 as a "hyperbole for something remarkable or rare," but presents no linguistic or historical evidence to support this assertion.²⁸ In his Commentary on Acts, Calvin equates the tongues of Acts 2 with Paul's reference to his own gift in I Corinthians 14:18,²⁹ and stresses that tongues were necessary in the

²⁴See our discussion, pp. 101-116 supra.

²⁵Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 338.

²⁶Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 291, referring to Calvin's Commentary on I Corinthians 12:28.

²⁷Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 292. ²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Calvin's Commentary on Acts 2:4.

first century, lest Christ would have been "confined to a small corner of Judaea."³⁰

Calvin claims that the gift of tongues is a legitimate and necessary gift in his own day when it aids prophecy.³¹ The illustration he uses, however, is that of the Greek and Hebrew languages³² and his point is not that pastors should preach the Gospel in Greek and Hebrew, but that

the theologians who had received as a gift of the Spirit the ability to use creatively and significantly the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament do so. This gift . . . operated in cooperation with the individual study of the gifted person.³³

Referring to I Corinthians 12, Calvin says Paul lists the following gifts which are not the direct ministering of the word: powers, the gift of healing, interpretation, government, and caring for the poor. He sees a two-fold division of this list:

Two of these I omit as being temporary, for it is not worthwhile to tarry over them. But two of them³⁴ are permanent: government and caring for the poor.

The miraculous gift of "healing," as mentioned in I Corinthians 12:9, is discussed by Calvin in the context

³⁰ Ibid., Acts 2:2.

³¹ Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 295.

³² Calvin's Commentary on I Corinthians 14:27.

³³ Sweetman, "The Gifts," pp. 295-296.

³⁴ Institutes, IV. iii. 8.

of his refutation of the Catholic doctrine of extreme unction. Calvin refers to the belief that the oil consecrated by the bishop, and administered with the formula "Through this holy anointing and through his most kindly mercy, may God pardon thee for whatever sins thou hast committed through seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, or tasting," is not supported by the Scripture which they cite (James 5:14). Calvin rejects the idea that a ceremonial mystery is connected with the act of healing and interprets the oil of James 5:14 to be a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His power in healing.³⁵

This gift of healing, in Calvin's opinion, is no longer present in the Church; there is no continuance of apostolic healing for us today:

That gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the gospel marvelous forever. Therefore, even if we grant to the full that anointing was a sacrament of those powers which were then administered by the hands of the apostles, it now has nothing to do with us, to whom the administering of such powers has not been committed.³⁶

Concerning the offices of "apostles" and "prophets" (Ephesians 4:11), Calvin makes a distinction between those

³⁵ Institutes, IV. xix. 18. Calvin later states:
 "Therefore, as by the symbol of oil the apostles have with good cause openly testified that the gift of healing committed to them was not their own power but that of the Holy Spirit, so on the other hand they wrong the Holy Spirit who make a putrid and ineffectual oil his power" (Ibid., IV. xix. 20).

³⁶ Ibid.

"ministries in the government of the church [which] were temporary and [those] which . . . were so instituted as to endure permanently."³⁷ Calvin's basis for this distinction is apparently his empirical observation that these offices died out early in the church's life rather than an extended exegetical study of Ephesians 4. The permanent offices of pastor and teacher are the counterpart to prophet and apostle in the life of the post-New Testament church.³⁸ Calvin's comment on the term "apostle" shows that, although the office of apostle was temporary, the work of the apostle continues:

By the meaning and derivation of the word all ministers of the church can properly be called "apostles," because all are sent by the Lord and are his messengers.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., IV. iii. 5. Calvin's lack of dogmatism in this area is admirable: "It is difficult," he states, "to make up one's mind about gifts and offices of which the Church has been deprived for so long, except for mere traces or shades of them which are still to be found" (Calvin's Commentary on I Corinthians 12:27).

³⁸ Ibid., IV. iii. 6. See also Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 285. "The pastor is bound to a particular congregation in a particular place, whereas the apostle's parish is the world" (Ibid.). Calvin speaks of the apostles and evangelists as those who are to "publish the doctrine of the Gospel throughout the whole world, to plant Churches and to erect the Kingdom of Christ. So they had no churches of their own; but they had a common mandate to preach the gospel wherever they went" (Calvin's Commentary on Ephesians 4:11); see also Institutes, IV. vii. 8.

³⁹ Institutes, IV. iii. 5. Sweetman's comment is helpful:

"When the term ["apostle"] is used to designate the Twelve, the disciples whom Jesus chose, then the term apostle describes an office in the church which was temporary and which disappeared after the New Testament

Calvin's understanding of the office of "prophet" is quite explicit. Referring to Ephesians 4:11, Calvin says,

Paul applies the name "prophets" not to all those who were interpreters of God's will, but to those who excelled in a particular revelation. This class either does not exist today or is less commonly seen.⁴⁰

The office of prophet has passed away, according to Calvin, but the gift of prophecy remains. In his great concern for the communication of the truth of God in the church, it may be said that

Calvin's description of the gift of prophecy . . . serves as an admirable description of the role of a preacher-pastor in the modern church.⁴¹

Darby's position on the offices of apostle and prophet have already been discussed in this dissertation.⁴² As those who "by a special energy of the Spirit unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church,"⁴³ apostles and prophets no longer exist as offices, but rather as ministries.⁴⁴ Darby and Calvin agree in their equating the term "apostle" with "missionary" with respect to the con-

age was closed. This usage Calvin calls 'its proper and generally accepted sense.' Paul, however, uses the term apostle also to refer 'in a general way to those who planted churches by bringing the doctrine of salvation to various places' (Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 286, citing Calvin's Commentary on Romans 16:7).

⁴⁰Institutes, IV. iii. 4.

⁴¹Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 286. ⁴²See p. 117 supra.

⁴³Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁴Ibid.

temporary church.⁴⁵ Although both theologians concur that we no longer possess the office of prophet today (especially in the sense of the communication of additional special revelation),⁴⁶ they are both concerned that the church possess individuals who speak the Word of God with authority.

In summarizing Calvin's position on these miraculous gifts, we see that these particular manifestations of the Spirit's activity, in Calvin's understanding, were never intended to be permanent demonstrations of the presence of the Third member of the Trinity. These gifts were useful for complementing the proclamation of the gospel in the time of the apostles and have disappeared with the apostolic age. The administering of such powers as the gift of healing has not been committed to us. The continuance of these miraculous gifts is not essential to the life and mission of the church, not have they been committed to us. They are

⁴⁵Sweetman points out that the definition of "apostle" in Calvin

"fits well the function or role . . . of missionary in the modern church . . . The missionary . . . functions as one whose role is 'to publish the doctrine of the Gospel throughout the whole world, to plant Churches and to erect the Kingdom of Christ.' This is Calvin's description of the role of the apostle" (Sweetman, "The Gifts," p. 286).

⁴⁶See, for example, Darby's statement in Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 296-297. Calvin's belief in a closed canon of Scripture is reflected in such places as Institutes, IV. viii. 8; I. vii. passim. See also H. Jackson

also not a major aspect of Calvin's understanding of God the Holy Spirit's work among men today.⁴⁷

Darby and
John Wesley

Several historians of the Brethren Movement compare the personalities and ministries of John Nelson Darby and John Wesley (1703-1791). Although they stand in contrast to one another in their positions on the Established Church,⁴⁸ they are similar in other respects. One writer says that Darby,

Forstman, Word and Spirit - Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), passim.

⁴⁷ Sweetman's conclusion on Calvin's doctrine of miraculous gifts illustrates this point:

"[In Calvin's view] God's presence and activity in the world, including indwelling His saints, is always a mediated presence and activity. God does not confront men nor operate in the world directly, immediately. He always uses agents who are His voice and His hands among men" ("The Gifts," pp. 302-303).

⁴⁸ Although Wesley remained a loyal member of the Church of England, John Nelson Darby could not do so. Wesley's Sermon LXXX, "On Schism" presents his concern for remaining within the Church of England:

"To separate ourselves from a body of living Christians, with whom we were before united, is a grievous breach of the law of love . . . I am now and have been from my youth, a member and a minister of the Church of England. And I have no desire nor design to separate from it till my soul separates from my body. Yet if I was not permitted to remain therein, without omitting what God requires me to do, it would then become meet, and right, and my bounden duty, to separate from it without delay" (quoted in Howard Watkin-Jones, The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley [London: The Epworth Press, 1929], p. 231. Hereafter cited as The Holy Spirit).

In contrast with this position, the burden of Darby and the

like Wesley, was

an itinerant man of few domestic pleasures, a man with magnetic, electric personal qualities combined with a tyrant's will to lead and intolerance of criticism.⁴⁹

Both men had the highest regard for the Scriptures.

Another Brethren historian writes that

The place of the Bible in the early Brethren movement was . . . essentially the same as in the great traditions of Protestant renewal. Luther had pronounced his conscience captive to the Word of God; Calvin had built his churches and his theology on a basis of profound Biblical exposition; the Independent John Robinson had looked for "more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word;" and John Wesley had exclaimed "Oh, give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri." The Bible . . . was at the heart of Groves's movement of soul. Darby, too, spoke of how, in the days after his riding accident near Dublin, the Scriptures⁵⁰ had gained 'complete ascendancy' over him.

Concerning Ecclesiology, Darby, although he personally withdrew from the Established Church,⁵¹ would identify

Brethren Movement was to "get Christians clear practically of a great corrupt baptised body" (Letters, vol. II, p. 228) and, "separating the precious from the vile" (Jeremiah 15:19), to form a remnant community as God's witness in the world.

⁴⁹Sandeen, Roots, p. 31. Sandeen continues his comparison, however, by saying that

"Unlike Wesley [Darby] often demonstrated as much zeal in destroying a work of his own building as he did in its first construction . . . Also unlike Wesley and most unfortunately for his historical reputation, the clarity with which [Darby] perceived the will of God was never matched by his ability to write it down. He left a massive set of Collected Writings which are almost uniformly unintelligible" (*Ibid.*).

⁵⁰Coad, History, p. 250. For Darby's experience, see Letters, vol. II, p. 298.

⁵¹Darby states that "What led me out of the Establishment was the unity of the body" (Letters, vol. I, p. 420). See also his article "Separation from Evil - God's Principle of Unity"

with Wesley's desire for the manifestation of unity among the people of God. One writer quotes Wesley:

"There was one thing much insisted on in Scripture -the unity of the Church -which none of them, I thought, clearly explained or strongly inculcated." So John Wesley described part of his early theological studies. The factor which Wesley missed in the writers he studied was one of the central aspirations of the early Brethren movement.⁵²

Darby frequently speaks of the necessity of having a "heart large enough to embrace all God's children walking before Him."⁵³ Unity in the church in Darby's view is not to be maintained by any nationalistic principle (the Established Church) or by adherence to a particular set of favored doctrines (the Dissenting Church) but is rather the special work of the Spirit of God.⁵⁴

(Collected Writings, vol. I, pp. 353-365).

⁵²Coad, History, p. 275.

⁵³Letters, vol. III, p. 447. Darby's guiding principle, "jealousy for Christ's honour" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 192), apparently inhibited his ability to distinguish major issues worthy of separation from other Christians from minor disagreements which could be charitably tolerated. His Ecclesiology caused him to separate from the original Plymouth gathering in 1848 and he remarked: "I am quite decided to walk in what I am satisfied is the Lord's [ground]. If they [the Brethren in Plymouth] do not like it, I have no desire nor thought of quarrelling; we shall not walk together" (Ibid., p. 186).

⁵⁴e.g. "What I felt from the beginning . . . the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore, the essential principle of unity with His presence" (Letters, vol. I, p. 94); Darby speaks of the Spirit as "the constituent power of unity to the body" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 352) and insists that "nothing can produce unity, but the teaching and power of the Spirit of God" (Letters, vol. I, p. 112). Darby warns the Brethren: "I am anxious that the brethren's testimony

Wesley's practice of appointing lay ministers is similar to Darby's emphasis on the priesthood of believers and the "rights of Christ" to use sovereignly the gifts bestowed by the Spirit.⁵⁵

With Wesley's concern for and definition of the Church, Darby, though he would certainly want to add many details, would probably agree:

How much do we almost continually hear about the Church! With many it is matter of daily conversation. And yet how few understand what they talk of: how few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, "the Church," is scarce to be found in the English language . . . The . . . universal Church is all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them . . . to be "one body," united by "one Spirit," having "one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all."⁵⁶

Darby, who so frequently quotes Matthew 18:20 ("For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"), would have felt perhaps some affin-

should rest on its own bottom -the unity of the church of God" (Ibid., p. 455). He desires that they should be kept "in unity on true divine ground as the testimony of God" and declares "I should deplore as ruinous, slipping into the place of followers of a system of doctrine" (Ibid.).

⁵⁵ Wesley "was forced by circumstances into an act which made inevitable a breach between his Methodist societies and the Church of England, when in 1784 he himself appointed ministers in the societies of America for the administration of the sacraments. For some years before this he had recognized the validity of lay preachers among the societies, and the striking development of this system among the Methodists is a further interesting step in the direction of the theory of the ministry which was later to characterize Brethren" (Coad, History, p. 103).

⁵⁶ Sermon LXXIX, "On the Church" in Wesley's Standard Sermons. Edited and annotated by Edward H. Sugden. 2 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1921).

ity with Wesley's reference to Cyprian's declaration that "where two or three believers are met together, there is a Church."⁵⁷

There is agreement between these two theologians on the issue of "grieving the Spirit," although Darby emphasizes his dispensational understanding of this sin.⁵⁸

Several other areas of agreement between Darby and Wesley are worthy of mention,⁵⁹ but we want to examine briefly one final point of comparison between them before we look at the issue of miraculous gifts. What both hold on the doctrine of sanctification deserves our attention.

Darby vigorously campaigned against what he termed "Wesleyan Perfectionism." He attacked the nineteenth century Perfectionists (including a leading Perfectionist preacher, R. Piersall Smith), and took Wesley to task for "not following the word of God":

⁵⁷Quoted in Watkins-Jones, The Holy Spirit, p. 230.

⁵⁸Wesley says in his sermon, "On Grieving the Holy Spirit":
 "We are said to grieve the Holy Spirit by our sins, because of His immediate presence with us. They are more directly committed under His eye, and are therefore more highly offensive to Him" (Sermon CXXXVIII). For Darby's doctrine of grieving the Spirit by the individual believer, see pp. 164-165 supra. Darby discusses the dispensational grieving of the Spirit under his concept of the "church in ruins" (see pp. 102-117 supra).

⁵⁹Both preachers traveled extensively. As one writer has said, "[Darby's] travels were world-wide, and, in a century when means of travel had vastly improved, must have greatly exceeded those of John Wesley in extent, and have equalled them in ardour" (Coad, History, p.107).

Fervency of conviction often gives rise to perhaps

The source whence John Wesley derived this doctrine was by no means the Bible; he himself honestly confessed it. He believed the Bible confirmed his ideas, but he did not derive them thence. He learned them from Bishop Taylor, Law, and Thomas -a-Kempis. It was not till four years after he had studied the first of these writers, and while he was still deeply imbued with his doctrines, that he took the Bible as the sole standard of truth.⁶⁰

Wesley's doctrine of "Christian Perfection" was partially based on his understanding that when the Scripture commanded the believer to be "perfect," such a state must then indeed be obtainable. He resolved some of his difficulties in this area by limiting his definition of sin:

To explain myself a little farther on this head:
 (1) Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin, improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. (2) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes

unwarranted frankness of speech. Wesley and Darby were both prone to "speak their minds." Wesley wrote in his Journal on February 28, 1770 that he had been reading Baron Swedenborg. Wesley says: "He is one of the most ingenious, lively, entertaining madmen, that ever set pen to paper" (quoted in Watkin-Jones, The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley, p. 48). Darby shows little restraint when he disagrees with other men of God. He describes the theological works of others with words such as: "it is a stupid paper" (Letters, vol. III, p. 393) and "the whole thing is an unfounded mess" (*Ibid.*, p. 451). His harshest words are reserved for those who opposed him during the Bethesda incident of 1848. He characterizes his adversaries as "tools in Satan's hands" (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 466); who are marked by "profound contempt for the Lord" (*Ibid.*, p. 200) because of their "moral blindness" (*Ibid.*, p. 181); "when people love the world," Darby says, "they go to Bethesda" (*Ibid.*, p. 268).

⁶⁰ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 164, quoted by Robertson, "Sanctification," pp. 384-385. Robertson's entire

inseparable from mortality. (3) Therefore sinless perfection is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned.⁶¹

Because nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God,

This definition emphasized, in a spirit that later in America would suit the modern democratic age⁶² the concept of sin as a voluntary act of will.

Darby emphasizes his belief that the Wesleyan "attenuates the idea of sin and holiness to bring them on a level with the state of [his] own soul."⁶³

Wesley believed, furthermore, that Christians could be freed by God's grace not only from specific sinful actions, but also from the disease of sinful motives and the "power" of sin. This state Wesley called "entire sanctification."

It usually involved both a growth in grace and a dramatic experience. The condition of "perfection" of having "perfect love" had to be maintained at all times and was one from which the Christian might fall.⁶⁴

chapter XII (pp. 366-408) is helpful in evaluating Wesley's doctrine of sanctification, the nineteenth century Perfectionist doctrine of sanctification, and the Reformed doctrine of sanctification.

⁶¹Thomas Jackson, ed. The Works of the Reverend John Wesley. 3rd edition. 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872), XI, 396. Hereafter cited as Works.

⁶²Marsden, Fundamentalism, p. 73.

⁶³Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 179.

⁶⁴Marsden, Fundamentalism, pp. 73-74.

Referring to R. Piersall Smith, Darby writes:

I reject wholly the theories of Mr. R. P. S., and his false perfection; yet there is a power which keeps us close to God, so that sin does not enter, the wicked one does not touch us, the flesh is not brought into activity. The soul is then occupied with the Lord, and with what concerns Him. It is not only kept from what is corrupt in its thoughts, but from irritation and passion, from that which⁶⁵ is not lust, but the fruit of unmortified flesh.

Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, although not presented systematically by him,⁶⁶ reveals that

[He] is not content to stop with a consideration of what God does for us through the life and death

⁶⁵Letters, vol. II, p. 331. Darby wrote the following articles to combat Wesleyan Perfectionism: "Christ and Sanctification" (vol. XXXIII, pp. 48-60); "Letter on Free-Will" (vol. X, pp. 185-187) . . . where JND says: "Man was free in Paradise, but then he enjoyed what was good. He used his free choice, and therefore he is a sinner. To leave him to his free choice, now that he is disposed to do evil, would be a cruelty" (Ibid., pp. 186-7); "The Doctrine of the Wesleyans on Perfection and Their Employment of Holy Scripture as to This Subject" (vol. III, pp. 164-205) . . . where Darby speaks of the sources of Wesley's doctrine, Thomas-a-Kempis, Law and Taylor, and says about Kempis that he "had the least possible knowledge of the love of God" and concerning Law and Taylor that "neither . . . had the slightest conception of grace . . . No instructed Christian who has read their works doubts their utter ignorance of the gospel. Such are the three sources whence John Wesley acknowledged he first derived the doctrine which he has introduced into the Church" (pp. 164-5).

⁶⁶"It is useless," says one writer, "to search Wesley's thought for any systematic presentation of the doctrine of the Third Person of the Trinity, but it is only necessary to read a few of his sermons in order to realize the tremendous emphasis that he gave to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men. 'But I think,' he writes as a young man, 'that the true notion of the Spirit is, that it is some portion of, as well as preparation for, a life in God'" (William Ragsdale Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley,

of his Son but moves on to a positive statement of what God does in us through his Spirit.⁶⁷

Wesley's fervent belief is that "the Holy Spirit is the immediate minister of God's will upon earth, and transacts all the great affairs of the Church of Christ."⁶⁸

Although a number of areas of comparison between Darby and Wesley would be profitable,⁶⁹ we will limit our discussion to what Wesley holds concerning the miraculous gifts.

Wesley's belief is that, even though the supernatural empowerment of the apostolic period does not continue, believers today may possess the miraculous gifts in a "lower sense." Wesley states:

I desire any calm and serious man to read over this whole chapter [I Corinthians 12], and then he will easily judge . . . whether (although it be

[New York: Abingdon Press, 1946], p. 214, quoting Sermon CXLI). Hereafter cited as Cannon, Wesley.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 213.

⁶⁸Sermon CXXXVIII, "On Grieving the Holy Spirit."

⁶⁹The doctrine of assurance is one of the more emphasized areas of Wesley's Pneumatology. Referring to his own experience at Aldersgate, Wesley writes: "The Spirit itself bore witness that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof, and I immediately cried, Abba, Father!" (Sermon XI, part iii, sec. 6). Cannon notes that Wesley, on the basis of his own experience, "laid down as a principle of the religious life that the direct witness of the Spirit, providing the believer with a sense of assurance, is the natural accompaniment of justification itself and is granted unto every child of God" (Cannon, Wesley, p. 215). In Sermon X, Wesley states that when the Spirit of God is present in the soul, "a man can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt the shining of the sun while he

allowed that they were peculiarly fulfilled in the apostles, yet) they do not manifestly belong, in a lower sense, to every true minister of Christ?⁷⁰

Speaking of John 14:26 ("[The Holy Spirit] shall teach you all things"), Wesley says:

I grant indeed that these words were more eminently fulfilled in the age of the apostles. But this is altogether consistent with their belonging in a lower sense to all Christians, in all ages; seeing they have all need of an "unction from the Holy One," a supernatural assistance from the Holy Ghost, that they may know, in the due use of all proper means, all things needful for their souls' health.⁷¹

In order to avoid misunderstanding, Wesley states:

I do not mean that Christians now receive the Holy Ghost in order to work miracles; but they do doubtless now receive, yea, are "filled with the Holy Ghost," in order to be filled with the fruits of that blessed Spirit.⁷²

To prove that the performance of miracles does not guarantee conviction and belief on the part of those who witness them, Wesley refers to the miraculous works of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 14); the supernaturally accomplished

stands in the full blaze of its beams" (part i, sec. 12, quoted in Cannon, *Ibid.*, p. 219). The following incident with Darby is related by Turner:

"One day when Mr. Darby was expounding I John 1:7 showing that the subject dwelt on there is "where you walk, not how," Dr. Steele [an advocate of Wesleyan Perfectionism] interrupted with the question, 'But, Brother Darby, suppose a real Christian turned his back on the light, what then?' 'Then,' replied Mr. Darby, 'the light would shine upon his back!'" (*Life*, p. 23).

⁷⁰ Gerald R. Cragg, ed. *The Works of John Wesley*, 34 vols., (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), vol. 11 entitled "The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters," p. 153.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154. ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

execution of Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16); and the healing of the impotent man at Lystra (Acts 14). None of these led to immediate and total faith on the part of the observers, says Wesley. He then asks, "who will ever be empowered of God again to work such miracles as these were?"⁷³

Wesley's interpretation of I Corinthians 13:8 ("Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away") reflects his belief that such miraculous gifts may yet be present in that lower sense:

When that Christian life, wherein the apostles and first Christians were but infants, shall arrive to its full vigour and maturity in their successors, then miracles shall cease. But I fear that time is not yet come. I doubt none that are now alive enjoy more of the vigour and maturity of the Christian life than the very first Christians did.⁷⁴

Wesley is also aware of the argument by some that miraculous gifts are no longer needed in the church. He insists, however, that although history reveals the lack of these gifts after the first few Christian centuries, the cause of the cessation of these gifts is not their temporary character, but the church's carnality:

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian . . . From this time they almost totally ceased;

⁷³Ibid., pp. 512-513. ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 506.

very few instances of the kind were found. The cause of this was not, (as has been vulgarly supposed,) "because there was no more occasion for them," because the world was become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was, "the love of many," almost of all Christians, so called, was "waxed cold." . . . This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church; because the Christians were turned Heathens again, and had only a dead form left.⁷⁵

From the above quotation we note Wesley's belief that the presence of miraculous gifts is not historically conditioned. "That fatal period" in which Emperor Constantine professed to accept Christianity has little bearing on the issue of the continuance of such manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The spread of biblical truth did not make the miraculous gifts less necessary. The real cause for the present absence of miraculous gifts, in Wesley's view, is that of the low spiritual state of those who are genuine believers. The carnality of the church inhibits the Spirit from manifesting Himself in the charismata of I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.⁷⁶

Lest someone think that the lack of historical examples of these miraculous gifts should determine whether they are no longer available for God's purposes, Wesley emphasizes:

I do not know that God hath anywhere precluded himself from thus exerting his sovereign power, from working miracles in any kind or degree, in any age to the end of the world. I do not recollect any Scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic or the Cyprianic age, or of any period of

⁷⁵Sermon LXXXIX. ⁷⁶Ibid.

time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things. I have not observed, either in the Old Testament or the New, any intimation at all of this kind.⁷⁷

Wesley's support for the continuance of miraculous gifts today is based partially on his own experience and on the experience of others which he observed. He refers to the sudden "deliverance" of John Haydon⁷⁸ and to his own recovery⁷⁹ and states: "I cannot account for either of these in a natural way. Therefore I believe they were both super-natural."⁸⁰

Wesley's account of one miracle is straightforward and the occurrence is immediately linked by him to the Christian practice of prayer:

What I aver is the naked fact. Let everyone account for it as he sees good. My horse was exceeding lame. And my head ached much. I thought, "Cannot God heal man or beast, by means, or without?" Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. It was so; and I believe thousands of serious Christians have found as plain answers to prayer as this.⁸¹

As he recounts a number of other miracles, Wesley asks,

⁷⁷Works, "A Letter to the Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Gloucester," II. 16. Hereafter cited as "Lord Bishop."

⁷⁸For an account of Haydon's healing, see Wesley's Journal of May 2, 1739;

⁷⁹For Wesley's healing see Works, "The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained," IV. 11.

⁸⁰Works, "Lord Bishop," II. 12.

⁸¹Wesley's Journal, March 17, 1746.

But what does all this prove? Not that I claim any gift above other men, but only that I believe God now hears and answers prayer, even beyond the ordinary course of nature.⁸²

The definitions which Wesley gives to the miraculous gifts mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 may be summarized as follows:

The "word of wisdom" means light to explain the manifold wisdom of God in the grand scheme of gospel salvation; the "word of knowledge," a power of explaining the Old Testament types and prophecies. "Faith" may mean an extraordinary trust in God under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances; "the gifts of healing," a miraculous power of curing diseases; "the discerning of spirits," a supernatural discernment whether men were upright or not, whether they were qualified for offices in the church, and whether they who professed to speak by inspiration really did so or not.⁸³

In his sermon "The More Excellent Way," Wesley refers to "speaking with strange tongues, such as the speaker had never learned."⁸⁴

Wesley makes a division between extraordinary and ordinary offices in the church. He regarded apostles, prophets, and evangelists as being the "extraordinary officers, while pastors and teachers were the ordinary officers."⁸⁵

Wesley, much like Calvin, is not dogmatic when he

⁸²Works, "Lord Bishop," I. 7.

⁸³Works, "Lord Bishop," II. 3.

⁸⁴Sermon LXXXIX, "The More Excellent Way."

⁸⁵John Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (London: The Epworth Press, rep. 1954), p. 713. Cited in The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit, A Wesleyan Perspective, Charles Webb Carter, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1974), p. 282.

addresses the question as to whether God may use miracles today. Although he seems to encourage Christians to seek these miraculous gifts,⁸⁶ their presence is not essential to his understanding of the mission of the church or the genuine activities of the Holy Spirit. Wesley allows that there could be those who could do "real and undoubted miracles," but he emphasizes that those miracles must be by God's power and at His pleasure. Writing to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, Wesley issues the following challenge:

I cannot but think there have been already so many interpositions of divine power, as will shortly leave you without excuse if you either deny or despise them.⁸⁷

Wesley does not insist that God either may or may not use miraculous gifts:

As there have been already so many instances of this kind, far beyond what we dared to ask or think, I cannot take upon me to say whether or no it will please God to add to their number. I have not herein "known the mind of the Lord" . . . "Let him do what seemeth⁸⁸ him good." I desire only to be as clay in his hand.

In concluding this section on Wesley's view of miracles and the miraculous gifts, we note that his emphasis is constantly on the gospel and its proclamation to needy

⁸⁶"I pretend to no extraordinary revelations or gifts of the Holy Ghost: none but what every Christian may receive, and ought to expect and pray for" (Cannon, Wesley, p. 217, quoting Watkin-Jones, The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley, p. 316).

⁸⁷Works, "Lord Bishop," II. 13.

⁸⁸Ibid. The continuance of miracles or miraculous gifts is not an essential element in Wesley's theology. Miracles are not necessary to prove our doctrine, says, Wesley, for

sinners. Considering the conversion of an individual sinner to Christ as the greatest of miracles, he says:

O that it were possible for you to consider calmly whether the success of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even as it is preached by us, the least of his servants, be not itself a miracle never to be forgotten! One which cannot be denied, as being visible at this day, not in one but an hundred places; one which cannot be accounted for by the ordinary course of any natural causes whatsoever; one which cannot be ascribed, with any colour of reason, to diabolical agency; and lastly, one which will⁸⁹ bear the infallible test, the trial of the written Word.

Although Darby does not specifically evaluate Wesley's view on miraculous gifts, certain comparisons and contrasts would seem to be appropriate. Darby agrees that the supernatural manifestations of the apostolic period do not continue in the life of the contemporary church. Wesley's belief in the church's carnality is similar to Darby's dispensational understanding that the Holy Spirit has been grieved and that the Church is in "ruins." Because a fallen dispensation may not be restored,⁹⁰ we are not to expect any revival of the apostolic gifts. Darby would probably agree with Wesley's statement that Christians today possess the Holy Spirit in a lower sense if that statement is to be

"we prove these by Scripture and reason; and if need be, by antiquity" (Ibid., II. 18). They are not necessary for the conversion of sinners; "this is the work of God alone, only using what instruments he pleases" (Ibid., II. 19). Nor do miracles or miraculous gifts prove our calling to the ministry (Ibid.).

⁸⁹Ibid., II. 19.

⁹⁰Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 278.

understood as emphasizing the lack of miraculous gifts for believers today.

Concerning Wesley's exegesis of I Corinthians 13:8, Darby and Wesley would disagree on the gifts that should "pass away." Wesley's position is that we are not in the state of full Christian vigor and maturity which, therefore, would make these gifts unnecessary. Darby would concur with that statement, but gives the following basis for holding that the miraculous gifts do not continue:

There is no promise of their [the miraculous gifts] continuance though it may foreshadow their passing away. It is power, and then the Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He will, but it is a perfect state of things; the gifts are in a certain sense meant to fail, and so their continuance is not the subject at all; but I do get the assurance of their continuance when I come to [the gift of] edification.⁹¹

Darby would disagree with Wesley that the lack of these gifts in church history is due to the Church's carnality. That lack is due, in Darby's understanding, to the standard progress of a dispensation in which (1) God gives to humanity a responsibility; (2) humanity fails to fulfill that task; (3) God intervenes and accomplishes His will

⁹¹Miscellaneous Writings, vol. IV, p. 94. It is somewhat remarkable that Darby's only treatment of I Corinthians 13:8, a passage used by many to insist on the cessation of miraculous gifts, is the quotation we have given. Darby's argument against the continuance of miraculous gifts is not that of what the Church has attained (i.e. the "that which is perfect" of I Corinthians 13:10) but rather that of what the Church has lost through its dispensational grieving of the Holy Spirit.

despite humanity's dispensational failure.⁹²

Although Darby, like Wesley, does not believe that the Scriptures themselves teach that God can no longer use the miraculous gifts,⁹³ Darby does make a distinction between "foundational" gifts (especially the gifts of apostles and prophets) and "edifying" gifts (gifts such as teaching, edification, etc.).⁹⁴ He views these two categories within a chronological framework; the Church is historically existing in the period in which God is primarily using the edification gifts.

That the extraordinary administration of these things by the hands of the apostles has ceased, I do not deny . . . But . . . the Holy Ghost abides. He is sovereign, He is mighty; and the gifts for edification have not ceased. If the gifts which were signs have disappeared with the apostolic age, the testimony of the Church to the world, in its power and its unity, has also by degrees disappeared with these manifestations of the Holy Ghost.⁹⁵

God's present ministry to the church is not that of

⁹²See, for example, Darby's statement in his discussion of the office of apostle:

"The fruits of authoritative regulation were left (as every dispensation had been) in the responsibility of man, and men have entirely failed. But the revelation of the will of God is complete, and is there for us to refer to by the Spirit, according to the light of the word in our present condition, not by imitation, but by obedience" (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 149).

⁹³"I fully believe in the cutting off of the dispensation, because of the failure of the Church; but I put no limit to what God, meanwhile, may do in grace towards believers" (*Ibid.*, p. 299).

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 302.

its establishment, but rather that of its edification.

Referring to the list of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12, Darby says:

[in this list] we have, in general, all the gifts which are, for the establishmen of Christianity, signs to the world, and proofs of the glory of the victory of Christ as man, and of His rights of government in the church. Evangelists and pastors -that which is now called ministry -are not found there at all. It is rather the aggregate of divine operation and capacity in the body, than the care which Christ takes of the body as being His. Thus, except the gift of teacher, which is connected with that of pastor, all the gifts found here are now lost -at least in their primitive form and character.⁹⁶

Darby and Edward Irving

We will present in this section neither a historical overview of the life of Edward Irving (1792-1834) nor a survey of his theology.⁹⁷ Irving was a minister of the National Scotch Church, Regent Square, London in 1827, and it was here that he first was suspected of teaching a here-

⁹⁶ Ibid., vol. I, p. 221.

⁹⁷ For the life of Irving, see Margaret Oliphant's The Life of Edward Irving (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1862); Jean Christie Root's Edward Irving, Man, Preacher, Prophet (Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1912); and Arnold Dallimore's Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement -The Life of Edward Irving (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983). For surveys of Irving's theology, see The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes, Gavin Carlyle, ed. (London: Alexander Strahan, 1864); Edward Irving, "Facts Connected with Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts," Fraser's Magazine, January and February 1832; Gordon Strachan's The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving (London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1973); and, Edward Miller's The History and Doctrine of Irvingism. 2 vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1878).

tical view of the nature of Christ. His book on the Incarnation, published in 1828, led to the Scots Presbytery of London accusing him of teaching that Jesus Christ was a sinner. Although he withdrew from its jurisdiction, Irving was found guilty of the charge of heresy and of contumacy.⁹⁸

The evidence of certain miraculous gifts was manifested in the early years of the 1830's in Irving's Regent Square Church. Miss Mary Campbell spoke in tongues on Sunday, March 28, 1830; she was also healed of consumption several days later at her home. Mrs. Cardale spoke in tongues and prophesied on April 30, 1831; Miss Hall spoke in tongues in the vestry of Regent Square Church on Sunday morning, October 30, 1831. As these miraculous gifts began to increase, the trustees of Irving's church pleaded with him to stop these occurrences. Irving refused, emphasizing his belief that they were manifestations of the Spirit's divinely bestowed gifts. On April 26, 1832, Irving was tried and was found guilty of allowing unauthorized persons to interrupt the worship services; he was locked out of his church on May 4, 1832. On March 13, 1833, Irving was tried at Annan by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, was found guilty of heresy, and was deposed from the mini-

⁹⁸Gordon Strachan, The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving (London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1973), p. 13. Hereafter cited as PT.

stry of the Church of Scotland.⁹⁹

What concerns us in this dissertation is not the theological career of Edward Irving, but rather his teaching on miraculous gifts. We will then compare his view with that of John Nelson Darby.

Darby refers to Irving quite frequently in his writings, but always in negative terms. He speaks of the "fatal delusion of Irvingism"¹⁰⁰ and refers to the teachings of Irving as the work of Satan. The followers of Irving, Darby says,

[stand] plainly convicted . . . of so much false doctrine, false practice, and false prophecy . . . that [it is] a question only of preserving God's children against the deceits and crafts of Satan.¹⁰¹

Although Darby disagrees with Irving especially concerning his eschatological views,¹⁰² he especially faults Irving and his followers for, in his opinion, their not using the word of God as their guide:

Mr. Irving['s] . . . great defect . . . is . . . that he does not take scripture as his guide, but [rather] modern utterances as equivalent to it . . . My experience of Irvingites is that . . . there is very little unborrowed study of scripture, very little reading of it for themselves, looking for the guidance of the Spirit.¹⁰³

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁰Letters, vol. III, p. 235.

¹⁰¹Collected Writings, vol. XV, p. 2.

¹⁰²Ibid., vol. II, pp. 6-9.

¹⁰³Ibid., vol. XIV, pp. 131-132. On the other hand, Irving does utilize the Scriptures to support his view of

Darby compares the Irvingites with the Mormons and states,

It is not uncommon for the agents of the enemy, when putting forth false doctrines, to make use of the word of God, although they despise it. They quote it when it suits their purpose, and when it is inconvenient they despise and neglect it . . . All heretics conceal their doctrines. In our days we have had proofs of this in the Irvingites and Mormons.¹⁰⁴

Irving incurs Darby's wrath particularly for his having "meddled metaphysically" (in Darby's words) with the Lord's Person.¹⁰⁵ Darby rejects Irving's belief that Christ assumed a fallen nature in the Incarnation and, because He did not yield to sin, Christ therefore "won the Spirit for us."¹⁰⁶

the continuance of miraculous gifts (see PT, chapter 9) and makes such statements as: "The only way of determining every question of Divine truth is by an appeal to the Word of God" (Gavin Carlyle, ed., The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes [London: Alexander Strahan, 1864], vol. V, p. 509). Unless otherwise stated, we will use the abbreviation CW to refer hereafter to vol. V of Irving's writings. Irving does speak of a relationship between the Spirit and the word: "Having then, the Holy Ghost both for our author and our commentator, let us endeavour to find out the mind of God" (CW, p. 510). Irving's hermeneutic would be worthy of study. He uses, for example, the phrase "following the footsteps of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, with the candle of the New Testament in my hand" (CW, p. 534).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., vol. XXVIII, p. 320.

¹⁰⁵ Letters, vol. I, p. 469.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 496. Irving's position is that personal sin was not in Christ but in the nature He assumed in the Incarnation (Collected Writings, vol. XV, p. 35) and is adamant that Christ was "in the condition of the sinner," according to Darby (Ibid., p. 25). Darby quotes Irving's discussion of a "make-believe God":

"Either Christ was in the condition of the sinner . . . or He was not. If He was, then the point at issue is ceded, for that is what I am contending for. If He was not, and God treated Him as if He had been so; if that is the meaning of their imputation and substitution,

Darby also rejects Irving's incarnational view of the atonement¹⁰⁷ and insists that Irving's view of a Christ in sinful flesh is destructive not only of a true doctrine of the Incarnation¹⁰⁸ but also of a proper view of the atonement.¹⁰⁹ Christ suffered as the "just for the unjust," emphasizes Darby!¹¹⁰

Irvingism came into the Church, according to Darby, simply because the Church had lost the biblical teaching

or, by whatever name they call it, away with it from my theology for ever" (Ibid.).

Darby says that Irving "declared that his [Christ's] nature bristled with sin like quills upon a porcupine; and that the nature with which the Son of man was clothed poured forth from the centre of its inmost will streams as black as hell" (Ibid., p. 2). Darby refers to an episode in 1832 in which he spoke out against Irving's view. Although it was apparently not a personal confrontation between these two men, Darby emphasized his belief that Christ was sinless and died for sin whereas we are sinful and are to "walk as He walked" (i.e. we are to progress in sanctification) (Letters, vol. I, p. 470).

¹⁰⁷ Collected Writings, vol. XXIX, p. 204. Darby speaks of the "foundation error which led to all poor Irving's heresies and wanderings; namely, making an incarnate Christ head, instead of a Christ who had accomplished redemption, and thus excluding redemption as the groundwork of the new accepted creation of God" (Ibid., vol. XIII, p. 152).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., vol. XV, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 25. Darby uses Irving, however, as a foil for his own statements concerning the "non-atoning sufferings of Christ" and later in his life is accused of holding heretical views similar to those of B. W. Newton and Edward Irving! See Neatby, History, chapter XII "Darby's Strange Corrective to Newtonianism -The Secession of 1866," pp. 239-264, and Coad, A History, pp. 161ff.

¹¹⁰ Collected Writings, vol. XV, p. 25.

on the second coming of Christ and the presence of the Holy Ghost.¹¹¹ Darby contrasts Irving's doctrine of miraculous gifts with what he believes the Bible teaches and makes few comparisons between his theology and that of Irving and his followers apart from what we have just mentioned.¹¹²

According to Darby, Irving's belief is that the miraculous gifts could not be given by God until the truth of Christ's assuming a sinful nature in the Incarnation was brought in.¹¹³ Darby quotes Irving's statement that

The way for the promise of the Comforter had to be prepared by the preaching of the full coming of Christ in our flesh, and His coming again in glory, the two great divisions of christian doctrine which had gone down into the earth, out of sight and out of mind, and which must be revived by preaching before the Holy Spirit could have anything to witness unto.¹¹⁴

What are the specific details of Irving's doctrine of the miraculous gifts? Is Darby's assessment of Irving's view correct?

Irving is fervent in his belief that miraculous gifts are meant for the Church today. He states that although some think that these gifts were

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 304. Darby was, of course, a target of the same charge!

¹¹²Darby does evaluate an Irvingite tract entitled "A Word of Instruction" in Ibid., pp. 1-15.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 24. "The 'gifts' among the Irvingites," Darby says, "were founded on this doctrine of Christ's being a sinner in nature like ourselves. Mr. Irving's statement

given only for a season, while Christianity was making way in the world: by others they are believed to have been given, like the other gifts and callings of God, without repentance and revocation; and that the Church hath them now in as full right as ever, and ought to be exercising them with as great diligence, and for the very same¹¹⁵ ends, as did the apostles and primitive Christians.

Irving vigorously attacks the position that the miraculous gifts are no longer needed by the Church:

Unless men . . . be left so far to themselves as to say, that God hath ceased to testify to the work which Christ performed in the flesh -of casting Satan out; of redeeming all flesh from death, and disease its precursor; of restoring the animal and vegetable world, and all creation, to their original sinlessness, innocency, and subserviency to mankind; -unless men be disposed to say, that they know God hath ceased to be at any pains or charges, in giving testimony to this work of His Son, they have no ground for believing that the age of miracles is past. [Those who take this position we deem] unfaithful witnesses of God and of Christ, fraudulent messengers between them and the world.¹¹⁶

Irving specifies at least eight purposes for the continuance of miraculous gifts. The first purpose is that they are essential for the preparation of a habitation for God. Irving says:

This is the great end for which the gifts of the Holy Ghost, received by Christ upon His ascension, were given, -to construct for God a place to dwell in . . . The end of the gifts is what we are searching after. Let it be under-

was, that he had long preached the 'gifts,' but there were none, because there was nothing for the Holy Ghost to testify to; but that when he preached this doctrine, they came as a witness to it" (Ibid., vol. VI, p. 285). That Darby is correct on this point is shown in Irving's own statements cited in PT, pp. 89 and 93, and in Irving's article "Facts Connected with Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts," Fraser's Magazine, January and February, 1832, p. 755. Hereafter cited as Fraser's.

¹¹⁵ CW, p. 509. ¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 532.

stood that we have found it from God's own Word: it is, to prepare God a tabernacle, or house, or habitation . . . The habitation of God [was] to be constructed by Christ with the gifts of the Holy Ghost which He received from the Father. That habitation is the Church beyond all question.¹¹⁷

The very nature of the body of Christ and its unity is based on a continuance of these gifts. These gifts are an essential element in God's eschatological plans for the church:

It is abundantly manifest . . . that the habitation of God, which Christ was to construct for His Father, out of the gifts which He received when He ascended up on high, is the Church, His body, the fulness of the election which the Father had given to Him for His inheritance . . . It is further evident, that the unity of these many members is bound together by the wise distribution which He makes of the Spirit, given to Him of the Father, among the members of the body, in such wise as that one shall be necessary to the help and support of the other, and, all together cooperating, shall make the body to grow, and wax like the body of a child, from its rudiments then forming in the days of the apostles, until it should attain unto the measure of its appointed fulness -that is, until all the election should be brought in, and the bride of the Lamb, the new Jerusalem, which is the tabernacle, or habitation of God for ever, should be completed.¹¹⁸

The second major purpose of the miraculous gifts is that they serve to declare God's presence to the world. Referring to the statement in I Corinthians 14:24-25 ("If all prophesy, and some unbeliever or simple person comes in, he is convicted of all . . . he will do homage to God, reporting that God is indeed amongst you"), Irving states:

Christ's work with the Spirit is to prepare for God such a living temple, such a speaking, acting body, as shall declare His presence to every beholder.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 510-512. ¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 515-516.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 516. Irving also stresses the need for

Using the analogy of the Church as the body of Christ, Irving sets forth his belief that God's presence in the Church is made known empirically through such means as the gift of tongues:

These persons speaking with tongues, are the voice of the Spirit seeking access into our hearts by our ears, for the indwelling God to abide in us, and act and speak forth of us for ever . . . the Church is a body for God's Spirit, for God himself, to dwell in, and speak from, in¹²⁰ the sight and hearing of all creatures for ever.

The gift of tongues, Irving emphasizes, is the outward demonstration of the inward presence of the Spirit of God in one's life:

Beyond all question . . . speaking with tongues was the sign of the Holy Ghost in the person who so spake . . . As the tongue or word of man is the sign of the mind within him; so, when another spirit, the Spirit of God, enters into him, He signifieth His presence by another tongue from that which the person himself useth.¹²¹

A third reason for the continuation of miraculous gifts, according to Irving, is that they clearly demonstrate that the Church is the performer of God's works, the medium by which God accomplishes his purposes in the organism He has created through Christ:

unity among God's people:

"Christ . . . may take as many as the Father will give Him, and make them so to cohere together in the bands of mutual charity, work together the will of God, and manifest forth His glory, as that He shall need nothing else to make His fullness and perfectness known in the sight of all His creatures" (Ibid., p. 517).

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 539-540. ¹²¹Ibid., p. 545.

The Church is to be not only the container of the manifested God, but she is the actor of His works, and the utterer of His wisdom . . . This is His [Christ's] occupation in heaven, to build the spiritual temple of the Lord out of the materials which He hath impregnated with His own life. And the Church is this temple: we are it; we on earth are it.¹²²

The fourth purpose for miraculous gifts is to distinguish the servants of God from the servants of the evil one.¹²³ Irving does not elaborate on this point nor on what appears to be a fifth purpose: to confirm the witness of God's children.¹²⁴

The sixth purpose does receive some explanation from Irving. Miraculous gifts are necessary, he says, to remove the curses of sin:

None but the members of Christ's body can do works of that kind; none but the redeemed servants of the Redeemer can work these redemption-works; every one of which is the taking off some curse which sin hath imposed, and from which only the Redeemer from sin can deliver. Christ pays the price of the redemption; God takes off the bonds, and sets the prisoner free.¹²⁵

Irving makes much of how miraculous gifts function as a rebuke to the pride of humanity's intellect and the glory of humanity's learning. In regard to this seventh purpose, Irving refers to tongues as "part of a dispensation of judgment upon the pride of intellect and the glory of learning, which cannot find out God."¹²⁶

¹²²Ibid., p. 518. ¹²³Ibid., p. 525.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 528. ¹²⁵Ibid., p. 531.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 538.

The last (eighth) purpose of miraculous gifts and their continuance for the Church today concerns the edification of Christians in the body of Christ. Again referring to tongues, Irving says that when the gift of tongues is accompanied by the gift of interpretation, "the words spoken [in tongues] will be found to contain no more than the simplest, most elementary, and most nutritious truths of the Spirit."¹²⁷ The personal upbuilding of the believers Irving links to the exercise of the gift of tongues:

The gift of tongues is greatly for the edification of the children of the Spirit; and the first means adopted of God for drawing out their higher faculties of knowledge, and wisdom, and love, and action.¹²⁸

In a rather surprising statement, Irving sets forth the gift of tongues as a major way by which God edifies the Church:

The gift of tongues is a chief means of God for training up the children of the Spirit into the capacity of prophesying and speaking in the Church for the edification of all, whether "by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine."¹²⁹

In summary, then, the continuance of miraculous gifts, according to Irving, is absolutely essential to the Church's witness of God and His attributes in and to the world:

Christ hath either failed to do His Father's will since His ascension, or the Spirit hath failed, or the materials have succeeded in defeating the Architect; or else the Church is this building of God, where God is heard in His manifold wisdom, and seen in His various actings: -His wisdom, in this membership having the word of wisdom; His knowledge, in

¹²⁷Ibid. ¹²⁸Ibid., p. 539. ¹²⁹Ibid., p. 541.

this membership having the word of knowledge; His truth, in this membership having the gift of faith; His health, in this membership having the gift of healing; His supremacy of spirits, in this membership having the discernment of spirits; His voice, in this membership having the gift of tongues; and His understanding, in this membership having the interpretation of tongues.¹³⁰

In every area and aspect of the Church's life, the reality of the God of the Bible is to be manifested by means of these gifts:

As His children, therefore, we with Him are called to be for signs and wonders -that is, to minister the supernatural manifestation of the power of God; to be the hand of God for action, as we are His house for habitation; to be the body in which dwelleth the Spirit of God in all goodness and righteousness and truth; in which, also, and in all the members of which, God himself worketh all signs and wonders and mighty acts in the sight of men.¹³¹

The miraculous gifts demonstrate our sonship and are, in one sense, more important than our victory over sin!

We . . . as His children, begotten from above into His heavenly image, ought to put forth, in order to prove our sonship, some features of the supernatural, not only in the way of a holy will triumphant over the law of sin, and a word triumphant over the law of falsehood, but of a mighty power triumphing over the law of sickness, infirmity, and death: in one word, we should put forth a first-fruits of that power which He Himself will put forth in the day of His appearing.¹³²

Irving says much about the gift of tongues, but we will only summarize his points before comparing his view of miraculous gifts to that held by Darby. Tongues are a secret means of communication between the believer and God

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 518. ¹³¹Ibid., p. 522.

¹³²Ibid., pp. 523-524.

and are an acceptable, and sometimes even superior, form of worship.¹³³ As a demonstration of the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life, the gift of tongues is to be refused at great spiritual peril.¹³⁴ "God feeds us," says Irving,

by the Holy Ghost, proceeding from Christ, without any intervention of book or other person, by meditation,¹³⁵ lifting up of the soul, and, in one word, communion.

The exercise of the gift of tongues may result in the exercise of the miraculous gift of prophecy,¹³⁶ but Irving warns that the messages communicated through the gifts of

¹³³ Irving states that tongues are important for personal edification and worship:

"A tongue . . . is for communication between a man's soul and God, which ought to pass on secretly, and not in the audience of third parties, save where there is an interpreter at hand, or an unbeliever who will not give heed to what is spoken in the common language, and needs to be attracted to recognise God by some words of a tongue introduced into the bosom of a discourse" (Ibid., pp. 547-8).

In this connection Irving speaks of "praying in a tongue": "Prayer in a tongue is a prayer in the Spirit, and so also of singing: it is true prayer and true praise" (Ibid., p. 550). "There can be no doubt whatever that the gift of tongues was a means of worshipping God acceptably in all ways, which oft-times was so used in the public meetings of the church" (Ibid.).

¹³⁴ "Tongues were a sign of this indwelling of God, but prophesying is the certainty of it; and both together bring the perfect and complete demonstration of the Spirit: to refuse which is to resist God, and to bring upon ourselves swift destruction" (Ibid., p. 553).

¹³⁵ Irving describes this as "a manifestation of a universal truth which every pious soul knows" (Ibid., p. 557).

¹³⁶ "When this inworking of the Holy Ghost in the spirit of a man getteth vent, not in an unknown tongue, but in the forms of the reason through natural speech of man, it becomes prophecy of one form or another, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, word of teaching, etc." (Ibid., p. 558).

tongues and prophecy are to be evaluated by the word of God.¹³⁷ Irving challenges every believer to seek the gift of tongues and deals with the situation of a Christian who has sought the gift but has not yet received it.¹³⁸ Irving again sets forth his explanation why the gift of tongues has been manifested sparingly in the history of the Church:

The true reason why the gift of tongues hath ceased to be in the Church is, the exaltation of the natural methods of teaching above, or into copartnership with, the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the meanness of our idea, and the weakness of our faith, concerning the oneness of Christ glorified, with His Church on earth: the unworthiness of our doctrine

¹³⁷ "In either of these cases the church is to hear with reverence, but not to receive without discrimination . . . The church dare not blindly receive anything from any man or spirit, be he or do he what he may; but must weigh it in the balances of the sanctuary, which is the word of God, opened to us by the Holy Ghost, whereof every believer hath the seal" (Ibid.).

¹³⁸ "I do, as one bearing rule in the Christian Church, call upon all and every one of the members of Christ to covet earnestly, and fervently to pray for, spiritual gifts, speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Ibid., p. 557). Irving continues:

"There is not any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who ought not to desire and to pray for, and who may not expect, the gift of tongues for his own spiritual edification . . . Though it be not received, we should not be disheartened, as if we were rejected of the Holy Ghost, and had not the Holy Ghost dwelling in us . . . If any person, therefore, having laid hold of this truth, is living in the faith and enjoyment of it [the Comfort of the Holy Ghost], he is to be assured of his salvation, and to be at peace; yet is he to desire to speak with tongues, in order to convince an unbelieving and ignorant world, who will ever trusting to book-reading, or man-teaching, or self-sufficiency, or some other form of error, instead of trusting to the indwelling operation of the Spirit of Christ" (Ibid., p. 559).

concerning the person and office of the Holy Ghost, to knit up the believer into complete oneness with Christ . . . the shortcoming of our knowledge, in respect to the gifts themselves . . . our want of fasting, and humiliation . . . our contentment to be without them; our base and false theories to account for their absence . . . Who, then, dares preach to the Church that her present loss of her gifts, and hiding of her glorious power, and experience of a risen and glorified Christ, is not due to her sin and unfaithfulness?¹³⁹

Much of what we have already said in comparing Darby's view of miraculous gifts with the views of Calvin and Wesley apply to an assessment of Irving's position on the continuance of miraculous gifts.¹⁴⁰ In addition to his criticism of Irving's doctrine of Christ and Irving's misuse of the Bible, Darby specifically rejects Irving's doctrine of the continuance of the miraculous gifts. Darby states:

There are two kinds of gifts entirely distinct; I said so thirty years ago to Irving. Those in I Corinthians xii. are gifts of power, so much so that often when there was positive power nobody was to use it; it was all under the rule and Authority of Christ's order in the house. And so there, therefore, I get no promise of the continuance of gifts.¹⁴¹

Because Darby does not go into a detailed refutation of Irving's view of miraculous gifts, the following comparisons between their two views are based on our general understanding of Darby and his theology.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 561.

¹⁴⁰ For our discussion of Calvin's position, see pp. 288-297 *supra*; for Wesley's understanding, see our discussion on pp. 298-316 *supra*.

¹⁴¹ Miscellaneous Writings, vol. IV, p. 93.

As Darby often points out, the miraculous gifts were given primarily to provide a foundation for the beginning of the church. Our responsibility is to build upon that foundation, not to reestablish it. To insist that such gifts continue today is to destroy the uniqueness of the apostolic period and practically to "disown the importance of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost."¹⁴² Darby's two-fold division between the gifts expresses his understanding of their temporal nature. Sign gifts were originally given to appeal to the senses of the world and to establish the divine basis of the church. Edification gifts were originally given (and continue) to appeal to the conscience and mind of the Christian as he or she becomes a part of God's remnant community in the world.¹⁴³

Irving implies in several statements that the miraculous gift of tongues is God's means of "feeding" the Christian and is a direct acting of God "without any intervention of book or other person."¹⁴⁴ Darby stresses the fact that, although the foundation ministry of the apostles is com-

¹⁴² Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 265.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁴⁴ CW, p. 557. Whether Irving is specifically referring to the Bible is unclear. One wonders, however, what place the Bible really had in a movement which emphasized the immediate speaking of God to His people through the gift of tongues. For an essay by Irving on the relationship of the Spirit and the word and his doctrine of inspiration, see Ibid., vol. IV, chapter VI, "Idolatry of the Book -the Bible," pp. 75-85.

plete, "the word of God is written for us"¹⁴⁵ and is to be our sole standard for life and practice.

Darby argues just as forcibly for the church's being God's "habitation on earth";¹⁴⁶ in simple terms, it is God's "being at home in the midst of His people."¹⁴⁷ Affirming the belief that God's presence is indeed in the church, Darby differs from Irving in that Irving insists that God's presence depends upon the presence of the miraculous gifts, whereas in Darby's view,

The basis of all power, of all testimony, of all manifestation of the glory of Christ, of the existence of the Church . . . is, the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself.¹⁴⁸

God makes His presence known in the church, but not in supernatural, miraculous ways. The church is the forum in which the Holy Ghost establishes His operations. The Spirit uses the gifts which He sovereignly has bestowed and He thereby directs the church by His mind.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 140. Darby connects the authority of the word with the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

"Authority in the church is neither more nor less than the power of the Holy Ghost. There may be added at the beginning the apostles as constituted companions of Jesus, and having directions from Him. But now this is simply the working of the Holy Ghost in the church" (Letters, vol. I, p. 104).

¹⁴⁶ See Darby's sermon "The Church, An Habitation of God through the Spirit" in Collected Writings, vol. XII, pp. 239-252.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247. ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 248.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Darby also would reject Irving's view of miraculous gifts for his failure to understand the dispensational structure of the word of God.¹⁵⁰ In Darby's understanding, God tests humanity in each dispensation, and humanity's failure to meet the dispensational "test" provides an opportunity for God, through the weakness and frailty of his creation, to show his strength and power. Irving, although admitting the church's carnality, does not teach the doctrine of the church in ruins. Irving's position is that the church is to manifest its supernatural glory, not its dispensational shame. The only reasons, according to Irving, why the miraculous gifts have been absent historically are an incorrect doctrine of the Incarnation and the carnality of the church. Although the Spirit has been grieved by the sinfulness of Christians, the miraculous gifts are of great value and have not been withdrawn. Darby's position, however, is that the church is in ruins. We are to admit her condition; we are not to seek to restore a fallen dispensation but are rather to acknowledge that, because the Holy Spirit has been grieved, certain gifts (specifically those of a miraculous character) have been withdrawn.

¹⁵⁰For our discussion of Darby's dispensationalism and its impact on his Pneumatology, see pp. 171-179, *supra*. We are not implying that Irving was not a dispensationalist of a sort (see *CW*, p. 84). In his book Thirty Sermons Irving gives a series of lectures on the dispensations; his subject titles are: "The 'Antediluvian' Dispensation," "The 'Jewish' Dispensation," "The First Advent of our Lord," "The Church," and "The Second Advent of our Lord and his Everlasting

Concerning the specific gift of tongues, Irving's understanding of them grew from an early belief that they were known languages, to a later conviction that there were two types of tongues in the New Testament: (1) tongues like those manifested at Pentecost (Acts 2) which were known languages; and, (2) tongues like those of the church at Corinth (Acts 12-14) which were largely the ecstatic utterance of incoherent sounds.¹⁵¹ Irving personally was disappointed in this issue of tongues. Mary Campbell Caird, who was the first of Irving's congregation to speak in tongues,¹⁵² went to Europe with her husband in hopes of performing missionary work. To their dismay they were forced to recognize that her gift of tongues did not enable her to communicate in any of the languages necessary for the work. They returned to England, later giving up hope of becoming missionaries. She subsequently relinquished her belief in the charismatic practices.¹⁵³ Irving attempted to resolve this (and similar) problems with the gift of tongues by holding that God's granting of the gift of tongues was to be in two stages: first, He had granted the Corinthian type of tongues (unknown utterances), and, later, He would grant the

Kingdom" (E. Irving, Thirty Sermons, [London: John Bennett, 1835]).

¹⁵¹Dallimore, Forerunner, p. 175. ¹⁵²PT, p. 13.

¹⁵³Dallimore, Forerunner, p. 175.

Pentecostal type (known languages).¹⁵⁴

Darby takes great issue with Irving on precisely this point. He agrees that the tongues of Acts 2 were known languages:

Now this fact is the substantial point of the whole affair. It was that which struck the multitude. Three thousand people were converted by it. The Church begins its existence, and was formed in virtue of this multitude understanding what was said. Christian-
ity was planted and rooted in the world by it.¹⁵⁵

Darby faults the Irvingites for the difference between the tongues they practice as compared with the tongues of Acts 2:

At Pentecost the languages were universally understood by those who spoke them; the Irvingite tongues never by any one: a notable difference. And this is so true, that after first trying their hand at making Chinese of it, it was suggested among them that it might be the tongue of angels, as it was said, "If I speak with the
tongues of men and of angels" -delightful idea!¹⁵⁶

Darby's understanding is that the miraculous gift of tongues has been lost¹⁵⁷ or, employing a more dispensational term,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 175-176.

¹⁵⁵ Collected Writings, vol. VI, p. 282. Darby views the gift of tongues at Pentecost as a reversal of the judgment of Babel (Genesis 11); God's love oversteps that barrier of different languages. Concerning what occurred at Pentecost, Darby says:

"Man becomes only an instrument in the hands of God -of the Holy Ghost sent down from on high . . . A testimony appears, which uses the very fruit of sin to shew that grace was reaching men just where the judgment of that sin had placed them" (Ibid., vol. I, pp. 216-217).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 283-284.

¹⁵⁷ Letters, vol. III, p. 198. Referring to I Corinthians 12-14, Darby says that "the direction as to tongues has not lost its authority. Were there tongues it would apply. There are not, and there is nothing to apply it so"

withdrawn.¹⁵⁸ Darby's church in ruins doctrine relates to his dispensational position that certain gifts have been removed from the church:

The Church is shorn of well nigh if not all her glory and ornament, and well has she deserved it. Hence there is a necessary modification in the application [of certain scriptures]. I cannot regulate¹⁵⁹ the speaking with tongues when there are none.

The Church does not possess the Pentecostal gifts¹⁶⁰ but has the word of God as the replacement of those miraculous manifestations of the Spirit.¹⁶¹

(Ibid., vol. II, p. 3). Darby reminds us of his belief that the miraculous gifts have been lost because of the grieving of the Holy Ghost (Collected Writings, vol. III, pp. 348-349).

¹⁵⁸"Now God may withdraw as He pleases gifts which He distributes as He pleases (that is, some of those which are only a testimony rendered to the Church before the world); but Christ nourishes the Church according to His faithfulness, and this rests on another basis. This also may be weakened if the Holy Ghost is grieved. Nevertheless, the Holy Ghost Himself remains in the Church for ever" (Ibid., p. 298).

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 322. In another place Darby says, "The apostle gives directions for the use of tongues and of gifts of interpretation. Is his authority rejected because it is no longer applicable to them? Do those commands oblige you to restore what has been lost, as the Irvingites have pretended to do?" (Ibid., vol. IV, p. 363). See also Darby's use of the phrase "every remaining gift" (Letters, vol. I, p. 113).

¹⁶⁰Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 255.

¹⁶¹In response to the question whether Christians should be seeking for God to speak to them through dreams, Darby says, "[The Christian] needs neither signs, nor wonders, nor dreams. He has the word" (Letters, vol. I, p. 77).

As a final criticism of Irving's position, Darby states that Irving and his followers confuse the gift of the Holy Spirit with the gifts which He sovereignly bestows.¹⁶²

To confound them [the Spirit and the gifts], is to confound the Giver and the gift; for the Spirit distributes of these to every man severally as He will, and they are only the manifestation of the Spirit given for profit; and confounding them . . . undermines the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost, and confounds the power of witnessing to others . . . with the blessed and sanctifying communion with, and anticipation of, things hoped for and treasured up in Christ as ours. . . . In a word, the Spirit which distributes the gift is not the gift He distributes, though He be displayed in the gift.¹⁶³

In summary, we have noticed that Calvin's position is that these temporary gifts were designed to complement the proclamation of the Gospel in the apostolic period and were not intended to be common to all ages. They were never meant to be permanent demonstrations of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Wesley finds no biblical proof that the miraculous gifts are no longer available or needed and emphasizes his belief that Christians today possess the miraculous gifts "in a lower sense." These gifts have ceased not because of their temporary character, but because of the Church's carnality. There is no biblical passage, Wesley insists, which historically limits these gifts to any particular age. Although he personally experienced certain miraculous occurrences in his own life, Wesley does not insist that

¹⁶²Ibid., pp. 85-86.

¹⁶³Ibid.

such must continue to characterize the life of the Church. Irving is dogmatic that the truth of the miraculous gifts could not be given by God until the truth of Christ's assuming a sinful nature in the Incarnation was brought in. Such gifts, he insists, have been given by God without repentance and revocation and the Church ought to be exercising them with as great diligence as ever. Eight specific purposes for the continuance of these miraculous gifts are emphasized by Irving. The absence of these gifts is due to the Church's sin and unfaithfulness, not to their temporary nature. Irving insists that the gifts are available and urges their full recovery on both an exegetical and an experiential basis.

Darby agrees with Calvin on the temporary nature of these gifts and insists that they were for the establishment of the Church and the confirmation of the apostolic witness and have, as such, therefore, ceased. The edification gifts continue and are to be exercised for the building up of the saints. Because of his church in ruins doctrine, Darby insists also that these supernatural gifts have been withdrawn because of the grieving of the Spirit in this dispensation. The standard progress of a dispensation (especially the inevitable failure of humanity and God's accomplishment of His will despite His creature's failure) is a major argument in Darby's rejection of the continuance of such gifts. Opposing Irving's belief that the jewels of the

Church have been recovered, Darby stresses his conviction that the bride of Christ (the Church) has been shorn of well nigh if not all her glory and ornament and, in her weakness, is to be the vessel by which God shows His strength.

Although both Irving and Darby deal extensively with the scriptures to support their respective positions on miraculous gifts, in the final analysis both base much of their convictions on theological (rather than strictly exegetical) considerations. Irving insists miraculous gifts continue because the true doctrine of the Incarnation has been brought in; Darby insists that they have ceased because of the truth of the dispensational grieving of the Holy Spirit and his church in ruins doctrine. The debate on this issue of miraculous gifts continues.

APPENDIX TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF
JOHN NELSON DARBY AND
THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN MOVEMENT
IN THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGY

"Crumbling Christendom wants the truth,"¹ says Darby. Darby views the truths which he and the Plymouth Brethren stood for as absolutely essential for the life of the church. Expressing a pessimism concerning the condition of the church, Darby views his own time particularly as a crisis point for the church:

This is a time [of] devotedness which shews that one has the consciousness that everything traditional, every-² thing external (evil excepted) is crumbling to pieces.

A certain optimism, however, balances Darby's pessimism. "Everywhere I think the Spirit of God is at work," Darby insists, "making men feel that Christianity ought to be something more real."³ Although he often stresses his "church in ruins" doctrine, Darby gives hopeful encouragement to those who will heed his message:

The Church has so grieved [the Holy Spirit], it is hard often to discern His operations; but God is calling back the conscience of the Church to its sin in this respect, and what it has lost . . . the essential characteristic⁴ of Christianity which is the ministration of the Spirit.

Because the church is at a crisis point in its history, Darby oftens refers to truths which he feels are especially

¹Letters, vol. I, p. 351.

²Ibid., p. 370 (written in 1864).

³Ibid., p. 371. Darby speaks of his joy that the Holy Spirit is rousing saints to the consciousness of something "more earnest, more true, more what Christianity was at first" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 209).

⁴Collected Writings, vol. X, p. 255.

needed by the contemporary church:

What the Church is, and what the presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter is, as scripture speaks of each . . . [are] two points . . . of primary importance for Christians now, and those by which God is working to lead the saints on, out of the state they are systematically in, to go forth to meet the Bridegroom.⁵

So severe is the need of the contemporary church for the truths which Darby and the Brethren expound that he is not reluctant to compare the emphases of the Brethren with the Reformation battles fought by Martin Luther:

The question now is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as forming and embodying the Church in unity . . . There are truths to which God recalls the saints as being important at such or such a time, as leading to peculiar and needed blessings, or as bearing on peculiar evils or dangers, and against which therefore the malice of the enemy will be particularly directed, to oppose or undermine them. Such I believe the doctrine of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church to be at this time.⁶

Referring to the "principles of [the] brethren" as the "testimony of God in these last days . . . [which are] essential for these times,"⁷ Darby expresses his hope that

⁵Ibid., p. 233.

⁶Ibid., vol. III, pp. 341-342. "As the cross and justification by faith were brought out at the Reformation, so the coming of the Holy Ghost uniting us to Christ in heaven, and His coming again, were brought out now" (Letters, vol. II, p. 356).

⁷Ibid., vol. I, p. 322. "I have received the deepest and profoundest conviction, that the truth that the brethren have been taught of God is the special testimony of God for these days, and these are serious days -the last days" (Ibid., p. 349).
In another place Darby says: "I have the fullest persuasion that the testimony we have is God's testimony for the last days -the gospel Paul preached, brought out to

many will embrace the distinctives which he and the Brethren set forth.⁸

How successful was Darby in disseminating what he believed were the essential truths for the contemporary church? Did many respond to his clarion call back to these issues? In this final section we will point out the influence of Darby and the Brethren on such areas as Dispensationalism, American Fundamentalism, the Scofield Reference Bible, and the modern missionary movement.

Although recognized by many as the theological spokesman of the Plymouth Brethren Movement,⁹ Darby's influence in

light -what I never suspected when I began in this city [Dublin], just fifty years ago now" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 423).

Darby refers to the truths of the Brethren as "truths . . . of first-rate importance" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 350) and is not reluctant, in describing his doctrinal distinctives, to use language such as "a root-principle of Christianity" (Ibid., p. 325) and "the essence of Christianity" (Ibid.). Referring to his understanding of "getting Christians out of Romans 7," Darby says "the great groundwork principles have to be brought out and developed" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 350).

⁸ Although Darby is pleased with the opinion of some outside the movement that the Plymouth Brethren "have more of scripture" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 423), he frequently expresses his dismay that so many embrace the truths of the Brethren, yet remain within the system of the clergy. "It is hard for them in England," says Darby, "to get rid of the cloth" (Ibid., p. 129). "Many are seeking to introduce brethren's truths into the systems as they are" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 353). "Eminent ministers preach the Lord's coming, the ruin of the church, liberty of ministry, and avowedly from brethren's books, and stay where they are" (Ibid., p. 308).

⁹ Few who have studied the rise and development of the

theology extended beyond his immediate circle in several remarkable ways. Although referred to as "undoubtedly the greatest teacher of the nineteenth century,"¹⁰ Darby suffered from at least two specific shortcomings which probably limited his influence in conservative circles outside the Brethren.

Plymouth Brethren Movement would deny Neatby's statement that "The maker of Brethrenism as a system, its guiding and energising spirit throughout, was John Nelson Darby. In the grandeur of his conceptions, in the irresistible vehemence of his will, in his consummate strategical instinct, in his genius for administration, and most of all in his immense personal ascendancy, he stands unrivalled amongst the Brethren" (*History*, p. 44).

This opinion is echoed by another writer who theologically stood outside Brethrenism and dispensationalism:

"Darby was . . . undoubtedly the maker of Brethrenism as a theological system, and he gave it the impetus it needed for expansion. He systematized its doctrinal position, and through his own dynamic personality, intellectual capabilities, and social position, popularized the movement" (Bass, *Backgrounds*, p. 143).

E. E. Whitefield overstates the case when he says: "A full epitome of the doctrine developed among the Brethren could be obtained only from the writing of Darby who was the chief teacher; [his authority] in his denomination was so great that in the minds of most of the brethren, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin were mere ciphers" (quoted in Robertson, "Sanctification," p. 26. *Italics mine*).

Bass makes the balanced statement that "Credit for the impetus of this movement is due largely to the efforts of John Nelson Darby, who, though not the founder, became the prime mover in co-ordinating and propagating its doctrines" (*Backgrounds*, p. 48).

See also Coad, *History*, *passim*, for his view that Anthony Norris Groves played a much more formative role in the development of the Brethren Movement than is commonly recognized.

¹⁰ attributed to Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein (the editor of the millenarian periodical *Our Hope*) in Wilbur M. Smith's *Profitable Bible Study*, (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1939), p. 104.

The first major limitation with Darby has already been mentioned in this dissertation. Darby's lack of perspicuity and poor writing style almost certainly limited his readership to those who were either within Brethren circles or were ardent readers of dispensational theology.¹¹

¹¹ Sandeen says that Darby "left a massive set of Collected Writings which are almost uniformly unintelligible" (Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House], 1970, p. 31. Hereafter cited as Roots). Bass states that Darby's "attempts at clarity only confuse the reader, since his style becomes so abstruse that the reader loses the original thought in the complexity of qualifying phrases" (Backgrounds, p. 60). William Kelly, the editor of Darby's works, constantly encouraged enquiring Christians to "Read Darby!" (Turner, Life, p. 52), an admonition quite difficult to heed.

Bass believes that two factors contributed to Darby's poor writing style: "his overwhelming passion to state and defend the truth of the gospel, and a hurried disregard for form" (Backgrounds, p. 61). Bass quotes the preface of a tract written by Darby which shows Darby's consciousness of his difficult writing style: "It [what Darby had written] seems to me that as it stands it is quite sufficiently clear to any upright mind. I am not so foolish as to think that all the expressions in it are the best, or absolutely exact or just, as if I was [*sic*] inspired . . . To the humblest and weakest of God's saints, I should gladly explain my meaning" (*Ibid.*). That he was at times, however, impatient with those who did not grasp what he was saying (in either sermon or essay) is shown by the following incident: While giving a "Bible reading" (lecture) in the States, Darby was interrupted several times by a minister who had not quite grasped Darby's argument. After two brief attempts to clarify his position failed to enlighten the clergyman, Darby met the third interruption by tartly retorting: "I am here to supply exposition not brains!" (Turner Life, p. 21). Darby did not hide the fact that writing was a means for him of maturity in theology: He states "In writing I gain knowledge, and the subject becomes more familiar to me" (Letters, vol. II, p. 363). "My writings are my course of arrival at truth," he once remarked (*Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 305). See also his statements in Letters, vol. I, pp. 30, 137, 305; vol. III, p. 389; and our section in this thesis, pp. 8-10 *supra*, concerning his writing style. His articles appeared primarily in Brethren magazines. He once explained:

The second major factor which probably limited his readership is more difficult to prove. There was a distinct egocentricity which marked Darby (and some subsequent Brethren) which almost assuredly dissuaded non-Brethren Christians from taking his writings seriously.¹² This

"I do not occupy myself with putting in articles into the different journals: I fear there are too many, and though, I doubt not, often useful, I doubt a little if they have the freshness of the first, when truth was first blooming out, or the maturity which a good many years might seem calculated to produce" (Ibid., vol. II, p. 481).

¹² Although Darby often expresses his dislike for theological controversy (Bass lists the following references in Darby's Collected Writings, vol. I: pp. 169, 240, 314, 405, 415, 420, etc. to prove this point [Backgrounds, p. 56]), he does not hesitate to vehemently attack all who do not agree with his doctrinal views. Although quite knowledgeable in church history, Darby dismisses much of its literature by saying "It is quite clear that the ponderous tomes of councils are not a more clear, or accessible, or intelligible rule of faith than the living word" (Letters, vol. I, p. 107). He refers to some of the writings of the Church Fathers as "this lore" (Ibid., p. 45) and speaks of his study of Patristics:

"As to the Fathers, I have read some, consulted almost all, and some a good deal. But when, many years ago, I set about to read them, I found them as a body such trash that I gave it up as a study; for history they are of course useful, and I have examined them largely" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 71).

Concerning his own movement, Darby makes statements such as: "I believe brethren alone walk in consistency in the midst of a mass of baptised people" (Letters, vol. II, p. 148) and "Brethren have something which other Christians have not got" (Ibid., p. 307). On the other hand, Darby says that he never pushed "Brethrenism": "I can honestly say I never thought of 'brethren' with a single soul I ever met with -never -but what that soul wanted from God, as far as I was able" (Ibid., p. 423; see also Ibid., vol. I, p. 374 and vol. III, p. 49). He also at times insists that the Holy Ghost's work is not limited to that among the Plymouth Brethren (Collected Writings, vol. III, p. 353).

writer believes that much of the influence which Darby exerted on conservative theology is due primarily to a kind of second-hand assimilation of his views (i.e. though the writings of others [Brethren such as C. H. MacIntosh and William Kelly; non-Brethren such as C. I. Scofield]) rather than to a first-hand reading of Darby's Collected Writings.¹³

Darby's Influence on Dispensationalism and Millenarianism

There is disagreement as to whether Darby is truly the founder of dispensationalism¹⁴ or merely its popularizer.¹⁵ Bass gives Darby much of the credit for the systematizing of dispensationalism's principles:

¹³Turner refers to the fact that the Revisers used Darby's The New Testament -A New Translation (Life, p. 53). Darby's Synopsis of the Books of the Bible was recommended by Bishop Ellicott to theological students of his diocese (Ibid., p. 54).

¹⁴For our definition of dispensationalism, see footnote #20, pp. 85-86 supra. The position that Darby and the Brethren originated dispensationalism is held, for example, by William E. Cox. He states on the first page of his book: "Dispensationalism, as we know it today, had its beginning with the Brethren movement, which became prominent around 1830" (An Examination of Dispensationalism [Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1963], p. 1. Hereafter cited as Examination). Referring to Darby as the "father of modern dispensationalism," Cox says of Darby that "By 1830 he was in complete control of the [Brethren] movement and definitely shaped its dispensational doctrines" (Ibid., p. 6).

¹⁵Arnold Ehlert insists that Darby "colored the doctrine [of dispensationalism] to a considerable extent" but the method of dividing up redemptive history into various ages

Dispensationalism grew out of the Brethren movement, or Darbyism, as it is sometimes called, and much of its character and spirit has developed as the direct result of the personal magnetism of the man. His impact on the movement, for good or bad, is universally admitted: no man contributed more to it than he did . . . His theology was the root out of which dispensationalism grew. He developed the basic doctrinal pattern and hermeneutical principles which have been carried through to contemporary dispensationalism.¹⁶

Bass specifies Darby's Ecclesiology as the root out of which contemporary dispensationalism grew. Speaking of the Plymouth Brethren Movement, Bass says:

Whatever evaluation history may make of this movement, it will attest that dispensationalism is rooted in Darby's concept of the church -a concept that sharply distinguishes the church from Israel, assigns an exclusivist role to the church in an apostate Christendom, gives the church a heavenly title and futuristic character, grants each local church independency because each comprises the body of Christ, and maintains unity through separation from evil.¹⁷

Speaking of the broader theological category of "futuristic millenarianism," Ernest R. Sandeen states:

[The futuristic millenarianism] taught by John Nelson Darby and known since then as dispensationalism began to outdistance other varieties in both Britain and America. 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.¹⁸

Although we have already briefly discussed the origin of Darby's pretribulation rapture doctrine,¹⁹ that par-

and dispensations is as old as the Church itself (A Bibliographic History of Dispensationalism [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965], p. 47).

¹⁶Bass, Backgrounds, pp. 141, 143. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁸Sandeen, Roots, p. xxiii.

¹⁹See note #243, pp. 237-238 supra.

ticular emphasis within dispensationalism and his view that the Church was not prophesied in the Old Testament are features of his dispensationalism which frequently are cited as distinct contributions by Darby. Rather than defending themselves against the charge of doctrinal innovation in such features, some Brethren writers take pride in Darby's role in spreading these distinctives. Harry A. Ironside, for example, boasts of the fact that the view that the church was not prophesied in the Old Testament was non-existent until introduced by Darby in the nineteenth century:

In fact, until brought to the fore, through the writings and preaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman, Mr. J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon throughout a period of 1600 years!²⁰

Darby's Influence on American Fundamentalism and "The Fundamentals"

In this section we will briefly examine the impact of Darby and his dispensationalism on both the American Fundamentalist Movement²¹ and on the authors of the literature which set forth the cardinal doctrines of that movement, The Fundamentals.²²

²⁰H. A. Ironside, The Mysteries of God (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1908), p. 50, quoted in Cox, Examination, p. 2.

²¹For our definition of "Fundamentalism" and "Fundamentalist," see p. 83 supra.

²²Marsden describes this literature:
"The Fundamentals" was conceived by a Southern

Darby and the Brethren influenced the American Fundamentalist Movement in two specific ways in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first means involved the spreading of Darby's dispensational views through the personal visits he paid to the United States in the years 1862, 1864, 1866, 1870, 1872-1873, 1874, and 1876.²³

The second way Darby and the Brethren influenced the American Fundamentalist Movement was by means of what Josiah S. Teulon calls "deluging the country with pamphlets." Teulon states that Brethrenism's "main instrument of its propagation has been the press rather than the pulpit."²⁴ Four leading writers of the Brethren were read by American

California oil millionaire and edited by Bible teachers and evangelists. Published in twelve paperback volumes from 1910 to 1915, it was meant to be a great 'Testimony to the Truth' and even something of a scholarly tour de force. Lyman Stewart, the chief promoter and financial backer, described the prospective authors as 'the best and most loyal Bible teachers in the world.' He had a business-man's confidence that the product would 'doubtless be the master-pieces of the writers'" (George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and the American Culture [New York: Oxford University Press, 1980], p. 118). Hereafter cited as Fundamentalism.

²³Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 132. See also the section on Darby's visits to North America in Ross Howlett McLaren's "The Triple Tradition: The Origin and Development of the Open Brethren in North America." Master's Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1982, pp. 1-4.

²⁴J. S. Teulon, The History and Teaching of the Plymouth Brethren (New York: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1899), p. 5.

ministers: Darby, William Kelly (1820-1906), C. H. Macintosh (1820-1896), and William Trotter (1818-1865).²⁵

Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895), who with others initiated the Niagara Bible Conference in 1876, was not a Plymouth Brother, but taught the any-moment coming and avidly read virtually every Brethren author.²⁶ He once said of the Brethren:

Such, we believe, after much thorough and careful investigation and frequent conversations with those best qualified to judge, is the real spring of the present evangelistic movement. It demands fearless candor to concede it, but we believe that truth requires us to confess that we owe a great deal, both in literature and in life, to the leaders of this ultra-Protestant movement. And we are glad to believe that the light which it has thrown out by its immense biblical study and research has been appropriated by many of the best preachers and evangelists in our Protestant churches.²⁷

Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), described as the "most conspicuous exponent" of the revival emphasis of American Protestantism²⁸ in the nineteenth century, was influenced in several ways by Darby and the Brethren. He brought home many tracts from the Brethren in Ireland during his evangelistic crusades abroad.²⁹ Some suggest that the model of the Breth-

²⁵Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," pp. 132-135.

²⁶Sandeen, Roots, p. 143.

²⁷A. J. Gordon, Watchword 1-19 (Boston, 1878-97), quoted in Sandeen, Roots, p. 143).

²⁸Walker, A History, p. 516.

²⁹Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," pp. 132-135.

ren assemblies "actually influenced Moody in his planning for the Illinois Street church in Chicago."³⁰ The American church historian Sydney Ahlstrom, in discussing Moody's preaching, says that "this new line of conservative thought owed much to England's Plymouth Brethren."³¹

While in Chicago on one of his visits Darby was invited by Moody to give a series of Bible readings in Farwell Hall. The meeting, in the description of W. G. Turner,

Unfortunately suddenly came to an abrupt end as the two clashed over the question of the freedom of the will. Mr. Darby held to what Mr. Moody considered extreme Calvinism on this point, affirming that so perverted was man's will he could not "will" even to be saved . . . Mr. Moody insisted that man as a responsible person was appealed to by God to turn to Him and would be condemned if he did not . . . The controversy became so heated one day that Mr. Dar-³² by suddenly closed his Bible and refused to go on.

Darby frequently refers to Moody in his writings. He speaks of "Moody's earnestness, for I know the man well,"³³ but uses terms such as "shallow" and "superficial" to describe Moody's efforts in the gospel.³⁴ "Individuals may be converted [through Moody's preaching]," Darby says, but

³⁰ Elmer W. Powell, Moody of Northfield, unpublished manuscript done in 1940 and housed in the library of the Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania. Quoted by Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 147.

³¹ Quoted in David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, editors, The Evangelicals (Nashville: Abington Press, 1975), p. 283.

³² Turner, Life, pp. 21-22.

³³ Letters, vol. II, p. 257.

³⁴ Ibid. "Moody and Sankey have given an impulsion to

"the effect on the church of God will be mischievous."³⁵

Darby speaks of his confrontation with Moody in Chicago:

Moody before he came to England denied openly all work of grace in conversion, and denounced it as diabolical in his own pulpit . . . We discussed it at Chicago, and he held it there, namely, that no man is condemned for his sins, but for not coming to the refuge -sins are all borne and put away for everybody.³⁶

Darby is not reluctant to compare the evangelistic work of Moody with that of the Plymouth Brethren:

The mere excitement [Moody's revivals] will soon be over, a matter to be talked of as past. But brethren have something that is permanent, and the word of God abides for ever. Only they must live it.³⁷

revival work everywhere, and I doubt not God's hand is in it. I cannot but trust there are real conversions, but it is a very shallow work, and encourages shallowness and worldly Christianity" (Ibid., p. 334). "I fully judge it will foster worldliness in saints; it will foster heresy and false doctrine" (Ibid., p. 257). In another place Darby says: "Activity is all right, but activity instead of Christ -and that is Moodyism and United States religion -is a most deadening and worldly-making principle" (Ibid., p. 356).

³⁵ Ibid., p. 258.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 259.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 329. Apparently referring to Moody's revivals, Darby says: "I used to say fifty years ago that God's renewed actings in grace, revivals, in the old sense, were like fresh water poured on the ground; the next step was mud mixture" (Ibid., p. 385). In the work of R. Piersall Smith and Moody, Darby sees the application of a Bible text which he often quotes, Jeremiah 15:19 ("Separate the precious from the vile"): "We have to go through P. Smith and Moody like all else. God will make everything work together for good to those that love Him. They [are] in some aspects signs of the last days; our business is to separate the precious from the vile" (Ibid., p. 357). Perhaps professional jealousy also contributed to the rift between Darby and Moody. Robert T. Grant, a Brethren evangelist, reported to Darby in 1868 that he (Grant) had won some

Although Darby did not personally write any of the articles in The Fundamentals (he died almost thirty years before they were published), his influence was felt through them. Lyman Stewart, the financial backer of the project, was an ardent Darbyite dispensationalist and stated that "a man who does not have a grasp of dispensational truth cannot possibly rightly divide the word of truth."³⁸ The editor of The Fundamentals, A. C. Dixon, was a dispensationalist Baptist minister. The clergymen comprising the editorial committee were millenarians and, like Dixon and Stewart, almost assuredly dispensationalists.³⁹

The task of The Fundamentals extended much beyond the propagation of premillennialism; only two articles in the volumes dealt with that particular subject. All five of the articles on inspiration, however, were written by dispensationalists. A total of nineteen authors, in fact, who contributed thirty-one articles, were dispensationalists.⁴⁰

promising young men. "Moody is quite in a pet," said Grant, "about so many of them leaving him who were his best workers" (Robert T. Grant to J. N. Darby, 9 August 1868, Sibthorpe manuscripts, cited in Sandeen, Roots, p. 73). Darby spoke more complementarily of Moody by 1875, but only because he was convinced that Moody had "greatly got on in the truth" (Letters, vol. II, pp. 327, 369).

³⁸ Sandeen, Roots, p. 193..

³⁹ Ibid., p. 197.

⁴⁰ Ernest R. Sandeen, "Towards a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," Church History

Such men as A. T. Pierson, A. J. Gordon, James Brookes, W. J. Erdman, George C. Needham, and Leander Munhall "embraced and taught, at least for a few years, the millenarian views identified earlier with Darby's dispensational theology."⁴¹

Concerning nineteenth century Fundamentalism, one writer attributes much of its impact and strength to its mixed nature:

Fundamentalism was comprised of an alliance between two newly-formulated nineteenth-century theologies, dispensationalism and the Princeton Theology which, although not wholly compatible, managed to maintain a united front against modernism until about 1918.⁴²

Darby's influence among Fundamentalists may be especially seen in the contemporary church in the area of the interpretation of the scriptures. Although it is not the goal of this dissertation to investigate Darby's hermeneutics and its continuance among conservatives, it seems undeniable that, to a large degree, Darby was the "progenitor of the exegetical methodology employed in most Fundamentalist circles today."⁴³

36 (1967): 67. Hereafter cited as "Origins."

⁴¹Sandeen, Roots, p. 144.

⁴²Sandeen, "Origins," p. 67.

⁴³Robertson, "Sanctification," p. 42, citing Hagan, "Ministry." For a listing of several key passages which influenced Darby in his exegesis, see p. 266, *supra*. For a brief discussion of the use of II Timothy 2:15 ("Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"), see note #73 on pp. 364-365, *infra*.

Darby and the Scofield
Reference Bible

Cyrus Iverson Scofield (1843-1921) authored one of the articles in The Fundamentals and, along with Arno C. Gaebelein, was the leader of the Darbyite or pretrikulationist party during the crisis within Millenarianism in the years 1895-1914.⁴⁴ That crisis, described as an "internal dissension that eventually turned hopes to ashes,"⁴⁵ centered greatly around "that crucial point in Darby's eschatology, the any-moment coming or secret rapture."⁴⁶

Although very little is said concerning the influence of Darby and the Brethren on Scofield either in Scofield's biography⁴⁷ or in the account of the production

⁴⁴Sandeen, Roots, p. 214. See also Marsden, Fundamentalism, p. 241, note #17.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 208. James H. Brookes, one of the major forces in the Millenarian movement, described the growing discord a few years before his death: "It is a sad fact that pre-millennialists, notwithstanding their knowledge of the truth, are going to pieces" (Watchword and Truth, [1902] :302, quoted from Truth 21 [April, 1895], cited by Sandeen, Roots, p. 209).

⁴⁶Sandeen, Roots, p. 210. Sandeen points out that "one party in American millenarianism -beginning with James Inglis and James H. Brookes and continuing through C. I. Scofield and Arno C. Gaebelein to later twentieth-century defenders such as Lewis Sperry Chafer -has consistently maintained the Darbyite dispensational theology" (Ibid., p. 221, footnote #25).

⁴⁷Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, The Life Story of C.I. Scofield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920).

of his Reference Bible,⁴⁸ Scofield's ties with the Plymouth Brethren are numerous (though he never became a member of the movement). James H. Brookes, an ardent dispensationalist⁴⁹ had a great influence on Scofield; Scofield studied the Bible in Brookes's church and home⁵⁰ and Scofield once wrote:

During the last twenty years of his life Dr. Brookes was perhaps my most intimate friend, and to him I am indebted more than to all other men in the world for the establishment of my faith.⁵¹

Scofield's explicit contact with the Brethren often concerned the publication of his writings.⁵² It does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that

Scofield, although not a Plymouth Brethren, was a devoted disciple of John Darby . . . The phenomenon of the wide influence of Scofield is heightened when

⁴⁸Arno C. Gaebelin, The History of the Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1943). The lack of reference to Darby and the Brethren may well be due to what we have suggested on p. 344, note #12 supra.

⁴⁹Ironside claims that Darby preached in Brookes's pulpit, but does not cite any supporting evidence for the assertion (H. A. Ironside, Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement [Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1942], pp. 196, 204, cited in Sandeen, Roots, p. 75).

⁵⁰Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," pp. 136-137.

⁵¹Sandeen, Roots, p. 223. Marsden refers to Scofield as Brookes's "protege" (Marsden, Fundamentalism, p. 51).

⁵²Shinn points out that Scofield's book Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth was published in 1888 by one of the major Brethren publishers in America, Loizeaux Brothers; Scofield's Bible correspondence course was printed and published by his Plymouth Brethren friend Francis Emory Fitch; Scofield's arrangements for publication of his Reference Bible were made with Henry Frowde, the head of Oxford Press and associated with the Brethren (Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," pp. 136-137).

one discovers that his teachings were taken almost in toto from John Nelson Darby.⁵³

A comparison between the tenets of Darby's dispensational theology and Scofield's notes in his Bible⁵⁴ supports the statement that

The parallel between Scofield's notes and Darby's works only too clearly reveals that Scofield was not only a student of Darby's works, but that he copiously borrowed ideas, words, and phrases.⁵⁵

Someone has well remarked that the root of dispensationalism is John Nelson Darby but the fruit of that system is the work of C. I. Scofield.

Although theological liberalism was not yet a cause celebre in the 1870's, the following statement helps us to see a line of continuity within Fundamentalism:-

It is clear that the views of John Nelson Darby as accepted by the American adherents of the Niagara and International Prophecy conferences of the late nineteenth century, popularized by W. E. Blackstone's Jesus Is Coming and systematized by James H. Brookes and then by his protege C. I. Scofield,⁵⁶ opposed the liberal trends at almost every point.

⁵³Cox, Examination, pp. 51, 56. Cox further states: "Scofield wrote many books, founded what is now called the Philadelphia College of the Bible, and, in 1909, published his Scofield Reference Bible. All these efforts inculcated the Plymouth Brethren teachings learned from Darby" (Ibid., p. 13).

⁵⁴e.g. Scofield's position that the entire church age intervenes between Daniel's sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks (The Scofield Reference Bible, 1909 edition, pp. 914-915, notes) exactly parallels Darby's view (Marsden, Fundamentalism, p. 52; see also pp. 59-60, 63). For Darby's exposition of Daniel 9, see Collected Writings, vol. XI, passim.

⁵⁵Bass, Backgrounds, p. 18.

⁵⁶Marsden, Fundamentalism, p. 51. Marsden's summary of this period's activity is helpful:

The enormous impact of the Scofield Reference Bible can hardly be overestimated. One writer describes it as the most powerful dispenser of dispensationalism in America:

[The Scofield Reference Bible is] perhaps the most influential single publication in millenarian and Fundamentalist historiography. The Scofield Reference Bible combined an attractive format of typography, paragraphing, notes, and cross references with the theology of Darbyite dispensationalism. The book has thus been subtly but powerfully influential in spreading those views among hundreds of thousands who have regularly read that Bible and who often have been unaware of the distinction between the ancient text and the Scofield interpretation.⁵⁷

"The same group of Bible teachers and evangelists who promoted The Fundamentals were moving on other fronts to promote their own distinctive dispensationalist views. Backed by Stewart money they founded the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1908. In the same year they also managed re-publication and massive free distribution of William E. Blackstone's Jesus Is Coming. Probably most important, in 1909 there came the publication, by Oxford University Press, of the Scofield Reference Bible" (Ibid., p. 119).

Sandeen adds:

"[Lyman Stewart] contributed one thousand dollars toward the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible. The year before this Bible was published and two years before the appearance of the first volume of The Fundamentals, Stewart appealed to Scofield to write a book of 'warning and testimony to the English-speaking ministers, theological teachers and students.' Although not directly stated, it was implied in Stewart's letter that he would pay for the distribution of such a work" (Sandeen, Roots, p. 191).

⁵⁷ Sandeen, Roots, p. 222. Sandeen reiterates his belief that "the Scofield Reference Bible was uncompromisingly Darbyite dispensationalist in doctrine and taught the any-moment coming and the secret rapture of the church" (Ibid., p. 224).

Darby and the Bible
Conference Movement

The Bible Conference Movement⁵⁸ was one of the most effective organs in spreading Darbyite dispensationalism. The Niagara Conference, described by one writer as "the mother of them all -the Monte Cassino and Port Royal of the movement,"⁵⁹ adopted Darby's view of the church and the leaders and speakers at the conference "advocated the doctrine of the any-moment coming of Christ and followed Darby's interpretation of prophecy until the 1890's."⁶⁰

A group of eight American millenarians proposed in 1878 a Bible conference to be held in New York City. Apparently referring to the Mildmay conferences which began in that same year, they issued the following call for the convening of the American conference:

Listen to a series of carefully prepared papers on the pre-Millennial advent of the Lord Jesus Christ and connected truths, and . . . participate in such discussions as the topics may suggest.⁶¹

In describing their motivation for such a conference,

⁵⁸For a survey of the Bible conference movement, see Sandeen, Roots, ch. 6 "The Prophecy and Bible Conference Movement," pp. 132-161.

⁵⁹Sandeen, Roots, p. 132.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 141. "The Niagara conference represented J. N. Darby's concept of the church adapted to the American environment" (Ibid., p. 136). "The leaders at Niagara followed Darby's lead, furthermore, in strenuously opposing the doctrines of the perfectionists and annihilationists" (Ibid., p. 140).

⁶¹Ibid., p. 145.

these eight (who had been leaders of the Niagara conference) stated:

It has seemed desirable that those who . . . are "looking for that blessed hope," should meet together in conference, as our honored brethren in England have recently done.⁶²

"Once again," comments one historian of the Fundamentalist movement, "the British millenarians were leading the American."⁶³

Prophecy conferences also began in 1914 at Moody Bible Institute. Moody's Northfield Conferences were "virtually dominated by dispensationalists" who clearly taught Darby's pretribulationist view.⁶⁴

Darby, the Brethren and The Modern Missionary Movement

The pessimism of the dispensationalists of the nineteenth century prompted the charge "you millenarians don't expect to succeed; you don't think that the gospel will

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid. Sandeen discusses the historical predecessor to these conferences: The Powerscourt conferences began in 1831 and were patterned after Henry Drummond's Albury conferences. They were attended by both Darby and Edward Irving; however, only the former exerted a strong influence.

"Darby used the third Powerscourt conference in September 1833 to continue his attack upon the apostasy of the churches and to stress the need for all true believers to gather in the name of the Lord alone . . . Darby introduced into discussion at Powerscourt the ideas of a secret rapture of the church and of a parenthesis in prophetic fulfillment between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel" (Sandeen, Roots, p. 38). "The third Powerscourt conference was dominated entirely by the Plymouth Brethren" (Ibid., p. 36).

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 141.

eventually convert the heathen world to Christianity."⁶⁵
 The millenarians, however, did not agree that their position
 "cut the nerve of foreign missions." "What nonmillenarians
 everlastingly failed to realize was that millenarianism
 carried with it a new philosophy of missions."⁶⁶ That new
 philosophy involved the rejection of universalism (that all
 would be saved), yet emphasized that all whom God intended
 to be saved would be saved.

Some early leaders among the Plymouth Brethren recognized that God's work of saving sinners was to be done through His appointed means, i.e. through individuals who would dedicate themselves to the spread of the gospel. The earliest Plymouth Brother to do so was Anthony Norris-Groves.⁶⁷

The expectation of the Second Coming of Christ was a powerful motivation for missionary activity. A. N. Groves wrote in his journal for December 13, 1833:

I consider the testimony of Jesus to be published through every land, before the Bridegroom comes; this makes my heart feel an interest in heathens, that we may hasten the coming of the Lord.⁶⁸

Darby personally expressed the conviction that the

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 184. ⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷For the life of Groves, see Mrs. A. N. Groves, Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1857). For a detailed account of his missionary effort, see Anthony N. Groves, Journal of a Residence at Bagdad (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1832).

⁶⁸Groves's Memoir, p. 258, cited by Rowdon, Origins, p. 187.

certainty of judgment soon to fall upon the earth provides a powerful motive for missionary exertion."⁶⁹ George Mueller took up his itinerant missionary work specifically "through the recently received truth of the Lord's second coming."⁷⁰

One writer has remarked:

The most distinctive mark of Brethren missionary work, as regards motivation, was the fact that it arose largely from the conviction that the Scriptural prophecies concerning the Second Advent of Christ would shortly be fulfilled.⁷¹

As we have noticed in this appendix, Darby and the Brethren Movement played a formative role in spreading the tenets of dispensationalism; in influencing major participants in the American Fundamentalist Movement; in inspiring such conservative leaders as A. J. Gordon, D. L. Moody, C. I. Scofield, and others; in using Bible conferences as effective organs for presenting the dispensational faith and fighting the rising tide of liberalism; and in setting an example for the modern missionary movement.

Darby's theology is readily seen in Fundamentalist

⁶⁹ Collected Writings, vol. II, p. 37.

⁷⁰ Mueller's Narrative, I.51, cited by Rowdon, Origins, p. 187.

⁷¹ Rowdon, Origins, p. 187. Another writer has said: "Darbyism as a movement has been in the forefront of world missionary activity; and many of the leading men of God of the past one hundred years have been of pre-tribulational persuasion" (J. Barton Payne, The Imminent Appearing of Christ [Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1962], pp. 167-168).

circles today.⁷² The Scofield Reference Bible continues to be a bestseller, especially among those who "rightly divide the word of truth."⁷³ Dispensationalism is

⁷²Robertson says that "Darby's influence extended beyond the Brethren as his theology effected the formation of the twentieth-century Fundamentalist community" ("Sanctification," p. 29). He suggests that "it was apparently the influence of the theology of the Plymouth Brethren that prevented Moody from being caught up in 'perfectionism,' a characteristic of the England Keswick movement" (Ibid., p. 31). "Theological seminaries and Bible institutes and colleges which have inherited Darby's theology show a marked interest in sanctification and produce further evidence of the abiding influence of his doctrine" (Ibid., p. 34). Gordon Woodcock provides insight into the future of Darby and the Brethren's influence:

"As in former years its [the Brethren Movement's] strength will continue to lie in the influence which it brings to bear upon undenominational Christianity through the leaders who are trained in its particular viewpoint. Many of these will tire, in time, of the restrictions placed upon them by the narrow ecclesiastical limits of the group, and move out to other bodies where their contribution of devotion and knowledge of Scriptures will be welcome" (Gordon B. Woodcock, "The Plymouth Brethren." B. D. thesis, McMaster University, 1948, p. 9; quoted by Robertson, "Sanctification," p. 34).

⁷³The interpretation of this verse (II Timothy 2:15) by those of the dispensationalist school is an interesting study. Although Darby says virtually nothing about the text which became a rallying-point for many dispensationalists, his scheme of interpretation probably provided the basis for C. I. Scofield's later understanding of it. Scofield understands II Timothy 2:15 ("Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth") as providing the challenge to make proper dispensational "divisions" of the Bible. In his pamphlet Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, Scofield says concerning this text:

"The Word of Truth, then, has right divisions, and it must be evident that, as one cannot be 'a workman that needed [*sic*] not to be ashamed' without observing them, so any study of that Word which ignores those divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing."

Scofield then proceeds to outline what he terms "the more important divisions" of that word, the seven "dis-

ferently taught in a number of conservative schools;⁷⁴ a concise overview of dispensational theology may be found today in a text such as Charles Caldwell Ryrie's Dispensationalism Today. The pretribulational viewpoint is vigorously espoused in a wide variety of Fundamentalist circles through writings such as Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth.

It is not an overstatement to say that seldom have Darby and the Brethren received credit for these contributions. Darby's personality certainly repelled many in conservative circles, as one writer has appropriately noted:

One can only imagine what the total impact of Brethrenism would have been had this man retained the spirit of humble service to the body of Christ which he exhibited in the mountains of Wicklow County and had not introduced his theological extremes, nor exerted his personal despotism, but with equal zeal had given to the world the fellowship and spiritual truth which was known at Dublin in the early days.⁷⁵

The following observation summarizes our concern in this concluding section:

pensations" which have been advocated by many of his followers (C. I. Scofield, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, [New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.], p. 6).

⁷⁴e.g., Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas (founded by Lewis Sperry Chafer, an ardent Darbyite dispensationalist); Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa (the major Plymouth Brethren school of the "Open Brethren"); Northeastern Bible College, Essex Fells, New Jersey (a Baptist institution, but decidedly dispensational in the Darbyite tradition); and Philadelphia College of the Bible, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (founded by C. I. Scofield).

⁷⁵Bass, Backgrounds, pp. 143-144.

American church historians have not fully explored the extent of the indebtedness of conservatism to Brethrenism, which supplied not only the pervasive themes of dispensationalism but also styles of devotion and language of church life.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Shinn, "Plymouth Brethren," p. 147.

**A
SELECTED
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bibliographies

Ehlert, Arnold D. A Bibliographic History of Dispensationalism. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965.

Brethren Writers- A Checklist with an Introductory Essay and Additional Lists. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969.

Darby's Writings

Christ Tempted and Sympathizing. London: Morrish, n.d.

The Collected Works of J. N. Darby. New ed. Edited by William Kelly. 34 vols. Kingston-on-Thames, England: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, n.d.

A Few Hymns and Some Spiritual Songs, Selected 1856, for the Little Flock. London: Groombridge and Sons, 1856.

Gospel Sermons. London: W. H. Broom, n.d.

Hints on the Tabernacle, the Sacrifices, the Feasts, and the Coverings of the Holy Vessels. London: Morrish, n.d.

The Holy Scriptures, A New Translation from the Original Languages. 1967 ed. Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, 1967.

Lectures on the Second Coming. London: W. H. Broom, 1868.

A Letter on the Church of the Scriptures. London: W. H. Broom, n.d.

Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures. London: Morrish, n.d.

Letters of J. N. D. London: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, n.d. Vol. 1: 1832-1868. Vol. 2: 1868-1879. Vol. 3: 1879-1882.

Meditations on the Epistle to the Romans. London: Morrish, n.d.

Miscellaneous Writings of J. N. D. 2 vols. Vol. 4 and 5. Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

Nine Lectures on the First Epistle of John. 1948 edition.
Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1978 reprint.

Notes and Comments on Scripture, from the Note Books of
J.N. Darby. 7 vols. Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth
Publishers, n.d.

Notes and Expositions by JND. London: W. H. Broom, 1866.

Notes and Jottings from Various Meetings with J. N. Darby.
New ed. Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

Notes of Addresses. 2 vols. London: Morrish, n.d.

Notes of Addresses on the Gospel of Luke. London: F. E.
Race, 1922.

Pilgrim Portions. Selections from the Writings of John
Nelson Darby. Edited by H. G. Addison, Illinois: Bible
Truth Publishers, n.d.

Sermons and Sunday Tracts. London: Morrish, n.d.

Spiritual Songs. London: J. Carter, 1900.

Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. 5 vols. Kingston-on-
Thames. England: Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, 1943.

Secondary Resources

Books

Arminius, James. Works. Translated by James Nichols and W.
R. Bagnall. 3 vols. Buffalo: Derby, Miller & Orton, 1853.

Barbour, Hugh. The Quakers in Puritan England. New Haven and
London: Yale University Press, 1964.

_____ and Roberts, Arthur, editors. Early Quaker
Writings. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publish-
ing Co., 1973.

Bass, Clarence B. Backgrounds to Dispensationalism. Grand
Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1960.

Beattie, David J. Brethren, The Story of a Great Recovery.
Kilmarnock: John Ritchie, Ltd., 1937.

- Berkhof, L. The History of Christian Doctrines. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1937; reprint ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975.
- Blackstone, W. E. Jesus Is Coming. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898.
- Broadbent, E. H. The Pilgrim Church. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1942, second edition.
- Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1967.
- Cameron, Robert. Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return. New York: 1922.
- Calvin, John. Calvin: Theological Treatises. Translated by J. K. S. Reid. The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXII. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n. d.
- _____. The Commentaries of John Calvin. Various translators. 46 vols. Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843-1855.
- _____. Institutes of the Christian Religion. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. The Library of Christian Classics, vols. XX and XXI. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- Cannon, William Ragsdale. The Theology of John Wesley. New York: Abingdon Press, 1946.
- Carson, James C.L. The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren. Coleraine: John McCombie, 1862.
- Carter, Charles Webb. The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit, A Wesleyan Perspective. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1974.
- Chadwick, Owen, ed. The Mind of the Oxford Movement. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960.
- _____. The Victorian Church. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. Systematic Theology. 8 vols. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948.
- Chauvire, Roger. A Short History of Ireland. New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1961.
- Church, R. W. The Oxford Movement. Edited by Geoffrey Best. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

- Coad, F. Roy. A History of the Brethren Movement. Sydney, Australia: The Paternoster Press, 1968.
- Cox, William E. An Examination of Dispensationalism. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1963.
- Croskery, Thomas. Catechism of the Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren. London: James Nisbet Co., 1866.
- Croskery, Thomas. Darbyism, or the Separationist Theory of a Pure Church. London: James Nisbet Co., n.d.
- Croskery, Thomas. Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines. London and Belfast: William Mullen and Son, 1879.
- D.A. Darbyism: An Attack Upon J. N. D. London: Cookhead, Bayswater, 1881.
- Dallimore, Arnold. Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement—The Life of Edward Irving. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983.
- Davidson, James West. The Logic of Millennial Thought. London: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Davies, Horton. Worship and Theology in England. Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Dennet, Edward. The Plymouth Brethren: Their Rise, Division, Practice, and Doctrine. London: Elliot Stock, n.d.
- Dolman, D. H. Simple Talks on the Holy Spirit. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1927.
- Elliot-Binns, L. E. The Development of English Theology in the Later Nineteenth Century. London, 1952.
- Fisher, George Park. History of Christian Doctrine. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.
- Forstman, H. Jackson. Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962.
- Fromow, George H., ed. B. W.-Newton and Dr. S. P. Tregelles. Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, London: n.d.
- G. An Enquiry As to the Scriptural Position of the Plymouth Brethren. London: G. Morrish, 1875.

- Gaebelein, Arno C. The History of the Scofield Reference Bible. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1943.
- Gilmore, William. These Seventy Years. Kilmarnock, 1954.
- Grant, James. The Plymouth Brethren. Their History and Heresies. London: W. H. Guest, 1876.
- Groves, Anthony N. Journal of a Residence at Bagdad. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1832.
- Groves, Mrs. A. N. Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1857.
- Halevy, Elie. Halevy's History of the English People. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961.
- Hamilton, Henry. England, A History of the Homeland. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1948.
- Ironside, H. A. A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1942.
- _____. The Mysteries of God. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1908.
- Irving, Edward. The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes. Edited by Gavin Carlyle. London: Alexander Strahan, 1864.
- _____. Thirty Sermons. London: John Bennett, 1835.
- Kelly, William, ed. Index to the Bible Treasury, A Monthly Magazine of Papers on Scriptural Subjects, June 1856-July 1920. H. L. Heijkoop, 58, Blijhamsterstraat, Wruschoten, Netherlands, n.d.
- Kraus, C. Norman. Dispensationalism in America. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1958.
- Ladd, George E. The Blessed Hope. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956.
- Latimer, W.T. Lectures on the Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren. Belfast: James Cleeland, 1890.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. The Nineteenth Century in Europe. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Row, 1959.
- McAdoo, Henry R. The Spirit of Anglicanism. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965.

- Macintosh, Duncan. The Special Teachings, Ecclesiastical and Doctrinal, of the Exclusive Brethren, or Plymouth Brethren, Compiled From Their Own Writings, With Strictures. London: Houlston and Sons, 1872, fourth edition.
- MacPherson, Dave. The Incredible Cover-Up. Medford, Oregon: Omega Publications, n.d.
- MacPherson, Dave. The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin. Kansas City, Missouri: Heart of American Bible Society, 1973.
- Mallott, Floyd E. Studies in Brethren History. Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, n.d.
- Marsden, George M. Fundamentalism and American Culture-The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelism: 1870-1925. London: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Mead, Frank S. Handbook of Denominations In the United States, Their History, Doctrines, Organizations, Present Status. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970, fifth edition.
- Mearns, Peter. Christian Truth Viewed in Relation to Plymouthism. Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1875, second edition.
- Miller, Andrew. The Brethren, Their Origin, Progress and Testimony. London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.
- _____. Short Papers on Church History from Apostolic Times to the Twentieth Century. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1929.
- Miller, Edward. The History and Doctrines of Irvingism. 2 vols. London: C. Kegan Paul and Co., 1878.
- Neatby, W. Blair. The History of the Plymouth Brethren. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901.
- Newman, Francis W. Phases of Faith; or Passages from the History of My Creed. London, 1850.
- Noel, Napoleon. The History of the Brethren. Denver, Colorado: W. F. Knapp, 1936.
- Nuttall, Geoffrey F. The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947.
- _____. The Puritan Spirit. London: Epworth Press, 1967.

- Oliphant, Margaret. The Life of Edward Irving. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1862.
- Outler, Albert C., ed. John Wesley. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Payne, J. Barton. The Imminent Appearing of Christ. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1962.
- Pickering, Hy. Chief Men among the Brethren. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1918.
- Pierson, Arthur T. Forward Movements of the Last Half Century. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1900.
- Quennell, Marjorie. A History of Everyday Things in England. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1954.
- Reid, William. Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted. Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1880.
- Root, Jean Christie. Edward Irving, Man, Preacher, Prophet. Boston: Sherman, French & Co., 1912.
- Rowdon, Harold H. The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850. London, 1967.
- Ryrie Charles Caldwell. The Basis of the Premillennial Faith. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953.
- _____. Dispensationalism Today. Chicago: Moody Press, 1965.
- _____. The Holy Spirit. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1965.
- Sandeen, Ernest R. The Origins of Fundamentalism. Historical Series, no. 10. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968.
- _____. The Roots of Fundamentalism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Schleiermacher, Frederick. On Religion. Translated by John Oman. New York: Harper and Row, 1958.
- _____. The Christian Faith. 2 vols. Edited by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.
- Scofield, C.I. Dr. C. I. Scofield's Question Box. Compiled by Ella E. Pohle. Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1917.

- _____. (ed.) The New Scofield Reference Bible: Authorized King James Version. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- _____. Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1888.
- Shedd, William G. T. Dogmatic Theology. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.
- Sheldon, Henry C. History of Christian Theology. 2nd edition. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895.
- Smeaton, George. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. London: T & T Clark, 1889; reprint ed., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958.
- Smith, Wilbur M. Profitable Bible Study. Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1939.
- Starkey, Lycurgus, Jr. The Work of the Holy Spirit- A Study in Wesleyan Theology. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Stokes, G.T. Plymouth Brethrenism: Its Ecclesiastical and Doctrinal Teachings: With a Sketch of Its History. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874.
- Strachan, C. Gordon. The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973.
- Teulon, J.S. The History and Teachings of the Plymouth Brethren. London: Society for Promoting of Christian Knowledge, 1883.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. The Holy Spirit of God. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955.
- Tregelles, S. P. The Hope of Christ's Second Coming: How Is It Taught in Scripture? And Why? Worthing: 1926; reprint ed., London: 1864.
- Trevelyan, G. M. English Social History. New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1965.
- Turner, W. G. John Nelson Darby. London: C. A. Hammond, 1944.
- Veitch, Thomas Stewart. The Story of the Brethren Movement. London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.
- Walker, Williston. A History of the Christian Church. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Walvoord, John F. The Holy Spirit. Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1954.

_____. The Millennial Kingdom. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Dunham Publishers, 1959.

Watkin-Jones, Howard. The Holy Spirit from Arminius to Wesley. London: The Epworth Press, 1929.

Wells, David F., and Woodbridge, John D., editors. The Evangelicals. Nashville: Abington Press, 1975.

Wesley, John, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. London: The Epworth Press, reprint edition 1954.

_____. Wesley's Standard Sermons. Edited and annotated by Edward H. Sugden. 2 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1921.

_____. Wesleyans: A Complete System of Wesleyan Theology. New York: Carlton and Porter, n.d.

_____. The Works of the Reverend John Wesley. 3rd edition. 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872.

Whately, E. J. Plymouth Brethrenism. London: Hatchards, 1879.

Woodrow, Ralph. Great Prophecies of the Bible. Riverside, California: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, Inc., 1971.

Periodical Articles

Irving, Edward. "Facts Connected with Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts." Fraser's Magazine (January and February, 1832).

Rowdon, Harold H. "Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century." Vox Evangelica III, editor Ralph P. Martin. London: The Epworth Press, 1964.

Stokes, George T. "John Nelson Darby." Contemporary Review. (July-December 1885).

Unpublished Works

Arnal, Albert. "Le Ministère au Point de Vue Darbyste." These Fac. de. Theol. Prot. de Paris, 1889.

Arnett, William M. "John Wesley -Man of One Book." Ph. D. dissertation, Drew University, 1954.

- Bell, William Everett, Jr. "A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology." Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1967.
- Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Nelson Darby.
London: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, a list of his books which were auctioned on November 25, 1889.
- Cawood, John W. "A Definitive Study of Dispensational Interpretation." Th. D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959.
- Carlsson, Allan. "A Historical Approach to the Doctrine of the Rapture." Master's Thesis, Wheaton College, 1956.
- Fuller, Daniel P. "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism." Th. M. dissertation, Northern Baptist Seminary, 1957.
- Garlow, James L. "John Wesley's Understanding of the Laity As Demonstrated by His Use of the Lay Preachers." Ph. D. dissertation, Drew University, 1979.
- Goddard, John Howard. "The Contribution of John Nelson Darby to Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology." Th. D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1948.
- Gray, Clifton Doggett. "The Meaning of Membership as Perceived by Plymouth Brethren." Ph. D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963.
- Hagan, Michael Robert. "The Concept of Christian Ministry As Revealed in the Writing of John Nelson Darby, (1800-1882)." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1967.
- McLaren, Ross Howlett. "The Triple Tradition: The Origin and Development of the Open Brethren in North America." Master's Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1982.
- Powell, Elmer W. Moody of Northfield. Unpublished manuscript done in 1940 and housed in the library of the Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania.
- Robertson, Arthur K., Jr. "The New Testament Doctrine of Sanctification as Found in the Published Writings of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)." Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1975.
- Rosscup, James E. "Crucial Objections to Dispensationalism." Master's Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1961.

Shinn, Robert Worcester. "The Plymouth Brethren and Ecumenical Protestantism." Th. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 1968.

Sturgeon, Howard. E. "The Life of John Nelson Darby." Th. M. Thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957.

VITA

Full name Larry Edward Dixon
Place and date of birth Greensboro, NC February 2, 1950
Parents' names Joe Gwyn Dixon
Mary Perry Dixon

Educational Institutions:

	<u>School</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date</u>
Secondary	Walter Williams High School	Burlington, NC	--	1968
Collegiate	Northeastern Bible College	Essex Fells, NJ	B.A.	1976
Graduate	Biblical Theo- logical Seminary	Hatfield, PA	M.Div.	1979
	Drew University	Madison, NJ	M.Phil.	1982
	Drew University	Madison, NJ	Ph.D.	1985

I understand that the Drew University
Library may have this dissertation
reproduced by microphotography and
made available by sale to scholars
and other libraries.


Signature