

A Brief Word Regarding Classic Pauline Dispensationalism

Occasionally, I receive email from frustrated non-dispensational believers, who after years of floundering and failure are seeking an escape from their personal dilemmas and wilderness spiritual journey. However more often, I receive email from earnest dispensationalists curious about *Pauline* dispensationalism, who like myself cut their teeth on an original or revised *Scotfield Bible*. Some may have heard of or read a few of Miles J. Stanford's classic works (e.g., *The Complete Green Letters*) and are looking to gain a better understanding of how *Pauline* dispensationalism agrees or differs from their own current understanding of dispensational truth. Inquiries include those from the realms of "Traditional" dispensationalism (Scotfield, Chafer, Walvoord, Pentecost, et al) as well as the "post-Acts 2" dispensational variety (Bullinger, Welch, O'Hair, Stam, Baker, etc.) See: [*Dispensationalism's Theological Persons*](#).

During the later half of the 20th century, two writers who have both gone to be with the Lord, advanced explanations for dispensationalism's decline in influence and popularity. 1) *Pauline* dispensationalist Miles Stanford identified and focused on the theological importance of keeping Israel separate from the Church—contra the erroneous application of Israel's New Covenant to New Creation believers. 2) Christian author Roy Huebner explained the historical ties and theological influence of Covenantist Isaac Watts upon C. I. Scotfield and Scotfield's substitution of his own premillennial *age-ism* for genuine dispensational truth.

My interest in the writings of Roy Huebner are largely focused upon his technical and systematic explanations of the *Pauline* dispensational thoughts of John Nelson Darby (JND) and other subsequent Plymouth Brethren (PB) writers. While having attended Open PB fellowships as a visitor in my early years as a believer, I am today more than content to observe all PB assemblies, gospel halls, and other sacrosanct "grounds of gathering" from a distance.

Shown below are the *Contents* page and *Preface* to Roy A. Huebner's *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, Present Truth Publishers, 1993. This book is a condensed version (181 pages) of his much larger and valuable *Dispensational Truth, Volume 1* (366 pages). Each seeks to summarize the key concepts of *Pauline* dispensationalism as understood and taught by JND and other prominent 19th century dispensationalists.

The late Roy Huebner was a retired engineer and long-time member/leader in the nearly extinct Tunbridge Wells branch of the PBs. He did extensive research using early PB publications (see his *Present Truth Publishers*) and in addition wrote extensively regarding the doctrinal roots of the seriously aberrant Raven/Taylor/Symington/Hales wing of the Exclusive PBs.

Believers living on the North American side of the Atlantic Ocean have long assumed, albeit wrongly, that the 20th century so-called "Traditional" dispensationalism of the Scotfield, Gray, Chafer, Ironside, Pettingill, Walvoord, Pentecost, and Ryrie, more-or-less reflected the understanding of the earlier dispensationalists of Great Britain. Not so. The influence of Covenantist Isaac Watts upon C. I. Scotfield created a theological contamination which had far reaching consequences. Historically speaking, the more *Pauline* variety of dispensationalism found expression in North America with William R. Newell and subsequently the works of Miles Stanford and Roy Huebner, although the later two ministries were uniquely different.

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Preface

It was originally intended that J. N. Darby's (hereafter JND) teaching regarding dispensational truth be included in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby, Vol. 1*, but it grew too long. Appendix One contains some comments on whether or not C. I. Scofield built on JND. Additionally, it was thought to add an Appendix Two to critique "ultradispensationalism" from the standpoint of the truth recovered through JND. And finally, the publication of a book charging that dispensationalism is inherently Arminian provided motivation to present a survey of the teachings of JND as they bear on "the five points of Calvinism." Thus, Appendix Three will show that JND is rejected by both Calvinists and Arminians. This same book motivated a response to the objection that "the offer of the kingdom," as viewed by dispensationalists, is an immoral offer - Appendix Four.

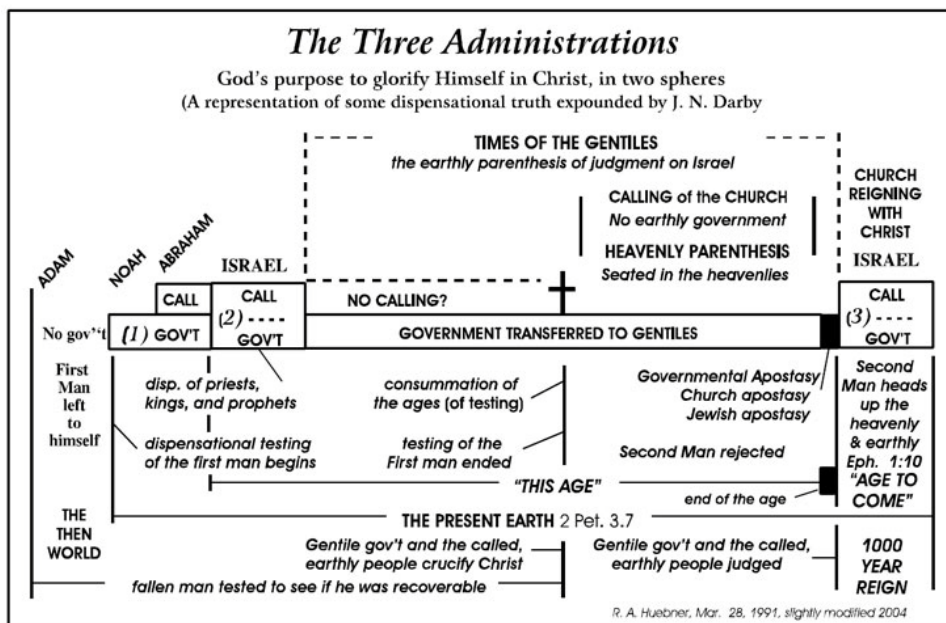
The body of the book gives a brief survey of J. N. Darby's dispensational teaching, which involves the following:

1. God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ. This involves glory in two spheres, the *earthly* and the *heavenly*.
2. In keeping with this purpose, God has made the Church distinct from Israel, though salvation of all saints is ever and only by grace, in view of the atoning work of Christ. The body of Christ, of which Israel is not a part, is composed of saints seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), and this constitutes them a heavenly people, while Israel is an earthly people and shall be established in the land by sovereign power. All Israel will then be saved (Rom. 11:26, etc.), the rebels having been purged (Ezek. 20), etc.
3. It is most important to understand the truth concerning the two men (1 Cor. 15:47). The first man is man viewed in Adamic standing under testing--to bring out his state; and this testing ended with the Cross [of Christ]. In the rejection of the Son of the Father, man was finally and fully proved to be totally depraved. Then Christ took His place above and became Head of a body, formed by the baptism ~~in~~ by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 32, 32), [the body] united to the Head in glory. The gathering in of Christ's *heavenly* co-heirs is a heavenly work going on until the era arrives when a remnant of Israel will be prepared for Messiah's coming in power and glory. This heavenly work was not foreseen by the O. T.

prophets and is [in the words of the Apostle Paul] a "mystery" (Rom. 16:25,26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9).

4. Before the last week (seven years) of Daniel's 70 weeks, the pretribulation rapture of the saints will occur. After the close of that week, the Lord will execute the second phase of His coming. He will come to establish the millennial kingdom and reign for 1000 literal years.
5. Strictly speaking, *dispensations* are not identical to distinguishable time periods or to ages, though the word dispensation is often so used. To understand dispensational truth, it is important to distinguish between 1) an *age* [aion - Greek], i.e., a distinguishable time period, and 2) a *dispensation* [oikonomia – Greek]¹. Strictly speaking, they are not the same thing. However, the word dispensation is conventionally used for an age. JND so used the word dispensation conventionally also, and it must be discerned where he did and where he did not use the word conventionally. JND cited some examples of dispensations such as priesthood, judges and kingship in Israel. These are not ages but something that God dispensed.
6. Certain time periods, which I will call *administrations*, in an effort to clarify JND's teaching, have essential and characterizing element, namely *government*, introduced with Noah. With Moses, the principle of God's *calling* was combined with government. These are the first two of the three, administrations. The Gentiles do not have this calling of God during the times of the Gentiles. Moreover, the church does not have government placed in its hands, though the saints have a heavenly calling. Thus, there has been no third administration yet. But Christ will make good, to God's glory, both calling and government, wherein the first man has failed. The third, the last of the three administrations, will be the Millennial kingdom. The ways of God *in government* is an essential component of an administration -- for these have to do with God's ways in the earth.
7. The time wherein the Church is called is not, properly speaking, a dispensation or an administration. The first man, as such, is no longer under testing since the Cross, because he no longer has a position before God. The testing of the first man *now* would mean that God is not finished with man in his Adamic standing. But he is removed, and the Last Adam is established.
8. It may be seen from all this that the times of the Gentiles forms an earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel. It is an earthly parenthesis of the "times of the Gentiles" until *both government and calling* are taken up by Christ and made good by sovereign power, by Christ, during the Millennium.
9. Within the earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel is a heavenly parenthesis of saints being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). No saints before, and none after, will partake of this special, heavenly position and blessing. Therefore it has been called a "heavenly parenthesis."

These and other truths will be traced in the following pages without pretending to completeness.



¹ See *Collected Writings* [of J. N. Darby] 13:153-156 concerning the difference.