

## Church History part 8

19<sup>th</sup> Century Part 2

### **Philadelphia**

**Rev. 3:7-13**

### The Plymouth Brethren

#### John Nelson Darby 1800-82

Like Wesley in the previous century, Darby's life spans the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

He was born in London, England to Anglo-Irish parents.

Educated at Westminster School and then Trinity College in Dublin, became a classical medalist in Greek.

The world was in great upheaval, the French Revolution 1780-91 had ended with the Rise of Napoleon and the Napoleonic wars in Europe. The Irish Rebellion in 1778 had also caused much upheaval. Darby's family owned land in County Offaly [Leap Castle] and he should have been the inheritor of Leap Castle. The established order was under attack.

Darby trained as a lawyer, yet never practiced as he felt he could use his talents to pervert the course of justice. He

became a Church of Ireland [similar to Anglican] Clergyman. Saved at age 20 while studying law.

He lived sparsely and was very successful in the Parish of Calary in County Wicklow, leading between 6- 800 Catholics to Christ. He was known by the parishioners as the Irish Saint because of his indefatigable labors, sacrificial living etc.

The Archbishop of Dublin, William McGee, who was vehemently opposed to Catholic Emancipation, said that any Catholic, who was converted, must swear allegiance to the Crown [George IV] to be accepted in the Church of Ireland. Remember the Monarch is the head of the Anglican Church worldwide.

Darby, was so disgusted with this, he left the ministry. Began to look at Scripture in a much closer light and saw the Church as a heavenly company, united to Christ its head! [Not a national body with an earthly head!]

Soon afterwards, in October 1827, he fell from a horse and was seriously injured. He later stated that it was during this time that he began to believe that the "kingdom" described in the [Book of Isaiah](#) & particularly Chapter 32, and elsewhere in the [Old Testament](#) was entirely different from the [Christian church](#). [Futurist views, believing in the restoration of Israel in the purposes of God].

He travelled widely teaching the truth God had revealed to him, 26 years on the road without every unpacking his suitcase!

Key dates:

### **The Revival of NT Principles of Gathering**

1. In 1825, a medical doctor, Edward Cronin was genuinely saved by the Spirit of God and left the Roman Catholic Church. He began meeting with a Protestant denomination called "Independents" who met on York Street, in Dublin, Ireland. [brethren medical men were pioneers in homeopathic medicine!].
2. The Independents stressed "excessively" the practice of Church "membership". Through his own study of the Word of God, he began to see the simplicity of the NT principles of gathering for himself in Scripture, and left the Independents.
3. Dr. Cronin, joined by Edward Wilson [ A deacon from the Independents] and later others, began meeting in Dr. Cronin's home, breaking bread and following the NT pattern of Church order. 1826
4. In 1827, J.N. Darby left the Protestant Church and began meeting with the other believers in the home of Dr. Cronin.
5. During the 1800's, this resurgence of NT principles of gathering experienced rapid growth in the British Isles. [It was a move of the Holy Spirit!]. Many saw the truth in the Word of God, not knowing others had seen the same principles and when they came together for Prophecy Conferences at Powerscourt Estate, County Wicklow, they found others with a similar exercise. 1831-33 The example of Mount Juliet, Ireland and the Earl of Carrick, asked to be on a committee to revise the book of common prayer, delved into Scripture and saw something very different!
6. A large work originated in Ebrington Street Chapel, Plymouth , England. Because of informal association with this work in Plymouth, the growing movement of local assemblies springing up in England, Ireland and Scotland soon became known as the "Plymouth Brethren". This was not a denominational title they chose for themselves (that was a practice they rejected) but what evolved by others outside the movement. [Ironically the Taylor exclusives have now claimed that title as their own.]
7. Despite many disputes and divisions in it's early growth, usually over strong personalities differing on minor doctrinal issues (obviously not minor to them), the NT assemblies were noted for their knowledge of

the Word of God, and their commitment to foreign missions.

8. In the early 1900's the local assemblies often met in rented community buildings or halls and became known as "Gospel Halls". The simplicity of their gathering place and principles is expressed in the words of Matthews 18:20, which became the hallmark verse of the early brethren seeking to gather according to NT principles.
9. 1932 The Exclusive Grant Party came in with the Open Brethren, largely teachers rather than Evangelists, it would have a large influence especially in the North Eastern USA. Cedarcroft Bible Chapel, has Grant's original Bible.

Samuel Ridout, FC Jennings, HA Ironside examples of this grouping, also the Loizeaux brothers

10. In the later part of the 1900's, many assemblies began to disregard the principles of Church order as established in the NT to appease social issues and retain or increase numbers in their gatherings. These changes, which reflected a departure from the teaching of Scripture and the embracing of practices common to Protestant Churches, has reshaped many assemblies into "community churches" now without the distinctives of the NT principles of gathering.

11. Today, there are also many NT assemblies gatherings which take no other name than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no other historical connection to Church affiliation other than the Body of Christ, as it began in Acts 2. In many countries of the world today, there is an "awakening" and a returning back to the NT principles of gathering. It is exciting to see many young people of this generation desiring to fellowship with God's people who hold the NT Biblical pattern and order of Church truth

#### The Sad Division of 1848 into Exclusive and Open Brethren

Judging the Issue, Benjamin Willis Newton, between Ebrington Street, Plymouth and Bethesda, Bristol. George Muller and JN Darby.

The real issue is centralized oversight, or scriptural autonomy or independency with interdependency.

#### The Brethren in North America [The Gospel Hall's]

##### Donald Ross

Scotland's North East Coast Mission to Fishermen around 20 Evangelists, laboring together.

Multitudes Saved, Church of Scotland Ministers largely unsaved, Even Free Church of Scotland was hardly any better. Donald Ross became very frustrated.

*But Ross was not content to only warn the disreputable. He wrote, "Gradually it became our settled conviction that the clergy were the greatest hindrances in the country to the people's salvation. This staggered us, and we often asked ourselves-'Can this be they that Christ ordered?' Another thing was made plain to us then, that is, that nearly all the church members in the Established Church were absolutely unconverted, and that only a sprinkling of the Free Church people were born again. We were convinced that something was radically wrong with the churches. For ourselves we were beginning to think over the question whether it was our duty to have no more fellowship with that which was simply an agency for the devil to deceive souls. This gradually ripened into positive conviction and led to the first steps on the way to a complete separation."*

Donald Munro  
James Campbell  
Alexander Marshall  
James McKendrick

### The Hall / Chapel Division of the 1950's

The Piedmont Model, a way to reach the Baptists in the Carolina's

Family Bible Hour  
Resident Worker  
Choirs  
Special Music

Durham 1100 at FBH, 250 at Breaking of Bread

### The Wider Influence of the Plymouth Brethren

JND and the Rapture plot, so called debunked  
JND influence on JH Brookes and then on CI Schofield  
HA Ironside & Moody Church  
DL Moody and the Kerry landlords, also Harry  
Moorhouse's influence on Moody's preaching of the love  
of God, CHM and DL Moody  
Warren Wiersbe -that is where I get all my groceries

### This is the history, but what about their future?

Need to return to first principles

Need to recognize this was a move of the Spirit of God in times of Spiritual Revival, it can become stale and mechanical if we are not personally burdened and dependent upon the Holy Spirit,

The need for spiritual humility, pride in NT principles is a huge pitfall we can be fully guilty of.

