

# A History of Dispensationalism in the United States

By Jeremy Lucas

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1831

- John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) of Westminster, London establishes the Plymouth Brethren as a reaction against the Church of England and presumed "authority" of the church (ecclesiology) over the Scriptures. In 1831, 1500 members were present in Plymouth, England (thus the title they received). Plymouth Brethren were also known as the Assembly Movement or Darbyites. Visit the [Works of J.N.Darby](#).

1866

- August 19: Cyrus I. Scofield is born in Lenawee County, Michigan. He would go on to serve as a private in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War earning a Cross of Honor for his service. Scofield studied law in St. Louis and was admitted to the bar in 1869 eventually earning an appointment to United States district attorney for Kansas under the administration of President Grant. In St. Louis, Scofield would eventually find instruction in the Scripture under the leadership of James Brookes (1830-1898).

1848

- The Plymouth Brethren splits into an Exclusive Group (led by Darby) and an Open Group. Distinguished for being isolated from most evangelical fellowship, Darby's Exclusive Group generally only accept new members by "letters of commendation" from another Brethren assembly. (Believe it or not, this is still very true today as I myself have been present in fellowship with Brethren who did not consider me acceptable to share in communion because I lacked one such letter.)

1854

- James Inglis (1813-1872) first introduced dispensationalism to North America through the publishing of a monthly magazine entitled, Waymarks in the Wilderness. This publication continued "intermittently" between 1854 and 1872.

1866

- Inglis organizes the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study where he taught dispensationalist ideas to a group of American evangelicals.
- Dwight L. Moody hears about dispensationalism through the Plymouth Brethren. Moody developed a close tie with James H. Brookes who would later go on to organize the Niagara Bible

Conference (1883). Moody would go on to very much encourage the spread of dispensationalism.

1869

- James H. Brookes publishes [May Christians Dance?](#)

1883

- After the death of James Inglis, [James H. Brookes of St. Louis](#) (1830-1898) organized the Niagara Bible Conference for members of the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study (1866) to establish principles of Christian fundamentalism. Among those present were W.E.Blackstone, Charles Erdman, William Moorehead, A.J.Gordon, A.C.Dixon, C.I.Scofield, and J.Hudson Taylor. The Niagara Conference went on to inspire the furtherance of Biblical education and scholarship in the United States. Debated among these men were matters of doctrine, role of the Holy Spirit, the Bible, missions, prophecy (with premillennialism being foremost among the majority) with their conclusions being laid out in the Niagara Creed.

1886

- Moody Bible Institute is established giving "institutional permanence" to the dispensational movement.

1895

- Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918) publishes his most well known theological work, [The Coming Prince](#).

1896

- C.I.Scofield publishes [Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth](#).

1907

- The Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Better known to many today as B.I.O.L.A.) is established giving "institutional permanence" to the dispensational movement under the founding of T.C.Horton and Lyman Stewart.
- Lewis Chafer publishes Elementary Outline Studies in the Science of Music.

1909

- Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921) bestowed a "level of respectability" to dispensationalism through the publication of his Scofield Reference Bible by Oxford University Press.
- Lewis Chafer publishes [Satan](#).

1911

- Lewis Chafer publishes *True Evangelism*.

1913

- Philadelphia Biblical University is established giving "institutional permanence" to the dispensational movement under the co-founding of C.I.Scofield, Dr. William L. Pettingill, and W.W.Rugh.

1915

- Lewis Chafer publishes *The Kingdom in History and Prophecy*.

1917

- Lewis Chafer publishes *Salvation*.

1918

- Lewis Chafer publishes *He That is Spiritual*.
- Clarence Larken (1850-1924) publishes *The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*.

1919

- Lewis Chafer publishes *Seven Major Biblical Signs of the Times*.

1921

- Lewis Chafer publishes *Must We Dismiss the Millenium?*.

1922

- Lewis Chafer publishes *Grace*.

1924

- Dallas Theological Seminary is established giving "institutional permanence" to the dispensational movement under Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952). DTS would go on to become a "flagship" for dispensational theology in the United States.

1926

- Lewis Chafer publishes *Major Bible Themes*.

1934

- The Biblegram begins to be published under the direction of Charles F. Baker.
- From 1934 to 1939, the term "Grace Movement" becomes the distinctive separation of Pauline Dispensationalism by comparison to Traditional Dispensationalism (Dallas Theological

Seminary). All those associating themselves with such a movement thus began calling themselves "Grace Believers."

1939

- Worldwide Grace Testimony is established as a foreign mission board in service to Zaire and the Belgian Congo. Included on that board were Charles F. Baker, John C. O'Hair, and T.R. Huston.

1943

- Grace Gospel Fellowship is conceived through the men who had established the Worldwide Grace Testimony

1944

- Board of Directors for Grace Gospel Fellowship establish the Milwaukee Bible Institute under Charles R. Baker (President) and Cornelius R. Stam (Dean). [Pastor John C. O'Hair](#) became a prominent advocate for MBI and T.R. Houston provided for much of the early financial needs.
- A constitution was adopted for Grace Gospel Fellowship during a convention in Evansville, Indiana for the furtherance of Pauline truth.

1945

- September 15: Milwaukee Bible Institute classes begin. With the start of teaching, pastors from the Grace Gospel Fellowship decide that MBI should be the "educational arm" of the fellowship.

1946

- Grace Youth Camp begins in Spencer, Indiana under the direction of Jack Sonneveldt.
- Grace Gospel News begins publication with John LaVier as editor. During this period, J.C.O'Hair had been publishing Bible Study for Bereans.

1948

- Lewis Chafer publishes Systematic Theology (8 Volumes).

1950

- Truth Magazine debuts under the editing of Charles F. Baker and Glen L. Hesselgrave. Truth was a joint publication of Milwaukee Bible Institute and Worldwide Grace Testimony.

1951

- C.R.Stam publishes Things That Differ: The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism. Things that Differ would go on to transform the Biblical understanding of many faithful Bereans (Acts 17:11) who seek to understand the Word of God more clearly.

1953

- The Berean Bible Society moves from Milwaukee to Chicago.
- Milwaukee Bible Institute becomes a four-year college and its name is changed to Milwaukee Bible College.

1955

- Things To Come Mission was founded by H. Palmer with its earliest missionaries being Vernon & Darlene Anderson and Joe & Pauline Watkins.

1958

- The Berean Bible Society outgrows the 1953 facility and had to expand.

1960

- Milwaukee Bible College moves to Grand Rapids, Michigan and assumes the name, Grace Bible College.

1964

- Miles J. Stanford (1914-1999) publishes [The Green Letters](#) as a treatise on spiritual growth from the perspective of a Pauline dispensationalist.

1965

- Miles J. Stanford publishes The Red Letters.

1966

- Miles J. Stanford publishes The Reckoning that Counts.

1967

- The Berean Bible Society once again outgrew its facility and had to expand.
- Dr. Jack Dean succeeds Charles Baker as president of Berean Bible Society. At the present time, it is a bit unclear to modern "grace believers" as to what happened during this period. Grace Gospel Fellowship refers to 1967 as a "year of upheaval resulting in the formation of the Berean Bible Fellowship."
- Thus, a rather unclear division now separates the BBF and the GGF. (Input to clear this up is more than welcome.)
- Miles J. Stanford publishes The Principle of Position.

1970

- Miles J. Stanford publishes Abide Above.

1971

- Grace Publications was incorporated as an arm of Grace Mission. Grace Line Lessons is incorporated into this new organization.
- Charles O'Connor becomes the first president of Grace Gospel Fellowship
- Miles J. Stanford publishes *The Ground of Growth*.
- Charles F. Baker publishes *A Dispensational Theology*. This would essentially lay out all Biblical viewpoints from a dispensational perspective.

1972

- Miles J. Stanford publishes [The Line Drawn](#).

1973

- Miles J. Stanford publishes *Spiritual Sharing Service*.
- Miles J. Stanford publishes *None But the Hungry Heart*.

1975

- Miles J. Stanford publishes *The Complete Green Letters*.

1977

- Miles J. Stanford publishes [The New Birth Explained](#).

1981

- *Bible Doctrines to Live By* begins under the direction of Lee Homoki as a means to conduct evangelistic crusades and promote Bible study through literature and tapes.

1984

- Grace Mission and Bethesda Mission merge to form Grace Ministries International with Wayne Schoonover as the director.

1985

- Dr. Sam Vinton, Jr. is elected as the third president of Grace Bible College.

1987

- Paul Sadler replaces C.R. Stam as President of the Berean Bible Society.

1991

- Dr. Sam Vinton became executive director of Grace Ministries International.
- Grace Bible College received accreditation from the North Central Association.

- Pastor Bruce Kemper of Port Orchard, Washington, was elected as the fourth president of the college.
- Pastor Roger Anderson of Prunedale, California, became the second president of Grace Gospel Fellowship. A graduate of Grace Bible College and pastor for 32 years he also brought pastoral background to this position.

1992

- Grace Gospel Fellowship, Grace Ministries International, and Grace Publications are finally housed under one roof, beginning each day in prayer together.

1993

- The Berean Bible Society is once again relocated to a suburb of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After 50 years in Chicago, the Board of Directors at BBS agree unanimously to establish themselves in Germantown, Wisconsin.
- Miles J. Stanford publishes [Pauline Dispensationalism](#).

2000

- Roger Anderson retired and Pastor Ken Parker of Spokane, Washington became the third president of Grace Gospel Fellowship. (During my travels across the United States from 1999-2002, my paths crossed with Pastor Anderson allowing me the privilege of sharing lunch and fellowship with he and his gracious wife during the summer of 2000. His gentle spirit had a tremendous impact on my early need for grace and patience over dogmatic insistence. We met and discussed the "grace movement" on three separate occasions.)

References:

[Berean Bible Society](#)

[Dispensationalism](#)

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*Holding Fast the Faithful Word* (formerly known as *The Controversy*) by Cornelius Stam

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*Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* edited by Herbert W. Bateman IV

*A Dispensational Theology* by Charles F. Baker