



# Revised History

## The Church Neutralized—Part Three

By Al Benson    October 30, 2020

One might almost say that the neutralization of the Christian Church went along with the “reconstruction” of the old Confederate States in the late 1800s after Mr. Lincoln’s War.

At the conclusion of the shooting part of that war the Yankee schoolteachers descended upon the Southern states like a swarm of locusts. Thus, was the public school system, as we know it, brought into a South which had little experienced anything quite like it. That’s not to sway that the South was an ignorant region by any means but simply to say that it had never experienced anything quite like Karl Marx’s vision of public education before the War. After the War it was all but taken captive by it.

And along with the Yankee teachers came Yankee churchmen determined to force their view of religiosity upon what they considered an unregenerate South—unregenerate in that it had never widely accepted Unitarianism and/or socialism.

But not all Southern folk were fooled. Francis Butler Simkins in *A History Of The South* observed: “An Alabamian expressed the opinion of most white Southerners when he said: “Perhaps the greatest liars and most malignant slanderers that the North has spewed out upon the South since the close of the war, are the reverend blackguards that have been sent among us as ministers of religion.”

Joseph Canfield, in his authoritative book *The Incredible Scofield and his Book* has given us some insight on how new doctrines were introduced into our churches in the 1800s. Joe told us that “The Niagara Conference grew out of a major effort which originated with the Plymouth Brethren. In the period after the Civil War, they pushed very hard to get general acceptance for that interest in prophecy which had started in England following the French Revolution. While there had been millennial elements in the movement which forced the United States into the Civil War, the Plymouth Brethren position had not completely taken over. The church or at least a large part of it had to be directed to the view that its hope was its own failure.”

It goes without saying that such a doctrine is at complete odds with the traditional orthodox Christian view. Gary DeMar, in *The Reduction of Christianity* asked an interesting question regarding this situation. He said “If Christians retreat from the cultural issues of the day, who will, humanly speaking, visibly control the future course of history? If Christians won’t, humanists will...Christians retreat because there is no hope. As more Christians retreat there is less hope. Finally, the whole cultural field is left to humanists who insist on taking us down the road to an international statist utopia.” And you have to admit that with dispensationalism this is the reward we have reaped—a failing church doing nothing but trying to save souls in bunches to get them into heaven. To them nothing else matters. And while saving souls is important it is not the end all of everything.

Joe Canfield also noted the time John Nelson Darby spent in St. Louis with Rev. James Brookes, the pastor

of a Presbyterian church there. And he noted: “Darby concentrated on an area in the United States which had strong connections with the Continent which had hatched ungodly ideas. It was in that city that he profusely scattered the seeds which flowered into Dispensationalism.” St. Louis in the mid-1800s was a hotbed of radicalism. Many of the socialists and Communists from the failed socialist revolts in Europe in 1848 ended up in the St. Louis area. Canfield also noted that “...the blossoming of Darby’s movement in its American form was entrusted to a man based in St. Louis who had a ‘French Connection?’ That man was C. I. Scofield.” Beginning to get the picture yet?

You need to read Joe Canfield’s book about Scofield. It seems that Scofield was, to say the least, rather an “interesting” personality. Canfield told us that Scofield married his second wife before he bothered to divorce his first wife, and that Scofield, only three years after his “conversion” was called to preach at the First Congregational Church in Dallas, Texas. This was only *five years* after the “official” end of “reconstruction” in the South. And for those who understand “reconstruction” in the South, they realize it did not really end in 1877 when the Yankee troops pulled out. It has continued right on down to the present day here. The Yankee troops left but the Yankee schoolteachers and some of the Yankee churchmen stayed on because they understood what “reconstruction” was *really* all about.

The church Scofield pastored in Dallas grew. It had started out with seventeen charter members—eleven of them being from the North. Scofield went on to become acting missionary superintendent for the Congregationalists in the Southwest, which included churches in Texas and Louisiana. He went on to become president of the board of trustees of the Congregationalists Lake Charles College in Lake Charles, Louisiana. So, he was able to spread the doctrines of J.N. Darby throughout the deep South *within a decade after the supposed end of ‘reconstruction.’*

Pastor Duane Garner, who I have mentioned previously, has noted that “Dispensationalists have no multi-generational focus. As they consistently apply their theology to their mission and lives, they find it foolish to take on any effort that may take several years, even several generations to finish... Instead of viewing their own homes and descendants as their greatest mission field and greatest opportunity to impact the world for the cause of Jesus Christ, they fear to bring children into the world... They see little need to facilitate the training of great musicians, skilled artists or gifted writers. There is no time for such efforts. The creation is dying, and everything is going down the sewer. The results of this dogma manifest themselves in the Church’s steady retreat from society.”

Can you begin to envision the results of such a theology in a “reconstructed” South after the War of Northern Aggression had reduced that part of the country to almost a complete shamble?

I have long contended that Dispensationalism was **the theological arm of Yankee “reconstruction” in the South.** The timing for its bursting full-blown on the South was propitious. It reduced churches in the South from bastions of their culture into virtual nonentities, content with only “getting people to heaven” and little else. What a come-down from the preaching of stalwarts like R. L. Dabney and Benjamin Morgan Palmer! And this is where we are in our day—God help us!!!

To be continued