

Articles by Mark Peever

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Summary of some of the "Chief Men" among the brethren

Meet the Authors

This is a little set of facts about some whose stuff we have here, or whose stuff has interested and influenced me. Most of my information comes from a couple of sources:

Chief Men Among the Brethren by Hy Pickering, Loizeaux Brothers, Inc. Neptune, NJ, 1996 A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement by H. A. Ironside, Loizeaux Brothers, Inc. Neptune, NJ, 1985 History of the Brethren by N. A. Noel I'm not trying to write some definitive outline, just a few brief facts that will make some of the papers more relevant. For more complete information, see Shawn Abigail's "Plymouth Brethren" History FAQ. Shawn has done a good job of trying to sum up a lot of information quickly, and makes a real attempt to be fair. Shawn's entire website is well-made and deserves a few good visits.

"I'm not living in this world, I'm dying in it" -- J. N. Darby

J. N. Darby

Probably the most well-known and most maligned figure in the early "brethren". All sorts of ridiculous things are said about him by both those who look up to him and those who get all bent out of shape by the mention of his name.

Darby was a classicist in university, who was studying for Law. He became a clergyman in the Church of Ireland instead, until a riding accident led him to retire to a relative's home in Dublin. He apparently became convinced through reading the Bible that the Establishment was not ecclesiastically right, and separated from them.

His greatest contributions are in the realm of ecclesiology, ministry on practical Christianity, and his excellent translation of the Bible.

For more information, check out Max Weremchuck's excellent book John Nelson Darby published by Loizeaux Brothers in 1992

**"It is not by study of the letter of Scripture
that we gets things, but by waiting upon God"
-- J. B. Stoney**

J. B. Stoney

James

Butler Stoney was one of the last of the early "brethren movement". His insights into scripture are precious to most who take the trouble to seek out his writings. There is a set available from Kingston Bible Trust that contains almost all of Stoney's writings called "New Ministry by J. B. Stoney." His most highly acclaimed book is Vol. 13 of the "New Ministry" called Discipline in the School of God. It is of the highest quality and extremely helpful in a more practical sense To many brethren, JBS is an icon of the "subjective" school of biblical study in the "brethren movement," just like William Kelly and F. W. Grant are icons of the "objective" school.

It is unfortunate that

Stoney's involvement with F. E. R. and his part in the "Grant" or "Montreal Division" have caused many believers to avoid his writings.

"It is Christ's work for us, not His work in us, that brings us peace" -- J. N. Darby

William Kelly

William

Kelly was the end of the first generation of "brethren" and the beginning of the second. He is known as an icon of the "objective" school of theology, and was for many years the editor of the Bible Treasury. Kelly's ability to expound scripture is almost legendary, and he is sound, but his tone can be extremely caustic when he deals with heresies that arise in Christendom.

The "Kelly exclusives" that formed around him were known for being a gentler group than the main-line "exclusive" party that centered on the assembly in Park Street, London.

Kelly's Lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians is an absolutely excellent must-read for Christians today.

"The Messiah, in shame and humiliation, was a stumbling-stone to Israel; but the Son of the living God confessed was the rock upon which the church is built." -- W. Kelly

C. A. Coates

C. A. Coates was born in 1862 and died in 1945.

His written ministry is of highest quality. Like most of the "brethren" in the Stoney-Raven lineage, he is very subjective. There is a real yearning for the Lord's heart in his writing.

I do not espouse all Coates' views, but have found his writing to be particularly helpful.

While I caution people before reading Coates because of some of his views, I have very much enjoyed his little books Letters of C. A. Coates (compiled after his death and reprinted by Kingston Bible Trust in 1978), and The Believer Established also published by Kingston Bible Trust.

"the Spirit is displacing one thing after another to let Christ in" -- J. G. Bellett

J. G. Bellett

Bellett is often described as being the most godly man of all the "brethren." He was a good friend of J. N. Darby, and the two complimented each other very well. Darby is known for his keen mind and willingness to jump into conflict for the truth, while Bellett is remembered for having a soft heart that tried to know Christ's heart.

Bellett has written a few books and booklets, his most famous is probably The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, published by a few companies including Bible Truth Publishers. Another little book of tremendous value is his The Opened Heavens, published by BTP, which is a study of Christ's personal glories in the Epistle of Hebrews.