

## THE MILLENNIAL POSITION OF SPURGEON

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*The notoriety of Charles Haddon Spurgeon has caused many since his time to claim him as a supporter of their individual views regarding the millennium. Spurgeon and his contemporaries were familiar with the four current millennial views—amillennialism, postmillennialism, historic premillennialism, and dispensational premillennialism—though the earlier nomenclature may have differed. Spurgeon did not preach or write extensively on prophetic themes, but in his sermons and writings he did say enough to produce a clear picture of his position. Despite claims to the contrary, his position was most closely identifiable with that of historic premillennialism in teaching the church would experience the tribulation, the millennial kingdom would be the culmination of God's program for the church, a thousand years would separate the resurrection of the just from that of the unjust, and the Jews in the kingdom would be part of the one people of God with the church.*

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In the last hundred years eschatology has probably been the subject of more writings than any other aspect of systematic theology. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92) did not specialize in eschatology, but supporters of almost every eschatological position have appealed to him as an authority to support their views.

Given Spurgeon's notoriety, the volume of his writings, and his theological acumen, those appeals are not surprising. A sampling of conclusions will illustrate this point. Lewis A. Drummond states, "Spurgeon confessed to be a pre-millennialist."<sup>1</sup> Peter Masters, current

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993) 650.

pastor of Spurgeon's church, The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, stated, "Spurgeon . . . would have stood much closer to amillennialism than to either of the other scenarios recognized today"<sup>2</sup> Erroll Hulse firmly declared Spurgeon to be postmillennial.<sup>3</sup>

Spurgeon could not have held all these positions. However, in which, if any, did he fit? The issue is an important one, as Spurgeon continues to be one of the most popular Christian authors in print, even a century after his death. Men of different positions seek to marshal support for their prophetic interpretations by appealing to Spurgeon.

This article will probe Spurgeon's view on the millennium by a careful examination of his writings in the light of his own times. Hopefully, it will help the uninformed understand Spurgeon and his millennial view more clearly and diminish the misinterpretation of his works and misuse of his stature in regard to eschatology.

## MILLENNIALISM IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

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<sup>2</sup>Peter Masters, "Spurgeon's Eschatology," *The Sword and Trowel* (December 1989):39.

<sup>3</sup>Erroll Hulse, *The Restoration of Israel* (London: Henry E. Walter Ltd., 1968) 154. Some in the "Theonomist" movement (which holds postmillennialism as a cornerstone of its system) in their writings have implied that Spurgeon was postmillennial. See Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, *The Reduction of Christianity* (Tyler, Texas: Dominion, 1988) 41.

An understanding of millennial definitions of Spurgeon's time is vital to understanding his view on the subject. Twentieth-century definitions are important, but how his contemporaries understood terms is essential. Furthermore, any view of the millennium depends on one's interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6. The following discussion will limit itself to the various millennial positions as they relate to Spurgeon's views.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Introduction to the Millennial Understandings***

Historically, examinations of Revelation 20 have resulted in four millennial views, designated by the prefixes "a-," "post-," "pre-," and "historic pre-." These refer to not only the timing of Christ's return to commence His millennial reign, but perhaps more important, the essential nature of that kingdom.

Briefly, the following are common understandings of the four millennial positions:

- (1) The amillennial position believes there will be no physical kingdom on earth. "Amillennialists believe that the kingdom of God is now present in the world as the victorious Christ rules his church through the Word and Spirit. They feel that the future, glorious, and perfect kingdom refers to the new earth and life in heaven."<sup>5</sup>
- (2) The postmillennial position teaches that there will be an extended period of peace, prosperity, and a godly world brought about by "Christian preaching and teaching."<sup>6</sup> This millennium will see the nearly universal rule of the church and Christian principles in force in the world and will finally culminate with the return of Christ, and the translation into the eternal state.

The premillennial position divides into two distinct camps:

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<sup>4</sup>For a detailed survey of interpretational options for Rev. 20:1-10, see Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995) 403 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Robert G. Clouse, "Views of the Millennium," *Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*, Walter Elwell, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 714-18.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 715.

- (3) The historic or covenantal premillennial view advocates a thousand-year kingdom on earth in which Christ will personally reign, having returned to the earth to establish his rule "suddenly through supernatural methods rather than gradually over a long period of time."<sup>7</sup> In this approach the kingdom is essentially the culmination of the church age.
- (4) The dispensational premillennialist approach is similar, but the essential nature of the kingdom is quite different. For the dispensationalist, the thousand-year kingdom is the culmination and final fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, not the culmination of the church age. The kingdom over which Christ personally rules is the Davidic Kingdom of Israel's Messiah.

### ***Millennial Approaches in Spurgeon's Day: An Overview***

Christendom in Victorian England undoubtedly embraced all four millennial positions. In 1878 Nathaniel West, presenting a chronicle of the history of premillennialism, identified three strains of millennial thought:

Thus does pre-millennialism become a protest against the doctrine of unbroken evolution of the Kingdom of God to absolute perfection on earth, apart from the miraculous intervention of Christ [i.e., postmillennialism]. And equally is it a protest against that vapid idealism which violates the perfect kingdom into a spiritual abstraction, apart from the regensis of the earth [i.e. amillennialism]. It asserts that the literal is always the last and highest fulfillment of prophecy.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, John Whitcomb points out,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Nathaniel West, "History of the Pre-Millennial Doctrine," in *Premillennial Essays of the Prophetic Conference held in the Church of the Holy Trinity*, Nathaniel West, ed. (reprint of Fleming H. Revell 1879 ed., Minneapolis: Bryant Baptist, 1981) 315. This conference convened in the United States, but one presenter (Dr. W. P. Mackay) and several other participants were from England. Spurgeon was most probably aware of the positions and perhaps the conference.

Even in Spurgeon's day . . . Henry Alford (1810-71), the dean of Canterbury, in his monumental four-volume edition of the Greek New Testament, insisted that the thousand-year reign of Christ following His second coming as described in Revelation 20 be understood literally.<sup>9</sup>

What could be identified as amillennialism represented the official positions the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, although there was latitude within Anglicanism for a wide spectrum on eschatological views. Outside of the established church the influential non-conformist theologian Philip Doddridge (1702-51), "rejected the very notion of a millennium."<sup>10</sup> The Congregational theologian, Josiah Conder wrote in 1838 that any view of a literal millennial kingdom was "aberrational."<sup>11</sup>

In England "the postmillennial theory was evidently widespread."<sup>12</sup> William Carey and Thomas Chalmers helped spread this view. Postmillennialism was the dominant view in America from the Puritan era to the early 1900's, and was also well-established in England. A seminal work delineating postmillennialism was David Brown's *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Premillennial?* (1846), a work that became the classic presentation of postmillennial eschatology in England. The volume remains a standard reference piece to this day.

Dispensationalism, still being formulated in Spurgeon's time, predated Spurgeon's ministry by a few decades. John Nelson Darby and the "Brethren" were very influential and began spreading their system by the late 1830's. Bebbington states,

Although never the unanimous view among Brethren, dispensationalism spread beyond their ranks and gradually became the most popular

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<sup>9</sup>John C. Whitcomb, "C. H. Spurgeon, Biblical Inerrancy, and Premillennialism," *Grace Theological Journal* 7/2 (Fall 1986):233.

<sup>10</sup>David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730's to the 1980's* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989) 62.

<sup>11</sup>Josiah Conder, *An Analytical and Comparative View of All Religions* (London: SPCK, 1838) 584-92.

<sup>12</sup>Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* 62.

version of futurism. In the nineteenth century it remained a *minority version among premillennialists*, but this intense form of apocalyptic expectation was to achieve much greater salience in the twentieth.<sup>13</sup>

Bebbington goes on to state that the 1830's and 1840's saw the emergence of two schools of thought in premillennialism, the "historicist" and the "futurist."<sup>14</sup> The "historicist" most closely identified with the historic/covenantal premillennial position and the "futurist" with the dispensational premillennialist.<sup>15</sup> Since the dispensational view was a "minority version among premillennialists," the historicist view was the dominant premillennial option in the nineteenth century.

Spurgeon was familiar with various millennial opinions. In his *Commenting and Commentaries*, he identified interpretations of the Book of Revelation and their main proponents. He divided them into four groups: (1) preterist, (2) continuists, (3) simple futurists, and (4) extreme futurists.<sup>16</sup>

This clear discussion by Spurgeon, combined with his own admission that he was well-read in the prophetic literature of the day,<sup>17</sup> shows his capability of interacting with the spectrum of millennial thought.

### ***Spurgeon's Statements on Eschatology***

Spurgeon's preaching did not often focus on eschatology. He paid little attention to the idea of using prophecy as an evangelistic tool. His statement, "A prophetic preacher enlarged so much on 'the little horn' of Daniel, that one Sabbath morning he had but seven

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<sup>13</sup>Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* 86 [emphasis added].

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>16</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries* (reprint of 1876 Passmore and Alabaster ed., Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1969) 198.

<sup>17</sup>G. Holden Pike, *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (reprint of 1894 Cassell & Company ed., Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1991) 4:133.

hearers remaining,"<sup>18</sup> shows he saw no value in extended preaching on prophetic themes. He taught that one's chief concern in preaching should not be prophetic speculations, but the gospel message and practical godliness:

Salvation is a theme for which I would fain enlist every holy tongue. I am greedy after witnesses for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God. Your guess at the number of the beast, your Napoleonic speculations, your conjectures concerning a personal Antichrist—forgive me, I count them but mere bones for dogs.<sup>19</sup>

Nonetheless, Spurgeon could claim with the Apostle Paul that he "did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). His own testimony on this matter is sufficient:

You will bear me witness, my friends, that it is exceedingly seldom I ever intrude into the mysteries of the future with regard either to the second advent, the millennial reign, or the first and second resurrection. As often as we come about it in our expositions, we do not turn aside from the point, but if guilty at all on this point, it is rather in being too silent than saying too much.<sup>20</sup>

It is clear that even if Spurgeon's statement on matters of "the second advent, the millennial reign, or the first and second resurrection" were infrequent, they were not imprecise. Spurgeon understood all the features of eschatology presented in Scripture, although he did not devote much time to their chronological arrangement. On September 18, 1876, he presented to the Metropolitan Tabernacle congregation this overview of eschatological events:

It is also certain that the Jews, as a people, will yet own Jesus of

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<sup>18</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 4 vols. in 1 (reprint of 1881 1st series ed. of Passmore & Alabaster, Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim, 1990) 1:100.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:83.

<sup>20</sup>Spurgeon, "The First Resurrection," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 7:345.

Nazareth, the Son of David, as their King, and that they will return to their own land. . . . It is certain also that our Lord Jesus Christ will come again to this earth, and that he will reign amongst his ancients gloriously, and that there will be a thousand years of joy and peace such as were never known on this earth before. It is also certain that there will be a great and general judgment, when all nations shall be gathered before the Son of man sitting upon the throne of his glory; and his final award concerning those upon his left hand will be. . . . How all these great events are to be chronologically arranged, I cannot tell.<sup>21</sup>

The tendency of Spurgeon to reject tightly knit chronological sequences remained with him his entire life. Drummond points out that Spurgeon "refused to spend an inordinate amount of time discussing, for example, the relationship of the rapture to the tribulation period, or like points of eschatological nuance."<sup>22</sup> Eschatology was secondary with him, a valuable endeavor, but one that he felt should never "overlay the commonplaces of practical godliness,"<sup>23</sup> or come before "first you see to it that your children are brought to the saviour's feet."<sup>24</sup>

### ***Spurgeon's Sermons***

The primary outlet for Spurgeon's theology was, of course, his preaching. His preaching style was normally a topical or textual approach, yet he still worked diligently at exegesis. One visitor to his study remarked, "I was at first surprised to find Mr. Spurgeon consulting both the Hebrew and Greek texts. . . . His exegesis was seldom wrong. He spared no pains to be sure of the exact meaning of his text."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Spurgeon, "The Harvest and the Vintage," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 50:553-54.

<sup>22</sup>Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* 650.

<sup>23</sup>Spurgeon, "The Ascension and Second Advent Practically Considered," in *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia* 4:442.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Spurgeon, *Autobiography* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1976) 2:346.

*The second coming of Christ.* The feature that Spurgeon identified as a foundational eschatological issue was "The Second Advent of Christ." That Spurgeon believed in the personal and literal return of Christ to the earth is an indisputable fact. He looked forward to this great event with anticipation and announced it to his congregation with regularity:

We know that Christ was really, personally, and physically here on earth. But it is not quite so clear to some persons that he is to come, really, personally, and literally the second time. . . . Now, we believe that the Christ who shall sit on the throne of his father David, and whose feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet, is as much a personal Christ as the Christ who came to Bethlehem and wept in the manger.<sup>26</sup>

Certainly there can be no doubt about Spurgeon's belief in the literal and physical return of Christ. However, what were his views on the millennial reign?

*The millennial reign of Christ.* On the theme of millennial reign of Christ, Spurgeon was far from silent. Though he did not give a great deal of attention to it, when he did, his view was consistent. In 1865 he stated,

Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and *then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth.*<sup>27</sup>

This comment not only clarifies Spurgeon's position on the subject, but also shows his familiarity with other millennial positions and their key

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<sup>26</sup>Spurgeon, "The Two Advents of Christ," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 8:39. For other sermons with a similar theme, see "Things to Come," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 15:329; "To-Morrow," in *The New Park Street Pulpit* 2:237; and "The Ascension and The Second Advent Practically Considered," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 31:23.

<sup>27</sup>Spurgeon, "Justification and Glory," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 11:249 [emphasis added].

features. In another sermon he made the following oft-quoted remark regarding the millennial reign:

We are looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" is the desire of every instructed saint. I shall not go into any details about when he will come: I will not espouse the cause of the pre-millennial or the post-millennial advent; it will suffice me just now to observe that the Redeemer's coming is the desire of the entire church.<sup>28</sup>

Iain Murray cites Spurgeon's disclaimer of not espousing the cause of two different millennial positions as an example of Spurgeon admitting "a fundamental uncertainty in his mind."<sup>29</sup> However, it seems better to understand that Spurgeon was simply declining to elaborate on millennial views in this particular sermon.

Also, he did not think the millennium on earth was to be identified with the eternal existence in heaven. He clearly made a distinction between the two. Beginning a sermon on the text, "Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (Rev 22:3), he stated, "We shall take these words as referring to heaven. Certainly it is most true of the celestial city, *as well as of the millennial city*, that the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it."<sup>30</sup> Regarding the nature and location of the millennial reign he said,

There is, moreover, to be a reign of Christ. I cannot read the Scriptures without perceiving that there is to be a millennial reign, as I believe, upon the earth, and that there shall be new heavens and new earth wherein dwell righteousness.<sup>31</sup>

Discussing the relation of the timing of the return of Christ to

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<sup>28</sup>Spurgeon, "The Double Come," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 27:390-91.

<sup>29</sup>Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1971) 263.

<sup>30</sup>Spurgeon, "The Throne of God and of the Lamb," in *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia* 8:409 [emphasis added].

<sup>31</sup>Spurgeon, "For Ever with the Lord," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 23:522.

the millennium and the necessity of its commencing that millennium, he rejected a postmillennial position:

Paul does not paint the future with rose-colour: he is no smooth-tongued prophet of a golden age, into which this dull earth may be imagined to be glowing. There are sanguine brethren who are looking forward to everything growing better and better and better, until, at the last this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon. We who believe that there will be no millennial reign without the King, and who expect no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the righteous Lord, are nearer the mark. Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into pandemonium than to rise into a millennium. A divine interposition seems to me the hope set before us in Scripture, and, indeed, to be the only hope adequate to the situation. We look to the darkening down of things; the state of mankind, however improved politically, may yet grow worse and worse spiritually.<sup>32</sup>

He rejected any notion, however well-intended, that apart from the personal intervention of Christ a millennium would be possible. He called preachers who held to a postmillennial system those who "do not understand the prophecies"<sup>33</sup> and asserted that "the great hope of the future is the coming of the Son of man."<sup>34</sup>

Thus it is clear that Spurgeon believed in an earthly millennium founded on and preceded by the Second Advent of Christ.

*The resurrection of the dead.* A third area of Spurgeon's eschatological interest lay in the resurrections of the just and the wicked. Throughout his ministry he taught separate resurrections of the just and unjust. The discussion above has cited his distinction between

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<sup>32</sup>Spurgeon, "The Form of Godliness without the Power," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 35:301.

<sup>33</sup>Spurgeon, "Jesus Only: A Communion Meditation," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 45:374.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

"the first and second resurrection."<sup>35</sup> That he believed in a literal and physical resurrection is undeniable:

Yet this Paul believed, and this he preached—that there would be a resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust, not that the just and the unjust would merely live as to their souls, but that their bodies should be restored from the grave, and that a resurrection, as well as an immortality, should be the entail of every man of woman born, whatever his character might be.<sup>36</sup>

In the same sermon Spurgeon declared the resurrections would be distinct, separated by a period of time: "Notice that this reaping comes first, and I think it comes first in order of time. If I read the Scriptures aright, there are to be two resurrections, and the first will be the resurrection of the righteous."<sup>37</sup>

Interestingly and in keeping with his avoidance of prophetic preaching, he only preached two sermons in his entire ministry with a primary text in Revelation 20, admittedly the key passage on the millennium. He preached on Revelation 20:4-6, 12 (skipping over verses one might have wished him to comment upon) in an 1861 sermon and Revelation 20:11 in 1866. He also never preached from any portion of Daniel 12 and the interpretation of the first two verses. Despite this, he firmly declared his belief that the thousand-year millennial reign would separate the two resurrections. In 1861 he told his congregation this:

I think that the Word of God teaches, and teaches indisputably, that the saints shall rise first. And be the interval of time whatever it may, whether the thousand years are literal years, or a very long period of time, I am not now about to determine; I have nothing to do except with the fact that there are two resurrections, a resurrection of the just, and afterwards of the unjust,—a time when the saints of God shall rise, and

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<sup>35</sup>Spurgeon, "The First Resurrection" 7:345.

<sup>36</sup>Spurgeon, "Resurrection for the Just and the Unjust," *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia* 13:241.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 13:358; cf. also, "Things to Come," *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 15:329.

after time when the wicked shall rise to the resurrection of damnation.<sup>38</sup>

In the same sermon he expressed his belief that both resurrections are literal and physical. He attacked the position of the famous American Presbyterian, Albert Barnes (1798-1870), an amillennialist,<sup>39</sup> who rejected the literal resurrection spoken of in Revelation 20:4-6, 12. He charged Barnes with holding a position that spiritualized the resurrection. In concluding his argument against Barnes, he said,

Now I appeal to you, would you, in reading that passage, think this to be the meaning? Would any man believe that to be its meaning, if he had not some thesis to defend? The fact is, we sometimes read Scripture, thinking of what it ought to say, rather than what it does say. . . . It is—we have no doubt whatever—a literal resurrection of the saints of God, and not of principles nor of doctrines.<sup>40</sup>

Spurgeon's comments on the two resurrections, separated by the millennium, are not as Murray concludes, "far from common in his sermons,"<sup>41</sup> but a normal and consistently expounded theme, when the text suggested that topic:

Now we believe and hold that Christ shall come a second time suddenly, to raise his saints at the first resurrection; this shall be the commencement of the grand judgment, and they shall reign with him afterwards. *The rest of the dead live not till the thousand years are finished.* Then they shall rise from their tombs and they shall receive the deeds which they have done in the body.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Spurgeon, "The First Resurrection" 7:346. The statement about "not now about to determine" seems to be idiomatic of Spurgeon to refer to his unwillingness to expound on a "bunny-trail" in the context of his sermon.

<sup>39</sup>James E. Rosscup, *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors* (Sun Valley, Calif.: Grace Book Shack, 1993) 22.

<sup>40</sup>Spurgeon, "The First Resurrection" 7:346.

<sup>41</sup>Murray, *The Puritan Hope* 259.

<sup>42</sup>Spurgeon, "The Two Advents of Christ" 8:39 [emphasis added].

Spurgeon's view on the future of Israel as a people and as a nation deserves attention. At a special meeting at The Metropolitan Tabernacle on June 16, 1864, Spurgeon preached on "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews," on behalf of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Jews. In this sermon he laid out several important statements about the future of the Jewish people. First of all, he believed that the Jews would physically and literally return to inhabit and have political control over their ancient land. He explained,

There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. . . . If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage [Ezekiel 37:1-10]—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them.<sup>43</sup>

He also believed that the conversion of the Jews would come through Christian preaching by means of the church and other societies and mission agencies that God would raise up for that task.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Spurgeon's Commentaries and Other Works***

In the course of his long preaching and literary career, Spurgeon wrote only two works that were, strictly speaking, commentaries. The primary one was his monumental work on the Psalms, *The Treasury of David*. Spurgeon spent nearly fifteen years completing the seven volumes which he and his closest associates considered his *magnum opus*.<sup>45</sup> It was his only thoroughly expository

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<sup>43</sup>Spurgeon, "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 10:426.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 430-36.

<sup>45</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography: Compiled from His Diary, Letters and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary* (reprint of 1897 Passmore and Alabaster ed., Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim, 1992) 3:305.

work and has remained in print without interruption since his death.

In the *Treasury*, as in most of Spurgeon's works, he sees references to Israel in the Psalms as being the church. He does touch on eschatology several times within this work. One is his comment on Psalm 14:7 where he wrote, "The coming of Messiah was the desire of the godly in all ages. . . . His glorious advent will restore his ancient people from literal captivity, and his spiritual seed from spiritual sorrow."<sup>46</sup>

Commenting on Psalm 2:5-6 Spurgeon wrote, "His unsuffering kingdom yet shall come when he shall take unto himself his great power, and reign from *the river unto the ends of the earth*."<sup>47</sup> Commenting on Psalm 45:16 his words were, "The whole earth shall yet be subdued for Christ, and honoured are they, who shall, through grace, have a share in the conquest—these shall reign with Christ at His Coming."<sup>48</sup> He comments decisively on the nature of Jesus' millennial reign in Psalm 72:8:

Wide spread shall be the rule of Messiah; only Land's End shall end his territory: to the Ultima Thule shall his scepter be extended. From Pacific to Atlantic, and from Atlantic to Pacific, he shall be. . . . In this Psalm, at least, we see a personal monarch, and he is the central figure, the focus of all glory; not his servant, but himself do we see possessing the dominion and dispensing the government.<sup>49</sup>

Spurgeon sees specifically a personal reign of Christ over nations on earth. Commenting further on this Psalm, he discussed the political nature of Christ's reign on earth. He believed that nations would exist in the millennium with their own kings and leaders, but that all would be subject to Christ and His government in Jerusalem. He also saw Christ's personal reign as a certain, but future event: "But since we see

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<sup>46</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: An Expository and Devotional Commentary on the Psalms*, 7 vols. (reprint of 1870-1884 Passmore and Alabaster ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 1:183.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:13 [emphasis added].

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:359.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:319.

Jesus crowned with glory and honour in heaven, we are altogether without doubt as to his universal monarchy on earth."<sup>50</sup>

In *The Treasury of David* as is in his sermons, Spurgeon is clear and concise in his statements regarding the millennium. Those statements were perhaps not as frequent as in some other commentators, but they are thoroughly consistent with his sermons and other writings.

Spurgeon's only other commentary was also his final book, *Matthew: The Gospel of the Kingdom*, completed only days before his death. Spurgeon himself completed only the first draft and the notations. His wife Susannah put it into its final form. He commented as follows on Matthew 24: "Our Lord appears to have purposely mingled the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his own second coming."<sup>51</sup> Spurgeon understood most of the prophecies to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In Matthew 24:15-21 he called the abomination of desolation "the Roman ensigns with their idolatrous emblems."<sup>52</sup>

Spurgeon saw none of the prophecies of Matthew as direct predictions of the period just before Christ's return, but saw in the destruction of Jerusalem a time typical of that period.

Another relevant work by Spurgeon was his *Commenting and Commentaries*, produced as the fourth in the series of *Lectures to My Students*. His comments were brief and often "tongue in cheek," but do reveal some features of his prophetic views. Regarding a certain R. Amner's commentary on Daniel, Spurgeon said it was built "on the absurd hypothesis that the prophecies were all fulfilled before the death of Antiochus Epiphanes."<sup>53</sup> About I. R. Park's work on Zechariah, he wrote, "This author explains the prophecy spiritually and asserts that 'the spiritual is the most literal interpretation.' We

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 3:320.

<sup>51</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *Matthew: The Gospel of the Kingdom* (reprint of 1893 Passmore and Alabaster ed., Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim, 1974) 217.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 215.

<sup>53</sup>Spurgeon, *Lectures (Commenting and Commentaries)* 4:126.

more than doubt it."<sup>54</sup> In discussing commentaries on Revelation, he calls the premillennial work of E. B. Elliott's *Horae Apocalypticae* "the standard work on the subject."<sup>55</sup>

During his lifetime Spurgeon amassed one of the largest and finest biblical and theological libraries of his day. He had read at least major parts of all of the volumes, had both the contents and locations of the books in his collection memorized! His vast resources and his almost insatiable reading habits enabled him to expose himself to the various interpretations of prophecy and the Book of Revelation in general and Revelation 20 and the millennium in particular. He kept up-to-date on current theological trends and new interpretations and was able to interact with them. In fact it was his theological acumen and "watchman on the wall" mentality that enabled him to foresee the theological decline that would lead to the "Downgrade Controversy," the event which led to the formulation of his famous "Statement of Faith."

### ***Spurgeon's Statement of Faith***

At the height of the Down-Grade Controversy<sup>56</sup> Spurgeon and several others created and signed a statement of faith to state the doctrines that distinguished them from those in the Baptist Union who were on the "down grade." In 1891 *The Sword and Trowel* published the statement, nearly half of which dealt with the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. It closed with the final point: "Our hope is

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 4:139.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 4:199. Elliott followed a continuous-historical interpretation of Revelation and was premillennial.

<sup>56</sup>In brief, this was the controversy that led Spurgeon to resign from the Baptist Union. For further information on the controversy see Bob Ross, *The Down-Grade Controversy: Collected Materials which Reveal the Viewpoint of the late Charles H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publishing, n.d.); Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1966); John F. MacArthur Jr., *Ashamed of the Gospel, When the Church Becomes like the World* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1993) 197-225; particularly J. C. Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon: An Interpretative Biography* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1933).

the Personal Pre-Millennial Return of the Lord Jesus in Glory."<sup>57</sup>

In discussing this Confession and its signatories, C. W. H. Griffiths maintained, "It is clearly to the point to ask what these men understood by pre-millennial."<sup>58</sup> He presented clear information that the signatories of this document were "powerful contenders for what we would understand as pre-millennialism."<sup>59</sup>

Peter Masters dismissed the importance of the "Manifesto," as it was called, contending that their definition of "premillennialism was considerably broader than it is today."<sup>60</sup> However, as Erickson points out, the confusion of millennial positions was not between the amillennial and premillennial views, but rather over the fact that "amillennialism has often been difficult to distinguish from postmillennialism."<sup>61</sup> This statement of faith is among the strongest sources for identifying Spurgeon as a premillennialist, with even Iain Murray citing it as substantial proof.<sup>62</sup>

## **SPURGEON AND MILLENNIAL OPTIONS**

With Spurgeon's material as proof of his premillennialism, it remains to examine the arguments of those who have identified his position otherwise or define what type of premillennialism he held.

### ***Spurgeon and Amillennialism***

Amillennialism rejects any earthly and physical "millennium,"

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<sup>57</sup>"Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," in *The Sword and Trowel* 26 (August 1891):446-48.

<sup>58</sup>C. W. H. Griffiths, "Spurgeon's Eschatology," in *Watching and Waiting* 23/15 (July-September 1990):227.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Masters, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 28.

<sup>61</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Contemporary Options in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 74.

<sup>62</sup>Murray, *Puritan Hope* 257.

instead believing that the "kingdom" is both present in the "dynamic reign of God in human history through Jesus Christ,"<sup>63</sup> and future in the "new heaven and new earth."<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps the most significant and well-documented evaluation of Spurgeon's eschatology that attempts to place him in the amillennial camp has come from Peter Masters. In a 1991 article in *Sword and Trowel*, he presents a brief critique of Iain Murray's appendix in *The Puritan Hope*, entitled "C. H. Spurgeon's Views on Prophecy." He also briefly notes Tom Carter's work, *Spurgeon at His Best*.<sup>65</sup> Masters' basic complaint about both works is their lack of thoroughness: "The problem with Mr. Murray's assessment is that it is based on too few of Spurgeon's eschatological statements."<sup>66</sup> He objects to Carter's calling Spurgeon a post-tribulation premillennialist "on the basis of three short passages."<sup>67</sup>

After criticizing the brevity of the two, Masters lays out in chronological fashion quotations from Spurgeon's sermons ranging over his entire ministry. He quotes nearly thirty sources and concludes that Spurgeon "would have stood much closer to amillennialism."<sup>68</sup>

Several facets of Masters' work deserve comment. First, he never defines the millennial views, he simply caricatures them and often misrepresents them. In one instance, he makes a point about the millennial reign and contrasts it to a dispensational view, saying,

According to Spurgeon, as the saints took up their everlasting abode on the glorified earth with their savior, the millennial reign would begin.

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<sup>63</sup>Anthony A. Hoekema, "Amillennialism," in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, Robert G. Clouse, ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977) 178.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Masters does not refer to Carter or the book by name in his article, but the work he refers to is unmistakable.

<sup>66</sup>Masters, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 28.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 39.

This, however, would not be a millennium like that *expected by dispensationalists*. *Spurgeon's millennium would not be interrupted by any resurgence of evil.*<sup>69</sup>

However, dispensationalists are not the only ones that foresee a rebellion at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:7-9); historic premillennialists do too, and even postmillenarian Charles Hodge taught a rebellion at the end of the thousand years to be quelled by the personal return of Christ!<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps the most serious deficiency of Masters' work is the occasional removal from Spurgeon's quotations of phrases and sentences without any notation. Ellipses are acceptable in long quotations when they do not alter the author's intended meaning, but his omissions do alter the meaning.

Upon close examination of several of the quotations, there "appears to have been a deliberate suppression of Mr. Spurgeon's view."<sup>71</sup> Masters wrote, "Spurgeon's millennium, was, in effect simply the *opening phase* of the eternal hereafter,<sup>72</sup> that there would not be any resurgence of evil, and, "No unregenerate person could possibly exist there."<sup>73</sup> However, in quoting Spurgeon's sermon, he omits a key phrase:

The people of Israel are to be converted to God, and . . . their conversion is to be permanent. . . . This thing shall be, and . . . both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among his people gloriously.<sup>74</sup>

The phrase excised in the second ellipsis is "so that whatever nations

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid. [emphasis added]

<sup>70</sup>Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (reprint of 1871 Charles Scribner and Sons ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 3:812.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Masters's, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 29 [emphasis original].

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Masters, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 30.

may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these days, the nation of Israel never can."<sup>75</sup> This phrase indicates that Spurgeon did entertain the possibility, if not the likelihood, of some type of apostasy or falling away among the nations during the reign of Christ on earth. An apostasy of the nations would be impossible if Spurgeon's millennium was the eternal state.

A more overt example is Masters' careless quotation of Spurgeon came in another 1864 sermon:

They shall not say to one another, Know the Lord: for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest.

The whole earth will be a temple, every day will be a Sabbath, the avocation of all men will be priestly, they shall be a nation of priests—distinctly so, and they shall day without night serve God in His temple.<sup>76</sup>

Here no indication of editing appears. Masters simply moves from one paragraph to the next. He begins the sermon excerpt with a statement that Spurgeon believed, "There would be no Jewish worship, nor Christian ministers, and all shall know the Lord."<sup>77</sup> However, the removed sentence refutes Masters' assertion. Spurgeon expresses the possibility of Jewish rituals in the millennial kingdom: "There may even be in that period certain solemn assemblies and Sabbath days, but they will not be of the same kind as we now have."<sup>78</sup>

Masters deserves criticism for both his technique and his analysis of Spurgeon's writings. He damages the credibility of his thesis and casts great doubt on the validity of his conclusions by carelessly handling the written evidence. Griffiths has written,

It appears that Dr. Masters has been over zealous in his attempt to identify the character of Mr. Spurgeon's millennium with that of the a-millennialists and that this has led to manipulation of quotations to his

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<sup>75</sup>Spurgeon, "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews" 10:430.

<sup>76</sup>Masters, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 30.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Spurgeon, "The Lamb, The Light," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 10:439.

own end.<sup>79</sup>

In a point by point comparison, Spurgeon's teachings simply do not match typical amillennial teaching. First, he claims to be premillennial. Though the term "amillennial" may not have existed in Spurgeon's day, he nonetheless understood the concept and the teaching which would eventually become amillennialism. The position was well-known and well-established in his day. His idea of two resurrections separated by a millennial age is totally incompatible with amillennial eschatology. Hoekema clarifies this as he comments, "Amillennialists reject the common premillennial teaching that the resurrection of believers and that of unbelievers will be separated by a thousand years."<sup>80</sup>

Spurgeon's belief that Israel would be re-gathered and have a "native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign,"<sup>81</sup> is foreign to amillennial eschatology. His belief that Christians are to "expect a reigning Christ on earth,"<sup>82</sup> is the opposite of amillennialists who see Christ's reign as spiritual and/or heavenly. In fact, Spurgeon warned that the earthly reign of Christ is "put so literally that we dare not spiritualize it."<sup>83</sup> No amillennialist would agree with his statement, "I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon the earth."<sup>84</sup>

The only conclusion can be that he was not amillennial in his eschatology.

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<sup>79</sup>Griffiths, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 230.

<sup>80</sup>Hoekema, "Amillennialism" 182.

<sup>81</sup>Spurgeon, "The Conversion and Restoration of the Jews" 10:426

<sup>82</sup>Spurgeon, "Things to Come" 15:329.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Spurgeon, "Justification and Glory" 11:249.

***Spurgeon and Postmillennialism***

It has been almost the "default" belief among Christians that Spurgeon was postmillennial in his eschatology because of his close association with English and American Puritan writers whom he respected so deeply. However, as already shown, he clearly defined and categorically rejected the postmillennial system: "Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of his reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial. . . ."85

Spurgeon clearly identified and summarily rejected the main tenets of postmillennialism. Yet Iain Murray attempted to cast Spurgeon as a postmillennialist. He wrote, "There was a fundamental uncertainty in his mind [regarding eschatology],"86 maintaining the thesis that though Spurgeon made many statements affirming a premillennial position, he also made statements contradictory to a premillennial position. Murray admitted that he had "no ready solution to the apparently contradictory features in Spurgeon's thought on prophecy."<sup>87</sup> However, after rejecting G. Holden Pike's theory that Spurgeon shifted his millennial beliefs after "he had received a few scars in the conflict,"<sup>88</sup> Murray presented three general explanations for Spurgeon's "contradictory features."

First, he postulated that in the initial phase of Spurgeon's London ministry (1855-65) when there were "conversions in large numbers, particularly after what may have been called the national spiritual awakening in Ulster in 1859,"<sup>89</sup> he was more "inclined to emphasize and preach the traditional Puritan hope [i.e., postmillennialism] which he had imbibed during his upbringing and youth."<sup>90</sup> Second, he noted that Spurgeon "had a profound distrust of

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Murray, *The Puritan Hope* 263.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 260.

<sup>88</sup>Pike, *Spurgeon* 5:96.

<sup>89</sup>Murray, *The Puritan Hope* 260.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

many pre-millennial dealers in prophecy."<sup>91</sup> These he identified mainly with certain members of the Plymouth Brethren movement who were always "trumpeting and vialing."<sup>92</sup> Third, Murray interpreted some statements as indicating he "was deliberately open in acknowledging the limitations of his understanding."<sup>93</sup> Murray's evaluation of Spurgeon's prophetic views is not adequate on several fronts.

Regarding his first and third points, Spurgeon's sermons show that he consistently rejected postmillennialism over his entire ministry, not simply during the time of the Down-Grade battle. "Jesus Only" was preached at New Park Street in 1857.<sup>94</sup> Perhaps Spurgeon's clearest statement, where he both identifies and rejects postmillennialism categorically, occurs in his sermon "Justification and Glory," preached in 1865.<sup>95</sup> The other sermon cited which rejects the postmillennial approach came in 1889, "The Form of Godliness without the Power."<sup>96</sup> To discern a "fundamental uncertainty" in Spurgeon's thinking on this does injustice to the facts. It appears that "unable to claim him as a postmillennialist, he [Murray] was unwilling to concede him to be a pre-millennialist."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 261.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 45:373 ff.

<sup>95</sup>Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 11:241 ff.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 35:301 ff.

<sup>97</sup>Griffiths, "Spurgeon's Eschatology" 226.

### ***Spurgeon and Dispensational Premillennialism***

On several occasions in the *Sword and Trowel* Spurgeon spoke against some of the practices of the Brethren, especially Darby, viewed sometimes as the developer of dispensational premillennialism. However, Spurgeon's main argument against the Brethren was their ecclesiology and soteriology, some features of their eschatology being only secondary issues.

Spurgeon's displeasure with "dispensationalism" was the teaching that separated the church and Israel into separate people's in God's program. In 1867 he wrote a long article outlining his objections to the theology of the Brethren.<sup>98</sup> In that article he questioned dispensational teaching: "Has it not been reserved to the Christian dispensation to furnish the privileged company which, in their unity, is called 'the Church,' 'the Bride of Jesus,' 'the Lamb's wife?'"<sup>99</sup> He objected to the idea that the believing Jews living prior to the first advent were not part of the church. In the entire article Spurgeon advocated "the one people of God," the continuity between the OT and NT saints. The following reflects his objection to this emphasis of dispensational teaching:

Difference of dispensation does not involve a difference of covenant; and it is according to the covenant of grace that all spiritual blessings are bestowed. So far as dispensations reach they indicate degrees of knowledge, degrees of privilege, and variety in the ordinances of worship. The unity of the faith is not affected by these, as we are taught in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. The faithful of every age concur in looking for that one city, and that city is identically the same with the New Jerusalem described in the Apocalypse as "a

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<sup>98</sup>Spurgeon was not against all Brethren. The Plymouth Brethren split between John Nelson Darby and B. W. Newton, Darby and his followers being called the "Exclusive Brethren" and Newton's group the "Open Brethren" or "Bethesda Group." Spurgeon's differences with the "Exclusive" branch were larger, but he maintained warm relations with many in the "Open" school, including B. W. Newton and George Mueller. Even among the "Exclusive" group he respected the commentaries William Kelly and C. H. Macintosh, though he usually differed with their conclusions.

<sup>99</sup>Spurgeon, "There be some that Trouble You," in *The Sword and Trowel* 3 (March 1867) 120.

bride adorned for her husband."<sup>100</sup>

He clarifies this point: "Surely, beloved brethren, you ought not to stumble at the anachronism of comprising Abraham, David, and others, in the fellowship of the Church!"<sup>101</sup> In this entire article, Spurgeon says nothing about eschatological interpretations of the Brethren, referring only to the violence done to the covenant by dispensationalism.

Ryrie specifies, "The essence of dispensationalism, then, is the distinction of Israel and the Church."<sup>102</sup> Spurgeon rejected any notion that separated the people of God. In a clear reference to the teaching of dispensationalists, he explained,

We have even heard it asserted that those who lived before the coming of Christ do not belong to the church of God! . . . These who saw Christ's day before it came, had a great difference as to what they knew, and perhaps in the same measure a difference as to what they enjoyed while on earth meditating upon Christ; but they were all washed in the same blood, all redeemed with the same ransom price, and made members of the same body. Israel in the covenant of grace is not natural Israel, but all believers in all ages.<sup>103</sup>

Without question, he saw the church and Israel united "spiritually." Also, his *Treasury of David* viewed the church as the recipient of the kingdom promises of God. His commentary on Matthew, though not stating so specifically, strongly implied that the church would experience the future tribulation, being preserved and protected by the power of God.

Spurgeon's views on eschatology were not consistent with a dispensational understanding of premillennialism.

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>102</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965) 47.

<sup>103</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, "Jesus Christ Immutable," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 15:8.

### ***Spurgeon and Historic Premillennialism***

Key features of historic premillennialism are twofold: (1) the kingdom will be the culmination of the church age and (2) the "rapture" will follow the tribulation, with the church going through the tribulation under the protection of God.

Spurgeon fits most consistently into the "historic or covenantal premillennial" system. The reasons for this conclusion are the following:

First, Spurgeon believed that the church would go through the totality of the tribulation, but be protected.

The burning earth shall be the torch to light up the wedding procession; the quivering of the heavens shall be, as it were, but as a dancing of the feet of angels in those glorious festivities, and the booming and crashing of the elements shall, somehow, only help to swell the outburst of praise unto God the just and terrible, who is to our exceeding joy.<sup>104</sup>

Tom Carter concluded that he "believed that the church would pass through the tribulation before the second coming, this would make him a premillennial post-tribulationist."<sup>105</sup> Spurgeon believed the second advent would precede the millennial kingdom: "I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial; that he will come first; and then will come the millennium as the result of his personal reign upon earth."<sup>106</sup>

Second, Spurgeon felt that the millennial kingdom was the culmination of God's program for the church: "The vehemence of your desire for the destruction of evil and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ will drive you to that grand hope of the church, and make you cry out for its fulfillment."<sup>107</sup>

Third, Spurgeon believed that there would be two separate

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 42:607.

<sup>105</sup>Tom Carter, *Spurgeon at His Best* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988) 183-84.

<sup>106</sup>Spurgeon, "Justification and Glory" 11:249.

<sup>107</sup>Spurgeon, "The Double Come" 27:292.

resurrections, one of the just and one of the unjust, separated by the millennium:

If I read the Scriptures aright, there are to be two resurrections, and the first will be the resurrection of the righteous; for it is written, `But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.'<sup>108</sup>

Fourth, Spurgeon taught that though the Jews would return to their land and Messiah would reign over them, they would come to faith in Christ just as the church and would be part of the church:

These who saw Christ's day before it came, had a great difference as to what they knew, and perhaps in the same measure a difference as to what they enjoyed while on earth meditating upon Christ; but they were all washed in the same blood, all redeemed with the same ransom price, and made members of the same body. Israel in the covenant of grace is not natural Israel, but all believers in all ages.<sup>109</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Spurgeon was most certainly premillennial, but not dispensational. Currently this has been a disputed issue, but during his lifetime his position was well known and attested to. As Drummond points out, "Nineteenth Century premillennialists loved to get Spurgeon in their camp. In 1888 The Episcopal Recorder stated that, `C. H. Spurgeon [is a] . . . pronounced premillennialist.'"<sup>110</sup> In prophetic conferences of the 19th century, S. H. Kellog identified Spurgeon as premillennial.<sup>111</sup> George Marsden called the religious

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<sup>108</sup>Spurgeon, "Resurrection of the Just and the Unjust" 13:241.

<sup>109</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, "Jesus Christ Immutable," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 15:8.

<sup>110</sup>Drummond, *Spurgeon* 650.

<sup>111</sup>S. H. Kellog, "Christ's Coming: Will It Be Premillennial," in *Premillennial Essays of the Prophetic Conference Held in the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York City*, Nathaniel West, ed. (reprint of Fleming H. Revell 1879 ed., Minneapolis: Bryant Baptist, 1981) 74.

periodical *The Christian Herald and Signs of the Times* "a premillennial organ, featuring such contributors as A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, Samuel Kellog and England's Charles Spurgeon."<sup>112</sup>

All the evidence demonstrates that Charles Haddon Spurgeon most certainly held to a premillennial eschatology. Furthermore, his millennial views coincided most closely with the "historic" or "covenantal" view of premillennialism, a position he held firmly throughout his entire ministry. The understanding of the premillennial return of Christ was of such great import to Spurgeon and his ministry that he stressed,

Brethren, no truth ought to be more frequently proclaimed, next to the first coming of the Lord, than his second coming; and you cannot thoroughly set forth all of the ends and bearings of the first advent if you forget the second. At the Lord's Supper, there is no discerning the Lord's body unless you discern his first coming; but there is no drinking into his cup to its fulness, unless you hear him say, "Until I Come." You must look forward, as well as backward. So it must be with all our ministries; they must look to him on the cross and on the throne. We must vividly realize that he, who has once come, is coming yet again, or else our testimony will be marred, and one-sided. We shall make lame work of preaching and teaching if we leave out either advent.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and the American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University, 1980) 84.

<sup>113</sup>Spurgeon, "He Cometh With Clouds," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 33:592-93.