

Wells, Spurgeon, Historic Dispensationalism – Three views of the Jewish Nation Or Three contrasting ways to “Rightly Divide the Word of God”

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Contents

PREFACE	3
Introduction	4
Three views on the Nation of Israel	4
C. H. Spurgeon and the Nation of Israel Sermon #582	4
Ezekiel 37:1-10 refers to the Jews alone.....	5
There will be a physical / political restoration of the Jewish Nation	5
The Jews, as a nation are not Idolaters.....	7
There will be a mass conversion of the Jewish Nation to Christ.....	9
Practical Application – The means of the Restoration.....	10
C. H. Spurgeon was opposed to Dispensationalism	11
Mr. James Wells and the Nation of Israel	13
The Sermon ‘Jewish Nationality Dissolved Forever’	13
Wells teaching from his lectures on Revelation	15
The meaning of “all the house of Israel”	16
Objections to what Wells taught based on the 1948 creation of the State of Israel	17
J. N. Darby and the Nation of Israel.....	17

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The Principles of Interpretation used 20

 Charles H. Spurgeon’s 20

 James Wells..... 25

 J. N. Darby..... 27

Conclusions 28

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.² (2 Timothy 2:15)

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”³ (2 Timothy 2:15)

PREFACE

Before touching on the subject of this dissertation it's important to lay out some ground rules and fundamental presuppositions. First and foremost, it's an absolute fact that, in the study of the Bible, that everyone engaged in such study has presuppositions. A presupposition is a belief or group of beliefs that any person already has. A person may not even be aware that they exist, yet they are tangible, definite ideas held by that person. There needs to be no factual basis for such belief, it's what is believed so therefore it's presupposed true. They exist prior to as well as after any factual study or studious endeavor. Our concepts and ideas can and do change with experience which means that our presuppositions can change. That is not to say that they are never based on facts, many are; for example, we presuppose gravity. When we get out of bed in the morning and put our feet on the floor we expect to stand up and not float into space. Basically, a presupposition is anything we pre-suppose.

I bring this up for two reasons, first, because I want the reader to be aware that I have several pre-supposed foundations upon which this paper is written. Foremost is the belief that the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God. It is the only final and real authority of what is true and what we are to believe. Another is that *unlike* J. I. Packer and a multitude of other professed Christian authorities I do NOT believe in what is called an 'Antinomy'. At least not where the Bible is concerned. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines antinomy as:

- 1: a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles
- 2: a fundamental and apparently unresolvable conflict or contradiction

A more common word meaning the same thing is 'paradox'. For example, either God is sovereign or man is sovereign. Any nonsense trying to portray both as equal in any degree is just that: nonsense. It's a supposed paradox that does not exist. Only God is sovereign. Thirdly, and stemming from the first two is the fact that there can be only one way to rightly divide God's word on any given subject. God does not have more than one future for the Jewish nation. There can be only one outcome: If the truth is in any of the three views presented here than it is only in that one view. Finally, that the Lord Jesus is the key to understanding the Bible. The lower or higher we place the Lord Jesus Christ the nearer or further we come to correctly understanding the Bible.

The second reason I'm bringing up the concept of presuppositions is to clearly show that each of the three persons under review held strong opinions prior to and after their exposition of texts dealing with the Jews.

Coming now to our subject: The subject is how God deals with the Nation of Israel, especially in regard to its future and the salvation of the Jewish nation. The subject is not about the Millennium parsec, though that subject does come up. Put in question form: What is God's purpose for the Jews as a nation? Is its fulfillment

² [New American Standard Bible: 1995 update](#). (1995). (2 Ti 2:15). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

³ This and all other scripture passages are taken from the King James Version unless other wise noted.

past, present or future? Is it distinct from the Gentiles and if so in what ways? Are they really a nation now in the Biblical sense of this term and if not, will they ever be again?

For my purpose here I am referring to Dispensationalism as represented by J. N. Darby as he is accredited as its founder. In fact, my purpose is more limited than that. It's to take as it were a snapshot in time; confining, for the most part, this study to the 1860's. The ranks of those who profess some form of Dispensationalism as the basis of their beliefs are legion and the differences between them are equally numerous. That part of the subject needs to be dealt with separately.

Introduction

Why compare the views of James Wells, C.H. Spurgeon and historic Dispensationalism (Darby)? First of all because they present three contrasting schemes. Secondly because of the time in history that these three views were advanced. Thirdly because they present three very different methods of studying the Bible. Based on their preconceived ideas they arrived at three distinctly different outcomes only one of which, if any, can be correct. In this comparison, I am primarily concerned with the future of the Jewish Nation, as a nation or distinct group as presented in Bible prophecy. Both their purpose and place in the Old Testament and their future are of course, very interrelated so I will touch upon both but with the emphasis on their future.

The timeline can be considered here in the introduction. James Wells lived from 1803 to 1872. Spurgeon's dates are 1834 to 1892. J.N. Darby dates are 1800 to 1882. It's a little difficult to pin down exact dates for when Darby first developed his basic tenants but it's generally taken to be around 1830. For the purposes of this study I have chosen three main sources, one for each person, though of course other material will be considered. In 1867 Darby published the revised edition of "The Hope of the Church of God, in Connection with the Destiny of the Jews and the Nations, as Revealed in Prophecy, Eleven Lectures."⁴ In 1864 Spurgeon preached sermon number 582 titled "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews" A sermon based on Ezekiel 37:1-10. James Wells, in 1867 preached sermon number 458 "Jewish Nationality Dissolved Forever".

By examining these and other source material I hope to answer two questions: First, what did each person believe in regard to the Nation of Israel? Secondly, how did they arrive at their conclusions? In other words, how did they approach the study of the Bible? What were their presuppositions? What basic principles of interpretation did they employ? Finally, and briefly, what conclusions can we draw from these findings?

Three views on the Nation of Israel

C. H. Spurgeon and the Nation of Israel Sermon #582

I am indebted to Dennis M. Swanson for his scholarly article on Spurgeon and the Nation of Israel⁵. As he chose to reserve all rights for this work, I will not be making any direct quotations from it. I however, refer the

⁴ According to Google Books the revised edition was published in 1867 and it was first published in 1840.

⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon and the Nation of Israel: A Non-Dispensational Perspective on a Literal National Restoration, by Dennis M. Swanson Copyright 2000

reader to his document⁶. It has been helpful to me personally, though I disagree with him on most points. For example, Swanson believes that Spurgeon's views on Israel are based on his interpretation of scripture. Now to some extent that is true, but as I seek to show below, underneath all Spurgeon's views on the Scriptures there lies deep and formattable pre-supposed ideas, especially about the Jews. These ideas come first then Scripture is fitted in to conform. In fairness, it should be noted that to a greater or lesser degree this is true of anyone who seeks to understand the Bible. It's a question of how much we let our presuppositions take first place. This will be examined as we continue.

As stated above my primary resource here is Spurgeon's sermon delivered on June 16th 1864. Its title is "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews"⁷. It was preached in the evening for the aid of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews⁸. His text was Ezekiel 37:1-10 which is the vision of the "Dry Bones". What then can we learn from this and other sources about what Spurgeon taught and thought with regard to the Jews?

Ezekiel 37:1-10 refers to the Jews alone

In his introduction Spurgeon clearly states the following in speaking of Ezekiel's words:

He was talking about the people of Israel, and prophesying concerning them; and evidently the vision, according to God's own interpretation of it, was concerning them, and them alone, for "these bones are the whole house of Israel." It was not a vision concerning all men, nor, indeed, concerning any men as to the resurrection of the dead, but it had a direct and special bearing upon the Jewish people.⁹

A little later he goes on to state that:

It would be altogether alien to the prophet's strain of thought to be thinking about the restoration of fallen zeal and the rekindling of expiring love; he was not considering the Reformation either of Luther or of Whitfield, or about the revival of one Church or of another. No, he was talking of his own people, of his own race, and of his own tribe. He surely ought to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit he gives us as an explanation of the vision, not- "Thus saith the Lord, my dying Church shall be restored," but- "I will bring my people out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel."

There is no ambiguity here at all, rather the opposite! Spurgeon states as a fact that this passage has reference for the Jewish nation and for them alone. In addition, to Spurgeon, the land as well as the people are part of the promise.

There will be a physical / political restoration of the Jewish Nation

⁶ <http://archive.spurgeon.org/misc/eschat2.php>

⁷ Sermon number 582 found in vol 10 of his Sermons.

⁸ This group still exist today under the name "Christian Witness to Israel" In fact Spurgeon's sermon is available on their website: http://www.cwi.org.uk/pdfs/Voices%20from%20the%20Past%20_Spurgeon.pdf

⁹ All references from this and other Spurgeon sermons are taken from the Ages Software "The Charles H. Spurgeon Collection" vs 2.3 copyright 1998-2004. Many of the sermons are also available on the web from various sources.

Spurgeon draws two conclusions based on his interpretation of the “main” emphasis or meaning of this passage as explained above. In his concluding remarks in the introduction to his sermon he says:

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality;

This then becomes point one of the two main points of his sermon.

In the opening of this section he says:

Israel is now blotted out from the map of nations; her sons are scattered far and wide; her daughters mourn beside all the rivers of the earth. Her sacred song is hushed; **no king reigns in Jerusalem**; she bringeth forth no governors among her tribes. But she is to be restored; she is to be restored “as from the dead.” When her own sons have given up all hope of her, then is God to appear for her. She is to be re-organized; her scattered bones are to be brought together. 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. Her sons, though they can never forget the **sacred dust** of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her *consecrated* shores, But it shall not be so forever, for her sons shall again rejoice in her: her land shall be called Beulah, for as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall her sons marry her. “I will place you in your own land,” is God’s promise to them. They shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig-trees. And they are also to be re-united. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but one-one Israel praising one God, **servng one king, and that one king the Son of David, the descended Messiah. They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous; nay, so glorious shall they be that Egypt, and Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, shall all forget their glory in the greater splendor of the throne of David.**

We can gain more insight into his thoughts on this subject by looking at another sermon: ‘The Frist Resurrection’ Number 391, preached May 5th, 1861 We learn in this sermon that he believed in a real earth as opposed to heavenly earth for the future of all those who God saved. As I show later on, his various statements regarding the time length on this early reign are very confusing.

So it is that God’s promises always have a wider meaning than we can conceive; now, in this case, if it only means that the meek are to have what they gain in this life, which is very little indeed, if they are only to have what they enjoy here upon earth, which is so little, that I think if in this life only they have hope, they are of men the most miserable — if it only mean that, then the promise means less than we might conceive it to mean, but if it mean that they shall have **glory even here**, then you have given to it one of the widest meanings you can conceive, a meaning like the meanings usually given to the promises of God — wide, large, extensive, and worthy of himself. Brethren, the meek do not inherit the earth to any great degree at present, and **we look for this in another age**. Let me quote the language of Christ, lest you should think this passage peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” How? where? when? Not now certainly, not in Christ’s days, not in apostolic times by any means. . . . Turn again to a passage in Revelation 5:9, 10: — “And they sung a new song.” It is the very song we sang this morning, and it runs thus, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign on the earth.**” Whether any one disputes the genuineness of these words, I do not know; but **if they mean anything at all, if the Holy Spirit meant to set forth any meaning, surely it must**

have been that the people of Christ shall reign on the earth. Besides, remember our Savior's words in Matthew 19:28, where in answer to a question which had been put by Peter as to what his saints should have as the result of their losses for his sake, he said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." It seems that Christ here is to come in the regeneration, **when in a newborn world there shall be joys fitted for the new-born spirits, and then there shall be splendors and glories for the apostles first, and for all those who by any means have suffered any losses for Christ Jesus. You find such passages as these in the Word of God, "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."** You find another like this in Zachariah, "My God shall come with the multitude of his saints." **Indeed, I could not now take up your time by quoting many passages in which it seems to me that nothing but the triumph on the very spot where they have fought the battle, nothing but the glory in the very place where they have had the tug of war, will meet the meaning of God's Word.** I do look forward to this with joy, that though I may sleep in Christ before my Master come, and I know not whether that shall be or no, yet I shall rise at the day of his appearing, and shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just if I have truly and faithfully served him; and that recompense shall be, to be made like unto him, and to partake of his glories before the eyes of men, and **to reign with him during the thousand years.**

There is no ambiguity as to what he believed on this subject. That is **when he chose to take the scriptures literally**¹⁰ as he did in quotations above, there would be a literal earth, an earthly Jerusalem with an earthly Mt Zion. The Jews would have a special place on this earth, with Jesus ruling over them as their king. Their earthly prosperity would be immense.

The Jews, as a nation are not Idolaters

In his second section he says that both the text and its context teach us about a mass spiritual restoration of the Jews. Based on his use of context he quotes Ezekiel 37:23 "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols." In his comments we gain an open window, as it were, into his mind on his pre-beliefs regarding the Jews. What is his basic attitude toward the Jewish Nation? In other words what are some of his presuppositions? He says something truly astonishing, indeed deplorable! He says "The promise is that they shall renounce their idols, **and, behold, they have already done so**¹¹." He further states:

Whatever faults the Jew may have besides, **he certainly has no idolatry.** "The Lord thy God is one God," is a truth far better conceived by the Jew than by any other man on earth except the Christian.

He actually states that, at that time, 1864, that the Jews as a nation were "**Weaned for ever from the worship of all images of whatever short...**"¹² When I read this for the first time a verse of Scripture sprang into my mind. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out

¹⁰ See below: The Principles of Interpretation used

¹¹ Any emphasis is mine both here and elsewhere unless otherwise stated.

¹² Remarks such as these are not limited to this sermon. For example, in his commentary on the Book of Matthew when commenting on Matthew 12:45 he says "**The spirit which led the Jews to idolatry was gone,** but the true God was not spiritually loved nor even known; and so the demon power held them still in possession."

of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45 KJV) **WHAT!** The reader may say, are you calling the great and godly C. H. Spurgeon evil? I certainly am with regard to what he preached about the Jews. Please tolerate me for now so I can explain.

To elaborate let me ask some related questions: Have the Jewish nation as whole, at any time in history accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in his divinity? In his atonement? In his resurrection? His sitting and reigning at the right hand of God as God? Obviously, no right-thinking person could say yes to any of those or similar questions. Just the reverse, they hate the Lord Jesus Christ with a passionate hatred having as a nation put him to death without national repentance or remorse.

For reference I note the following information summarized from a Wikipedia article titled “Judaism’s view of Jesus”¹³ This information is not controversial or in dispute.

1. The Jews view Jesus as the most influential and therefore dangerous or damaging of all the **false** messiahs.
2. Any idea of God as a dual or triune God is heretical
3. It is also a heresy for any man to claim to be God, or the son of God.
4. It is a central tenet of Judaism that God cannot have any physical characteristics. Therefore, Christ as he lived on earth can have no relationship to God.
5. The Jews believe that Christ does not fulfill the requirements set forth in Isaiah and Ezekiel (or for that matter the other Old Testament books) Furthermore he is not even to be considered as a prophet.

Spurgeon himself, admits this for he says in his application, “How shall they be lifted up out of that hardness of heart, which makes them hate the Messiah of Nazareth...”

What then did the Lord Jesus Himself teach us about worshiping God? Let look at John 8:12-30

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, **Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.** 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. 21 Then said Jesus again unto them, **I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.** 22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 **And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.** 24 **I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.** 25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism%27s_view_of_Jesus

he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30 As he spake these words, many believed on him. (KJV)

Again, as our Lord taught in John 14:6 we can only come to the Father through Christ. “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**’”

The Jewish nation, neither at that time nor at any time can know the Father without the Son. What they worship as the one God is a false God, a God without the Lord Jesus Christ; a false God who to them is indeed one not three in one. In other words, they worship an idol!

Spurgeon’s attitude toward the Jews differs radically from our Lord’s own teaching. As quoted above he sees no idolatry at all in their worship of a God devoid of Christ. In fact, to him their conception of God is second only to that of the Christian. Not only that but according to Spurgeon, money is not an object of idol worship to the Jew. In the same way National Pride is not an idol. Later on, in the application part of his sermon he even talks about the Jews constant pursuit of money. Is money not an idol when it is our supreme object of desire? None of this matters to him; the Jew has turned away from any and all idols. The Bible as a whole is an overwhelming witness against Spurgeon in this matter. As evidenced by an abundance of passages, they always were and still are idol worshipers of the first degree.

Spurgeon’s own words quoted in the next section show that he believes that there will come a time when the Jews will worship God “in spirit and in truth”. In the future they will worship him “in his own appointed way, accepting the Mediator” Now reader, can you not see that it is a self-evident fact that Spurgeon himself admits, in this same sermon, that the Jews do NOT now, nor in 1864, worship God in Spirit and Truth. As they do not worship in God’s appointed way there is only what possible result. They worship in idolatry. What is Buddhism, Islam, Jehovah Witness, or the worship of all host of heaven but the worship of a false God and Judaism is no different at all when Christ is omitted.

In summary here with a quote from James Wells

I was looking at a favorite verse of mine this morning, and thought I would give it you; I love it very much, “They shall no more defile themselves with their idols;” “Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon the earth I desire beside you,” “nor with their detestable things:” whatever is put into the place of Christ is a detestable thing.¹⁴

There will be a mass conversion of the Jewish Nation to Christ

Here are his words on this from under the heading “ISRAEL IS TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL RESTORATION OR A CONVERSION.”

“They shall be my people, and I will be their God.” The unseen but omnipotent Jehovah is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth by his ancient people; they are to come before him in his own appointed way, accepting the Mediator whom their sires rejected; coming into covenant relation with God, for so our text tells us “I will make a covenant of peace with them,” and Jesus is our peace, therefore we gather that Jehovah shall enter into the covenant of grace with them, that covenant of which Christ is the federal head, the substance, and the surety. They are to walk in God’s ordinances and statutes, and so exhibit the practical effects of being united to Christ who has given them peace. **All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be**

¹⁴ From Sermon number 399 ‘Hearing and Living’ July 15th 1866

converted to God, and that this conversion is to be permanent, for the tabernacle of God is to be with them, the Most High is, in an especial manner, to have his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter days, the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted, the hearts of the fathers shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God, and they shall be the people of God, **world without end.**

There are certain things that must be noticed here. First of all, to Spurgeon, both Jew and Gentile must be saved in the exactly same way: through the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet clearly to Spurgeon there is something inherent in the Jewish nation that sets them apart. They will **“in an especial manner”** have his sanctuary in their midst, and that **forever**. His actual words are “to have his sanctuary in the midst of them **for evermore;**” and **“world without end”** Yet at the same time earlier in his sermon he clearly stated that the saved are “to reign with him during the thousand years.” He speaks of the millennium in another sermon where he says:

If I read the word aright, and it is honest to admit that there is much room for difference of opinion here, the day will come, when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Some think that this descent of the Lord will be postmillennial- 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. But whether or no, this much is the fact, that Christ will suddenly come, come to reign, and come to judge the earth in righteousness.¹⁵

To me at least there is a good deal of confusion in his different statements, what is special with regard to what the Jews will experience forever, as opposed to what they have in the supposed millennium? It seems that in 1865 these things were not facts yet a short time later they are facts to Spurgeon.

Also, the timing of Gods plan for the Jews was, to Spurgeon, irrelevant. They could be saved first then restored or restored first and then saved. He says:

Let the Lord send these blessings in his own order, and **we shall be well content whichever way they shall come.** We take this for our joy and our comfort, that this thing shall be, and that **both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne,** the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among his people gloriously.

Practical Application – The means of the Restoration

It's beyond the scope of this document to properly evaluate the practical part of Spurgeon's sermon. Several parts are however, relevant. In spite of his ardent stress on not spiritualizing this section of scripture, (please see below), he quickly does what he said not to do. He says: “I want you to observe that there are two kinds of prophesying spoken of here. First, the prophet prophesies to the bones-**here is preaching;** and next, he prophesies to the four winds-**here is praying.**” The rest of his application is based on this interpretation. From the text he derives as a fact that “The preaching has its share in the work, but it is the praying which achieves the result” Furthermore we, Christians, take the place of the prophet Ezekiel, God is commanding us to do what he did.

¹⁵ 'Justification and Glory' Sermon number 627 preached April 30th 1865

In his application he no longer restricts the passage as applying to the Jew alone, now it's for "every creature" He says: "It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church, to preach the gospel to the Jew, **and to every creature, and in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide.**"

Most of his application uses his typical combining the doctrines of grace, God's sovereignty, and duty faith, free will etc. all lumped together. There is however, in this case, a noteworthy exception. Before stating that the main thing is to preach Christ; he starts off by suggesting that the Jew can be tempted and encouraged to salvation by means of an earthly kingdom. Greed and pride (idols) as a motive? Surly not! See for your selves in the quote below.

What are we to preach? The text says we are to prophesy, and assuredly every missionary to the Jews should especially keep God's prophecies very prominently before the public eye. It seems to me that one way in which the Jewish mind might be laid hold of, would be to remind the Jews right often of that **splendid future** which both the Old and the New Testaments predict for Israel. Every man has a tender side and a warm heart towards his own nation, and if you tell him that in your standard book there is a revelation made that that nation **is to act** a grand part in human history, and **is, indeed, to take the very highest place in the parliament of nations**, then the man's prejudice is on your side, and he listens to you with the greater attention. I would not commend, as some do, the everlasting preaching of prophesy in every congregation, but a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.

As I mentioned above Jew and Gentle are not equal in Spurgeon's eyes. The Jew is special in many ways not as Paul spoke of them in their past earthly glory but in the heavenly realm. He tells his hearers that they are to tempt the Jews with what will happen in the future. As an example, that their nation will have "the very highest place in the parliament of nations" This is NOT a Biblical term and therefore makes no sense biblically. In this instance, at least, he exerted all his powers of persuasion to bring about his desired end: the conversion of the Jews.

C. H. Spurgeon was opposed to Dispensationalism

Not only was Spurgeon not a Dispensationalist, he was in fact very opposed to the movement as the following quotations show.

Distinctions have been drawn by certain exceedingly wise men (measured by their own estimate of themselves), between the people of God who lived before the coming of Christ, and those who lived afterwards. We have even heard it asserted that those who lived before the coming of Christ do not belong to the church of God! We never know what we shall hear next, and perhaps it is a mercy that these absurdities are revealed one at a time, in order that we may be able to endure their stupidity without dying of amazement. Why, every child of God in every place stands on the same footing; the Lord has not some children best beloved, some second-rate offspring, and others whom he hardly cares about. 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 in 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. Before the first advent, all the types and shadows all pointed one way – they pointed to Christ, and to him all the saints looked with hope. Those who lived before Christ were not saved with a different salvation to that which shall come to us. They exercised faith as we must; that faith struggled as ours struggles, and that faith obtained its

reward as ours shall. As like as a man's face to that which he seeth in a glass is the spiritual life of David to the spiritual life of the believer now. Take the book of Psalms in your hand, and forgetting for an instant that you have the representation of the life of one of the olden time, you might suppose-that David wrote but yesterday. Even in what he writes of Christ, he seems as though he lived after Christ instead of before, and both in what he sees of himself and in what he sees of his Savior, he appears to be rather a Christian writer than a Jew; I mean that living before Christ he has the same hopes and the same fears, the same joys and the same sorrows, there is the same estimate of his blessed Redeemer which you and I have in these times. Jesus was the same yesterday as an anointed Savior to his people as he is to-day, and they under him received like precious gifts. If the goodly fellowship of the prophets could be here to-day, they would all testify to you that he was the same in every office in their times as he is in these our days.^{16, 17}

... The Gentile element is predominant almost to exclusiveness in the Christian Church. Occupying a place of privilege which our forefathers knew not, there have arisen among us certain brethren who stealthily at first, and afterwards more boldly, have disparaged the Jewish patriarchs, and vaunted for themselves a superior claim to the love of God, and a higher place in the destinies of heaven than they deem it possible for the saints of the pre-Christian era to inherit. Profane rivalry! not more pretentious than unwarranted; not more audacious than unscriptural. Does the proposition admit of debate, or is it necessary to do more; than refer every inquirer to the plain, unequivocal testimony of the New Testament?... In view of the various dispensations under which it has pleased God to gather an elect and faithful people out of the world, 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?' We have already refuted this notion. Still it appears that stumbling-blocks have been laid in the path of those who diligently search the Scriptures, which, by the grace of God, we will endeavor to remove. And first of all, do not, we beseech you, be cajoled by any appeal to "God's dispensational arrangements," knowing that, however various they may have been, his covenant has endured the same through them all. It is a mere trust- that Abel was not circumcised, that Noah did not observe the Passover, and Abraham was not baptized. 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 one city, and that city is identically- the same with the New Jerusalem described in the Apocalypse as "a bride adorned for her husband." Surely, beloved brethren, you ought not. to stumble at the anachronism of comprising Abraham, David, and others, in the fellowship of the Church! If you can understand how we, who live under the present economy, and unlike those Jews have never been circumcised, are nevertheless accounted the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and not in the flesh—you Can have very little difficulty in perceiving that those Old Testament saints, who were participators in the faith of Christ's death and resurrection, were verily baptized into him according to the Spirit. Neither time nor circumstance bounded the faith of Abraham. 'He rejoiced to see Messiah's day; and he saw it, and was glad. He believed in God who "called those things that be not as though they were."' It were well for us to walk in the footsteps of this same faith. ... Let the Plymouth Brethren define "the church" from which, by injunction or consent of their leaders, Abraham, Moses, David, and others, "as individual servants," are to be kept aloof. Their "plain papers" will tell us, "it is the actual living unity with Christ and with each other of those who, since Christ's resurrection, are formed into this unity by

¹⁶ Jesus Christ Immutable by C. H. Spurgeon; Vol. 10 number 848 January 3rd 1869.

¹⁷ Ages Software

the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.” Turn aside now and see this great sight. Where is it to be beheld? In the ecumenical church of Rome! In the Episcopal church of England, by law established! In the sections of Presbyterianism! Among the Methodist societies! Among the Congregationalists! Or is it, after all, among the Plymouth Brethren themselves, whose diversities and disunion are so notorious? ...^{18 19}

The above quotations are only a small part of what Spurgeon had to say against these doctrines in this Sword and Trowel article. He used all his eloquence and powers of persuasion to fight against these errors. He did in fact hold to some of the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren, for example, with regard to the literal interpretation of many Bible passages.

Mr. James Wells and the Nation of Israel

The Sermon ‘Jewish Nationality Dissolved Forever’

As with Spurgeon our starting point here is a sermon. On August 25th, 1867 Wells preached a sermon titled ‘Jewish Nationality Dissolved Forever’. Its sermon number 458 from volume 9 of his sermons. The text is Ezekiel 7:13 which reads "For the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return." The first thirteen verses of chapter 7 read as follows:

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; **An end, the end** is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth. Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded. Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of their's: neither shall there be wailing for them. The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

Wells in his opening statement says:

¹⁸ 1867 Sword and Trowel ‘There be some that Trouble You’

¹⁹ Ages Software

THE theme of the first part of this chapter is that of the final dissolution of the Jewish nationality, that their temple is gone, and gone forever; that their city, their land, their ceremonial law, their tribal distinction, are gone, and gone forever. They "shall not return." From all their former captivities they recovered, but from their present captivity they will never recover; there is no hope whatever in that direction. **But there is an infinitely better hope put into the place thereof, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, for Jew and for Gentile.**

He clearly states that: "My object, therefore, this morning will be to set before you a fourfold contrast between the covenant that is passed away and the covenant that shall not pass away." On what basis does he seek to 'rightly divide the word of truth'? What was his guide in this and all his sermons? What is the basis of this fourfold contrast? In other words what are his presuppositions? He tells us the answer very plainly: "Our text embodies that which would take a volume of sermons to work out and to do justice to; and therefore, all that one sermon can do will just be to indicate **the direction in which the river of God's eternal truth still continues to flow.**" This is just as I noted above "the **Lord Jesus Christ, for Jew and for Gentile.**"

The following section from this sermon gives us a good summary of what James Wells believed and preached.

The state and standing of one Christian, as he stands in Christ, is just the same as another: there is no difference, for there stands the decree that "he has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son." "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another", that is, from time to time, "shall all flesh," the Lord said (and I want to be careful in using these words "all flesh," because I shall want them presently to illustrate a point), "shall all flesh come to worship before me." Has not it been so? Where not both Jews and Gentiles in the apostolic age brought? And were there not both Jews and Gentiles included in the Epistle to the Hebrews? Though that epistle is especially to the Hebrews, Gentiles are included, and he says, "You are come unto mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Now it is said of these "all flesh," "They shall go forth and look upon the carcasses", **not the literally, but the spiritually,** the ecclesiastically and nationally dead carcasses, "of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die." The Lord placed a worm in the root of the Jewish nationality, and there stands the testimony of the immutable God that that worm shall not die; **that nation can never be a nation again,** "neither shall their fire be quenched." And does not the judgment of God rest to this day upon the land of Canaan? Did not that same judgment that scattered the ten tribes more than two thousand years ago into the Eastern world scatter the other two tribes nearly two thousand years ago into the western world, so to fulfil the ancient prediction, "You shall be scattered among all nations"? "And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Now try and understand it, even if it gives you some trouble. In the preceding verse there is an "all flesh" that should come to worship the Lord. Then in the close of that prophecy of Isaiah it says of these men that had transgressed thus against God, that they should be 'an abhorring unto all flesh.' "What does this mean? **You must take the "all flesh" there to mean all Christians all that are worshippers of the Lord.** And is not this fulfilled? **Is there anything that the Christian more detests than those sentiments and doctrines that deny the Messiah-ship of Christ, which the poor Jew does deny? Is here anything the Christian stands further from than he does that doctrine that denies the Son-ship of Christ, the salvation, atonement, righteousness death, resurrection, glory, and eternal reign of Christ, and that eternal life and blessedness we have by him?** Thus, then, the Jews-not in their persons, for we must not hate persons; we may hate principles and practices, but not persons-shall, in their doctrine, in their religion, be an abhorring unto all flesh-all true worshippers of the Lord. Does not the Savior show the fullness of his abhorrence against the

systems of his day, and does he not sum up the whole in the most awful, the most solemn language? Those men had had so much fellowship with Satan, and had got so much of their religion from beneath, that they had rendered themselves so like Satan that the Savior said, "You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?" **Thus, then, it appears clear from the closing of the prophetic Book of Isaiah, that the Jews can never return; and it appears clear also from this seventh chapter of Ezekiel. I grieve when I look at many learned men, especially such an industrious and learned and admirable man as Dr. Cumming that they should be so deluded as to be holding out an everlasting hope that the time is very near when the Jews will return. That is just what the Jew likes. There is too much preaching in our day that confirms people in their delusions. Here is one comes and says, "Now it is your duty to come to Christ, and you can come if you like." That is just what all men like. That is the very thing that they need to have preached out of them in order to be brought out of delusion and brought to know the truth. And so, the Jews think there is a fixed time for them to return to Canaan and have their temple and their city and their land and their national distinction; and Gentile ministers, professing to be Christian ministers, confirm them in this delusion.** Why, the apostle Paul, when he writes upon the subject, says, "As you in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy;" that is to say, as you have obtained mercy by Jesus Christ, the Jews must obtain mercy through that same mercy. And besides, in Christ "there is, nether Greek nor Jew circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free but Christ is all and in all." These distinctions are all swept away. Thus, then, they "shall not return.

Wells teaching from his lectures on Revelation

In lecture number 10 "The End of Jewish National Time" Wells speaks about the end of Jewish nation. He says:

I will not say anything harsh here, but I am sorry that so many learned men have written such delusions for the Jews, pretending there is a time when they will return to their land; whereas the seventh of Ezekiel positively declares that they never shall return; their time is gone, and gone forever; and it approaches to cruelty, I was going to say, to hold out now any hope but Jesus Christ for the Jews. Jesus Christ hath abolished that time, that dispensation, and everything belonging to it. Therefore, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Do not preach the land of Canaan; do not preach a supposed temple to be restored; do not preach a Levitical priesthood to be restored; do not preach a nationality to be restored; for if you do that you will delude them. Their house is left unto them desolate, and there is not one word said about its restoration; but "go and preach the gospel to every creature." This appears to me to be the meaning of the end of time—that time should be no longer; now should commence that time which should never end; for what is eternity, after all, to the Christian but the endless continuation of time? . . . First, then, here is the substituting of Christ for the typical dispensation; secondly, here is the substituting of the last Adam, Christ Jesus, for the first Adam; and thus in both these senses, though this latter is, I grant, an accommodating way of using the words, time shall be no more. Jewish shadowy time is ended; and substantial time, the time of substance, the time of the true riches, the time of the true Messiah, the time of the things that cannot be moved, has come. "We therefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved," the apostle might well say, "let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." And there is

something very wrong about us somewhere if these blessed truths will not make us serve the Lord our God. What is there worth living for in comparison of these eternal things? I am not going to make light of human life, or the providences of God, because it would be unnatural; and I do not wish to be unnatural; but I mean comparatively, what is there worth living for compared with these eternal things?

The meaning of “all the house of Israel”

Wells sermon on Ezekiel 39:29 is titled ‘Assurance for Ever’ It was sermon number 403 preached on August 6th, 1866. In it he defines the Holy Spirits meaning of the term “all the house of Israel” and similar expressions.

Verse 29 reads as follows in the KJV: “Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon **the house of Israel**, saith the Lord God.” Wells, speaking about to whom this promise was made says:

They are described in the preceding verses. First, they are called, “all the house of Israel.” And now I want for a few moments your attention rather carefully, while I try to show that “the whole house of Israel ” doth not mean the whole house of Israel nationally; that it doth not mean the whole house of Israel after the flesh; that it doth not mean the Jews in distinction from other people; but that “the whole house of Israel” means the whole election of grace, whether Jew or Gentile. This I have, in the first place, to prove, because our text embraces all these. It is a covenant promise to a covenant people: “Neither will I hide my face any more from them.” Hence, then, in one of the preceding verses we read, “Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name.” Now, the whole house of Israel here will mean Christian Israel, the whole that are chosen in Christ, irrespective of nation, or any natural or providential distinction whatever. Go back to the 11th chapter of this book, and you get these words, which are upon this subject very instructive. The Lord there saith to Ezekiel, “Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly” now mind that, “all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the Lord: unto us is this land given in possession.” Now observe here, “All the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said.” Now, these inhabitants of Jerusalem were a part, and a large part, too, of Israel after the flesh, but they were no part of Israel after the spirit. Now, “thy brethren”—that is, Ezekiel’s brethren, his kindred, and you know of what spirit Ezekiel was; our text will show of what spirit he was, that he was well established in the eternity of the gospel, “thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly,”—that is, all believers, all who were one with Ezekiel in these eternal truths—“are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem”—the unconverted Jews, the apostate Jews, “have said, Get you far from the Lord: unto us is this land given in possession.” And have we not had the same spirit in the Christian dispensation in times past? ... **So then, the expression, “all the house of Israel wholly” means all that were brought to receive the truth, to believe in the truth as it is in Jesus.** But a vast amount of trash has been written and preached about the Jews returning to their land. It is the worst nonsense. **The gospel recognizes no difference between Jew and Gentile; all the difference that the gospel recognizes is between believer and unbeliever.** Therefore, there is no hope for either Jew or Gentile, as I so often say, but the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, then, the whole house of Israel, which men take to mean the Jews, and keep looking and looking to see whether their captivity is to be turned, why, it will never be turned;

their work is done, their mission is ended, they are wanted no more. We no longer want the blood of bulls and calves; we no longer want Aaron and his robes; we no longer want a literal temple; we no longer want a local worship; it is not at Jerusalem, nor in this mountain now, but they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Objections to what Wells taught based on the 1948 creation of the State of Israel

At a very simplistic level, some may seek to discredit or reject what James Wells said with regard to the Nation of Israel. It is of course a fact that the Land of Israel exists today and that the Jews have some considerable power within the current boundaries. However, anyone who seeks to take passages like Ezekiel 37 literally are faced with an immediate problem: the promises have to be literally true. For example, Jesus must reign as an earthy king, the temple and its sacrifices must exist etc. Spurgeon as we saw was emphatic on these points. How happy would you be if you were promised a car if the following were true? The car was a real full size, drivable car but: You had no gas, you had no roads and no key; you could not even start it if you have gas. Even if you could start it and had gas there was nowhere to drive to and no way to get there. It would be a hollow empty gift, unless perhaps you chose to live in it because you had nowhere else to live. Then it would be a 'house' and not really a car. What value is the land without the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation? Does this, in any meaningful way answer to a literal interpretation of the prophetic texts?

I would refer the reader to a very well written article by Daniel J. Elazar²⁰ where he discusses Israel as a Jewish State. Under the heading 'Israel as a Politically Independent Jewish State' he says:

Israel is formally a secular, democratic state, the only one in the Middle East besides Turkey, but its calendar and rhythm are deliberately Jewish in the same way that the calendars and rhythms of the states of the Christian world are Christian, and of the Muslim world, Muslim. The Sabbath and Jewish holidays are official days of rest in Israel, albeit on social rather than religious grounds. Public and government bodies display Jewish symbols, whether mezzuzot on every doorpost in every public building or Hanukkah lights on top of every city hall at the appropriate season. The Israel Defense Forces, El Al - the national airline, and all other public institutions maintain Jewish dietary laws and an agreed-on modicum of Sabbath observance. Hebrew is the official and principal language of the country (Arabic is also an official language and English a recognized one). Because language is the principal bearer of culture, it strengthens the Jewish cultural identity of the state. Even the most secular Israeli public figures use biblical and talmudic expressions in their speeches and discussions as a matter of second nature.

Most informed readers will agree, I believe, that this is a fair statement of what exists in Israel today. This in no way, shape or form conforms to what either Spurgeon or Darby envisioned. It is not the fulfillment they saw in Scripture.

J. N. Darby and the Nation of Israel

²⁰ Israel as a Jewish State by Daniel J. Elazar – Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs at <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/isrjewstate.htm>

First of all, I would like to reiterate that my purpose here is very limited. It is primarily to focus on Darby and the Nation of Israel. However, in order to accomplish this, it's necessary to understand to some extent, how he divided up Gods word; in other words, his presuppositions. The reference here is to the New Revised edition (1867) of Darby's "The Hopes of the Church of God, in connection with The Destiny of the Jews and the Nations" first published in 1840.²¹

First of all, to Darby, prophecy was the all-important factor. Ignoring other scriptures of the same import²², he explains away Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He actually says: "Desiring to confine ourselves to Jesus crucified, **in the way it is urged**²³, is, I repeat, to confine ourselves to as little as possible of Christianity."²⁴ Yet even within the subject of prophecy there was a major subdivision. In his last lecture Darby states that he is, in a few words, going to describe how God reveals himself in prophecy. He says:

Revelation 12 presents to us **the great object of prophecy, and of all the word of God, that is, the combat which takes place between the Second Adam and Satan. It is from this center of truth that all the light which is found in scripture radiates.**

This great combat may take place either for the earthly things (they being the object), and then it is in the Jews; or for the Church (that being the object), and then it is in the heavenly places.

It is on this account that **the subject of prophecy divides itself into two parts**: the hopes of the Church, and those of the Jews; **though the former be scarcely, properly speaking, prophecy**, which concerns the earth and God's government of it.²⁵

So, we have prophecy 'proper' which concerns the Church and 'improper' (really history) which deals with the Jews. The historical Jewish part concerns the earth and Gods government of the earth. Not only is prophecy divided but he divides God himself. God, he says is to the Church like a Father but to the Jews he is Jehovah the King.

This can be seen clearly in what he earlier stated:

... towards the Jews, it is the character of Jehovah, the King. His faithfulness, unchangeableness, His almighty power, His government of the whole earth—all this is revealed in His relationship towards Israel; it is in this way that the history of this people lets us into the character of Jehovah²⁶

This is a recurrent theme he states it again on the next page: "The Jews, then, are the people by whom, and in whom, God sustains His name of Jehovah, and His character of judgment and righteousness. The Church are the people in whom, as in His family, the Father reveals His character of goodness and love."²⁷

²¹ It was published in London by G. Morrish, 24 Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row

²² For example, Colossians 1:18, 19 "For it pleased the Father that **in him** should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, **by him to reconcile all things** unto himself; by him, I say, **whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.**"

²³ In other words, his view alone is correct, any other meaning comes from taking the verse out of context or from "standing in the ways of the Lord" i.e. his interpretations.

²⁴ Page 150

²⁵ Page 151

²⁶ Page 136

²⁷ Page 137

This subjugation of Israel to the earth with heaven reserved for the Church is extreme in Darby's teaching. He uses our Lord's words to Nicodemus in John 3 for this very purpose. Understanding this is important which is why I am quoting the whole paragraph.

I would now remark, for a moment in passing on our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, (John iii. particularly ver. 12,) where there is an allusion to "earthly things." Previously, (ver. 10,) He had said, "Art thou a master [teacher] in Israel, and knowest not these things?"—namely, the need of being born of water and of the Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God. This knowledge was to be got out of the Old Testament, the source whence the teachers drew their instruction. The passage just quoted out of Ezekiel contains almost the very same words used by our Lord. How! says He, you a master [teacher] in Israel! you ought to understand that Israel must have a new and purified heart in order to enjoy the promises. How is it that you know not these things? If you enter not into my saying that you must be born of water and of the Spirit, and do not understand these earthly things, how can it be expected that you should believe about heavenly things? **As if He had said,**²⁸ If I have spoken to you of the things which apply to Israel, if I have told you that Israel must be born again to enjoy those *terrestrial premises which belong to her*²⁹, and you have not understood me, how will you comprehend about heavenly things—about the glory of Christ exalted in heaven, and the Church, His companion, in this heavenly glory? You have not even understood the doctrines of your prophets. You a teacher in Israel, you should at least have made yourself acquainted with **the earthly things, of which Ezekiel and others have spoken.**³⁰

As I said Derby actually puts his own words, his interpretation, into the mouth of Christ himself.

These divisions of earth for the Jews, heaven for the Church and Jehovah the King for the Jews vs. a Father for the Church are at the very heart of his dispensational thinking.

What did Jehovah for the Jews mean to Darby? One thing is clear, it was a way to know God apart from salvation in Christ.

I would again remind you of that important fact, that Jewish history is especially the manifestation of the glory of Jehovah. To ask, In what does this history concern us? is to say, Of what use is it that I should know what my Father is about to do for my brethren and the manifestation of His character in His acts?

It is evident, from the place which the subject occupies in His word, that their affairs are very dear to our God and Father, **if they be not to us**³¹. **It is in this people, by the ways of God revealed to them, that the character of Jehovah is fully revealed, that the nations will know Jehovah, and that we shall ourselves learn to know Him.**³²

What then was the supposed future for the Jewish Nation? He brings a succession of passages, mostly from the Old Testament to bear on this subject. Like Spurgeon he found Ezekiel chapter 37 particularly relevant. It was the passage to be read for Lecture 9 which deals in part with the 'Promises of Restoration'. He says "THAT which happens to the dry bones seen by Ezekiel exhibits, very forcibly, the matter to be treated of this evening;

²⁸ My emphasis

²⁹ His own emphasis

³⁰ Pages 131, 132

³¹ My emphasis in both places

³² Page 135

namely, what God in His goodness will yet do in favour of Israel.”³³ The first part of this lecture deals with Israel’s failure and dispersion which I will pass over.

The following are some of the passages he uses to teach a full restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel.

1 Chronicles 17:13 and 2 Samuel 7:10

Isaiah 1: 25-28

Isaiah 4: 2-4

Isaiah 33:20,24

Jeremiah 3:16-18

Parts of Jeremiah 30 and 31

Parts of Ezekiel 36 to 39

Parts of Daniel 12 etc.

Let’s look in more detail at one example where he says:

In Hosea ii. 14 unto the end, we see that the Lord will receive Israel, will bring her into the land, after having humbled her, but having spoken to her also after His own heart, and will make her such as she was in the days of her youth; that Jehovah will make a covenant with her, and bless her **in every kind of way on this earth**, and will betroth her unto Himself forever.

But more. There is an uninterrupted chain of blessings from Jehovah Himself, down to the earthly blessings poured out in abundance upon Israel, who is the seed of God (for this is the force of the word Jezreel). On this account there is added (ver. 23), “I will sow her unto me in the earth.” For Israel will become the instrument of blessing to the earth, as life from amongst the dead. At this time all is hindered by sin; spiritual wickedness is now “in heavenly places” (Eph. vi. 12); and every description of misery abounds, accompanied though it be with many blessings (for God makes “all things work together for good to them that love him”); but at that time there will be a **fulness of earthly blessing**.³⁴

In short, each Old Testament scripture example used in the Lectures is taken literally, no matter what convolutions and absurdities this leads to. For example, parts apply to the ten tribes only while others are for the two tribes. And again, speaking about the literal meaning of Jeremiah 3:16-18 he says: “We see in a word, three things happening together, which most surely have not had as yet **a simultaneous accomplishment**: namely, Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; Judah and Israel united; and the nations assembled to the throne of God. Over and over again his “literal” meaning leads to ridiculous conclusions.

The Principles of Interpretation used

Charles H. Spurgeon’s

³³ Page 120

³⁴ Pages 138, 139

Spurgeon's sermon on the Restoration of the Jews gives us some clear indications of his hermeneutic³⁵ principles at that time.

Speaking about the political restoration of the Jews he says:

If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God's meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, **the literal sense and meaning** of this passage—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.

In the same sermon on this subject, again while referring to the Jews he says:

His first and primary intention was to speak of them, and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning, since “no Scripture is of private interpretation,” yet I hold it **to be treason to God's Word** to neglect its primary meaning, and constantly to say- “Such-and such is the primary meaning, but it is of no consequence, and I shall use the words for another object.” The preacher of God's truth should not give up the Holy Ghost's meaning; he should take care that he does not even put it in the back ground. The first meaning of a text, the Spirit's meaning, is that which should be brought out first, and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place. Let it have the uppermost place **in the synagogue**³⁶, let it be looked upon as at least not inferior, either in interest or importance, to any other meaning which may come out of the text.

Least the reader should think that these were Surgeon's views all the time I give the following quotes from his “Lectures to My Students” They are from Lecture 7 “On Spiritualizing”

Many great soulwinners have felt it meet to give a fillip³⁷ to their ministry, and to arrest their people's attention by now and then striking out a path which had not been trodden heretofore. Experience has not taught them that they were in error, but the reverse. **Within limit**, my brethren, **be not afraid to spiritualize, or to take singular texts**. Continue to look out passages of Scripture, and **not only give their plain meaning, as you are bound to do**, but also **draw from them meanings which may not lie upon their surface**. Take the advice for what it is worth, but I seriously recommend you to show the superfine critics that everybody does not worship the golden image which they have set up. I counsel you to employ spiritualizing **within certain limits and boundaries**, but I pray you do not, under cover of this advice, rush headlong into incessant and injudicious “imaginings,” as George Fox would call them.

Later he says:

Once more, in no case allow your audience to forget that the narratives which you spiritualize are facts, and not mere myths or parables. **The first sense of the passage must never be drowned in the outflow of your imagination; it must be distinctly declared and allowed to hold the first rank; your accommodation of it must never thrust out the original and native meaning, or even push it into the background**. The Bible is not a compilation of clever allegories or instructive poetical traditions; it teaches literal facts and reveals tremendous realities: let your full

³⁵ See lower down for the meaning of hermeneutic

³⁶ The use of this term rather than “Truth” or some other term shows that extent Spurgeon when to in order to make this sermon ‘Jewish’.

³⁷ something tending to arouse or excite

persuasion of this truth be manifest to all who attend your ministry. It will be an ill day for the church if the pulpit should even appear to endorse the skeptical hypothesis that Holy Scripture is but the record of a refined mythology, in which globules of truth are dissolved in seas of poetic and imaginary detail.

And again:

But supposing you have expounded all the usually accepted types, and have cast light upon the emblems and figurative expressions, must your fancy and delight in similitudes go to sleep? By no means. When the apostle Paul finds a mystery in Melchisedek, and speaking of Hagar and Sarah, says, "Which things are an allegory," **he gives us a precedent for discovering scriptural allegories in other places besides the two mentioned.** Indeed, **the historical books** not only yield us here and there an allegory, but seem as a whole to be arranged with a view to symbolical teaching.

He closes in this way:

With this I close, re-asserting the opinion, that guided by discretion and judgment, we may **occasionally employ spiritualizing** with good effect to our people; certainly we shall interest them and keep them awake.

Clearly when allowing a small place for spiritualizing, he did NOT have prophecy in mind.

Spurgeon is very firm, indeed he talks about "treason to God's Word", as we saw above. By and large he professes to steer away from "Spiritualizing" the meaning of any given text. It could be used sparingly, within defined limits. One gets the impression that this reflects his own use of Scripture. This however is plainly not true. We will examine here, first of all, some further remarks he made in the "Restoration of the Jews" sermon. In laying the ground work for his interpretation of the Ezekiel passage he stresses what he calls "the first and proper interpretation of the text." I have already quoted part of this section above, but its important to have more of the context at this point.

Once more. There is no doubt that we have in this passage a most striking picture of the restoration of dead souls to spiritual life. Men, by nature, are just like these dry bones exposed in the open valley. ... Spiritual death reigns undisturbed. Yet the dry bones can live. Under the preaching of the Word the vilest sinners can be reclaimed, the most stubborn wills can be subdued, the most unholy lives can be sanctified. When the holy "breath" comes from the four winds, when the divine Spirit descends to own the Word, then multitudes of sinners, as on Pentecost's hallowed day, stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army, to praise the Lord their God. **But, mark you, this is not the first and proper interpretation of the text; it is indeed nothing more than a very striking parallel case to the one before us. It is not the case itself; it is only a similar one,** for the way in which God restores a nation is, practically, the way in which he restores an individual. **The way in which Israel shall be saved is the same by which any one individual sinner shall be saved.** It is not, however, the one case which the prophet is aiming at; he is looking at the vast mass of cases, the multitudes of instances to be found among the Jewish people, of gracious quickening, and holy resurrection. **His first and primary intention was to speak of them, and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning, since "no Scripture is of private interpretation," yet I hold it to be treason to God's Word to neglect its primary meaning, and constantly to say- "Such and such is the primary meaning, but it is of no consequence, and I shall use the words for another object." The preacher of God's**

truth should not give up the Holy Ghost's meaning; he should take care that he does not even put it in the back ground. The first meaning of a text, the Spirit's meaning, is that which should be brought out first, and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place. Let it have the uppermost place in the synagogue, let it be looked upon as at least not inferior, either in interest or importance, to any other meaning which may come out of the text.

He understood Ezekiel 37:1-10 and 37:23, implying at least that much of chapter 37, was to the literal Jews and to them alone. Yet in sermon number 2246, preached on Thursday evening May 15th 1890 he discarded the "primary meaning." Instead, he did what he said was treachery to the Word of God. That sermon is based on Ezekiel 37:9, part of "Jews only" passage. Here is how he justifies himself. Notice the very brief reference to "primary meaning" before he takes off into the secondary.

Others see here the resurrection of the almost destroyed host of Israel, which had been divided into two companies, and carried away captive into Babylon. Plague and pestilence and the sword of the Chaldean had gone far to cut off the chosen nation; but God promised to restore his people, thus mingling mercy with judgment, and again setting in the cloud the bow of his everlasting covenant. A partial fulfillment of this promise was given when, for a while, the Lord set up again the tribes of Israel at Jerusalem, and they had a happy rest before the coming of Christ. But Israel's full restoration is yet to be accomplished. The people shall be gathered out of the graves in which, as a nation, they have so long lain buried, and shall be placed in their own land, and then will come to pass the word of Jehovah: "Then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

There are others who, **looking beyond the literal for the spiritual teaching, see, and I think, rightly see,** that here is a picture of the recovery of ungodly men from their spiritual death and corruption — a parable of the way in which sinners are brought up from their hopeless, spiritually dead condition, and made to live by the power of the Holy Ghost. I shall, at any rate, use the text in this sense, **for I am not now aiming at the interpretation of prophesy, nor concerned greatly with what is to happen in the future. Neither do I wish to conduct you into the deep things of God;** but I am just now thinking of practical uses to which I can put this incident, in order to stir up God's people to deal with the Holy Spirit as he should be dealt with, and to urge the unconverted to seek the Lord, in the hope that some of them, as dead and dry as the bones in the valley of vision, may be made to live by his divine power.

Spurgeon preached a third sermon from this portion of Ezekiel, this time from Chapter 37:11, 12 and 13³⁸.

His opening words in this sermon are even more at odds with what he processed back in sermon number 582. Here is his opening paragraph:

I HAVE read to you the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones: keep it in your minds that you may understand the text. The figure is a very apt, instructive, and impressive one. It is not, however, a mere figure: it is a parable based upon a remarkable representation of the resurrection of the dead. Although the children of Israel at that time knew little enough concerning the resurrection, yet the Lord, the Holy Spirit, knew all about it, and **he used it as a striking picture of the salvation of Israel from that national death which had come upon them. We may with equal accuracy see in it a vivid representation of the work of grace upon the hearts of all**

³⁸ 'Despair Denounced and Grace Glorified' Number 1676. Preached Aug. 27th 1882

those who are quickened into spiritual life by the power of divine grace. Men by nature are dead in sin till they hear the voice of God and feel the quickening breath of the Spirit, and are made to live according to that word, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

Any thought of a “primary meaning” is abandoned. “With equal accuracy” he can chop and change at will with no treason.

This is good place to ask and answer a question: What was Spurgeon’s common practice when dealing with prophetic texts, especially those dealing the nation of Israel? I answer that his common practice was to by-pass the direct meaning in order to spiritualize the text for soul wining purposes.

Take for example sermon number 1431 ‘The Message from The Lords Mouth’ The text is Ezekiel 3:17: “Son of man I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.” (and its context). The literal meaning, both of the verse and its context is to Ezekiel and to the Nation of Israel. Spurgeon ignores this, treats his congregation as believers and exhorts them to be watchman.

He, himself summed up his methods in some remarks he made about Jeremiah chapter 31³⁹

Jeremiah 31:23-25 reads as follows:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell is Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

Here is what Spurgeon had to say on these verses:

This prophecy is to be fulfilled in the restoration of Israel to Palestine; **until that happens**, the promise bears **a spiritual meaning to all the children of God**. O weary soul, thou shalt be satiated, that is more than being satisfied; thou shalt have as much of holiness and joy as thou canst hold! Plead his promise now, O sorrowful soul, and may God fulfil it to thee!

In spite of what he taught, he felt great liberty in spiritualizing prophetic passages, applying them to both Jew and Gentile, saved and unsaved⁴⁰. So much for it to be “treason” to pass over the Spirits main (in the case of Ezekiel 37 and others “literal”) meaning. I wonder what was in his mind when he said “until that happens.” Does he mean that the millennium will replace any spiritual meaning?

³⁹ Exposition By C.H. Spurgeon, Jeremiah 31:1-28 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Vol 58

⁴⁰ Yet another example can be seen in Sermon number 1636 Vol 27 ‘Chastened Happiness’ He says “Thus much for the strict connection of the text. At this time we shall loosen the verse from its stall and bring it forth to our own pastures. Its primary signification is not its only teaching, for the words of the Lord are fall of eyes, and look in many ways. We may use this promise in reference to all the Lord’s people . . .” Preaching from Jeremiah 33:9

James Wells

Wells sermon ‘Jewish Nationality Dissolved Forever’ provides a good example of his approach to the Scriptures in general. First of all, he takes Ezekiel 7:1-13 literally as he said: “THE theme of the first part of this chapter is that of the final dissolution of the Jewish nationality.” That is the literal meaning of that passage of scripture. Where ever there was a clear literal meaning he felt free to use and enlarge upon that meaning (and as I showed above Spurgeon did the same thing in the same way). At the same time, he was never bound by that literal meaning. The overreaching importance of all of the scriptures was to glorify God through the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation he purchased for His elect. In other words, he found the Gospel in every book of the Bible and in every form that each book took. In every case the Old Covenant pointed to and foreshadowed the New. In no sense whatsoever did that Old foreshadow a revived Old Covenant.

For Wells than, the earthy was the means to bring out and contrast the heavenly. In his sermon he brought out four of the many possible contrasts between the two realms, each magnifying the Lord Jesus. The same of course is true with regard to his lectures on the book of Revelation This can be seen, for example where he says:

Jesus Christ hath abolished that time, that dispensation, and everything belonging to it. Therefore, he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Do not preach the land of Canaan; do not preach a supposed temple to be restored; do not preach a Levitical priesthood to be restored; do not preach a nationality to be restored; for if you do that you will delude them. Their house is left unto them desolate, and there is not one word said about its restoration; but "go and preach the gospel to every creature."

To put this into simple words he ‘spiritualized’ the text to bring out the Lord Jesus Christ whenever and where ever this was possible. He motto was 2 Timothy 3:14 – 17:

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able **to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It may be useful to give one more illustration of the technique Wells used most often. This example is from a sermon titled ‘The Work of the Stone Cut Out of the Mountain’.⁴¹ The text is Daniel 2:35 “The stone that smote the image, became a great mountain.” In his opening statement he tells us what he will preach from the text as well as what its literal meaning is. He says:

I AT once proceed to notice our subject this morning under a two-fold idea. First, Christ smiting this image: then secondly, his prosperity, as indicated by his becoming a great mountain; in his exaltation, and the progress and extension of the gospel.

We are not at all at a loss to know what the literal meaning of this image is; because it is set before us and explained as meaning four successive empires; the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.

⁴¹ From volume 1, number 21 preached Sunday May 15th 1859

It would not be incorrect or wrong to preach on the literal meaning of this or any other text but the vast majority of the time that is not the 'primary' or the Holy Spirit's intended meaning. Three passages from the gospel of John reveal to us God's 'primary' purpose: John 14:26, 16:13 and 15:26. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the life. That which magnified Christ, pleases God, not some imaginary earthly reign.

For James Wells, then, the key to the Bible and indeed to all things spiritual was the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have read and studied hundreds of James Wells sermons and other writings. The Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, from Genesis to Revelation is the golden tread that runs through each and every one.

"Happy is the man that fines wisdom" and he that thus finds Jesus Christ finds true wisdom, for Christ is the wisdom of God, "and the man that gets understanding" and he that gets Christ gets understanding. You can understand nothing without him. **The reason that men give such wretched interpretations of the Scriptures, and so mangle and secularize the prophecies of the Bible, creating imaginary earthly millenniums, a kind of Mahometan heavens, and I do not know what besides, is because they more or less shut out the Lord Jesus Christ.** Now, "happy is the man that fines wisdom" that is, that finds Christ, for he is the wisdom of God; in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and he is understanding: if you find him, you then have by him understanding; you can understand nothing without him, but you can understand everything you need to understand in having Jesus Christ. "For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." Your lawful vocations are good and proper, and divinely appointed. God has placed you in your calling, and may he grant you wisdom, grant you prudence, grant you everything you need, and that you may see his hand towards you from time to time in providence. I am not going to be such a hypocrite as to run down silver and gold in their proper place, that is to say, the providential bounties, and mercies, and favors of the Lord; but still it is well to remember that while silver and gold, that is, providential things—are good, yet they must soon leave us, and we must soon leave them; we have not a very firm hold on them, I was going to say; and if we do not, they will soon let go of us. And therefore, while we acknowledge the goodness of the one, it is well to remember and be delighted with the thought that there is another kind of revenue or income better than these; "the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." Silver and gold do great things for us by the Lords providence, but they cannot redeem our souls.⁴²

Here is a second quotation from James Wells where he sums up all things in Christ Jesus the Lord:

Thus, it may be said, then, that the adversary in all ages has tried to get rid of Jesus Christ; but he prevailed not; there has been a people in all ages that has held fast the truth as it is in Jesus. "We may in this part of our subject bless the Lord that with all the trials and all the circumstances of which we may have been the subjects, we have not got tired of Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is not lessened, but rather increased, and that he is not lowered, but heightened, and that he is not rendered less important, but more so than before, and more and more do we learn that everything is in and by Christ Jesus the Lord. We know not the worth, and never shall till we get home to glory, of that form of speech which we often meet with in the Scriptures. **Perhaps of all the forms of speech in the Scriptures there is none better, or more significant, or more advantageous than that one, namely, "In the Lord;" to dwell in the Lord, to boast in the Lord, to be complete in the Lord, approved in the Lord, accepted in the Lord; all standing there.** So that true religion brings us out of self, out of the first Adam, out of the law, out of sin, out of death, out

⁴² From sermon number 489, vol. 11 titled 'A Promise and A Threatening' March 22nd 1868

of trouble, simply into this sweet oneness with him who has gained the victory, and will cause us to rejoice therein.⁴³

J. N. Darby

With Darby the method of interpretation that he used becomes critical to understanding what he taught. Some would say that he re-discovered an existing Biblical Hermeneutic. Myself and others would say that he invented something that had not existed as such prior to the late 1820's. Let's be clear first on what a Biblical Hermeneutic is. Basically, it's the methods and theories we use to understand what the bible teaches. This is where our pre conceived ideas or presuppositions come into play.

As we saw above one key element of Darby's Hermeneutic was that Israel and the Church are two distinct entities. This is part and parcel of his seven dispensations. A second key element was that prophecy, not salvation was the key to the scriptures. These flow out of his unique style of "literal interpretation". That is not to imply that "literal interpretation" is unique to Darby or that it is always wrong. What is unique is the way he applied this technique. We saw how Spurgeon employed this technique for Ezekiel 37, but Darby's usage was far more complex. Thomas D. Ice brings this out in his "A Short History of Dispensationalism" where he touches on this subject:

DARBY'S THOUGHT

Literal Interpretation

No one questions whether Darby believed and practiced a literal method of interpretation. However, his hermeneutic is more sophisticated than many casual observers recognize. Darby believed in literal interpretation in the sense that the 1290 days of Daniel 12 were really days, in contrast to the host of historicists in his day who saw them as years. Darby thought that this kind of "spiritualization" of the text could only be used to support human ideas. Elmore notes that "when it comes to evaluating any interpretation of Scripture or theological formulation," Darby "seems to admit two levels of evidence: (1) direct statements of Scripture, and (2) deductions from direct statements of Scripture" (131). Like most literalists, Darby did not believe in "wooden literalism" that disallows figures of speech, typology, and the theology of the Bible to guide exegesis. Rather, he followed "a literal, face-value approach to the text," while maintaining "a balance between detailed exegesis and biblical theology of books and writers, always having the progressive nature of revelation in mind" (198-99). "Darby believed that the language of the Old Testament allowed for additional theological content to be revealed later, but no redefinition of its theological content" (198) as do many covenant theologians.

Dispensations, Israel, and the Church

From his earliest days, Darby, like Graves, believed not only in the future conversion of the Jews, but also restoration to their homeland. By taking promises to both Israel and the church literally, Darby thought that God's single plan of salvation is harmonized for God's two peoples—Israel and the church. Israel, God's earthly people, are destined to rule over the Nations with Christ before their resurrection. The Church, God's heavenly people, will reign with Christ in the same

⁴³ From 'Never Despair' sermon number 401 preached from Revelation 12:8 on July 29th, 1866

kingdom, but in resurrection bodies. Darby's distinction between God's plan for Israel and the Church formed the basis for his most controversial contribution to Evangelical Christianity—the pretribulation rapture of the Church. Even strong opponents to this doctrine admit that it is logical if God is going to literally fulfill His ancient promises to Israel. The Church must be removed before God resumes His work with Israel, enabling the two programs to fully participate in the millennial kingdom.⁴⁴

In actual fact Darby decided what was literal, what was historical, what part grammar could play and everything else that goes into the interrelation of any given text of scripture. Anyone can talk as much as they wish about Darby's "consistent literal approach to the whole of scripture" but the fact remains that someone has to decide what is to be taken literally and what is not. It's impossible to take every passage in a literal sense and we were never intended to do so. Based on this unique set of ideas, his presuppositions, he formulated a system of seven dispensations. Everything else was made to fit into this per-defined framework. Another factor that made his scheme unique is the way that he applied it to the whole bible, a concept that was refined in later years by those who followed him. Even in Darby's time there were many different "dispensational" schemes. According to what was considered literal many more than one system of interpretation was put forward as that true way. This is of course true today, even more so then in his lifetime.

Conclusions

Darby and Spurgeon held some common ground, at least in some of Spurgeon's sermons. Like Darby Spurgeon cautioned against over spiritualizing the texts though as we saw this is what in fact did. Darby with his supposed "consistent literal meaning" is far removed from James Wells approach. Wells of course often uses that literal meaning of text but its spiritual meaning in Salvation History through Christ is most important. As was mentioned above Spurgeon's primary purpose in almost all his works was the salvation of souls. Darby on the other hand said it was prophecy. Wells as I showed said it was the glory of God though the Lord Jesus Christ.

We find then that Spurgeon was opposed to both Wells and Darby. Darby on the other had opposed both Spurgeon and Wells. Finally Wells opposed both Spurgeon and Darby. If any of the three are closer to the truth than only one can be. It is my firm belief that Wells as in fact very close to the truth as it is in Jesus.

We have only to look to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. As John 16:14 says: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Our Lord Jesus is here referring to the Holy Spirit and his work. And Hebrew's 1:3 says of Christ: "Who being **the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person**, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" We are not to see God through the Nation of Israel but through the Lord Jesus Christ as he is revealed in all of Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testaments.

In closing it's fitting to see another example of how Wells illustrated this:

... but upon this doctrine of entering into the labors of others we have a beautiful illustration, and with that I close, in the 6th of Deuteronomy. The Israelites were sent to reap that whereon they had bestowed no labor, and to enter into the labors of others. "When the Lord your God shall have brought you into the land which he aware unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to

⁴⁴ Ice, Thomas D., "A Short History of Dispensationalism" (2009). Article Archives. Paper 37. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/37

give you great and goodly cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and wells dug which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you planted not; when you shall have eaten and be full, then beware lest you forget the Lord, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God, and serve him, and shall swear by his name.” Now let us have the meaning. “Great and goodly cities, which you build not.” How are we to spiritualize that? I know how I should do it if I were called upon to do it. I should say those cities were all a type of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the city of refuge; he is the holy city; and I am sure I have not built that city; I did not build Jesus Christ, God himself built him, made him the antitypical city. And what are the houses full of good things? Jesus Christ, the antitypical house, the antitype of all these types; and in him dwell all good things; no evil in him, all good things. “And dug wells which you did not dig.” So, the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to light the wells of eternal salvation, rising from the deeps of God’s everlasting love. And then just mark how it closes, it closes with a paradisiacal idea, “vineyards and olive trees:” the one denoting cheerfulness, the wine; and the other denoting peacefulness, the olive: “vineyards and olive trees, which you planted not.” Jesus Christ is the vine Jesus Christ is the true olive; and so all this will end in that paradisiacal blessedness darkly and slightly typified by those things.⁴⁵

James Wells was right when he said:

Ah, religion! treasures untold reside in that heavenly word. It is indeed more precious than silver or gold, all that this earth can afford. Thus, then, **the Lord will have mercy upon the whole house of Israel**, mercy upon them all. Look at that; mercy upon them all; mercy for the low, mercy for the high, mercy for the young, mercy for the old; mercy for the ignorant, mercy for the learned; let them be what they may, it is all mercy. He grasps them all in his mercy. He finds them all under sin, and has mercy upon them all; he concludes them all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon them all. Thus, those that are saved shall sing of his mercy, rejoice in his mercy, walk in his mercy, and glory in his infinite mercy, and that forever.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ ‘LABORS OF THE ANCIENTS’ Preached on Sunday Evening July 8th, 1866 Volume 8 Number 398

⁴⁶ ‘Assurance For Ever’ Preached on Sunday Evening August 5th, 1866 Volume 8 Number 403