

a rethinking of Marx on smallholding and capitalism; a reorientation toward subaltern and elite discourse formation; a reevaluation of the relationship between rhetoric, law, and text in historical analyses; a rethinking of universal liberal norms in the context of their colonial transformation; and much more. The sheer force of this dizzying array of reconsiderations—articulated all at once—is arresting, and it forces readers to confront their own methodological limitations and imagine new avenues of inquiry into the history of liberalism and/in empire. In the final analysis, Sartori's book stands as testament to the fact that some of the most groundbreaking and methodologically expansive political theory today is being written by historians.

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MARTIN SPENCE. *Heaven on Earth: Reimagining Time and Eternity in Nineteenth-Century British Evangelicalism*. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015. Pp. xiv + 306. \$28.80 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.48

In 1825 the premillennialist evangelical Henry Drummond denounced postmillennialist “evangelical liberals” for having “pervaded the land” with their “spurious soul-saving theology” (H. Drummond, *Letter to Dr. Chalmers* (1829), 1–4, 14, 18–21). The divisions within late Hanoverian and early Victorian evangelicalism have attracted considerable attention in recent years, and none more so than the eschatological one to which Drummond alluded. Martin Spence's contribution is a fine-grained, subtle, discriminating, and highly readable account of (mainly) premillennialist evangelicals in the central decades of the nineteenth century, broadly the Birks–Bickersteth generation. Most were not gloomy reactionaries like their pre-1830 predecessors, but “liberalising” materialists, “incurable progressives and relentless optimists” (145). Most were not “futurist” or “dispensationalist premillennialists” like John Nelson Darby—whose belief that all prophetic revelation had yet to take place became very influential from the later nineteenth century onwards—but “historicist premillennialists” who saw their own times as standing part-way along a linear prophetic journey. Such premillennialists were much influenced by romanticism, and by Coleridge and Wordsworth specifically, and they were struck by new conceptualizations of the “vastness of geological time” (153). Whereas postmillennialists conceived of the sacred and the secular as polar opposites, and interpreted heaven in spiritual terms (Drummond's “soul-saving”), futurist premillennialists envisaged a heaven on earth and the restitution of all things. Thus the dichotomy between time and eternity was broken down in what Spence describes as their “eschatological materialism” (25), an earthly and incarnational theology that stressed Christ's humanity and prefigured Maurice's depiction of heaven and hell in wholly this-worldly terms.

Spence's scholarship is exact, and he delivers several arresting insights, such as the suggestion that a preoccupation with Jewish restoration led believers to ideas of the Second Advent and not vice versa. Likewise, the demonstration that historicist premillennialists were not in any fundamental sense “fundamentalists,” as has sometimes been alleged, is emphatic and compelling (80–84). However, for all his analytical acuteness, the headline arguments are far less novel than the Spence claims, while a large part of his main target is composed of straw men. He writes at one point, “The surprise of this book will be to show how this apparently reactionary and conservative movement, which most historians have seen as just one more element of the obscurantist gloom of mid-century evangelicalism, was actually one of the first to demonstrate the shift in nineteenth-century theology into an optimistic vision of the redemption of space and time” (52). But how much of this is new? David Bebbington and others have emphasized the links with romanticism, while Burrow and others have analyzed the post-Lyellian

discovery of deep time. Many historians have discussed Maurice's theology in broadly similar terms, though most of them have had something to say about Maurice's Unitarian background, which Spence (reasonably enough, given his premillennialist perspective) neglects. Just over twenty years ago I drew attention to a generation of "premillennial optimists who combined a belief in progress, tolerance, and earthly happiness with the expectation that there would be an imminent apocalypse, long before the conversion of the world had taken place" and showed how Frere, Nevill, Elliot, and other premillennialists anticipated Maurice in emphasizing "the resurrection of the body rather than the salvage of the world, the rescue rather than the conversion of the world" ("Whiggery, Religion and Social Reform: The Case of Lord Morpeth," *Historical Journal* 37, no. 4 [December 1994], 829–59, at 844–55). And it is almost thirty years since I suggested that "the dominance of moderate [i.e., postmillennialist] evangelicalism, based on the Atonement, turns out to have been a relatively short-lived phenomenon," and that "it was the more extreme [i.e., premillennialist] evangelicals who contributed most ... to the more positivistic thought of the second half of the century. First, Irving influenced Campbell, who influenced Maurice and the incarnationalists; while among evangelicals it was [premillennialist] Irvingism, with its emphasis on the miraculous survival of the body, rather than [postmillennialist] Clapham with its emphasis on the immortality of individual souls, which survived" (*The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865*, 371).

Spence's failure to notice my thesis on the premillennial origins of Mauricean Broad Churchmanship is the more surprising insofar as he pays close and persistent attention to other parts of *The Age of Atonement* that he disagrees with. Let me admit at once that he is right to castigate me for my careless and too-free use of the term "Recordite," but some of his other criticisms miss the mark. For example, he chides me for describing the evangelical idea of time as "cyclical" without realizing that my adjective referred clearly and solely to postmillennialists. He opines that I depict Thomas Chalmers as gloomy. But that is only the half story. Since Chalmers saw the world as a place of moral trial, he did not regard it as designed for happiness, but his more important points were that sin could be overcome through "the expulsive power of a new affection," meaning love of Christ, and that properly understood Malthusian theory "sheds the greatest brightness over the earthly prospects of humanity" (*The Age of Atonement*, 12, 82). Finally, Spence is skeptical of my "model" that links contrasting beliefs in the millennium and contrasting understandings of providence to different social and economic policies. He suggests that the model "crumbles" under his gaze (215). Now skepticism is always called for, and every model needs exceptions, not because they prove a rule to be true but because they demonstrate that the model is not truistic. Even so, I note that Spence does not cite any individual evangelicals who failed to fit the model. Indeed, Spence's fascinating research on the Christian Influence Society helps to endorse it, while another of his most arresting findings—for which I am very grateful—actually helps to rescue it. I had noticed that Chalmers, a key figure for me, had responded to the Irish famine by calling for government intervention, something that contradicted a lifetime of free-market thinking and also contradicted my model linking market economics to postmillennial theology. I tried to bluster my way out of the difficulty, but now Spence has shown (132–33) that in the last decade or so of his life Chalmers switched from having been a postmillennialist to a premillennialist, Q.E.D. It is for deeply researched and novel discoveries like this that Spence's book deserves to be widely read, rather than for its repetitively expressed and unsurprising main themes.

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