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EARLY MORMON MILLENNIALISM:

ANOTHER LOOK

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PREFACE

A half a century ago, Herbert Butterfield composed a classic essay entitled, "The Whig Interpretation of History." Therein, he described the distortions that can occur when historians impose a rigid point of view on their study of the past. Such an approach, he warned, constrains the historian to be "vigilant for likenesses between past and present, instead of being vigilant for unlikenesses."[1] Furthermore, he argued, it is the elucidation of these unlikenesses that ought to be the chief aim of the historian.

Given the nature of Mormon theological claims, it is understandable why many doctrinal dissertations tend to be "vigilant for likenesses." Yet, as Butterfield has pointed out, this is not good history, nor is it good theology. For, if one believes that revelation comes "line-upon-line," he must realize the unlikelihood of intersecting church history at any two points in time and finding a particular doctrine being taught in precisely the same way. Nonetheless, this is stock-in-trade for Mormon writers. They frequently extract doctrinal pearls from their shells and string them together in a dazzling necklace with little apparent regard for context or for the role of doctrinal evolution. They feel justified in citing early leaders' elaborations to explain the modern position, and, perhaps

more seriously, they assume that present day ideas are representative of those at any point in the past.

Few topics seem to engage the interest of the Latter-day Saints more vigorously than that of the Second Coming of Christ. Over the years, numerous books treating this topic have issued from the Mormon press. For this reason, Mormon millennialism provides a ready test case for applying Butterfield's approach. What follows is the result of that effort to be "vigilant for unlikenesses," the elucidation of which constitutes the "stuff of history."

NOTES

[1]Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1965, reprint), pp. 11-12).

INTRODUCTION

Only recently have Mormon historians begun to study in detail the historical development of ideas within the church, but such a study, if complete, could provide valuable insight into why some concepts have changed from generation to generation while others have remained constant as pillars of the faith.[1]

These opening lines to James B. Allen's recent article on the expanding role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon religious thought signal the opening of yet another vital chapter in Mormon studies--doctrinal history. The field is ripe and as Allen noted, valuable insights await the ultimate completion of this academic harvest. The present thesis falls within this new area of historical inquiry by focusing on Mormon millennial doctrines in the earliest and most recent decades. The first chapter was originally presented at BYU's Sesquicentennial Symposium, "A Mosaic of Mormon Culture," and published in part in Dialogue. It specifically examines beliefs about the millennium, comparing and contrasting perceptions of the 1000 years during both time periods. In the process, several important strands of early Mormon thought are made clear for the first time.

Throughout the first decade, the saints had a dualistic perception of society and of salvation. Men were either Saints or they were classed among the wicked; they

were either Israelites or they were Gentiles. If they weren't saints, they were to be destroyed at Christ's coming, for, the millennium was for Israel only. Without examining the sources, such thinking seems narrow and foreign, in a word, "un-Mormon." Before doing this research, the writer, along with perhaps others, had always assumed that Joseph was responding rather tongue-in-cheek to the question "will everybody be damned but the Mormons" when he replied, "Yes, and a great portion of them unless they repent and work righteousness."[2] The evidence presented in the first chapter argues that on the contrary, he was quite serious.

Perhaps because the revelation on the three degrees of glory was given in 1832, Mormons have assumed that it was understood during the first decade after its announcement just as we understand it today. It was not. The earliest saints still trailed with them the Protestant polarization which saw man as either bound for salvation or damnation, heaven or hell. This is evident not only in pamphlet and periodical literature, private memoirs and journals, but even in the earlier revelations now contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, all of which will be demonstrated in chapter 1. Since the theological naivete of this sectarian notion has been lampooned over the years as much as the concept of a God "without body, parts, or passions," to now discover that Mormons retained such an idea well into the 1840s is as significant a find as the fact that leading

Mormons described God the Father as a spirit personage until about the same time.

With this dualistic conceptualization laid bare, we are free to notice subtle nuances of early Mormon thought that have heretofore been missed. Such corollary concepts as the following will be explored in the subsequent chapters of this thesis:

1. There would be no non-Mormons on earth during the millennium. Converted Gentiles, along with the Indians, Jews, and other blood Israelites who would be converted in mass, would constitute the millennial population. Thus, there would be no need to do missionary work during the thousand years.

Such a picture of homogeneity is not the one painted today. Modern Mormons pride themselves on their pluralized portrait which envisions good men of all faiths peacefully co-existing during the millennium. They also envision missionary work to be one of the grand millennial occupations.

2. There would only be two resurrections. The saints would be resurrected at the Second Coming; all the rest of mankind would rise after the millennium. There was neither discussion of sub-divisional resurrections based upon the degrees of glory or no-glory, nor the idea that Terrestial-bound souls would also come forth in the first resurrection, both of which are taught today.

3. When first decade Mormons spoke of future rewards, they almost always focussed on the millennial period. As the ultimate reward for their obedience, they talked of living in the new Eden with the same relish modern Mormons contemplate living in the Celestial Kingdom.

4. Since there would only be saints on the earth during the millennium, there had to be some interpretation as to who would rule and who would be ruled. Resurrected saints would reign with Christ; those saints living when he comes would be the happy subjects. The perception today is that both immortal and mortal saints, as well as qualified Gentiles, will be involved in the millennial government.

5. During the millennium, the Indian would once again get his land back from the avaricious Gentile. America would be his peaceful and perpetual dwelling place after he converted to Mormonism. Well over a hundred years of strenuous labor with the Native Americans has dampened some of the early enthusiasm, especially the presumption of a speedy and corporate conversion.

I have not attempted in these chapters to give more than a survey. The summary of each point could easily be amplified and revealing quotations multiplied almost indefinitely. But even in such a compressed treatment the differences in thought between the two periods become clear.

With the exception of the ideas about the Indians, based largely on the Book of Mormon, these positions bear striking similarity to certain contemporary Protestant

treatises on the millennium. What is clear throughout the study, and especially in the first chapter, is just how fully the Bible informed the contours of Mormon theology in the 1830s. In those early years, there were none of the modern Sunday School or Church educational classes to explore at length the nature and meaning of modern scripture. Furthermore, if the "Lectures on Faith" is any indicator, the Bible monopolized what little organized study they did have. Herein lies what is felt to be another, but secondary contribution of this thesis--a coincidental confirmation of the suspected biblicism of the early saints. Such demonstrable dependence on the Bible as is discovered in this study of Mormon millennialism necessarily led to theological positions closer to Protestantism than has often been appreciated and than is the case today. The Church has had 150 years to shear itself of sectarianisms and to swing the pendulum of scripture study to the "triple combination." It would appear that over the years, as the "modern scriptures" have surpassed the Bible in frequency of usage in the spoken and written word, the doctrinal distinctiveness of Mormonism has been proportionately enhanced. While that is a hypothesis yet to be fully tested, the following chapters clearly demonstrate that to assume that early Mormons shared the present propensity to preach or expound doctrine from the "triple combination" scriptures is a major historical error.

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Chapter 2 continues to explore subtle theological shifts. Its basic thrust is to relate Mormon millennialism to the general literature of the field, especially to that surge of studies carried out in the 1970s.[3]

1. It was discovered that a frequent millennial topic for the early saints was the destruction of the wicked. Today, such discussion occupies little pulpit time or print space. The importance to early Mormon theology of a Day of Judgment upon the wicked has not generally been noticed or explained. How this apocalyptic concern carried over into missionary work to provide both a rationale and a psychology of motivation is also explored. In particular, what it meant to "raise the warning voice" in the 1830s is discussed and its millennialism plainly portrayed.

2. An attempt is made to account for the polarization so pronounced in Mormon millennialism. Using a number of recent studies on the logic of millennial thought, as well as anthropological examinations of millenarian movements, it is shown that polarization is inherent in a millenarian <u>weltanschauung</u>. How such an apocalyptic world view disposed the saints to conspiratorial theories about their neighbors is also explored at length. Though the paranoid style in antebellum American politics is well known, what is herein demonstrated is that due largely to their apocalyticism, the Mormons were just as capable of paranoid perceptions of society, albeit in a religious sense, as the rest of nineteenth century Americans.

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3. Finally, our understandings of Mormon views on persecution are increased. It has occasionally been suggested that persecution and millennialism were related, but the precise relationship has not heretofore been spelled out, nor has such a symbiosis been set in its cosmological framework.

In the last chapter, the findings of earlier sections as well as recent millennial studies are brought to bear on past discussions of Mormon millennialism. The resulting revisionism, in particular, shows the work of Klaus Hansen and Louis Reinwand to be critically deficient. The same holds true for the briefer considerations by Ernest Tuveson, and David Smith.

In brief, Hansen posits a socioeconomic source for Mormon millenarianism. Though some socially frustrated groups have been attracted by millenarianism, the most recent scholarship warns against the sort of reductionism that make millenarianism a simple response to social and economic conditions. The trend, instead, has been to urge its devotional and intellectual potency. Moreover, Hansen insists on making the Mormons a revolutionary movement and finds this tied into their millenarianism. The connection he suggests is faulty and, as is shown, his analysis is suspect in light of new research.

Reinwand's study is valuable for tracing manifestations of millennialism in nineteenth century Utah, but when he attempts to interpret them in the context of Christian

millennialism in general, he falls short. The otherwise intriguing study is marred because Reinwand fails to properly understand the various millennial typologies. Specifically, he errs in portraying the feeling of imminence as the private domain of premillennialism, and missionism and human efforts to advance the Kingdom as the special province of postmillennialism. Why these associations are basic mistakes and how this adversely affects his interpretations are discussed at length.

Finally, the brief considerations of Mormon millennialism by Ernest Tuveson and David Smith are discussed. Though the authors are more familiar with traditional millennial typologies than Hansen or Reinwand, their grasp of Mormon thought is shown to be inadequate, thus leading them to confused interpretations.

NOTES

[1]James B. Allen, "The Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought," Journal of Mormon History 7 (1980): 43.

[2]Elders' Journal of the Church of Latter Day Saints 1 (July 1838): 42. Hereafter cited as EJ.

[3]The multitude of recent millennial studies is sifted and weighed in Leonard I. Sweet, "Millennialism in America: Recent Studies," Theological Studies 40 (Sept 1979): 510-531; and Hillel Schwartz, "The End of the Beginning: Millenarian Studies, 1969-1975," Religious Studies Review 2 (July 1976): 1-15.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SUBSTANCE OF MORMON PRE-MILLENNIALISM

To trace the development of Mormon millennialism across the 150-year span of Church history would fill a small volume. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, will be limited to a consideration and comparison of Mormon millennial thought now current with that prevalent during the 1830s. Publications printed in the 1830s, both periodicals and pamphlets, provide the source material for an understanding of early thinking; the 1978 LDS Church publication, Gospel Principles, provides a clear, concise and officially sponsored exposition of Mormon doctrine as it now stands at the celebration of its sesquicentennial anniversary.[1]

This comparison of millennialism during the two periods will be organized around three central issues--who will be on the earth during the millennium, what will be accomplished during the millennium, and what conditions will then prevail? Finally, significant strands of thought which defy this format will be considered separately.

Three major ideas can be drawn from Gospel Principles as characteristic of present-day thinking on the question of who will be on the earth during the millennium. First, only righteous people, that is, only those living

worthy to inherit the Terrestrial or Celestial kingdoms in Latter-day Saint salvation echelons, will continue to live during the millennium. Thus, nonmembers whose lives meet the Terrestrial standards will survive the Second Coming. They will have their free agency, and for a time many will continue in their own beliefs. Eventually, however, everyone will accept Christ as the Savior. Second, mortals living during the millennium will continue to have children. And third, resurrected beings will visit the earth frequently, but they and Christ "will probably not live on the earth all the time but will visit it whenever they please or when necessary to help in the governing of the earth."[2]

MILLENNIAL DEMOGRAPHY

Each of these points would have been understood differently by first decade Latter-day Saints. From existing sources, it appears that it was not until 1841 that Joseph Smith suggested that people other than Mormons would be alive during the millennium, and when he did, he initiated a complete about-face from the thinking of the thirties.[3] As will be shown, the early saints had no place for nonmembers in either their conception of salvation or of the millennium. In their eyes, society was divided into two kinds of people. Those who believed and accepted the restored gospel were known alternately as the elect, the righteous, the just, Israel, or the saints. Everyone who did not join the church was classified as the wicked, the

damned, sinners, the unrighteous, or the unjust. Such a simplistic dichotomy seems so far removed from current Mormon theology that it deserves careful consideration.

We begin with some of the earliest revelations. A year before the Church was organized, the Lord promised dire consequences for all who would not accept the message of the Restoration: "A desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out, from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming."[4] The picture is one of gradually weeding out all unbelievers. God would give them chances to repent and accept Mormonism, but sooner or later every hard-hearted human would be swept from the face of the earth. At least, this was how the first Mormons understood it. "All who do not obey Christ," warned Edward Partridge, "will be cut off from the face of the earth when the Lord comes."[5] With this purging in mind, it is not difficult to derive a demographic profile for the millennium: "All people who are on the earth during this period," explained Sidney Rigdon, "will be saints."[6]

This dualistic cosmology becomes even more plain in a revelation received the following year, just months after the church incorporated. Its lifelong mission was set forth succinctly: "Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect." What is especially noteworthy is the simple definition of "tne elect:" "for mine elect hear my voice

and harden not their hearts."[7] Thus, only by coming into the restored Kingdom of God could one be considered "elect." How about the rest? "I will take vengeance upon the wicked," the revelation continued "for they will not repent."[8] Accepting Mormonism was implied in the word "repent," as becomes clear later on:

> And thus did I the Lord God appoint unto man the days of his probation; that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe, and they that believe not, unto eternal damnation, for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not . . .[9]

The message was simple: believers are bound for eternal life and unbelievers are destined for destruction.

Several months later, the Lord defined "the wicked" as clearly as he had "the elect." It was, simply, they "that will not hear my voice but harden their hearts."[10] Even the casual observer will note that this is phrased as the exact opposite of the definition for "the elect." As if it were not already clear enough, the Lord told his saints a year later how he wanted them to distinguish between the two groups: "And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me; and by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkenss even now." Thus, the distinction between the wicked and the righteous, the Saints and the sinners, revolved around their response to the Mormon message. It could hardly have been less equivocally stated than in this March 1831 revelation: "Thus saith the

Lord, for I am God and have sent mine only begotten Son into the world, for the redemption of the world, and have decreed, that he that receiveth him shall be saved, and he that receiveth him not shall be damned."[12] In reality the saved-damned dichotomy was far more prevalent in the early revelations than is generally presumed. Modern Mormons have a tendency to read a three-degrees-of-glory cosmology back into the time period. Yet, for years after "the Vision" was given, the idea of an "either-or" salvation option was perpetuated by writers and even shows up in some later revelations. Consider the following:

> That the wheat may be secured in the garners to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory when I shall come in the kingdom of my Father . . . while the tares shall be bound in bundles, and their bands made strong, that they may be burned with unquenchable fire.[13]

Outlinging future possibilities as either "celestial glory" or "unquenchable fire" evidences that the old Protestant polarities, even when clothen in Mormon terminology, were slow to die out.

In light of all this, it is clear that the Prophet's response to the question "will everybody be damned but the Mormons" was not humerous hyperbole. In fact, Joseph Smith perpetuated this idea well into the 1840s. In a 20 March 1842 address, he held out little hope for those outside the church:

> Those who seek to enter in (to the Kingdom) any other way will seek in vain for God will not receive them neither will the angels acknowledge their works as accepted, for they have not taken upon themselves those ordinances and signs which God ordained for

> man to receive in order to receive a celestial glory, & God has decreed that all who will not obey his voice shall not escape the damnation of hell . . .[14]

The following winter, Joseph anticipated a question that might have been in the minds of some of his hearers:

> But say you what will become of the world or the various professors of religion who do not believe in revelation & the oracles of God as Continued to the Church in all ages of the world when he has a people on earth I tell you in the name of Jesus Christ they will be damned & when you get into the eternal world you will find it be so they cannot escape the damnation of hell.[15]

Speaking pointedly to the Presbyterians in January of 1843, he declared, "if they reject our voice they shall be damned."[16] In fact, it appears that the first public repudiation of the heaven-hell, saved-damned polarity in the Prophet's recorded speeches did not come until May of 1843.[17] Early the next month, in an 11 June 1843 speech, he ridiculed the idea of the "virtuous & whoremonger--all huddled together." In the halting style with which Willard Richards recorded this speech, we glean the following kernals of Joseph's message:

> "Paul says caught up to 3d heaven, & what tell that Lie for Paul. --Sun Moon & Stars --many mansions --all one say Sectarians. --They build hay wood & stubble, build on the old revelations without the spirit of revelation or Priesthood. if I had time I would dig into Hell. Hades Sheol. & tell what exists."[18]

Here in seminal fashion the Prophet provided the basic contours of the polemic Mormons would use for the next century to lampoon and lambast a notion which would ever after seem to them the height of folly. Yet, that simple

salvationist dualism seems to have persisted for over a decade in early Mormon thought.

Such a position required a unique exegesis of traditional millennial prophecies. Rigdon explained that it was only the saints to whom Scripture was referring when it promised a day in which all shall "know the Lord from the least to the greatest." "Among them," he continued:

> the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea; and all the rest of the world will without exception be cut off; and when this is done, and all the rest of the world cut off but the saints which are gathered, then will the earth be of one heart and one mind, then men will beat their ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks, and learn war no more . . . then shall the time come when they shall neither hurt nor destroy in all the Lord's holy mountain, which holy mountain is the place where the saints will be gathered.[19]

A corollary to the current conception that people living a Terrestrial law will abide the day of Christ's coming is the teaching that after the beginning of, and continuing during, the millennium, the dead of all ages who have earned a Terrestrial glory will be resurrected as part of the first resurrection. This is sometimes called the "afternoon" of the first resurrection.[20]

The usual exegetical avenue for arriving at this position begins with a verse of an 1832 revelation (Section 88) which reads: "And after this (the resurrection of the saints) another angel shall sound, which is the second trump; and then cometh the redemption of those who are Christ's at his coming; who have received their part in that prison which is prepared for them, that they might receive

the gospel, and be judged according to men in the flesh."[21] This, then, is cross-referenced with excerpts from another 1832 revelation (Section 76): "And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial . . . they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh."[22] Together, it is felt, they demonstrate a millennial resurrection for all beings bound for the Terrestrial kingdom. Such a line of analysis is found not only in Gospel Principles but also in Mormon Doctrine, and Doctrines of Salvation, as well.[23]

All of these revelations had been published at least once by 1835, yet existing sources reveal that none of the currently utilized segments were employed by early Mormon writers in their discussions of the first resurrection. The early saints depended primarily on the Bible and the only place in the Holy Scriptures where the term "first resurrection" is used is in Revelation 20:4-6. In that passage, John sees the faithful dead being raised to live and reign with Christ a thousand years and declares that the rest of the deceased would not be resurrected till the millennium was finished. Thus, the Saints would not have expected any interim resurrection unless they had derived it from the modern revelations, which they did not. Of course, to have imagined otherwise would have been inconsistent with the rest of their millennial thought. Since there were

really only two types of people, there needed to be only two resurrections--the first resurrection for the saints, and the second resurrection for all the rest of mankind. Historians frequently remind us that people see and hear what their preconceptions allow them to see and hear. Here, it seems, is a classic case in which new information was missed because their whole mind-set was geared in a different direction.

Even when they employed parts of Section 76 to discuss the first resurrection, they seem not to have ventured into the segments dealing with the Terrestrial or Telestial kingdoms. Most of what we have been discussing in the past few pages is brought together in W. W. Phelp's editorial for The Evening and the Morning Star entitled, "The Resurrection of the Just."[24]

Throughout its entirety, there is no questioning of the assumption that there are but two kinds of people. He approvingly quotes an 1831 revelation (Section 63) to show that "at that hour (the Second coming) cometh an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked, & and in that day will I send mine angels to pluck out the wicked, and cast them into unquenchable fire."[25] Thus there are two resurrections: "one of the just, at the second coming of the Savior, and another at the day of judgment, after the thousand years of peace."[26] He even cites the Vision (Section 76), but only to reinforce that the resurrection of the just is for saints only:

> "Concerning the first resurrection the Vision, says thus: And again we bear record for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the Just: they are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name, and were baptised after the manner of his burial . . ."[27]

He goes on to quote in full the subsequent nineteen verses describing those of the Celestial kingdom. Significantly, however, he stops just short of the segment dealing with the Terrestrial kingdom which today has become standard exegetical fare for a discussion of the first resurrection. Lest "any should be left in doubt," he concludes; "In the first resurrection, Christ comes to the righteous, but at the last day, the wicked stand before God and are judged according to their works."[28]

Clearly then, he was aware of the Vision of the three-degrees-of-flory, but his reading of it did not give him the same ideas it does to saints today. His world was one of opposites--black or white, righteous or wicked, saved or damned.

Similar literal adherence to the Bible seems not to have led early Mormons to the idea, later announced by Joseph, that the Savior and the resurrected saints would "not dwell on the earth" but would only "visit it when they please, or when necessary to govern it."[29] On the contrary, early saints anxiously contemplated and energetically commented upon the privilege of enjoying a thousand years in the visible presence of Christ. He would be there to bless them personally with his love and wipe away all their tears.

Indeed, one can easily sense Parley Pratt's enthusiam for this companionship when he exuberantly declared, "Man is to dwell in the flesh upon the earth with the Messiah, not only one thousand years, but for ever and ever."[30] "This reign of Christ is to be an earthly reign," emphasized Sidney Rigdon. "In all that John has said about the coming of the Saviour, he has never told us of any other object he had in coming but to reign on earth a thousand years . . . and all those of the first resurrection with him."[31] Indeed, an earlier revelation had announced that the Lord would "dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years."[32] The hymns and poems written for The Evening and the Morning Star by W. W. Phelps and by Parley P. Pratt for his The Millennium gives a further glimpse of the intensity with which this millennium-long mutual association was anticipated.[33]

Discussion of the role of children during the thousand years was merely incidental to the millennial musing of the ancient prophets, so it is not surprising that it was only occasionally addressed by early Mormons. One who commented was Sidney Rigdon. A few years earlier, Rigdon had been reproved by the Lord for not keeping the "commandments concerning his children" and had been admonished to set his house in order.[34] It is understandable, then, that part of his conception of the millennium included a vision of filial piety where the conduct of children would "never wound the feelings of their parents, nor bring a

stain on their characters, nor yet cause the tear of sorrow to roll down their cheek." This, he concluded, would secure to a parent "one of the greatest sources of human happiness, to have his family without reproach, without shame, without contempt, and his house a house of peace, and his family a family of righteousness."[35]

The notion of giving birth to children after the commencement of the millennium was not well developed in the 1830s.[36] W. W. Phelps, however, composed the following stanza as part of a poem describing the millennial Zion:

> There, in the resurrection morn,
> The living live again,
> And all their children will be born
> Without the <u>sting of sin</u>.[37]

In terms, then, of the question, "who will be on the earth during the millenium?" It is clear that a Missouri Mormon and his modern-day descendant would respond in different ways.

MILLENNIAL VOCATIONS

Turning to the second question--what will be done during the millennium, the recently published <u>Gospel Principles</u> reads: "There will be two great works for members of the Church during the millennium--temple work and missionary work."[#*] Since temple work for the dead was not initiated till the Nauvoo years, the idea that such a labor would occupy them during the millennium was unknown to first decade saints. In like fashion, their conception of a millennium involving only saints precluded the need for

missionary work. All were to be warned, and the elect gathered out, every last one of them, but this before the Second Coming.[39] In fact, it is unlikely that Mormons in the 1830s would have ever even framed such a question. Their conception of the millennium is captured in one of their favorite synonymous phrases, the "Sabbath of Creation." To them it was to be a thousand-year day of rest, not work. About the only activity they pictured themselves involved in was reigning with and otherwise enjoying the smiles of their blessed Savior. To sing his prases endlessly might seem dull to the modern Mormon, but W. W. Phelps could joyfully exclaim:

> When we've been there a thousand years,
> Bright shining as the Sun,
> We've no less days to sing God's praise,
> Than when we first begun.[40]

And in that classic Mormon hymn, early composed by Parley P. Pratt, he yearned for the day when the Lord would "righteousness bring in, that Saints may tune the lyre."[41] Such pastoral bliss may seem Protestant to the saint of the seventies, but it was part and parcel of the early Mormon mind.

As has been noted, this was all to accompany their co-regency with Christ. Even before they understood its fine theological nuances, early Mormons were basking in the apocalyptic promise of being made kings and priests to rule and reign with Christ.[42] Since the Prophet did not begin giving a peculiarly Mormon definition to the biblical term "exaltation" until the 1840s, earlier saints would not have

caught the--as presently defined--eternal implications of this concept. In the absence of such an understanding, therefore, they projected all their enthusiasm and expectations on the millennium, rather than on the far-off future state. Whereas the modern saint tends to focus his fulfillment on the day he is crowned with an inheritance in the Celestial kingdom, the early saint longed for his millennial inheritance. In the 1830s, before a theology of the three degrees of glory had been clearly worked out, before descriptions of eternity had been elaborated, the millennium was their anticipated day of triumph and glory.

In summary, then, perhaps the best way to contrast the early saint's understanding with that of his modern counterpart concerning what would be done during the millennium is this: the early Mormon pictured the millennial kingdom in much the same way that his modern counterpart conceives of the Celestial kingdom--as a place of rest and glorious reign, not as a place or period of missionary and temple work.

MILLENNIAL CONDITIONS

Finally, let us consider the millennial conditions as perceived by saints in both time periods. It quickly becomes apparent that in this instance similarities are more pronounced than the differences are. Modern Mormons still use the same scriptures to note that the lamb will lie down with the lion, that swords will be beaten into ploughshares, and that there will be freedom from disease, death and

sorrow.[43] So literally does the saint of the 1970s accept the renewal of the earth to its paradisiacal glory that he has retained the early idea that the earth will again become one land mass, a sort of prophetic Panagaea.[44] Modern Mormons continue to teach that the millennium will be a day when all things shall be revealed, though they do so with perhaps less verve than their Romantic counterparts of the 1830s.[45] Sidney Rigdon said it would be an age "when every man shall be his own prophet, seer, and revelator; for all shall know the Lord alike, from the least to the greatest."[46] And Parley P. Pratt eloquently described the revelatory bliss of Eden which he felt would be restored fully in the millennium:

> Witness the ancients conversing with the Great Jehovah, learning lessons from the angels, and receiving instruction by the Holy Ghost, in dreams by night, and visions by day, until at length, the veil is taken off, and they are permitted to gaze, with wonder and admiration, upon all things past and future; yea, even to soar aloft amid unnumbered worlds, while the vast expanse of eternity stands open before them, and they contemplate the mighty works of the Great I AM, until they know as they are known, as see as they are seen.[47]

Thus, when Joel spoke of a day in which the Lord would charismatically pour out his spirit upon all flesh, the early saints believed he was painting a perfect picture of the millennium.[48]

There are, however, two facets of the modern Mormon understanding of millennial conditions that were not included in the earliest descriptions. They are (1) what is meant by Satan being bound, and (2) the mechanics of millennial government.

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The sesquicentennial saint refers to Doctrine and Covenants 101:28 where he is told that Satan being bound means that he will have no power to tempt men. The sources reveal that writers in the 1830s did not use this verse or other similar Book of Mormon ones to discuss the millennium. Again, the Bible was their prime source, and its only reference to the binding of Satan was a brief mention of his being prevented from deceiving, rather than tempting, the nations.[49] That this particular feature of the millennium failed to attract much attention in the early period is also consistent with their conception of a millennium composed solely of saints. It was expected that a significant portion of the millennial population would be the righteous dead, by then resurrected, but who would have already completed their probationary state and passed beyond temptation anyway. Thus, who would have thought it noteworthy that Satan would have no power to tempt men the vast majority of whom had already passed beyond his power?

The current position on millennial government is this:

> Jesus Christ will not only lead the Church during the Millennium, but he also will be in charge of the political government. This government will be based on principles of righteousness and will preserve the basic rights and freedoms of all people. Mortals, both members of the Church and nonmembers, will hold government positions. They will receive help from resurrected beings.[50]

This paragraph represents a significant elaboration beyond the conception of millennial government held in the 1830s. Of the political reign of Christ, they had no doubt,

but the details were not clearly delineated in the scriptures, and guidelines would not be hinted at till Joseph organized the Council of Fifty in 1844. Furthermore, in light of the early rhetoric excluding the gentiles from the millennium, it is even less likely that the saints would have considered sharing the reigns of government with them.

If current thinking extends to "honorable" Gentiles the right to be guided, at least partially, by the dictates of their own beliefs during the millennium, such pluralism was not part of the early understanding. Expounding upon Daniel 2:44, Rigdon declared that Christ "will literally break in pieces and destroy all the kingdoms of the world . . . and so completely will he do it, that there will not, from one end of the earth to the other, be an individual found whose word, or edict will be obeyed but his own."[51] Thus, the early idea that saints would be the only inhabitants of the millennial earth demanded a homogenized view of belief systems and legal codes.

It also required some explanation of which saints would rule and which would be ruled. One early writer who tackled this problem was Sidney Rigdon. His first attempt appeared in an 1834 exegesis of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. His conclusion was that it was not the mortal saints who would "reign with Christ a thousand years; but on the contrary, those who are raised from the dead."[52] Within a month, Rigdon shared the pulpit with the Prophet Joseph at a conference of elders in Ohio. Echoing his earlier

analysis, he explained that "the ancient saints will reign with Christ a thousand years; the gathered saints will dwell under that reign."[53] Joseph was not averse to correcting a collegue on doctrine, and had this been a mistaken notion, one could have expected some such reproof at the time. None, however, was forthcoming.[54] Several months later, the idea appeared again in The Evening and the Morning Star: "The disembodied spirits of the saints in the paradise of God are waiting to receive their glorified bodies, and commence . . . reigning with Christ a thousand years." Those saints "in the flesh" are waiting "to serve him a thousand years in their successive generations."[55]

Thus, with the two exceptions noted, Mormons in both periods conceived of millennial conditions in much the same terms. This was due in large part to the fact that writings and sermons in the 1970s invoked the same Old Testament passages, or similarly worded modern revelations, as they did in the 1830s. If saints from each decade would not agree on demography, they would on geography. If they differed in their understandings of millennial vocations, at least they viewed them as being performed in the same idyllic setting.

MILLENNIAL THOUGHT UNIQUE TO THE 1830s

Three further strands of early millennial logic warrant special consideration. A prominent feature in most early Mormon treatises on the Millennium was the manner in which Romans 11 was used to testify to the timeliness of

their mission. Though widely discussed in the 1830s, the chapter has not been discoursed upon in General Conference for over a hundred years.[56] Toward the end of the chapter, Paul tells of a day when spiritual blindness would depart from Israel and they would all be saved, adding that it would occur when "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."[57] It was this phrase, in particular, that caught the attention of the saints, and it was the unique way in which they interpreted it that helped them justify their place in prophetic history. If it could be established that the "fullness of the Gentiles" had come in, then the stage was set both for the final gathering of Israel, a mission which the saints acutely felt as their <u>raison d'etre</u>, and for the Second Coming, an event which any serious student of the Bible knew followed immediately after that restoration of Israel. The following excerpt from the <u>Messenger and Advocate</u> typifies the Saints' interpretation of this scripture:

> when <u>will</u> the fulness of the Gentiles be come in? The answer is again at hand.--That is, when they all shall have ceased to bring forth the fruits of the kingdom of heaven, of all parties, sects, and denominations and not one of them standing in the situation in which God had placed them . . . then is the time that the world may prepare themselves to see the God of heaven set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people.[58]

Early Mormons, then, equated "the fullness of the Gentiles" with the apostasy of the Gentiles--the Gentiles, of course, being the Christian churches of the day. The prophetic chronology seemed clear--the Gentiles apostatize,

the Israelites are gathered, and the millennium is ushered in. "Unless the scattered remants of Jacob should be gathered from all countries whither they had been driven, no such thing as the millennium could ever exist," declared one early writer, "and that predicted on the fact of the Gentiles having forfeited all claim to the divine favor by reason of their great apostasy."[59] Thus, the saints invested the doctrine of the apostasy with definite millennial implications. To them, the apostasy was more than just evidence that truth and authority had been lost, it was evidence that the end scene was upon them, that the Lord had begun his latter-day work.

So central was this millennial scenario to the meaning of the Mormon witness that it even influenced the perceived value in their new scriptures. Early saints stressed that one of the prime purposes for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and other revelations was to identify Israel and to locate the place of her gathering. "If God should give no more revelations," asked Joseph Smith, "where will we find Zion and this remnant?" He later added, "Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations. and where is our religion? We have none; for without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall."[60] Note that the emphasis was not "take away the restoration scriptures, and we shall have none of our distinctive truths," but, "take away our revelations and we shall not be able to locate Zion, the one place to which Israel must be gathered to find temporal

salvation in the coming day of desolation." Such reasoning by the Prophet himself should bring into sharp focus the pervasive nature of millennialism during the 1830s.

In this climate, the fact that Andrew Jackson's removal policy happened to relocate the Indians just a few miles west of the revealed site for New Jerusalem was too coincidental not to be providential. For those who could read the handwriting on the wall, it was clear that Jehovah was using Jackson just as he had earlier used Cyrus the Great to gather his people.[61] Even after the saints had been expelled from Jackson county, the interpretation was kept alive. Several years later, Parley P. Pratt urged the Indians to tolerate the Removal Act "as a kind reward for the injuries you have received from [the Gentiles]." While the counsel was familiar, what he went on to say epitomizes the early Mormon ideas on Indians and eschatology when combined and carried to their logical extension:

> for the very places of their [the Gentiles] dwellings will become desolate; except such of them as are gathered and numbered with you; and you will exist in peace, upon the face of this land from generation to generation. And your children will only know that the Gentiles once conquered this country and became a great nation here, as they read it in history; as a thing long since passed away, and the remembrance of it almost gone from the earth.[62]

Once again, it can be seen that in the early Mormon mind, the millennium was for a rather limited group of people. Here Pratt described it in terms of Indians and Mormons only. With such sentiments in print, one can begin to understand why the Gentiles might have worried about a possible Mormon-Indian alliance.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

At least four factors seem important in accounting for differences in adventist doctrine between the two periods. These are biblicism, literalism, access to the new scriptures and what might be termed the "line-upon-line" principle. By far the most easily documented explanation is the near exclusive use the early saints made of the Old and New Testaments in their doctrinal writings.[63] Their use of the Bible can be likened to a well-worn pair of tennis shoes that somehow gets preferred for the key race rather than the brand new pair. The saints felt comfortable and familiar with the Bible. From it, many took their first lessons in reading. It had been their lifelong associate. And now, even though new scripture contained many acknowledged insights, it was not easy to abandon their old companion. Besides, a race was on, the "winding-up" scenes were underway. Little time was available for a detached perusal of the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants, and the leaders fell back on their knowledge of the Bible not only for defense of the faith, but for doctrinal exposition as well. For these reasons, it must be stressed that in the 1830s, the new scriptures were seen less as a realm of study than as an agenda for activity.

Given the early saints' overwhelming dependence on the Bible, it is not surprising to find that they took it at face value. The Mormons of 1830s were reticent, to say the least, ever to be caught "spiritualizing" the scriptures,

and they heartily condemned contemporaries for such a practice. If modern Mormons have come to believe that some scripture is to be understood symbolically, such an admission was extremely rare in the early years. The contrast is noted by comparing Parley P. Pratt's and Bruce R. McConkie's exegesis of Revelation 21. McConkie, certainly not one who could be charged with scriptural spiritualization, attempts to give meaning to John's vision of the Holy City in this way: "Here is a city, in size and dimensions, in splendor, and glory, which is so far beyond human experience or compre hension that there is no way to convey to the finite mind what the eternal reality is. Hence, expressions relative to precious stones, to streets of gold, and to pearly gates."[64] Pratt, on the other hand, assumes no such symbolism: "We learn that it will be composed of precious stones, and gold, as the temporal city also was described by Isaiah."[65] In his description of the temporal city he declared that "precious metals are to abound in such plenty, that gold is to be used in the room of brass, silver in the room of iron . . . and iron in the room of stones."[66] Clearly such statements evidence a very literal hermeneutic. Though early Mormons were not as wont to delve into the Apocalypse as some of their contemporaries, they did believe, as other millenarians, that the prophecies would be fulfilled exactly as given, and that they could be recognized when they were fulfilled.[67]

The argument of preference for the Bible must be balanced with a consideration of accessibility of the new scriptures. Though the Book of Mormon had been available since 1830, the Doctrine and Covenants was not published until 1835. Thus, in the years before mid-decade, when much of their millennial thought was published, the only access writers would have had to the new revelations would be either a handwritten copy, or printed excerpts in the periodicals, or, after 1833, one of the salvaged signatures of the Book of Commandments. Although the major Mormon millennialists would have had better access to the revelations, because of their proximity to the prophet and the presses, than other members (especially those in outlying branches), their writings show that they rarely took advantage of this opportunity.

The logic of the "line-upon-line" principle is well known among the saints. Mormonism did not simply spring full-blown into existence; doctrine and organization were revealed, and continue to be revealed, line upon line as a function of both human capacity and divine design. But the nature of this process is less clear because it is complex. Revelation has come in many ways and under many circumstances. Whether the revealed insight came in the midst of a doctrinal discussion in a council meeting or as an unsolicited dispensation, it is of like divine origin. In a religion in which revelation is seen as both keystone and watermark, the line-upon-line principle must be given

weighty consideration, even though as a function of faith it is occasionally difficult to discern.

Finally, we turn our attention to the implications of this study for understanding the larger realm of Mormon history in general. Nearly every textbook or monograph dealing with Mormon history during the early years includes a discussion of the various factors leading to Mormon-Gentile conflict. Economic, political, cultural, and religious reasons are all explored and given rightful attention. In light of this study, at least one other factor should be mentioned--an apocalyptic rhetoric that did not augur well for non-Mormon neighbors. When early Missourians read in The Evening and the Morning Star that all those who did not obey the restored gospel would be consumed at Christ's coming, and that such a day was soon at hand, how did they feel? When the Saints emphasized that with the speedy dawning of that millennium, the only people who would be inhabiting Jackson County would be Native American Israelites and believing Gentiles (meaning baptized Mormons), should that have bothered the settlers? On one occasion, Edward Partridge interpreted Malachi 4 to mean that the saints would "literally tread upon the ashes of the wicked after they are destroyed from off the face of the earth."[68] When such sentiments found their way into print, would the average Gentile want them for neighbors? Clearly, such exclusivism coupled with vivid apocalyptic imagery did not promote peaceful interaction between Mormon and Gentile.

At least during the 1830s, it was this aspect of Mormon millennialism that must be considered a prime source of conflict, rather than the idea of a political kingdom which was not developed till the Nauvoo years. To read such ideas back into the 1830s is anachronistic. Ironically, at least from the point of Gentile perception, it was the Council of Fifty that actually began taking the exclusive edge off earlier eschatology.

NOTES

[1]Gospel Principles (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978). This book is actually a manual designed to help new members "learn the basic principles of the gospel" (p. 1). The major Mormon periodicals during the 1830s include The Evening and the Morning Star (1832-1834), Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate (1834-1837), Elders' Journal of the Church of Latter Day Saints (1837-1838).

It should be noted that the term "official" had a rather tenuous meaning before 1845. See David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," Journal of Mormon History 4 (1977); 37, 43-45. Thus, while the present study attempts to steer as close to what might be called official doctrine as possible, it is more difficult to use that adjective in dealing with the first decade.

[2]This paragraph is a distillation of material presented in Gospel Principles, pp. 271-272.

[3]The earliest recorded reference to this teaching found to date is in the McIntire Minute Book under the date of 16 March 1841. This excerpt of The Minute Book is reproduced in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), p. 65. Hereinafter cited as WJS.

[4]This is found in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (Kirtland: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), p. 159. Hereinafter cited as D&C (1835). An earlier version of the revelation was included in the Book of Commandments (Zion: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), p. 11. Hereafter cited as B of C. The pertinent paragraph reads: "And now if this generation do harden their hearts against my word, behold I will deliver them up unto satan, for he reigneth and hath much power at this time, for he hath got great hold upon the hearts of the people of this generation: and not far from the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah, do they come at this time: and behold the sword of Justice hangeth over their heads, and if they persist in the hardness of their hearts, the time cometh that it must fall upon them." In the current D&C 5:19 the wording is the same as the 1835 edition.

[5] Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate 1 (Jan. 1835): 56. Hereinafter cited as MA.

[6]The Evening and the Morning Star 2 (April 1834): 147. Hereinafter cited as EMS.

[7]This revelation was first published in EMS 1(Sept. 1832): (26); then in B of C, p. 61; and finally in D&C (1835), p. 113. Today it is D&C 29:7. The wording is identical in each case.

[8]EMS, Ibid.; B of C, p. 63; D&C (1835), p. 114; D&C 29:17. Identical wording in each case.

[9]EMS, Ibid.; B of C, p. 66; D&C (1835), pp. 115-116; D&C 29:43-44. Identical wording.

[10]EMS 1 (Jan 1833): (61); B of C, pp. 80-81; D&C (1835), p. 118; D&C 38:6. Identical wording.

[11]D&C (1835), p.91; D&C 84:52-53. Identical wording.

[12]B of C, p. 116; D&C (1835), p. 191; D&C 49:5. Identical wording.

[13]D&C (1835), p.238; D&C 101:65-66. This revelation was given in Dec. of 1833, nearly two years after "the Vision," (Section 76).

[14]WJS, p. 108. At least one writer in the 1830s endeavored to make a distinction beyond the simple saint-sinner dichotomy. In Voice of Warning, Parley P. Pratt gave the Jew and Heathen special consideration. "This burning," he explained, "more especially applies to the fallen church [the Gentiles], rather than to the heathen or Jews, whom they are now trying to convert . . . and it will be more tolerable in that day fo the Jews and the heathen than for you [Gentile sectarians]" (New York: W. Sandford, 1837) pp. 53-54. He did not, however, specify how it would be more tolerant. Pratt's work will hereafter be cited as Voice of Warning unless the wording has been changed significantly, the 1874 edition will be used. By the turn of the decade, Benjamin Winchester, in his Gospel Reflector series on the millennium, would divide mankind into three groups--saints, wicked, and heathen. See Gospel Reflector 1 (1841): 220-272. But again, there is no clear exposition of the fate of the heathen.

[15]WJS, p. 156.

[16]WJS, p. 162.

[17]WJS, pp. 202, 206.

[18]WJS, pp. 211-212.

[19]MA 3 (Nov. 1836): 403-404. Joseph Smith also expressed similar sentiments in a 27 June 1939 discourse: "For the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor know ye the Lord for all shall know him (who Remain) from the least to the greatest, How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power & the other comforter spoken of which will be manifest by Revelation." (WJS p. 4) Given the original emphasis on "who remain" plus the fact that since those who do remain will know the Lord through temple ordinances and having their calling and election made sure, it is very clear that Joseph was anticipating a Mormon millennium.

[20]Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 640. See also, Gospel Principles, p. 268).

[21]D&C (1835), pp. 105-106; D&C 88:99. Identical wording.

[22]This revelation was first published in its entirety in EMS 1(July 1832): (10)-(11), only four months after it was received. It did not appear in the Book of Commandments published the next year which contained revelations only up through the fall of 1831. It was placed in D&C (1835), pp. 225-231, and has been in all subsequent editions. The verses cited are D&C 76:71-73.

[23]Gospel Principles, p. 268; McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 640; and Bruce R. McConkie, comp.; Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Felding Smith, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), II:296-297. Smith also employs D&C 45:54 which reads: "And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection." As before noted, the place of the "heathen" in Mormon theology has been rather vague from the first. Perhaps this is why reference to this verse is absent from both Mormon Doctrine and Gospel Principles.

[24]EMS 1(Dec. 1832): (49)-(51).

[25]D&C 63:54.

[26]EMS, Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]"Diary of Joseph Smith," kept by Willard Richards, under the date of 30 Dec. 1842. This is located in the Church Archives. It is also found in slightly revised form (the word "probably" is placed next to the word "not") in

Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964), 5:212. Hereinafter cited as HC. Joseph was just as explicit on this idea in his earlier 16 March 1841 speech: "that Jesus will be a Resident on the Earth a thousand (years) with the Saints is not the case but will Raign over the saints & come Down & instruct as he Did the 5 hundred Brethern (1st Cor 15)." WJS p. 65.

[30]Voice of Warning, p. 137.

[31]EMS 2 (April 1834): 147.

[32]This revelation was first published in EMS 1 (Sept. 1832): (26), but is now found in D&C 29:11.

[33]Pratt's work was a long poem with a series of short hymns attached (Boston 1835).

[34]D&C 93:44.

[35]MA 1 (Feb. 1335): 68.

[36]The first real discussion of the topic was Benjamin Winchester, "Procreation in the Millennium," Gospel Reflector 1 (June 1, 1841): 273-275.

[37]EMS 2 (Sept. 1834): 191. There are some difficulties in assessing the exact meaning of Phelps' words. The problem centers on what is meant by "the living live again" and what "the sting of sin" is. In the first instance, it is possible that he is talking about mortal saints living at the time of the second coming who would be changed in the twinkling of an eye to a state of partial glory, equivalent to being translated. This, in a sense, would be adding further life to the living, but there is little likelihood that he was thinking along such lines since they represent later developments. As late as 1837 and 1839, when the first two editions of Voice of Warning were printed, as astute a doctrinal scholar as Parley Pratt used the terms "translated" and "resurrected" synonymously. (See p. 131, for example.) Thus, I believe that he is speaking of resurrected instead of mortal saints procreating during the millennium. I could find no other example of such thinking, and the shift to the mortal side was clear by the time of Nauvoo.

In the second case, the "sting of sin" could be referring to the idea advanced in what is now D&C 45:58 that since Satan would be bound, millennial children would be able to be raised without the stinging effects of sin to hinder their progress. In light of Phelps' biblicism, though, I believe he would have been using it in the Pauline sense wherein the sting of sin is death (1 Cor. 15) thus referring to the fact that children born in that day would

not have to experience death in the normal sense of the word. No matter how one understands it, it is clear that he conceived of somebody having children during the millennium, and that is the 1970s idea for which an 1830s counterpart is being sought.

[38]Gospel Principles, p. 272.

[39]MA 3 (Nov. 1836): 401-404.

[40]EMS 1 (July 1832): (16). A characteristic of Phelps' hymn selection and preparation for The Evening and the Morning Star was that he occasionally borrowed doctrinally agreeable lines or stanzas from non-Mormon songs and included them in his own compositions, sometimes with slight modification. The lines herein cited are one such example. The quatrain originally formed the final stanza of a popular Protestant hymn of the nineteenth century, "Jersalem, My Happy Home," but is perhaps better known in its twentieth century form as the last verse in some arrangements of "Amazing Grace.' See, William J. Reynolds, Companion to Baptist Hymnal (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Pres, 1976), p. 165. The first line reads, "When we've been there ten thousand years." Phelps dropped the word "ten" and replaced it with an "a," thus making it clearly millennial in meaning. Since he made no other modification, it is obvious that he accepted the basic idea embodied in the stanza.

[41]Samuel Russell, ed. and comp., The Millennial Hymns of Parley Parker Pratt (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913), p. 28. According to Russell, Pratt composed the hymn in 1840.

[42]The scriptural reference is Rev 5:9-12; some examples of their exegesis of this passage include EMS 2 (Apr. 1834): 146; Voice of Warning, p. 51; and EMS 1 (June 1832): (8). The more developed understanding of this promise was revealed with the Nauvoo endowment. See, Andrew Ehat, "It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," BYU Studies 20 (Spring 1980): 254-257.

[43]For example, see EMS 2 (Feb. 1834): 131; MA 1 (Jan. 1835): 58; MA 3 (Nov. 1836): 403-404; Voice of Warning, pp. 119-130; and EJ 1 (July 1838): 31-32.

[44]Gospel Principles, pp. 272-273; Voice of Warning, pp. 128-129.

[45]Gospel Principles, pp. 273-274.

[46]EMS 2 (Feb. 1834): 131.

[47]Voice of Warning, p. 125.

[48]Ibid., p. 130; MA 1 (Jan. 1835): 58; EMS 2 (Feb. 1834): 131 are some examples.

[49]The biblical reference to Satan being bound is Rev. 20:8. In the author's unpublished manuscript entitled "Scriptural Exegesis in Early Mormon Millennialism," a record of all scriptures cited in Latter-day Saint millennial treatises is included, whether found in periodical or pamphlet. To date no use of D&C 101:28 has been discovered for the years under study.

[50]Gospel Principles, p. 273.

[51]EMS 2 (June 1834): 162.

[52]EMS 2 (Apr. 1834): 146.

[53]HC, 2:53.

[54]As late as March of 1841, the Prophet himself was expressing such sentiments: "those of the first Resurrection will also Reign with him over the saints." (WJS p.65).

[55]EMS 2 (June 1834): 162.

[56]According to the LDS Scripture Citation Index (HBL Library, BYU, 1979), which lists all scriptures used in any conference address from the beginning through April, 1978, the last time a speaker referred to Romans 11 was Erastus Snow in April, 1880 (CR, Apr. 1880, p. 91). On the other hand, in Gordon Irving's "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830's," BYU Studies 13 (Summer 1973): 481, 485, it is noted that only six passages of scripture, dealing with any topic at all, were used more frequently during this period, Romans 11 being used twelve times. Irving's study corresponds to my findings in "Scriptural Exegesis in Early Mormon Millennialism."

[57]Romans 11:25, 26.

[58]MA 1 (Nov. 1834): 18.

[59]EMS 2 (Jan. 1834): 127.

[60]HC, 2:52.

[61]For examples, see EMS 1 (Sept. 1832): (32), 1 (Dec. 1832): (54), and 1 (Jan. 1833): (62).

[62]Voice of Warning, 1837 ed., p. 189. This portion of the text was deleted by Pratt in the 2nd edition (1839) and has remained deleted in all subsequent editions.

[63]Even a casual perusal of the early Mormon periodicals and pamphlets reveals that such is indeed the case. An excellent quantitative study, however, verifying this assertion is Irving's study cited in note # 56.

[64]Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 3:588.

[65]Voice of Warning, p. 149.

[66]Ibid., p. 142.

[67]The standard work on millenarianism in nineteenth century America is Ernest Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Sandeen stresses that literalism was a hallmark of any millenarian group (see pp. 42-59).

[68]MA 1 (Jan. 1835): 58.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY MORMONISM AND THE MILLENARIAN MOVEMENT

It was a crisp winter morning in December of 1835, when Joseph Smith and his family set out for Painesville, a town not far from where they were living in Kirtland, Ohio. While passing through Mentor Street, they overtook a team with two men in the sleigh. Joseph politely asked permission to pass and it was granted. While moving around them, however, he recorded that "they bawled out, 'do you get any revelations lately?' with an addition of blackguard language that I did not understand."[1] The Prophet said nothing at the time, but later journalized:

> I was led to marvel at the longsuffering and condescension of our heavenly father in permitting these ungodly wretches to possess this goodly land . . . And we rejoice that the time is at hand, when the wicked who will not repent will be swept from the earth as with a besom of destruction, and the earth, become an inheritance of the poor and the meek.[2]

Few Mormons today would expect such a journal entry from Spencer Kimball. It seems judgmental and vindictive, an emotion most modern saints see as unbecoming of a prophet. Does this mean that Joseph was less tolerant, less emotionally mature than other Church leaders? Was he flawed with a flaring temper like Paul who, when smitten by the high priest, retorted, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall?"[3] Or, did he simply have a bad day?

While all are possibilities, a more satisfactory answer explores the ways in which millennialism informed his response. To begin with, the use of the word "wicked" is significant. As we have seen, it had a somewhat different connotation in early Mormon terminology than it does today, and Joseph often used the word "wicked" just as his fellow saints did to refer to unbelievers in general rather than to excessively corrupt individuals only. In the early Mormon mind, the primary criterion for distinguishing saint and sinner was their response to the restored gospel. Thus, understanding the Saints' semantics helps soften the seeming harshness of many of their declarations, including those of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

While such social reductionism may seem strange to modern Mormons, it is quite typical of millenarian movements. In his recent book, The Logic of Millennial Thought, James W. Davidson labels it the "rhetoric of polarization" and demonstrates how it inheres in millenarianism.[4] The apocalyptic books of Scripture like Daniel and Revelation, which constitute the lifeblood of Christian millenarianism, depict world history as the ongoing battle between the Lord and Lucifer. Therein, the lines between good and evil, between saintly and satanic are clearly drawn. This has important ramifications for how millenarians conceptualize their own era. If history is seen as one continual struggle of the forces of God against Satan,

"it is natural," explains religious historian James Moorhead, "for the adherents of the Kingdom to perceive a coherent, sinister intelligence animating the various problems they encounter."[5] In a general sense, this evaluation pinpoints rather well Mormon attitudes during the formative years, and specifically helps us to see that Joseph's journal entry is perhaps better explained by looking at his millenarianism than his moods.

Furthermore, Davidson's studies lead him to conclude that when the elements of polarization and imminence combine in a millennial logic, "the temptation (grows) to bring down judgment future and apply it to the present."[6] As has been shown, in the early Mormon mind there existed a definite "them"-"us" mentality. Since it was abundantly clear to the Saints what the Scriptures said would happen to "them," and recognizing the prevalent feeling that the Lord was coming soon, it is readily apparent that a desire to see prophecy take its rightful toll would follow naturally and normally. Thus, by peering through the lense of millennial logic, we are able to understand why the Prophet wrote as he did on this occasion, and why the Saints responded as they frequently did in early church history.

Beyond that, however, polarization as an intellectual phenomenon within Mormonism needs further examination. On the one hand, the polarizing tendency could be comforting. John Gager, in his study of early Christianity as a millenarian movement, explains how such

eschatological underpinnings could clarify an ambiguous world. "The complexities of moral judgments that typify complex society," he writies, "are resolved into a series of binary oppositions: poor-rich, good-evil, pious-hypocrite, elect-damned. And a final reckoning is proclaimed for the near future."[7] Thus, argues anthropologist Kenelm Burridge, millenarian movements took the disquieting and "unmanageable manyness" of the world around them and re-ordered it into "sharply contrasted contraries."[8] Evidence exists that just such a polarized resolution of reality permeated other phases of Mormon thought. Consider, for example, the following description from the Book of Mormon of known religions:

> and he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the Church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the Church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.[9]

The same absence of grey is apparent later in the Book when Mormon counsels the believers on how to discern the ultimate source of all things. That which "inviteth and enticeth" to sin and evil is from the devil, while that which "inviteth and enticeth" to do good is "inspired of God." Thus, he concludes, the way to judge is as plain "as the daylight is from the dark night."[10]

On the other hand, the rhetoric of polarization presented some problems. It expected opposition, assumed animosities, and in so doing created a sort of siege mentality. All of which came accompanied by unfortunate

consequences. When Gentile neighbors learned that the Saints had fitted them into a larger-than-life drama either as emissaries of Satan or, at least, as the unwitting dupes he manipulated to block the progress of the Kingdom, it is little wonder their dander was raised. Years ago, David B. Davis documented the fear of conspiracy characteristic of antebellum America which manifested itself, in part, as a paranoia that Mormonism was un-American. What must now be conceded is that Mormon millenariamism disposed the Saints to a similar conspiratorial view of events which, albeit clothed in scriptural imagery, pictured the whole sectarian world in league with Beelzebub.[11]

Such opposition, however, precisely because it fit into an eschatological drama with a pre-determined victory for the Saints, generally did little to daunt them. It has long been recognized that the Mormons considered persecution as one more confirmatory sign of their validity as God's people, but its relationship to their millenariamism needs to be articulated. The Saints knew that as time spiraled to its climax at the Second Coming, Satan would be waging a war of ever increasing intensity against them. Since the outcome was certain, though, and in their favor, they saw persecution as an assurance of a rather backhanded sort that all was proceeding on prophetic schedule. As Moorhead explains, "opposition could in turn become evidence to the believer that the millennium was indeed approaching and that his zeal should be redoubled."[12] Simply put, millenarianism provoked persecution and persecution evoked millenarianism.

This was especially true since much of the persecution endured by the Saints was of the physical variety. In his book, Disaster and the Millennium, Michael Barkun notes that "men cleave to hopes of imminent worldly salvation . . . when the hammerblows of disaster destroy the world they have known."[13] A great many students of the millennium have concurred that millenarian schemes are hatched in the hothouse of deprivation, distress, or disorientation.[14] While this does not explain the rise of Mormonism, it is helpful in tracing the oscillations in intensity of the Saints' apocalypticism. During periods of intense persecution there is a corresponding intensification of apocalyptic rhetoric, especially when the persecution left the Saints greatly deprived.

The classic example is provided by the explusion from Missouri. The besieged Saints were forced to face the stark inadequacy of their efforts to thwart the onslaughts of the Gentile enemy. As a result, they expressed a heightened dependence upon God, realizing that nothing short of his supernatural intervention could defeat Satan's minions and usher in the long desired millennial day of rest. Before this, Parley Pratt had already composed various millennial hymns extolling the New Eden that would be inaugrated at Christ's Coming. After the Saints' world was shattered in Far West, however, Pratt produced several new hymns emphasizing a different side to the Second Advent. The following stanzas are typical:

—

How long, O Lord, wilt thou forsake
The saints who tremble at Thy word?
Awake, O Arm, O God awake
And teach the nations Thou art God.

Descend with all thy holy Throng,
The year of thy redeemed bring near,
Haste, haste the day of vengeance on,
Bid Zion's children dry their tear.[15]

From Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith himself plead that the Lord would avenge them of their wrongs, expressing, at the same time, intense faith that "the time soon shall come when the Son of Man shall descend in the clouds of heaven" and shall "have our oppressors in derision" and "will laugh at their calamity, and mock them when their fear cometh."[16]

Again, such rhetoric is typical of embattled millenarians. When a people feel the weight of the oppressor's heel, it is understandable that the destruction of the wicked is one of the most emphasized aspects of the eschatological drama. As Davidson explains, the impending judgments "were parts of an immutable guarantee that no matter how much the wicked seemed to triumph in the present age, God would supernaturally set the scales of Justice aright at the Day of Judgment."[17] Since in the rhetoric of polarization "the wicked" had become a generic term for all oppressors, Biblical promises of their ultimate destruction at Christ's coming provided a satisfying conclusion to history. This simple yet profound hope had penetrated deep into the Mormon membership. Typical is the sentiment expressed by one early member, not a leader, in a letter to a kinsman in the East. He recounted the hardships and

deprivation endured in the last days of Nauvoo but explained that his one consolation was that "we will have a name and a being on the earth when our enemies are extinct or else the word of the Lord fails" and "we will some day become the head and not the tail."[18] It was the old hope that the last would be first and the first would be last.

In certain important ways such sentiments found their best contemporary analogue in the millenarianism of antebellum blacks. For them, as well as for the Mormons, the coming of Christ was a Day of Deliverance at once liberating and vindicating. Yet, the extent of this emphasis has been overlooked. Donald Mathews claims that in spite of all that has been learned about slave religions "it is the Apocalypse which is missing from most evaluations of black Christianity."[19] Similarly, perhaps we have not sufficiently noticed the importance to early Mormon theology of a day of judgment in the apocalyptic drama.

For this reason, we have also failed to perceive the extent to which millenarianism informed their philosophy of missions. By applying what has already been learned of their millennial logic, we can begin to discern important nuances of the early Mormon mind. At the outset, it must be recognized that the very conception of their mission was polarized. For example, when Hazen Aldrich was set apart as one of the first Seventy, he was instructed that his twofold mission was to call "the children of men to repentance and the Elect of the Lord to Zion."[20] Both facets need further consideration.

If "raising the warning voice" has come to simply be synonymous with sharing the gospel, such was not always the case.[21] In Joseph's day, it had definite apocalyptic overtones. An early revelation commanded that every man should "lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth, and declare . . . that desolation shall come upon the wicked."Y22H Bishop Whitney was specifically told to warn the inhabitants of certain cities "of the desolation and utter abolishment which await them if they do reject (the gospel)."[23] To be sure, these revelations are still in the Doctrine and Covenants, but the early brethren took them quite literally and at full face value.

On one occasion, Edward Partridge penned an open letter to all his former friends and acquaintances in Ohio with this earnest entreaty: "O take the advice of one that wished you well . . . humble yourselves and embrace the everlasting gospel before the judgments of God sweep you from the face of the earth."[24] Orson Hyde wrote in similar terms to the world at large in his early tract, "A Prophetic Warning." "Pray therefore," he said, "that God may send unto you some servant of his, who is authorized from on high, to administer to you the ordinances of the gospel. Except you do this, you . . . must fall victims to the messengers of destruction, which God will soon send upon the earth."[25] A year later, in New York City, Parley P. Pratt published his first edition of A Voice of Warning. In a chapter not since included, he declared:

> Wo, wo, wo unto the inhabitants of this city; and again wo, wo, wo unto the inhabitants in all this land, for your sins have reached unto Heaven, and God has remembered your iniquities; and only this once will he call upon you to repent . . . Behold the sword of vengeance hangs over you and except you repent, the Lord will cause that it shall soon overtake you.[26]

In each case, the promised judgments are assumed to be imminent, physical, and this-worldly. Modern Mormons simply do not speak to their associates in such apocalyptic terms. Today, such "if-you-don't-repent-you'll-be destroyed"

talk more accurately characterizes the Jehovah's Witnesses than it does the Latter-day Saints. Who would expect a modern Mormon to address his friends, as did Edward Partridge and tell them point blank that if they do not soon accept the gospel they will be swept off the face of the earth? Latter-day Saints today take a much more low-key approach. To talk of impending destruction or imminent punishments is too negative and modern missionaries are counseled to be anything but negative. The saints have learned that it is much more productive to tell a person what he will miss out on rather than how he will be punished for not joining the church. Just as Bruce R. McConkie takes Revelation 21 less literally than Parley P. Pratt, so too the saints of today tend to feel that the numerous commands to warn of impending judgments are better complied with if approached less explicitly. Be that as it may, the early saints did not have the benefit of modern psychology to make their message more appealing. On the contrary, they had a

whole Bible full of doomsaying holy men after whom to pattern their ministries.

Then, too, we must remember that the sword had two sides. For those inclined to accept the message of the Restoration, the opportunities were described in glowing terms. The long lost gifts of the Spirit had been returned by a gracious God for the edification of his saints. The apostolic authority and powers were once again upon the earth. And, of course, the latter day glory of Israel was described with optimistic specificity. Nonetheless, be it blessing or punishment, it was couched in imminent terms, and immediate results were expected. It was not uncommon for a young elder to "hold forth" for two hours and afterwards invite those so desiring to retire to the stream to be baptized. Today (with a few exceptions), the missionaries are instructed to catechize prospective converts thoroughly and then interview them to be sure that the step is not being taken hastily. The early elders, however, took literally the admonition that their's was "a day of warning, and not a day of many words."[27]

If the missionaries of the 1830s were both more explicit and more insistent in their warning of a coming desolation of unbelievers, what affect did this have on why people joined the church? Is it possible that fear played a greater role in the conversion process in the early years than it does today? Does it affect a listener differently if the consequences of non-acceptance are graphically

portrayed as both imminent and physical (as they were then) or if they are relegated to the far-off eternal state and described in abstract spiritual terms (as they are now)? Though the investigation of such questions lies beyond the scope of this study, the recent efforts of Joseph F. Zygmunt in analyzing the psychology of motivation within social movements and of sociologist James A. Beckford in analyzing why people join the Jehovah's Witnesses are suggestive of approaches that might profitably be applied to Mormonism.[28]

Beyond being a command, literal warnings of doom had a clearly worked out theological rationale in the early years. In his influential, Government of God, John Taylor argued that such declarations were the particular province of the modern dispensation. Thus, he contrasted missionary work in the meridian of time with that of his day in the following manner; "If the Gospel formerly was to be proclaimed to all nations, so it is now with this difference associated with it, there is to be a cry, 'fear God, and give glory to him, for the hours of His judgment is come.'"[29]

That the hour of judgment was upon them also served as the impetus for the gathering of the elect--the other phase of their missionary outreach. Sidney Rigdon explained: "When the God of heaven sent a messenger to proclaim judgment on the old world, he provided an ark for the safety of the righteous: When Sodom was burned, there was a Zoar provided for Lot and his family . . . and in the

last days, when the Lord brings judgment on the world, there will be a Mount Zion, and a Jerusalem, where there will be deliverance."[30] If modern Mormons feel that a righteous life is sufficient protection for the troubled times ahead and that it is not where they live, but how that matters, such was not the thinking in the earliest years. For first decade disciples, Zion was a specific place, not so much a lifestyle; and it was the only spot the Lord had designated as "a defense . . . and a refuge from the storm, and from wrath be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth."[31] Thus, Joseph Smith urged all to "embrace the everlasting covenant, and flee to Zion before the overflowing scourage overtake you."[32] The First Presidency reasoned along similar lines in an 1841 editorial. "This gathering," they declared, "must take place before the Lord comes to 'take vengeance upon the ungodly'"[33]

If sand in the hourglass of time was running out, the Saints were assured that the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" would not dawn until the elect "shall all have come from one end of heaven to the other, and not one (is) left in all nations . . . under heaven, and then and not until then will Christ come."[34] Before the Lord rains down his wrath upon the world, all believers must be gathered to the prophetic panoply, Zion. Thus, the Mormon philosphy of and motivation for missions was integrally related to their millenarianism. The elders were to traverse the earth, preaching "nothing but repentance," to warn the wicked and

gather the elect--all because the Day of the Lord, as a day of judgment, was at hand.

NOTES

[1] HC 2:323-324.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Acts 23:2-3.

[4] James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977) pp. 163-175, 281-297.

[5] James H. Moorhead, American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978) p. 7.

[6] Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 294.

[7] John G. Gager, Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975) p. 25.

[8] Kenelm Burridge, New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities (Oxford, 1969) p. 147.

[9] 1 Nephi 14:10.

[10] Moroni 7:12-19.

[11] The fear of conspiracy in America is ably analyzed by David B. Davis in "Some Themes of Countersubversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 47 (Sept 1960): 205-225.

It would seem that this disposition to a conspiratorial view of events is still with us. Witness the number of modern Mormons who have no qualms about accepting a supposed international banking conspiracy as the real ruling power in the world. The idea is presented in Gary Allen and Larry Abraham, None Dare Call It Conspiracy (Seal Beach, California: Concord Press, 1972).

[12] James H. Moorhead, "Social Reform and the Divided Conscience of Antebellum Protestantism," Church History 48 (Dec. 1979): 421.

[13] Michael Barkun, Disaster and the Millennium (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974) p. 1.

[14]The first to popularize the deprivation theory was Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologists 58 (1956): 264-231. Later discussants, emphasizing socioeconomic and psychological stresses include Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1957); Vittorio Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed (New York: Knopf, 1963); Eric Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (reprinted; New York: Norton, 1965); Sylvia Thrupp, ed., Millennial Dreams in Action: Essays in Comparative History (New York: Schocken Books, 1970; originally published in 1962); Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, rev. ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Guenter Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[15]Samuel Russell, ed. and comp., The Millennial Hymns of Parley Parker Pratt (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913) p. 19.

[16]HC 3:291-292.

[17]Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 83. Davidson assumes that the Day of Judgment will accompany the Parousia.

[18]Solon Foster to Luther Foster, Solon Foster Letters, 28 Dec 1848, Church Archives.

[19]Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) p. 231.

[20]Kirtland Council Minute Book, p. 174, manuscript, Church Archives.

[21]Bruce R. McConkie was quoted in a recent Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide that "when the missionaries or other members of the Church offer the gospel to the people of the world, they thereby raise the warning voice." Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978) p.3.

[22]D&C 63:37.

[23]D&C 84:114.

[24]MA 1 (Jan 1835): 61.

[25]MA 2 (July 1836): 346.

[26]Pratt, Voice of Warning, pp. 141-142.

[27]D&C 63:58.

[28]Zygmunt, "Movements and Motives: Some Unresolved Issues in the Psychology of Social Movements," Human Relations 25 (1972): 449-467; Beckford, The Trumpet of Prophecy (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1975).

[29]John Taylor, The Government of God (Liverpool: S.W. Richards, 1852) p. 99. While the elders were to proclaim the pending judgments, some apparently undertook the grim task with a little too much relish. On at least one occasion, Joseph Smith had to warn against "the uselessness of preaching to the world about great judgments," and instructed them instead "to preach the simple gospel." (HC 4:11) Perusing the pamphlet and periodical literature for the next few decades suggests that the counsel was slow in taking hold for there was little shying away from announcing the cataclysmic consequences of gospel rejection. Modern missionary approaches, however, demonstrate that the early advice has been internalized.

[30]EMS 2 (Jan 1834): 126.

[31]D&C 115:6.

[32]HC 1:315-316.

[33]Times and Seasons 2 (Jan 1841): 276.

[34]MA 3 (Nov 1836): 404.

CHAPTER THREE

MORMONISM AND PREVIOUS MILLENNIAL STUDY

In this final chapter it is incumbent upon us to relate the findings of this study to the larger literature of the field. We shall analyze both the attempts of students of Mormonism to place Latter-day Saint eschatology within the broader Christian framework, as well the efforts of those who specialize in the larger millennial traditions to deal with Mormon thought. The principal two works discussing Mormon millennialism in the last few decades are Klaus Hansen's Quest for Empire and an unpublished master's thesis by Louis Reinwand entitled "An Interpretive Study of Mormon Millennialism During the Nineteenth Century." Reinwand's explicit thesis and one of Hansen's implicit assumptions is that the Mormon Church vacillated between premillennialism and postmillennialism (Reinwand also adds amillennialism) during the nineteenth century, and that by the turn of the century, it had largely moved away from premillennialism.[1] This interpretation, I shall argue, not only bespeaks a major misunderstanding of the various types of Christian millennialism, but also misrepresents Mormon eschatology as well.

Ernest Sandeen has already noticed one of the limitations in Hansen's work when he wrote that Hansen's treatment of the millennial tradition in general is "not

entirely competent."[2] To understand why the same criticism could be levelled against Reinwand, we must begin by examining the different millennial traditions.

One of the most helpful summaries of the various millennial schools of thought that have developed within Christianity over the years is the recent publication edited by Robert G. Clouse entitled The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views.[3] The initial caveat pointed out by Clouse is that many go no further than the dictionary definition in their understanding of these positions. But this is unfortunate:

> The distinctions (warns Clouse) involve a great deal more than the time of Christ's return. The kingdom expected by the premillennialists is quite different from the kingdom anticipated by the postmillennialist, not only with respect to the time and manner in which it will be established but also in regard to its nature, and the way Christ will exercise control over it.[4]

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, we shall follow the increasingly common scholarly convention of using millennialism interchangeably with postmillennialism and millenarianism as synonymous with premillennialism.

Both groups believed that Christ would personally return to the earth and both associate with that return a resurrection and a day of judgment. As the prefix implies, however, the postmillennialists felt that these events would conclude the millennium, that is, that there would only be one general resurrection of all mankind and one Day of Judgment and that both would follow the thousand years. On the other hand, the millenarians believed that there would

be two resurrections and two judgments. The first resurrection would occur at the time of Christ's premillennial advent and would involve only the faithful dead. The rest of mankind would come forth after the millennium as the second resurrection. Like his millennialist counterpart, the millenarian believed that the Day of Judgment from which man would be assigned his eternal state would occur after the millennium, but he also felt that there would be a sort of preliminary jdugment (primarily the destruction of the wicked) that would accompany the second advent.

Shifting from the events surrounding it to the nature of the millennium itself and how Christ will exercise control over it, other important differences are noticeable. Perhaps the most helpful distinction to make at the outset deals with their respective hermeneutics. In his study of early nineteenth century Calvinist theology, George Marsden reports that "in the writings of the day (postmillennialism) was often designated 'Spiritualist' because its advocates believed that the promised Kingdom of Christ would be manifested in the reigning of the Holy Spirit over the hearts of the people"[5] And Ernest Sandeen was merely stating the obvious when he declared that "literal interpretation of prophetic passages was the foundation stone of millenarian theology."[6]

This distinction is manifest in their differing perceptions of the millennial age. For the millenarian, the lamb really would lie down with the lion, immortal beings

really would mingle freely with mortals, and Christ would indeed reign personally over the earth from some terrestrial capital. To all of these prophetic promises the millennialists gave a spiritualized interpretation. The lamb and lion scene was just a pastoral metaphor to describe an age of peace and cooperation; the resurrection was burying the old sinful self and rising to a new spiritual life in Christ; and, it was Christ's spirit, not his body (if indeed they felt he still had one!) that would do the reigning during the millennium.

Finally we should note their differing expectations for the salvation of mankind. For the postmillennialist, the thousand years represented the culmination of the gradual Christianization of the entire world and would be achieved largely through successful evangelists. The premillennialist, as we shall later see, could be just as active in missionary work, but merely hoped to convert a relative handful before Christ personally came to purge the earth and inaugurate the millennium. Other differences could be multiplied, but all relate to their opposing system of hermeneutics.

Reinwand's work, therefore, needs revision for several reasons. In the first place, it is dated, especially his treatment of premillennialism. Secondly, his understanding of all millennial typologies is based largely on works issued from denominational presses rather than relevant historical monographs. Even then, he seems not to

understand what is being said, and slips into interpretive errors which cloud his conclusions. Only within the last decade have the works of Ernest Sandeen, George Marsden, Timothy Weber, and James Davidson made it clear that the tidy typologies generally indulged by scholars to explain pre- and postmillennialism are inadequate. The old distinctions drew sharp contrasts between the two. Millenarians were supposedly pessimistic about society, uninvolved in evangelism or social reform, and expected Christ to single-handedly and supernaturally set up his Kingdom. The millennialists, on the other hand, were assumed to be optimistic about man's possibilities, actively involved in mission work and social reform, and convinced that Christ could only work through them or other natural means to establish the millennium. Recent scholars, however, have shown us that naturalism and supernaturalism, progress and cataclysm, optimism and pessimism can be found side by side in either millennial scenario.[7] As Sacvan Bercovitch has noted, "pre- and postmillennialism are often present in the same movement and sometimes in the same thinker."[8] Thus, we are brought to the Kammen complex:

> "The millennial hope is a paradoxical one, (James Moorhead writes) and one can extrapolate a dismal or optimistic view of history, encompassing temporal disasters or progress, or both . . . Efforts to seize the Kingdom by violence, passive withdrawal from corruption to await the Second Coming, or melioristic reform efforts--all these and other responses have been adduced from eschatological symbols."[9]

What all this means is that we can leave the Mormons entrenched in the premillennial camp where they belong

rather than shifting them to postmillennialism as Reinwand felt compelled to do. Just because we find the Mormons urging human efforts to build the Kingdom or because we find them mission-minded, we do not have to immediately identify this as "postmillennial" behavior. It can still fit very comfortably within millenarianism. Consider the Fifth Monarchy men, long recognized as a definite manifestation of millenarianism. Yet, as Clarke Garrett has noted, they "could in the same sermon call upon men to regenerate the world through their own efforts (an act clearly assumed to be postmillennial) and upon Jesus to transform it through his miraculous intervention."[10] So, too, it was with the Mormons.

On the other hand, Samuel Hopkins, one of the leading postmillennialists of his day admitted that while the antichrist would fall partly because of human effort, the telling blows would be delivered "by the immediate hand of God, by famines and pestilences . . . earthquakes, terrible storms of lightnings and thunders and inundations of water."[11] Again one is reminded of Mormon doctrine. An 1832 revelation warned the elders to be diligent "for after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes . . and also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempest, and the voice of waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds."[12] Hopkins's basic eschatology and theology, however, was far removed from Mormon thought. On finding

this similarity one would be remiss to argue that Hopkins had shifted to early Mormon doctrine (even if Hopkins had lived in Joseph Smith's heyday). Men like Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, or Jonathan Edwards and Charles Chauncy operated on certain common assumptions and held similar views. Yet, who would argue that in so doing Hamilton had become a Jeffersonian or Chauncy an Edwardsean? Similar interpretive lapes plague Reinwand's work.

James Davidson in his path-breaking work on New England eschatology in the eighteenth century points out that historians "have not always been equally astute in rejecting postmillennial ideas of how premillennialists ought to behave."[13] George Marsden, found that during the nineteenth century, postmillennialists "frequently repeated the accusation that premillennialism implied a pessimistic outlook for the world that would discourage missionary and reforming efforts," adding that "only their views provided a proper rationale for missionary zeal." In reality, he discovered that oftentimes millenarians "pursued exactly the same goals but for slightly different reasons."[14]

Especially in the realm of missionary enthusiasm, Reinwand is wrong in arguing that Mormons left their millenarian posture. Both Ernest Sandeen and Timothy Weber have studied premillennialism in book length monographs and found that the old stereotype of the evangelically inactive millenarian simply does not hold up.[15] In fact, Weber, in studying the resurgence of premillennialism in the last

quarter of the nineteenth century, found that it brought a heightened interest in missionism: "Just as D. L. Moody 'felt like working three times as hard' after becoming a premillennialist, others experienced a new desire to bring the gospel to a dying world. . . ."[16]

George Duffield, a contemporary of Joseph Smith, defended his premillennialism against the charge that it dampened missionary efforts in these words: "The groans of a world perishing in its corruptions call for quickened, multiplied effort, and for zeal irrepressible and inextinguishable. The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come."[17]

If their zeal was equal or superior to millennialist evangelicals, their expectaions for numerical success were not. As David Smith correctly noted, they were "conservative" in their views of "the possibility of salvation."[18] "To put it simply," writes Weber, "God had absolutely no intention of saving the world before the second coming of Christ. His chief purpose in this dispensation was to 'visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name', not to convert the world."[19] So it was in Mormon theology, with their view of Stakes as gathered enclaves of the elect. They did not expect to convert the world, only warn it. However, Weber's description of the premillenialists again fits the saints: "They realized that not everyone responded favorably to the gospel, but they

expected to reap a huge harvest of souls if they were faithful in their efforts."[20] To modify a phrase from Leonard Sweet, the Mormons have always believed that they were called to bring to pass the gathering of the elect, not the broad electorate, of mankind. In fact the Finneyian faith in global conversion rather annoyed the early saints. "The ignorance of the religious teachers of the day," complained Sidney Rigdon, "never appeared more glaring in any thing, than in an attempt to creat a Millenium by converting this generation."[21]

Finally, Reinwand has problems dealing with post-millennialism. First, he equates the Mormon conception of a millennial theocracy with that of postmillennialism; and secondly, he infers throughout the study that postmillen-nialism is a "quieter" doctrine without "emotional outbursts of millennial hope" or sentiments that the Second Coming is near.[22] As has already been noted, postmillennialists conceive of the entire millennium in spiritualized terms. Neither Christ personally nor his appointed clergy would exercise actual political rule. Rather, life on a worldwide basis would be much like living in a solidly Christian community today--there would be a certain likemindedness and a deference to Christian principles, but no priest would rule. For the millennialist, the millenarian (and Mormon) perception of a theocracy of saints was a heady harking back to Cromwell's days.

As for assuming that postmillennialists stood in contradistinction to premillennialists in their feelings of imminence, consider the example of Charles G. Finney, one of the greatest of all postmillennialists. On 28 November 1830, he told a Rochester, New York audience that if Christians would unite and dedicate themselves to the task at hand, they could "convert the world and bring on the millennium in three months."[23] Such pronouncements (and he made other similar ones) make Mormon and Millerite speculations seem tame in comparison. And how about Jonathan Edwards, termed by some the father of American postmillennialism. Did not the Great Awakening lead him to believe that the new age was about to dawn? And did he not devise a way to interpret the Two Witnesses of the Apocalypse as a past event, thus removing the barriers for belief in a much more imminent millennium than hithertofore imagined possible?[24] Clearly, millennialists have been just as ebullient in their hopes and as anxious for an imminent millennium as have any millenarians. In fact, Robert K. Whalen, after having studied both schools of thought during the nineteenth century concluded that "the Millennialists were more given to date-setting than their millenarian contemporaries."[25] Reinwand's errors are regrettable but understandable if one checks his bibliography. There is no reference to the works of C. C. Goen, Stow Persons, or Alan Heimert, all of which have made an immense contribution to our understanding of postmillennialism and all of which were in print well before Reinwand wrote his thesis.[26]

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The segment dealing with Mormon millenarianism, in Klaus Hansen's new book, Mormonism and the American Experience, is a deep disappointment. The brief discussion of Mormon eschatological thought in the fourth chapter is basically a rehash of his earlier Quest for Empire with the addition of parts of an essay he did for the 1973 RLDS publication, The Restoration Movement.[27] Two problems are immediately obvious: he has not kept abreast of the recent avalanche of scholarly millennial studies, and he pays no attention to recent critiques of his analysis of the Council of Fifty which is perpetuated virtually unchanged in his new monograph.[28]

That he has not kept up with the literature of field is evident in his use of a socioeconomic model to account for the appeal of the various millennial traditions, including Mormonism. "Unlike the millennialists who represented the upwardly mobile segment of society," writes Hansen, "many of the millenarians were either on the fringe of social and economic progress, or else belong to a displaced elite that was losing out to the rising self-made men of Jacksonian America."[29] The millenarian did not reject the existing social order because his Bible compelled him to, but "because the Jacksonian rhetoric of individualism, equalitarianism, and progress had left the hopes of these people unfulfilled."[30] Repeatedly, Hansen stresses that millenarians became such because they "saw no hope" in Jacksonian America.[31]

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As for the Saints, he assumes that Joseph Smith's millennial program was also a response to "the dislocations of nineteenth century America" and that the Mormon Kingdom of God "provided people who were alienated from the American social order with a social order of their own."[32] He explains:

> A man who could not achieve self-respect in the society of Jacksonian America could achieve it in the society of the Mormon kingdom of God. Through an elaborate system of interlocking political, social, and ecclesiastical organizations, a hierarchy of offices and positions in the Mormon priesthood provided a prestige ladder for those who may not have been even on the bottom rung of that other American ladder of upward mobility and progress.[33]

With such a clearly socioeconomic interpretation of early Mormonism, it seems odd that Hansen would not have enlisted the aid of such pastmasters as E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, Vittorio Lanternari, Peter Worsley, or especially Christopher Hill, all of whom have seen millenarianism as a response to social or economic tensions.[34] Instead, he attempts to relate Michael Walzer's controversial <u>The Revolution of the Saints</u> to Mormons via the Council of Fifty[35] Though the title says exactly what Hansen wants to say about Mormonism, he could have done so much more effectively by employing the standard Marxian interpretations of millennialism listed above. Could it be that he is not aware of them? They are found nowhere in his citations, nor in the earlier article, nor in <u>Quest for Empire</u>. What is more telling, however, in demonstrating that Hansen has not kept up with the literature of the field, is the fact

that he refers his readers to David E. Smith's 1965 historiographical essay for a survey of millennial scholarship when it has been superceded by the more recent and far more comprehensive articles by Hillel Schwartz (1976) and Leonard Sweet (1979).[36]

These articles reveal that, of late, explanations of millenarianism as an ideology for those "on the fringe of social and economic progress" are under sharp attack. Sweet summarizes: "Increasingly it is being realized by this second generation, however, that millennialism is a natural, rational, and sometimes normative force that can exert formative influence over all strata of society."[37] No longer is millenarian thought considered the "preserve of peasants and the oppressed" nor is it construed necessarily to be "a function of social frustration, economic dislocation, or cognitive dissonance."[38] The implication is that to portray Mormons as millenarians no longer requires us to see them as socially or economically disenchanted.

William Lamont, for example, in his book Godly Rule, rejects Christopher Hill's characterization of English Puritanism and the Fifth Monarchy men as derivitive of socioeconomic tensions, and demonstrates that chiliasm was widespread and respectable theologically, regardless of social stratum.[39] Robert Lerner's recent reconsideration of the heresy of the "Free Spirit" provides this corrective to Norman Cohn: "The primary motivation for turning to the life and ideas of the Free Spirit was not that of material

or social benefit, but the religious and emotional search for perfection."[40] Closer chronologically to Mormonism is J.F.C. Harrison's study of Owenism and millenarian thought in the early nineteenth century. Harrison disputes the idea that millenarianism was "a psychic escape from intolerable conditions in the early Industrial Revolution" and traces its pervasiveness at all levels of English society.[41]

This is not to swing the pendulum too far the other way, for, as Yonina Talmon points out, certain socially frustrated groups or individuals were attracted to such thinking. However, she warns against the sort of reductionism that makes millenarianism solely a response to social and economic conditions. Instead, she urges that we look more toward its intellectual potency and the "partial independence of the 'religious factor.'"[42] Another who would stress the religious roots of millenarianism is Gordon Leff. In his monumental study of heresy in the late Middle Ages, he argues that millenarianism should be viewed primarily as a protest movement whose roots were "doctrinal and devotional," not social or economic.[43]

Historians such as Leff, Lamont, Lerner, Harrison, and Garrett all demonstrate that it is actually impossible to draw socioeconomic parameters around millenarianism. Hence, the inadequacy of Hansen's argument that Mormons developed a revolutionary millenarian ethic as a result of being cut out of the main chance. This, of course, also helps explain why Hansen and others misunderstand the

Council of Fifty and its role. If the Saints millenarianism and the Council of Fifty which grew out of it really were a response to alienation and provided an alternate avenue to desired power, then their millenarianism is permissibly portrayed as revolutionary both socially and politically. On the other hand, if, as I believe, their ideals were rather separatist, if as Marvin Hill argues,[44] they were questing for refuge rather than empire, then we must look elsewhere to understand their millenarianism and need not view the Council of Fifty as anything more than the "symbolic formality" that Michael Quinn recently called it.[45]

The real problem with socioeconomic interpretations, is delineated by Hillel Schwartz: "Deprivation in psychological, social, or economic terms, however 'relative', however computed, is based upon the observer's ethic."[46] Here, then, is a key for better understanding Mormon millenarianism. In essence, Schwartz, like Robert F. Berkhofer, is reminding us that the participant's perspective is not only valid but vital in historical analysis.[47] We need to start asking different questions. Did the Mormons themselves express social frustration or economic disenchantment? If so, in an age that celebrated self-reliance and free will, would they have blamed self or society for their failures? Did they perceive the Mormon Church as an alternate avenue to plutocratic power and is that why they joined?

Unfortunately, Hansen does not cite a single contemporary journal, letter, or memoir to support his socioeconomic interpretation of the origins of Mormonism. Yet, if we are to understand what attracted antebellum Americans to the Mormon church, these primary sources must become our prime sources. What is needed is a full-scale demographic study of the origins of Mormonism.[48] By examining first-person conversion accounts, I have argued elsewhere, like Talmon, that the "religious factor" is considerable.[49] Mormonism did not generally appeal to the greatly impoverished and the ethos evoked was nowhere near what Norman Cohn has portrayed for the rootless poor of medieval Europe.[50] A reading of the sources evidences little frustration of any kind other than religious. These were an intensely devout people for whom the Holy Book was a much greater motivator than the pocketbook. Like their prophetic predecessor, Moses, they were prone to esteem "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the earth."[51]

There is also much to commend itself in the analysis by Gordon Leff that millenarian movements are primarily doctrinal and devotional protests. David L. Rowe, for one, has recently applied such a model to the Millerites of Upstate New York.[52] They were a protest movement, to be sure, but they were protesting clerical abuses and religious institutional impotency. If the Millerites wished to see the world destroyed, it was because it had deprived them of

spiritual, not economic opportunity. Rowe even suggests that this perspective could profitably be applied generally to "the rise of religious movements in the 1830's and 1840's":

> "Each was a rebellion against the churches," (he writes) "each eschewed sectarianism, charged the churches with dividing the 'body of Christ,' and condemned the clergy for lusting after worldly power and wealth. In turn, each of the dissenting sects proposed an alternative vehicle to meaningful, spiritual, cosmological, and salvationist experiences, in effect a restoration of the primitive church."[53]

Even the casual student of Mormonism will notice fruitful possibilities for examining Mormon origins in this light.

Though we have digressed briefly from a strict consideration of Mormon millenarianism to a consideration of the movement as a whole, it has been necessary to demonstrate the inadequacy of Hansen's model. In light of all that has been written in the past few decades we can only lament that he has not reconsidered his interpretation of Mormon millenarianism.

Finally, a word must be directed to the work of Ernest Tuveson and David Smith. In David Smith's 1965 historiographical essay on American millennial scholarship he labels Mormonism an "eccentric embodiment" of "the post-millennial ideal."[54] Three years later Ernest Tuveson in his Redeemer Nation admitted that "it is difficult to fit the Latter-day Saints into the pattern of millennialism . . . Yet, if they fit awkwardly into the full movement I

have described . . . they cannot be completely excluded either."[55] Both Smith and Tuveson feel compelled to place Mormonism closer to a postmillennial typology because the Saints

> "surround the Parousia with hopeful expectations about world progress; they certainly do not think that the course of history is one of increasing decline, which can be ended only by the personal intervention of the Lord; and their belief that 'Zion' is to be located somewhere in the American West," that "the New Jerusalem is to descend upon some specifically local place."[56]

There are major problems with such ideas. We have already seen the folly of considering Mormonism in any way as postmillennial. Even if that were not the case, millennial research since Tuveson has called into question the necessity of labeling a movement postmillennial because it anticipates a specific location for the New Eden. The premillennial Puritans that washed ashore with the Great Migration had definite ideas about a New England Zion long before the postmillennialist Edwardseans appropriated and expanded the vision of a local New Jerusalem.[57] On the other hand, Tuveson's characterization of Mormon thought as optimistic needs to be qualified in light of this study.[58] Especially in its earliest formulations, it is clear that Mormon millenarianism held out little hope for the generality of mankind. Rather, it was to "reprove the world" of all "their ungodly deeds." The optimistic rhetoric referred to Kingdom building possibilities within the community of gathered saints. For them, not the wicked around them, there was hope of creating a pure people. This

is a critical distinction. Commentators have varied in their perceptions of Mormonism depending on whether they notice its brooding pessimism or bucolic optimism. What seems to be a paradox is really not. The grim, declensionist pronouncements, aside from occasional reformations such as the one in 1856-57, have invariably been directed toward the world, the wicked Babylon. The Pelagian portrayals, however, were discussing possibilities only for the saints as they sought a prelibation of paradise. Again, it is evident that Mormonism is essentially premillennial due to its conception of the world's spiritual condition on the eve of Christ's coming.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this chapter, it is the dire necessity for scholars to both ground their work in primary sources and continually re-evaluate it in light of the latest literature of the field. Particularly in our studies of Mormon eschatology, it is apparent that we need to be reminded of this, and, hopefully, future work will reflect that reminder.

NOTES

[1]Louis G. Reinwand, "An Interpretive Study of Mormon Millennialism During the Nineteenth Century with Emphasis on Millennial Developments in Utah," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971); and, Klaus J. Hansen, Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967).

[2]Sandeen, Roots of Fundamentalism, p. 302.

[3]Clouse, ed., The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1977).

[4]Ibid., p. 7.

[5]Marsden, The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) p. 185.

[6]Sandeen, "Millennialism," in Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteeneth Century America (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 113.

[7]In addition to the works of Sandeen cited above, see also his article "Millennialism" in Encyclopedia Britannica, Macropaedia, 12:200-203. Marsden has already been noted. For the others: Timothy P. Weber, Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and, James W. Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), and "Searching for the Millennium: Problems for the 1790s and the 1970s," New England Quarterly 45 (June 1972): 241-261.

[8]Bercovitch, "The Typology of America's Mission," American Quarterly 30 (Summ 1978): 137.

[9]Moorhead, American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 8.

[10]Garrett, Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 7.

[11]Cit. in Davidson, "Searching for the Millennium," p. 252.

[12]D&C 88:84, 89-90.

[13]Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 277.

[14]Marsden, The Evangelical Mind, pp. 193-197.

[15]Sandeen, Roots of Fundamentalism, pp. 183-186; Weber, Living in the Shadow, pp. 65-81.

[16]Weber, Living in the Shadow, p. 67.

[17]Cit. in Marsden, The Evangelical Mind, p. 194.

[18]David E. Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship in America," American Quarterly 17 (1965):539.

[19]Weber, Living in the Shadow, p. 70.

[20]Ibid., p. 69.

[21]Rigdon, EMS.

[22]On p. 47 of his thesis, he speaks of the postmillennial conception (as he perceives it) that during the thousand years, the church would exert "political rule over all nations." For his ideas on postmillennialism being "quieter," see his last chapter (pp. 153-160) and passim.

[23]Cit. in Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium (New York:Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 3-4).

[24]Stephen J. Stein, ed., The Works of Jonathan Edwards 5: Apocalyptic Writings (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) pp. 378-398.

[25]Whalen, "Millenarianism and Millennialism in America, 1790-1880" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University College of New York at Stony Brook, 1971), p. 134n.

[26]C. C. Goen, "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology," Church History 28 (Mar 1959): 25-40; C. C. Goen, Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962); Stow Persons, American Minds; A History of Ideas (New York: Holt, 1958); Alan E. Heimert, Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

[27]Klaus J. Hansen, Mormonism and the American Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Chapter IV is found on pages 113-146. Hansen's 1973 article is

"Mormonism and American Culture: Some Tentative Hypotheses," in F. Mark McKiernan, et. al., The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), 1-25.

[28]For recent critiques of the "Kingdom School" interpretation of the Council of Fifty, see D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844-1945, "BYU Studies 20 (Winter 1980): 163-197; and Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth?: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," BYU Studies 20 (Spring 1980): 253-279.

[29]Hansen, Mormonism and the American Experience, p. 117.

[30]Ibid., p. 115.

[31]Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[32]Ibid., pp. 119, 121.

[33]Ibid., p. 122.

[34]Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (rev. ed.: Harmondsworth:Penguin Press, 1968); Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Reprinted; New York: Norton, 1965); Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed: A Study of Modern Messianic Cults (New York: Knopf, 1963); Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1957); and Hill, Antichrist in Seven-Century England (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[35]Hansen, Mormonism and the American Experience, pp. 120-121.

[36]Ibid., p. 230. The more recent studies are Schwartz, "The End of the Beginning: Millenarian Studies, 1969-1975," Religious Studies Review 2(July 1976): 1-15; and, Sweet, "Millennialism in America: Recent Studies,: Theological Studies 40(Sept 1979): 510-531.

[37]Ibid., p. 513.

[38]Ibid.,

[39]Lamont, Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-1660 (New York: St. Martins, 1969).

[40]Robert E. Lerner, The Heresy of the Free Sprirt in the Later Middle Ages (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), p. 233.

[41]Harrison, Quest for the New Moral World: Robert Owen and the Owenities in Brintian and America (New York: Scribner's, 1969). See also his The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1979).

[42]Talmon, "Millenarian Movements," European Journal of Sociology 7(1966):190.

[43]Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2 vols. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 1:1-7, 69-79.

[44]Hill, "Quest for Refuge: An Hypothesis as to the Social Origins and Nature of the Mormon Political Kingdom," Journal of Mormon History 2 (1975): 3-20.

[45]Quinn, "The Council of Fifty," p. 171.

[46]Schwartz, "The End of the Beginning," p. 7.

[47]Berkhofer, A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: Free Press, 1969).

[48]As a lone sample of what needs to be done on a much more comprehensive scale, see Laurence M. Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects of One Hundred Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1337," (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974).

[49]Underwood, "The Meaning and Attraction of Mormonism Re-Examined," The Thetean (Provo: Beta Iota Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, 1977), pp. 1-15. See also, Yorgason, Ibid.

[50]Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, 3d rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Yorgason, Ibid.

[51]Hebrews 11:26.

[52]Rowe, "A New Perspective on the Burned-Over District: The Millerites in Upstate New York," Church History 47 (Dec 1978): 408-420.

[53]Ibid., p. 411.

[54]Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship in America," p. 542.

[55]Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 175; Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship," p. 539.

[56] Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p. 176; and, Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship in America," p. 539.

[57]Bercovitch, "The Typology of America's Mission," pp. 135-155. See also his book The American Jeremiad (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

[58]Even Reinwand would agree on this. See his "An Interpretive Study," p. 12.

CONCLUSION

We conclude by returning to our original intent--to understand how familiar minds think unfamiliarly. Our exercise in intellectual empathy has indeed been profitable. We find ourselves in some ways quite different from our pioneering predecessors. Modern Mormon perceptions of society are pluralized rather than polarized; their ideas of judgment are more other-worldly than this-worldly; their feeling of imminence is less intense; and their conceptions of Zion, the gathering, and the "voice of warning" have greatly expanded and have been shorn of their apocalyptic-ism. Even more striking is the extent to which the early Saints, like the prophets of the Old Testament, accentuated the judgments and retribution which would accompany the Lord's advent.

While much has been learned, the full story of Mormon millenarianism is yet to be told. The small volume mentioned earlier that would trace it across all 150 years of church history still needs to be written. Both as doctrinal history and behavior determinant millenarianism is pregnant with possibilities. However nuances and subtleties of thought may have varied over the decades, Mormons have always maintained an abiding interest in the Second Coming. Appropriately, therefore, we close with these words from James Davidson:

The urge to bring on a day of reckoning--when heaven comes down to earth--is with us still, will always be with us. The lesson seems to be that if we try too hard to hasten that day, we are in peril of losing our humanity Yet surely we are equally in peril if we choose not to make the attempt at all.[1]

NOTES

[1]Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 241

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EARLY MORMON MILLENNIALISM:

ANOTHER LOOK

Grant Underwood

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ABSTRACT

Whether in its earliest or its most recent formulations, Mormon millennialism is essentially premillennial. At no time can it be considered postmillennial or amillennial. Along with a millenarian ideology, Latter-day Saints of the 1830s maintained a polarized perception of society and salvation. Apparently, it was not until the 1840s that Mormons began to explore the millennial implications of the "Vision" of the three degrees of glory. Other strands of thought unique to the earliest years of Mormonism are also considered. Furthermore, it is shown how millenarianism informed Mormon perceptions of Native Americans, missionary work, persecution, the Apostasy, and Zion. With the aid of recent scholarly studies of millenarianism in other religions and cultures, the early Mormon mind is set in a broad eschatological framework. Finally, recent attempts to explain Mormon millenarianism as a response to socioeconomic frustrations are found to be inadequate. Mormon millenarianism is better viewed as a religious response to doctrinal and spiritual frustration.

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