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The Political Character of Adventist Rhetoric Until the End of the Civil War

Jeffrey Boyd Smith

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Abstract

THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF ADVENTIST RHETORIC
UNTIL THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR
by
Jeffrey Boyd Smith

This thesis attempts to account for the emergence, development, and function of Seventh-day Adventist apocalyptic rhetoric within its social context. As the title indicates, the argument is that the rhetoric was political in character, having been derived from the apocalyptic rhetoric of American "civil religion," which originated in the colonial wars with the French during the eighteenth century. After tracing the formation of Adventist rhetoric from William Miller's preaching of the Second Coming to John N. Andrews's interpretation of the third angel's message found in Revelation 14, the author concludes with an analysis of this rhetoric's influence on Adventist behavior in regard to the preeminent political reform of the day: the abolition of slavery.

All primary sources employed will be familiar to historians of Adventism—and to many non-historians as well. The novelty of this study is the manner in which it relates these sources to a wider intellectual and social context, of which few who will read this paper will have been aware. For the recovery of this context, the author has relied heavily on several recent studies on American "civil religion," the citations of which may be found in the documentation.
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
Graduate School

THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF ADVENTIST RHETORIC
UNTIL THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR

by

Jeffrey Boyd Smith

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts
in History

December, 1983
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

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Acknowledgments

My debt to Dr. Jonathan Butler, who guided me throughout this study, and also through one that preceded it written at Claremont for undergraduate honors, is indeed large. It was he who steered me to the growing body of historical literature on American "civil religion" and millenarianism. All that was left for me then was to survey this literature and discern the manifold connections between it and Adventist rhetoric. I hope that this study may eventually bear greater fruit in Dr. Butler's own research and writing—though even this would by no means constitute adequate compensation.

Thanks are also due to Dr. Paul Landa, whose lectures on Church history equipped me with a background indispensable to the study of a modern religious movement such as nineteenth-century Adventism. Dr. Landa also gave his careful scrutiny to the final chapter of this thesis, which, in its original form, was written as a seminar paper under his direction.

Lastly, Dr. Frederick Hoyt should receive at least indirect credit for whatever good I have here done. For it was his classes on American History, which I took as a freshman at La Sierra, that led me to pursue whatever vague interests in this most glorious subject that I brought with me from Newbury Park Adventist Academy.
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Chapter One

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF AMERICAN REVIVALISM:
THE BACKGROUND OF ADVENTISM

The evidence is so clear, the testimony is so strong, that we live on the eve of the present dispensation towards the dawn of the Glorious Day, that I wonder why ministers and people do not wake up and trim their lamps... 'Behold the bridegroom cometh!'\(^1\)

William Miller

The Millennial Hope of the Republic

The kingdom of God has always been a central theme in American History, and this fact explains the inadequacy of the traditional division in American historiography between religion and politics; for, in America, eschatology has served as an ideology of state as well as of church. And never has the kingdom of God been emphasized more than it was in the revivalist preaching of the Second Great Awakening, which provided the social, intellectual, and political milieu for Millerism and later Adventism. Lyman Beecher, the transitional figure between the old-time New England Calvinism and the newer Western evangelicalism, expressed the common assumption of his day when he wrote confidently in A Plea for the West (1835) that the millennium would begin in America. The advance of the kingdom, he speculated, would come through "the rapid and universal extension of civil and religious liberty, introductory to the triumphs of universal Christianity. . . . By the march of revolution and

civil liberty, ... the way of the Lord is to be prepared."¹ Not every preacher was so blatantly political and imperialistic as Beecher, though it would not be an exaggeration to say that the American hope for a republican millennium lay at the heart of the Great Revival—so it was called—as its central concern.

Of the numerous examples one could cite, Alexander Campbell, leader of the Disciples of Christ, the largest church body indigenous to America, comes immediately to mind. In 1830 he renamed his journal the Millenial Harbinger, making it the prototype of the Millerite and Adventist periodicals and tracts printed in the decade to follow. In the prospectus for the renamed periodical, he wrote:

>This work shall be devoted to the destruction of Sectarianism, Infidelity, and Antichristian doctrine and practice. It shall have for its object the development, and introduction of the political and religious order of society called THE MILLENNIUM, which will be the consummation of that ultimate amelioration of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures.²

The mission of the revivals, then, consisted not only of seeking conversions but also of moral reform, personal and social and always within the context of republican liberty.

To be sure, the First Amendment to the Constitution effectively prevented the establishment of a national church, and even in the several states institutions of church and state were kept separate after


the last state church, the Congregationalist of Massachusetts, was disestablished in 1833. But one ought not to make the mistake of presuming that a formal separation of institutions implied a complete disjunction of spiritual and secular realms. In republican America the junction of interests that had always existed between church and state did not cease altogether, but rather was reformulated in a less formal and largely unconscious way; not the least of its effects being to make the study of American culture a truly baffling enterprise for any student so unfortunate as to attempt it. The First Amendment kept neither politics from the pulpit nor religion from the polls, but, ironically, seemed to encourage their mixing. The novel arrangements that resulted held far-reaching consequences for both spiritual and secular realms. If politics had the effect of diluting the Reformed doctrines cherished by New England's founders, religion also made politics a sacred profession, leading church historian Sidney Mead to place Abraham Lincoln—a politician—at "the spiritual center of American History."¹ The sacred tone of his orations, Biblical in phrasing and imagery, along with the tragic circumstances of his death, has obscured for most Americans the fact that President Lincoln was a politician.

This phenomenon, a de facto convergence of religion and politics, has recently acquired the label "civil religion."² Along side the religion of the European churches, which the settlers extended to the


New World, there developed in America a second tradition—a religion of the state, embracing the Whig ideology of freedom. But American state religion was not merely a sacralization of Jeffersonian political doctrine for it conflated the radical Whiggism of the American Enlightenment and Revolution with an older Puritan conception of Providence. By means of this conflation, Americans acquired a providential understanding of their own government and political processes; and, similarly, a political understanding of religion and its social functions.

The proponents of civil religion presented their synthesis of political theory and theology in the forms of history and eschatology. In these two forms of discourse, they hoped to provide the citizenry with a common understanding of both its origin and destiny. The keystone of this ideological edifice, uniting both politics and religion, past and future, was the doctrine of the millennium—the thousand years of peace prophesied in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation of St. John. So central was this doctrine to American culture—notwithstanding its manifold interpretations—that the two terms "civil religion" and "civil millennialism" may, in the American context, be used interchangeably. American civil religion was millenarian, and, conversely, the American version of the millennium was political. Hence, "civil millennialism" merits the attention of church as well as political historians; for, besides serving as an ideology of state, it was also preached from the pulpit as a means of enlisting the parishioner into a political program, thus inculcating republican as well as Christian duty. A pulpit so politicized, ipso facto, produced politicized doctrine, detectable not only in the Reformed churches, but even more so in the indigenous sects.
This interaction of religious and political doctrine was especially important in the development of those sects—Adventists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses—who justified their existence by a privileged understanding (a gnosis) of latter-day events. These groups, owing to their origin in a purely American context, were least constrained by Reformed orthodoxy and, hence, were freest to develop eschatologies with a special place for America in the providential scheme of things. But now let us leave aside these facile generalizations. Before discussing the relevance of "civil millennialism" to Adventism, we shall first need to say something about its origins and trace its development to the Millerite movement preceding the rise of Adventism.

The Development of Civil Millennialism in New England and the Northwest

The doctrine of the millennium received special attention in New England during the 1730's and 1740's in the preaching of the Great Awakening—the first wave of revivals in America. Jonathan Edwards elaborated an explicit, detailed and complicated postmillennial eschatology. In keeping with their Puritan heritage, Edwards and the New Lights directed their denunciations inward; viz., at spiritual backsliding within the community and at an "unconverted ministry." Like

1"Postmillennial" denotes the return of Christ to earth after the millennium, whereas "premillennial" means before it. Instead of these terms, some use "millennial" and "millenarian," respectively. The significance of this difference will be discussed later in the essay.

2The New Lights were the clergy who participated in the revivals; the Old Lights, those who opposed them, thinking them disruptive.

3It was Gilbert Tennant who began the attack upon an "unconverted ministry" in a sermon "The dangers of an Unconverted Ministry"—Old Lights, of course. (See Jonathan Butler for his thoughts on the dangers of a "converted ministry."
succeeding waves of revival that would later sweep the land, the Great Awakening began with a gloomy reflection on the declension of piety in the churches and then encouraged by individual conversions, proceeded to embrace the hope of global regeneration. Since before the turn of the century, both laity and clergy had been growing increasingly anxious because of the colonists' progressive departure from the ideals of New England's founders. The failure of Puritans to live up to their covenantal obligations, evidenced both by the growing preoccupation with commerce and litigation and by the fractious spirit they seemed to engender, evoked from the clergy stinging jeremiads.

The New England covenant was itself viewed as a renewal of the covenant of grace God had made with Abraham. For the colonial Puritans, the Abrahamic covenant had never lost its efficacy but was made continuous with the Christian era by its fulfillment in Christ's ministry. Accordingly, in each generation's renewal of the covenant of grace, the Puritans took as their model not Abraham, with whom the covenant was first made, but Moses, by whom it was first renewed in his farewell speech at the border of the Promised Land. In passage to Massachusetts on the Arabella, Jonathan Winthrop, first governor of the colony, ended his classic discourse by repeating the terms of the Deuteronomic covenant:

And to shutt vpp this discourse with that exhortacion of Moses that faithfull servant of the Lord in his last farewell to Israel Deut. 30. Beloued there is now sett before vs life, deathe and euill in that wee are Commanded this day to loue the Lord our God, and to loue one another to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commandements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may blesse vs in the land whether wee goe to possesse it: But
if our hearts shall turne away soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced and Worshipp . . . other Gods our pleasures, and proffitts, and serue them; it is propounded vnto vs this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast Sea to possesse it;

Therefore lett vs choose life, that wee, and our Seed, may liue; by obeying his voyce, and cleauing to him, for hee is our life, and our prosperity."

The imagery of a dying Moses, encouraging and admonishing the Israelites as they prepared to cross over Jordan into the Promised Land, was ever upon the Puritan mind, and the Deuteronomic covenant served as a Biblical paradigm for New England ministers to imitate. The other Old Testament paradigm frequently employed by the Puritan minister was the jeremiad. The two usually went together with the jeremiad serving as a rhetorical instrument by which a preacher admonished his parishioners to live up to their covenantal responsibilities, usually defined by a minister in the broadest manner possible. By 1700, reaffirmation of the covenant, accompanied by the threat of divine judgment should the covenant be broken, had become almost a ritual in New England congregations, methodically and frequently reenacted.

It was during the Anglo-French conflicts, beginning in 1745, that New England ministers found a novel use for the Puritan jeremiad. In


2On this point the author is indebted to the case argued by Nathan Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), on whom he has drawn heavily for his discussion on civil millenialism.
the place of human depravity, they made the enemy its focus, and instead of spiritual introspection, resistance against an alien aggressor its desired objective. This change in direction of the jeremiads (inward to outward) and the substitution of their target (an outward for an inward threat) might not in themselves seem striking, had not a far greater change lay behind them. In truth, these homiletic innovations signified a revolution in New Englanders' self-understanding, which involved the formulation of both a national eschatology (civil millennialism) and a new myth of origin. The theater of the Puritan drama of conflict, between cosmic forces of good and evil, shifted from the community to the battlefield. Christ and Satan fought not now over souls but rather the allegiance of nations. Unlike Edwards and the New Lights who sought to establish the kingdom of God on earth through the spiritual response of individuals to the preaching of the Gospel, the newer, more political colonist would now do it with arms. Hence, eschatology became politicized in a way that Puritans had never intended.

Following the lead of Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformers identified the pope as the antichrist, the horrific, ten-horned beast of Revelation, whose mark was apostacy. During the Anglo-French conflicts, "popery" came to represent for the American colonists a quality of French national character. In this first major revision of eschatology since the Reformation, the colonists reidentified the antichrist as the civil tyranny of Catholic France, which threatened the colonists' liberties protected under the British constitution. As Nathan Hatch writes, "Satan had redirected his evil power through another agency, that of op-

1 Nathan Hatch, Sacred Cause, pp. 40, 44-46.
pressive and arbitrary civil governments.1 By the mid-1700's, the associations of France with the antichrist had become frequent. The defeat of French popery by an all-Protestant, British coalition would signal the "fall of Babylon" and herald the coming of "a new heaven and new earth."2

The millennium predicted by the British colonists was not the age of piety that Edwards and the New Lights had hoped would follow the mass conversions. Rather, they awaited the triumph of civil liberty as defined in the radical Whig tradition that was popular in the colonies.3 As preaching became politicized, with the jeremiad assuming the form of a battle hymn to inspire resistance, the colonists' very concept of Providence acquired political connotations. They fought for "the cause of liberty," the victory of which had been preordained. Accordingly, the terms of the covenant were altered, and the Puritan mission, the "errand into the wilderness," was recast as the "sacred cause of liberty." In the colonists' new myth of national origin, the Puritans made their perilous voyage across the Atlantic, as every schoolboy thinks he knows, to live in liberty, free from Stuart tyranny. Hence, during the time of war, the colonists' covenantal responsibilities came to include taking up arms to preserve their rights as Englishmen, for which they supposed their ancestors had so bravely risked their lives to secure in the American wilderness.4 One can be sure that the Puritan settlers would have been aghast

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1Ibid., p. 17.
2For example, see the prediction made by the Virginian Samuel Davies, quoted in Hatch, Sacred Cause, p. 41.
3Hatch, Sacred Cause, pp. 44, 63-64.
4Ibid., pp. 44-46, 77.
to learn of this recasting of their history, for they had left England, if for anything, to escape from liberty, so that a genuinely Biblical community—"a city upon a hill"—might be established.

Thus, in the midst of strife with Catholic France, America's "civil religion" and "civil millennialism" were born, and her myth of origin and vision of destiny formulated, which would serve generations to come. In the Revolutionary era, the symbols of the revised eschatology retained their political meaning, but the symbols' referents changed: monarchical and episcopal England substituted for papal France as the antichrist, and free and Protestant America filled the role Britain had vacated—that of the persecuted women of Revelation 13, who fled to the wilderness to take refuge from the dragon's oppressive tyranny (i.e., Charles I and his Arminian bishops). This shift began with the Stamp Act and was consummated by the Quebec Act, along with Parliament's attempt to create an American bishopric, both of which many colonists interpreted as a willful extension of popery.¹ The American victory over British monarchy (while in truth more a victory over Parliament) confirmed the Patriots' belief that Republican America was indeed God's new Israel, His chosen instrument to liberate the world from oppressive regimes. Republican eschatology was, thus, unabashedly postmillennial: human effort would attain the kingdom of God in America, as the struggle for liberty proceeded according to providential design.²

In founding the new nation, the Patriots looked to classical Greece and Rome as their only two models for republican virtue. While examples

¹Ibid., pp. 51, 60-61.

²Ibid., pp. 89-90.
taken from antiquity seemed to legitimate the American experiment, their short duration boded ill for the young republic. At its very outset, the fall of Greece and Rome warned Americans of the ominous fate that would be theirs should morals become corrupted.\textsuperscript{1} During the Revolution, rationalists and churchmen alike accepted the Whiggish presumption that virtue depended upon freedom; but, in the Federalist era, freedom having been won, the order was reversed, and the jeremiad regained its inward attack against immorality in the community. The New England clergy now denounced vice as the first step toward political corruption, which, following the path of Rome, would eventually lead to the loss of liberty.\textsuperscript{2}

The Federalist clergy thus proved that the jeremiad in its republican form could wear two edges: one for an outward thrust to fend off civil tyranny, real or alleged; another for an inward thrust directed at sin.\textsuperscript{3} The latter function could adopt an Edwardsian tone, yet its objective differed in that virtue was commanded as civic duty, to prevent the loss of liberty. Accordingly, ministers in the 1790s stressed Christian virtue in the administrations of the Deist Washington and the Unitarian Adams.\textsuperscript{4} Americans of the next century, thanks to a raconteur, Parson Weems, would grow up believing that George Washington, the man who married for money, could not tell a lie.

The belief that personal vice threatened public welfare derived in part from the Puritan conception of the state was the "body politic,"

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 105.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 81.

\textsuperscript{3}For this metaphor the author acknowledges the marginal notes that Professor Butler penciled into the library's copy of ibid.

\textsuperscript{4}Hatch, \textit{Sacred Cause}, p. 121.
according to which there was no such thing as a private sin. All vice
was corporate in nature and thus affected the entire "body" like a
disease, so that the whole community might suffer from the misconduct of
one. As the clergyman Samuel Macclintock wrote, blasphemy, swearing,
and idleness were "diseases of the political body, which prey upon its
very vitals, and by certain, tho' insensible degrees, bring on its
dissolution."\(^1\) It was this conception of sin and virtue, as corporeal
entities bearing on the public welfare, that provided the framework for
the preaching of the nineteenth-century revivals, and also for the
reform movements that followed them.

The Bavarian Illuminati scare illustrates the manner in which the
Federalist clergy related moral corruption to despotic government. In
1789 Reverend Jedidiah Morse disclosed to his Boston congregation that a
secret society of anarchists had successfully plotted the French Revolu-
tion and planned next to introduce a social revolution into America as a
way to subvert its government. Among those who helped spread the panic
were David Tappan, professor of divinity at Harvard, and Yale's presi-
dent Timothy Dwight.\(^2\) In the same vein, Chauncy Lee inquired, "whether
there be virtue enough in human nature to support a free Republican gov-
ernment."\(^3\) Infidelity and immorality, it was assumed, naturally led to
anarchy and then tyranny.\(^4\)

\(^1\)From *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable the Council* (Portsmouth,
NH, 1784), pp. 34-35; quoted in ibid., p. 111.


\(^3\)Hatch, *The Tree of Knowledge of Political Good and Evil*, (Bennington,

\(^4\)The Red Scare of the 1950s provides a more recent illustration of
the appeal that this formula holds for Americans. Many assumed that
Even if the federal Constitution had not made provision for a national church, religion was still assigned a crucial role to play in maintaining the new government.

Before falling into the trap of mistaking the postmillennial expectancy found in the Second Great Awakening for an outburst of romantic optimism or, worse yet, for the popular flowering of an Enlightened vision of progress, let one first take note that belief in an imminent millennium was never more fervently held than by the Federalist clergy in the period between the Revolution and 1800, when it was commonly assumed that popular piety had reached its nadir.1 The millennial hope was espoused most vigorously by the same class of individuals who decried moral corruption, the spread of deism, and any whom they suspected associated with the French Revolution. Concerning such seemingly contradictory expressions of the Federalist clergy, Hatch writes:

The question of how churchmen could rejoice in the unprecedented success of the kingdom while their own churches lay devastated by the enemy suggests a reordering of their allegiance from ecclesia to polis.2

The answer, Hatch suggests, can be gotten from the clergy's republican eschatology. As the stone which toppled the Babylonish image of Nebu-

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1For examples Hatch refers to sermons on the coming of Christ's kingdom by David Tappan (Salem, 1783), Ezra Stiles (New Haven, 1783), Joseph Eckley (Boston, 1792), John Mellen (Boston, 1797), Jeremy Belknap (Boston, 1798), and Nathan Strong (Hartford, 1798). Sacred Cause, p. 147.

2Hatch, Sacred Cause, pp. 147-48.
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chadnzzar's dream, the American Revolution became for them the central event in redemptive history. In other words, the coming of Christ's kingdom would be so closely tied to the progress of the Republic, that the churches hardly mattered.

Perhaps the New England clergy could logically account for their millennial faith in the face of popular impiety; yet, even so, how could one then explain civil millennialism's perpetuation in the Great Revival, which made piety the chief issue again? The revivalists explicitly sought individual conversions to bring about the millennium, even if it was to be civil or republican in character. Might it not be the case that the clergy never solved for themselves the puzzle of how the kingdom could be so near at the moment when antichristian forces were threatening to fell the Republic?

Even the Great Revival, notwithstanding its grandiose desire for social perfection, seemed to open on a note of doom sounded by the Federalists. The very idea of "revival" presupposes declension, just as "conversion" presupposes a former state of wickedness. The dual purpose of the Revival was to bring backsliders back into the fold and to save the Republic from disorder, anarchy, infidelity, vice, and barbarism on the frontier. At the dawn of the new century, the clergy prescribed "revival" as an antidote for national survival, calling it a social and political necessity. What began as a mission to recover the lost sheep somehow became caught up in a drive for moral perfection, and the sober task of rescuing the nation from the brink of moral disaster confused with the exhuberant hope to build the kingdom of God in America. Indeed,

1Ibid., pp. 148-49.
pessimism and optimism often seem to spring from the same root, each sharing a greater genetic resemblance with the other than either has with more quiescent states of mind.

The main point of the foregoing is that one can find continuity between the Federalist and Jacksonian eras, if one looks for it. The New England clergy brought to the revivals from their Edwardsian-cum-republican tradition a mixture of optimism and pessimism in their rhetoric. The precedent for such a formula can be found in Jonathan Winthrop's affirmation of the Puritan covenant (i.e., a reaffirmation of the Mosaic covenant), which held out both the promise of prosperity for its fulfillment and the threat of punishment for its breaching:

wee are Commanded this day to loue the Lord our God, ... and to keepe his Commandements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may bless vs in the land whether wee goo to possesse it: but if our heartes shall turne away soe that wee will not obey ... wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast Sea to possesse it ...  

According to Lyman Beecher's articulation of the covenant, Americans would "perishe" by failing to maintain a republican government through the revival of spirituality. The Constitution provided only an external covenant: one that could regulate works but not create faith. Only a revival—individual conversions followed by moral reform—could restore the inner soul of the nation, on which its survival depended.

Lyman Beecher set forth his faith in an imminent millennium—a republican millennium—most fervently and unabashedly in A Plea for the West. Under the heading "The Necessity of Revivals of Religion to the Perpetuity of our Civil and Religious Institutions," he posited that the dangers confronting the Revival arose "from our vast extent of terri-
tory, our numerous and increasing population, from diversity of local interests, the power of unselfishness, and the fury of sectional jealousy and hate." This most prominent revivalist to come from the New England clergy believed that it was necessary to work for the millennium in order to preserve the bare minimum of social order, to save the country from barbarism on the frontier, from unholy passions of lust and greed which its unconfining spaciousness and apparently limitless resources seemed to abet.

Although the "New Divinity" Congregationalists and "New School" Presbyterians may have given the Revival its republican ideology, it was the Pietists who contributed its form. Without an established church, the clergy could only increase membership through voluntary means. Since the Pietists had always held the dissenting position that one's standing in Christ's Church rested chiefly on an experience of conversion, which no state could coerce, they were best prepared for the separation of church and state in national government and the disestablishment of state churches which followed. Many of them had, since the Great Awakening, become Baptists after the state churches proved too inhospitable. The Baptists were the ideal denomination for republican

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1 Quoted in Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1966), p. 69. Miller has especially argued for the Great Revival as a popular movement to establish national unity, but he tended to view it as a break with tradition and not as the perpetuation of some old themes in a new form, as we have tried to show here.

2 As the theorists for the revivalists clergy, the New Divinity men at Yale, represented by the likes of Nathaniel Taylor and Lyman Beecher, made several concessions to Arminianism which allowed more room for human effort in seeking conversions. The Old School Presbyterian clergy, i.e., the hold-outs for Calvinist orthodoxy, eventually found their champion in Charles Hodge at Princeton Seminary.

3 Sidney Mead, *Lively Experiment*, p. 38.
government, for, in the doctrine of believers' baptism, they made the separation of church and state a theological as well as a practical imperative. As might be expected, then, it was the Baptists, Methodists, and sectarian groups who enjoyed early success in the Republic, and, even more important, who provided the Great Revival with the voluntary forms of religion from which the techniques of modern revivalism were taken.

During the Revolutionary epoch, Pietists and rationalists, both favoring religious freedom, formed a temporary alliance to wage battle against the established churches—Episcopal in the South and Congregationalist in New England. Pietists concurred with the rationalists that the churches had perverted the pure teaching of Jesus. But once the revolution in ecclesiastical and state relations was complete (an experiment as daring and monumental as the Republic itself), the churches had little to do but accept it.¹ That barrier between the Reformed churches removed, the Pietists dissolved their uneasy alliance with the rationalists, and realigned themselves with the New England clergy in its attack on the Deists' denial of revelation.²

But accepting religious freedom did not mean giving up the conservative assumption that "the existence and well-being of any society depends upon the body of commonly shared religious beliefs," as Sidney Mead has written, "only that the institution(s) responsible for their inculcation must not have the coercive power of the state behind it (or them). The essence of the revolution was, then, the rejection of coercion

¹Ibid., pp. 38, 47-48, 61.
²Ibid., p. 128.
in favor of persuasion."¹ The "revival," the itinerants and New School men theorized, was to be that persuasive form which would provide Americans with a common set of meanings, goals, experiences, and not least of all, a shared sense of destiny.

Most renowned of all persuasive speakers was Charles Grandison Finney, the lawyer-evangelist who revolutionized the art of preaching with his "new measures." They included addressing sinners in his audience in the second person, bringing the "convicted" to the "anxious bench" up front where they were made to endure Finney's relentless scrutiny, women testifying and praying in public, and the "protracted meeting"—a community-wide revival campaign that served as a counterpart to the campmeeting on the frontier.² The new measures offered no new theological doctrines but were intended as improvements in the technique of inducing mass conversions. Finney, a former trial lawyer, may have been the first preacher to market Christianity consciously and unapologetically in capitalistic America.

**William Miller's Alternative to Republican Eschatology**

William Miller's career as an evangelist paralleled Finney's in more ways than one. Both grew up in upstate New York and ultimately realized their greatest success there, both rose to stature by means of sheer native intelligence, and neither received seminary training. Before preaching, Miller had been a soldier and a farmer, and though not a

¹Ibid., p. 63.

lawyer like Finney, nonetheless betook himself to solve the enigmas of biblical prophecy with all the shrewdness of a layman's lawyer-like logic. And, most significant, both Finney and Miller abandoned worldly careers after experiencing conversion and receiving heaven's call to pursue "the Lord's work." Finney quit a case just as it was about to go to court: "Deacon B____, he told his client on the morning of his fire-baptism, "I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and I cannot plead yours." With equal conviction, Miller, after reconversion, replied to the taunting of his deist friend, "Give me time, and I will harmonize all those apparent contradictions to my own satisfaction or remain a deist still."2

But the theories that Miller came to espouse after years of assiduous study have led many to view him as Finney's antithesis. Flushed with the rapid success of the revivals, Finney preached in 1835 that the millennium could be realized in America in just three years if the church would do its duty.3 The entire populace of the nation would convert and the rest of the world follow, he confidently preached.4 Miller seemed to contradict such aspirations when he began preaching in 1831 that Christ would make a personal return around 1843 to judge the world,

1Ibid., p. 142.
gathering up the faithful while leaving the wicked to suffer the full measure of divine vengeance.\(^1\) One camp seemed to be saying that America would realize a temporal millennium through social amelioration; the other, that the world was on an ineluctable course to destruction. But this division into discrete categories is too simple and based upon a superficial reading of the sources. Doubtless, premillennialism and postmillennialism are two distinct doctrines, but the distinction has not been well understood by historians. In the early nineteenth century neither doctrine stood for a simple-minded pessimism or a starry-eyed optimism.

In the case of Millerism, only late in the movement did its preachers draw particular attention to the divine vengeance which was to be poured out upon the wicked; and even then the real threat to unbelievers was their exclusion from the kingdom while all the saints enjoyed a share in its rule.\(^2\) During the 1830s Miller found the signs of the times hopeful. Like every other millennial harbinger of his day, Miller interpreted the rapid spreading of the Revival as evidence of the kingdom's imminence:

> See the missionary spirit extending from east to west and from north to south, warning the breast of the philanthropist, giving

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2. As a matter of fact, several Millerites, and Seventh-day Adventists after them, tempered their preaching of the last Judgment with a doctrine of annihilation of the wicked, instead of eternal hell-fire. See, for example, Josiah Litch's statement quoted by John N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists with Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Adventist Cause from 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference Assn. of SDA, 1892), p. 47.
life and vigour to the cold hearted moralist, and animating and
enlivening the social circle of the pious devotee. Every nation,
from India to Oregon, from Kamtskatka to New Zealand, have been
visited by these wise servants (as we hope) of the cross, pro-
claiming 'the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of ven-
geance of our God,' carrying the Lamp, the word of God in their
hands, and oil, faith in God, in their hearts.1

The second advent would be a "day of vengeance" only for the five lost
virgins in the parable,2 who were not awakened by the revivals sweeping
the land; but the other five would surely find the return of the Bride-
groom an occasion for great rejoicing. Euphoria and dread would exist
side by side on that glorious and awful day.

William Miller's date-setting might best be viewed as an extension
of Finney's new measures; for, throughout his career as an evangelist,
Miller's main goal was always the salvation of souls. His theories
began to take hold in New England and New York after Finney had achieved
his greatest successes, when in fact the Great Revival was in a state of
decline. Around 1835, certainly by 1840, the preaching of prominent
evangelists shifted to denouncing the declension in piety, which, they
supposed, had resulted from the acquisitive spirit of commerce. In
these years one also finds a growing antipathy of the pastoral clergy
toward the itinerants. Even the benevolent societies came under attack:
some thought the missionary and reformist institutions were diverting
energies from the primary goal of spiritual regeneration.3 As Perry
Miller (no relation to William) observed, it was amidst such anxious un-

1William Miller, Evidences from Scripture and History of the Second
Coming of Christ About the Year A.D. 1843, and of His Personal Reign of
1000 Years (Brandon, VT: Vermont Telegraph Office, 1833), p. 105.

2Matthew 25:1-12.

3Cf. Perry Miller, Life of the Mind, pp. 75-84.
certainty—a vague yet gnawing suspicion that at the Revival's end no kingdom was to be found—that the drive to perfect the means for inducing revivals was launched. Finney gave the new measures systematic expression in his Lectures on Revivals, published in 1835, and, although Miller began working on his theories a decade before then, they did not gain their wide popularity until after 1840. When the nation began to doubt whether the millennium would come, Miller preached that it must; for prophecy had preordained its day!

Indeed, when Miller began preaching, he viewed his own efforts as the culmination of the revivals and reform movements. Sabbath schools, temperance and other reforms, tract societies, the translation and broad distribution of the Bible, all of these Miller said stood for the trimming of the virgins' lamps in preparation for the Bridegroom's coming. The first angel's message of Revelation 14, later looked upon as an announcement of judgment, was initially interpreted by Millerite preachers as the herald of spiritual progress. Josiah Litch wrote of it:

The missionary angel, which has so swiftly flown through the earth for the last forty years, scattering light and life in all his path. These extraordinary efforts commenced about the time of the fall of popery, 1798, and have been gaining strength and influence from that to the present time.

The judgment announced by the angel, according to Litch, was on the pope:

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1Ibid., pp. 75-76.


his loss of temporal power during the French Revolution.

Thus, when Miller and his associates began preaching, they stressed the covenant's fulfillment rather than its brokenness. The revivals, missions, and reform societies had succeeded in spreading the everlasting gospel throughout the land, so that now Jesus could come—nay, would come on the day preordained! Their view of history was thoroughly progressive. For the first time in earth's history, in the modern era, the world was ready for Christ to come and redeem his own, so they thought.

Miller made his calculation on the basis of a prophecy given in Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Assuming that each day in prophetic time represented a year,1 and beginning at 457 B.C., the year Artaxerxes of Persia issued his first decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, Miller arrived at 1843 as the year of Jesus' return. Then the deceased saints would arise from their graves and with the living saints meet Him in the air, while the earth was purged with fire. Thereafter the saints would descend and rule with Christ on earth for a thousand years until the second resurrection, at which time the wicked would regain life and Satan be let loose again. The dénouement would come when Christ's army triumphed over Satan and those whom he deceived into waging war against the saints, casting them down for ever into hell.2

Miller began delivering lectures on his theories in 1831, but not until an associate, Joshua V. Himes, started publishing the Signs of the

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1 This practice was followed by both Puritan and Anglican expositors in the Elizabethan church. See, for example, John Foxe's prophetic calculations in Norskov Olsen, John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 53-100.

2 Bliss, Memoirs, pp. 72-75.
Times out of Boston in 1840 did he gain a following that would merit the term "movement." Circulation grew rapidly and Himes, who became the chief promoter after joining Miller in 1839, began scheduling him to tour the cities. In November, 1842, Himes started another paper in New York, the Midnight Cry; then later helped found others in Rochester, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Montreal; and even published a hymnal, The Millennial Harp. At the movement's peak, Miller himself thought there might be as many as fifty thousand adherents to his doctrine.

Although Millerite evangelists initially strove to reach the widest possible audience, and despite their best efforts to keep the movement ecumenical and non-sectarian, they inevitably met with hostility from the churches. As the year 1843 approached, the words of the first angel (Rev. 14:6, 7) turned into a polemic against postmillennialism. In an address delivered to a conference assembled in Boston, Henry Dana Ward exemplified the shift in emphasis from "conversion" to "judgment":

The flying angel carries the gospel to all nations, for a warning to them that dwell on the face of the earth. The angel does not say, 'Give glory to God for the time of the world's conversion

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2Professor Dick thinks this number is too low (Dick, "Adventist Crisis," pp. 267-69). Winthrop Hudson speculates that those "skeptically expectant" could have numbered as many as one million. See Hudson, Religion in American Life, p. 196. It is thus obvious that Miller was no unknown.

3Cf. Joshua Himes's statement quoted by Francis Nichol, Midnight Cry, p. 123.

4On this point and others following, the author acknowledges his debt to P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations, p. 45.
is come!'--although this is the idea the God of this world con-
tinues to infuse into the hearts of the Lord's people . . . .

But this is the word of the flying angel uttered with a loud
voice, saying, 'Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour
of his judgment is come.'

In 1842 and 1843, as the awaited day approached, as both Millerite
and anti-Millerite sentiment rose to a climax, and as the Millerites
grew increasingly conscious of their status of a dissenting minority,
they came to interpret the first angel's message in Revelation 14 almost
exclusively as a judgment-hour message, serving at once as an indictment
of all those who would not hear and a final plea to any who yet might.

As P. Gerard Damsteegt noted, "it was in the context of the contemporary
polemical situation that the message of the first angel of Revelation 14
was historicized and considered as a symbolic representation of the
Millerite missionary experience," and that the "judgment-hour angel
became such a strong eschatological motivation for the Millerite mis-

In the face of opposition--not a sword of persecution to be
sure, but that far more capricious force known as public opinion--
Millerism assumed a character of self-conscious dissention and its
prophetic tone, which have since composed its chief legacy to Seventh-
day Adventists. And it was this development that gave Millerism and
Adventism their much-maligned reputation as doom-sayers.

Miller initially opposed assigning too specific a date, but in mid-
1842, after some prodding, he settled on the ancient Jewish year, March
21, 1843, to March 21, 1844, to establish a deadline. Then, in July,

1Henry Dana Ward, "To the Conference of Christians Expecting the
Lord's Appearing Convened in Boston, 30th Nov., 1841," Signs of the
Times, Jan. 1, 1842, pp. 146.

2Damsteegt, Foundations, p. 46.
1843, the already frenzied expectancy was further heightened when Charles Fitch began preaching on a text in Revelation 18:

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicasies.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.¹

"Babylon," for Fitch, included all established churches, Catholic and Protestant alike, because all had rejected the true scriptural doctrine of Christ's personal coming and reign (as opposed to a merely "spiritual" reign).² The Millerite leaders divided over Fitch's extreme come-outer position, some withdrawing from their churches while others—including Miller himself a Calvinist Baptist—stayed.³

Come-outerism spread like a brush fire among the Millerite ranks after the deadline, March 21, 1844, expired. Miller confessed his error and very much desired to abandon altogether the impulse to set deadlines; for, however effective in the short run, evangelism of this kind—all would learn shortly—was ultimately self-destructive. But the pace quickened yet another step when S.S. Snow thought he discovered an error in the manner of reckoning, and moved the deadline forward to

¹Revelation 18:2-4, KJV, author's emphasis.


October 22, 1844, which started a new "seventh-month movement." Eventually, yet not until late September, Miller and the rest of his colleagues affirmed Snow's revision. Meanwhile, many Millerites, among them Ellen Gould Harmon and her family, were forced out of their churches. A torrent of persecution broke out just before October 22; riotous mobs tore down and burned several churches. Everett Dick wrote of a group of Millerites in Canada that "upon meeting in private homes, mobs gathered and fired guns near the house; and threw stones and clubs through windows, wounding some believers." Hence, Millerites came out as they were forced out: Babylon did not want them.

Besides apostasy, Charles Fitch identified several other marks of Babylon: her pride and desire for power and wealth, her spirit of oppression manifested by proslavery sentiment in the churches (of which we shall have much to say in the final chapter). Joseph Marsh, on the other hand, approached the matter etymologically, claiming that Babylon was characterized by confusion as well as oppression. Obviously then, the "daughters of Babylon" must refer to the Babel-like multiplicity of Protestant sects and creeds, all springing from the "MOTHER OF HARLOTS," the Roman Catholic Church. Combining both insights, George Storrs argued that since "organization" was inherently oppressive, and "creeds" inherently divisive, all churches were Babylonish by nature. In his

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view, organization inevitably led to confusion, a notion which Adventists later would have to fight vigorously to overcome.

But however many reasons were added to Fitch's, his essential message was not altered, nor would be altered by Adventists who succeeded Miller. "If you are a Christian, come out of Babylon! If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, come out of Babylon, and come out NOW!" By so equating Christianity with Millerism, Charles Fitch, in effect, made the acceptance of Millerite apocalyptic-eschatological doctrines a requirement for salvation, and thereupon laid the foundation for "shut-door" theories held by Adventists after the collapse of the seventh-month movement. And by insisting that true believers disassociate themselves from Protestant "sects," Fitch, Marsh, and Storrs unwittingly promoted a far more thorough-going sectarianism than any of them realized.

To what extent Millerites dissent from the mission of the Revival? Finney himself wrote a cordial critique of Miller's theories in the Oberlin Evangelist, asserting that Miller erred in his denial of an earthly kingdom achievable through human effort. A writer for the Old-School Calvinist Princeton Review was downright hostile toward premillennialists:

They sneer contemptuously at the Church's professed hope of converting the world by the agency of Bible and missionary societies, or by any diffusion of truth, or in any possible way in which the church can now convey the gospel to mankind.

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3 McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, p. 106.

On the other side of the debate, Miller and his colleagues could claim that Scripture backed their argument. True to his Calvinist upbringing, Miller assailed the revivalists for the perfectionism implied by their mission to achieve a temporal millennium. The cleansing of a soul from all sin and pollution will never be accomplished, Miller taught, until the Resurrection, when "vile bodies shall be changed." Those, "who pretend to be wholly sanctified are following the traditions of men," for it is wrong to presume that we "are actually enjoying all the promises now, and are not in need of further work of grace."

To counter charges of heresy and fanaticism, Millerite preachers sometimes took the offensive by asserting that tradition was on their side, that the premillennial advent was in fact an orthodox doctrine. In a speech to a conference in Boston in 1840, Henry Dana Ward called the doctrine of "a spiritual millennium in this world's flesh," having been popular for little over a century, a complete novelty in Christendom.

So firmly planted has this new faith become in all the churches of America, that never a religious newspaper of high standing with its own sect can easily be found, in New York or Boston, to admit an article into their columns, boldly questioning this proud Philistine, which has seized the arc of our faith, and now defies the arc of Israel. Ward objected to "this proud Philistine," postmillennialism, because he found it too closely resembling secular doctrines of progress and, therefore, a notion foreign to orthodox Christianity.

As a matter of record, the view of classical eschatology is "amillennialism," if Augustine is to be our standard. This doctrine rejects

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1 Quoted in Bliss, Memoirs, pp. 236-37.

altogether the idea of an earthly millennium in favor of a "spiritual" kingdom—the notion Ward assailed—which Christ established in His Church on earth. Most of the Protestant Reformers, who, being good Erastians, saw Constantine as the model Christian prince, affirmed rather than challenged Augustine's theories on the Church, state, and kingdom of God in history. The traditional doctrine that Ward really had in mind was that of Stuart Puritanism. The premillennial idea, Norskov Olsen says, began to be advocated at the close of Elizabeth's reign, and it became increasingly popular as Puritan opposition to the monarchy waxed and fondness for the Constantinian church waned.

The idea of an earthly millennium was proposed by an English divine, Daniel Whitby, in the early eighteenth century, and not long thereafter superseded the doctrine of a premillennial advent in England and America. But if indeed postmillennialism's attraction, especially in the form of civil religion, was early associated with an Enlightened view of progress, when preached in a revivalist context the doctrine took on a quite different hue that was more in keeping with the romantic character of the age. Jacksonian revivalists and reformers did not push a rational program of gradual ameliorization, as even some Millerites accused them of doing; for, like the premillennialists, they taught that the kingdom was at hand. The student of Millerism must take care not to become so engrossed in its debate that he not be able to evaluate it critically. In all of the debate over the divinely appointed means to bring about the millennium, the stress invariably lay on its imminence. All sides argued from the common assumption of the age (much like that

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1 Olsen, *John Foxe*, p. 77.

2 Ibid., pp. 83-87.
of our own) that something cataclysmic was about to occur.¹

In the idiom of apocalypse, any reform advocated, whether personal or social or whether by evangelical or adventist or unitarian, was demanded of society immediately, and any gradualist solution was preemp- torily rejected as devious. Most editors of the Millerite periodicals gained their journalistic experience working for abolitionist or temperance papers. Before joining Miller, George Storrs had lectured on the abolitionist circuit, Henry Jones had worked as an agent for the circulation of temperance papers, Charles Fitch had authored an abolitionist pamphlet, Joseph Bates had helped organize both the Fairhaven Temperance Society in Massachusetts, and Joshua V. Himes had assisted William Lloyd Garrison in setting up abolitionist meetings in his own Chardon Street Chapel in Boston. Nathaniel Southard, who succeeded Himes as editor of the Midnight Cry, had served as acting editor of the Emancipator.²

Perhaps these individuals had become disenchanted with the prospects of immediate social reform, for the problem of slavery proved especially intractable; perhaps they had grown doubtful of the prospects of achieving Paradise on earth, and only at that point left their posts in the reform organizations to join Miller in proclaiming the Reform to end all reforms; but whatever the motivations of Miller's colleagues, their former involvement in social reform proves beyond reasonable doubt that the stock from which they came was the same from which most other Jacksonian revivalists and reformers had come. Certainly they were not


Calvinist traditionalists simply reacting to the optimism of the age.

As has been noted, the Great Revival began on the premise that the country needed reviving; likewise, the movements to reform proceeded on the assumption that society in its present form was unacceptable: the mission of both, revival and reform, was to awaken people from the moral lethargy and spiritual stupor into which they had fallen. The participants played for high stakes, for implied by the argument that only revival and reform could save the nation was the unfortunate corollary that failure to revive and reform would inevitably result in doom. One may discern in the rhetoric of antebellum reform movements a pervasive anxiety, a presentiment that judgment was near and the great experiment in democratic government coming to an abrupt end. Even in the reformist rhetoric itself, so firmly set upon Pelagian foundations, one finds the almost fatalistic assumption that human nature was fundamentally irreformable, and that, hence, all efforts to reform were doomed.

Millerism, in its late development, and later Adventism were popular outbursts of that pervasive anxiety and latent pessimism which characterized the antebellum of American history, but which only a few dared to disclose. If one finds optimism in the 1840s and 50s, it must be seen as an optimism in the face of uncertainty about the future, for the times were not good. Despite a growing abolitionist movement, slavery became more entrenched in the American economy, in both South and North, year by year. By 1840 the financial panic of 1837 had trans-

1For a very shrewd analysis of political rhetoric of this period, see Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960). This study has quite brilliantly uncovered the reactionary character of Jacksonian democracy, the "progressivism" of which historians have too long taken for granted.
lated into a rural depression, and western New York, the infamous "burned-over district" ravished by the fires of revivalism, Millerism, social and religious experimentation, was hit hardest of all. This misfortune occurred at the same time that Catholic immigrants, hard-drinking, sabbath-breaking Irish, fleeing the worst potato famine ever to hit Ireland, were swelling in American cities, threatening not only the livelihood of native Americans with their cheap labor, but also the Protestant habits of the yeomanry with their urban ways. And adding to all these woes, revivalism waned after 1835, forcing even the itinerants to descend from the mountaintop.

To be sure, the Millerites, and their Adventist progeny, composed a minority bitterly resented by many churches. But one would be hard put to explain their dissent in terms of deprivation theory, for, as we know, their social circumstances were not peculiar, nor was their status, economic or otherwise, diminished viz-a-viz their neighbors. It seems that in the 1840s social and economic conditions were uniformly bad. Millerism, Mormonism, Spiritualism, Shakerism—the ascendent forms of religion in this period—offered alternative paths to the kingdom while civil millennialism was losing its hold on many in the Protestant mainstream. One might call them "sects"—these new religions which took root in American soil—or even "cults," but the efficacy of such opprobrious labels, in a society where orthodoxy and dissent are equally wel-

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3 For an unsuccessful attempt to find such phenomena, see the study by Reuben Harkness, "Social Origins of the Millerite Movement," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago, 1927).
come, where the wheat is hardly distinguishable from the tares and where the less established are more established, is questionable.

We then conclude that in antebellum America postmillennialism and premillennialism presented two sides of the American consciousness, both drawing upon Puritan and republican sources. The former held out the promise of the covenant, while the latter, in its late Millerite and Adventist forms, warned of the punishment to be incurred at its breaking. Found together in Puritan preaching, these two aspects of the covenant became divided in mid-nineteenth-century America, so that rival factions embraced them separately. The division, one might speculate, was symbolic of the divided state of the Union.
Chapter Two

THE REVISION OF REPUBLICAN ESCHATOLOGY

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.\(^1\)

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The First Angel

Of her participation in the seven-month movement, Ellen White (then Ellen Harmon) wrote:

This was the happiest year of my life. My heart was full of expectation . . . We united, as a people, in earnest prayer for a true experience and the unmistakable evidence of our acceptance with God.\(^2\)

This euphoria which Ellen Harmon shared with her Millerite brethren contrasted sharply with the great adversity under which she toiled in the first years of her married life. In the final weeks before October 22, 1844, the Millerite movement was "millenarian" in the purest sense of the term. Not only did the participants believe that apocalypse was imminent, they also felt and behaved as if it were—living minute by minute on time's outermost edge, at the very threshold of eternity. As Mrs. White later recalled, they dwelt in one accord, as a community fit

\(^1\)Revelation 14:9, 10, KJV.

for translation into the kingdom, morally and spiritually perfect. Absorbed by their anticipation, these Millerites experienced the future they expected as present. Outside of Babylon the Spirit was free to reign, unhampered by worldly forms and formalities; for, as George Storrs had said, Babylon was organization. The children of the kingdom are equal, and their love for one another is spontaneous.

Such euphoria was rudely dispelled when prophecy failed at midnight on October 22, 1844. After the Great Disappointment, the movement splintered beyond repair. Some manfully confessed their error, regretting they had ever allowed themselves to fall under the spell of Miller's delusions, but others, like Ellen Harmon, were loath to renounce their participation in the movement or to re-enter that better-forgotten world of drudging routine.

It was hard to take up the cares of life that we thought had been laid down forever. It was a bitter disappointment that fell upon the flock whose faith had been so strong and whose hopes had been so high. But we were surprised that we felt so free in the Lord and were so strongly sustained by His strength and grace.¹

Rather than extricate themselves from the intimacy of the eschatological community, only to face again the hostility in churches they had left more than a few Millerites chose to prolong the movement—or to start another—by reinterpreting the prophecy which had been disconfirmed.

The Bible having served as their source of prophetic speculation, only the Bible could now provide disappointed Millerites with the consolation they sought. The Harmon family found encouragement in the story of Jonah, another case of unfulfilled prophecy. He too had been disappointed when God failed to deliver the destruction He had intended for

¹Ibid., I:56.
Ninevah, and instead turned the occasion into a test for Jonah. And in the New Testament they read of the disciples' disappointment at their Lord's crucifixion, for their expectation had been for Him to break the Roman yoke and to establish His rule in Palestine.¹ These Millerites could only hope that their defeat would be transformed into victory like the disciples had experienced in the triumph of the Resurrection.

Ere long, Millerites in Maine, those with whom the Harmons associated, chose another month, July, 1845, for the time of Christ's return, thereby endeavoring to repeat the "seven-month movement." This solution was temporary at best, for it only delayed the dissolution of community. Another disaster was averted when Ellen Harmon, a frail, teen-aged youth destined to become the central figure of the Adventist movement, learned through a revelation that the saints must first pass through "the time of Jacob's trouble" before Christ would come again.² But if she disapproved of further date-setting, Miss Harmon displayed even greater disdain toward "spiritualizers," whom she met with during her travels in New Hampshire with James White. Believing that a spiritual millennium had indeed arrived on October 22, 1844, these ex-Millerites claimed for themselves perfect sanctification, so as to place themselves above the very possibility of sin. This in Miss Harmon's view was "a species of spiritual magnetism, of a similar character with mesmerism."³ Others

¹Ibid., I:57.

²James White, Ellen White, and Joseph Bates, A Word to the "Little Flock" ([Brunswick, ME: J. White], 1847), p. 22.

³Ellen White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White: Being a Narrative of Her Experience to 1881 as Written By Herself; with A Sketch of Her Last Sickness Compiled from Original Sources (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915), pp. 77-79.
whom she witnessed crept on the floor to prove their humility, and some believed it a sin to work, supposing the eternal Sabbath had begun. All were "fanatics" in her book.¹

A group of Millerites in central New York, "the burned-over district," offered an explanation for the Disappointment which later became for most Adventists the official one. A schoolteacher, O.R.L. Crosier, wrote out the group's findings and had them printed locally and then in an extra of the Day-Star, dated February 7, 1846, which was published at Cincinatti, Ohio.²

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." While most Millerites, including Miller himself, abandoned the 2300-year calculation after Christ failed to appear in 1844, Crosier, like the "spiritualizers," maintained that something did occur on October 22, 1844, that Miller's real error had been, not the calculation, but rather the event he had predicted. From its study, the group in New York discovered the true nature of the event given in Leviticus and Hebrews. The latter book teaches that Christ functions in heaven as the High Priest of the Church, interceding on behalf of the faithful before God the Father. Accordingly, one may also find in Hebrews, couched in figurative terms, the notion of a heavenly sanctuary. Now from such references Crosier and his associates concluded that the cleansing of the sanctuary prophesied in Daniel 8 referred, not to the

¹Ibid., pp. 85-88.
second advent, but to an event analogous to the ceremony performed by
the high priest of Israel on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur. On
the day the Millerites were expecting His return, Christ, the Church's
antitypical High Priest, went from the holy place behind the veil and
entered the "holy of holies," just as the high priest of Israel had done
every year, to begin the final phase of His atoning ministry in salva-
tion history.¹

The connection between Yom Kippur and the 2300 days prophesied in
Daniel 8 had already been made by S.S. Snow, who had set the tenth day
of the seventh month as the exact date of Christ's return. Following
Miller's typological interpretations of the Jewish feasts, Snow looked
for the fulfillment of vernal types in Christ's first advent and of
autumnal types in His second. Christ at His crucifixion, he said, repre-
sented the antitype of the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7); His resurrection
was the antitype of the harvest on the morning after the Sabbath (1 Cor.
15:20-23); and the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost, that of the Feast
of Weeks, commemorating the Lord's descent on Mount Sinai. By extrapola-
tion, Snow then reasoned that the autumnal type of Yom Kippur would
have its antitypical fulfillment at the second advent, when Christ, our
High Priest, would leave heaven (the antitypical holy of holies [Heb.
9:23-25]) to cleanse the earth (the antitypical sanctuary of Daniel
8:14).²

7, 1846.

²Samuel S. Snow, no title given, True Midnight Cry, Aug. 22, 1844,
p. 3.
Whereas Snow identified heaven and earth as the two apartments of the antitypical sanctuary, Crosier's revision placed both apartments in heaven. Thus, on October 22, 1844, Christ moved from the first apartment, or the holy place, to the second, or the most holy place, where He would make the final preparations for His return to earth.

The next step was to link this "Bridegroom-come theory" with the parable of the ten virgins, which had comprised the central feature of the Millerite message. The parable concludes:

> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.\(^1\)

As a way of reaffirming the validity of the seven-month movement in the face of great disappointment, many Millerites, including Miller himself, claimed that, even though Christ had not come on the awaited day, the door of mercy for the churches of the world was forever shut on October 22, 1844, thereby making participation in the movement an absolute requirement for salvation.\(^2\) Miller and his colleagues eventually abandoned all doctrinal developments proposed after the Disappointment--officially at the Albany conference of April, 1845\(^3\)--but the "Bridegroom-come" theories of Crosier and others perpetuated shut-door views.

The incipient phase of a new Adventist movement, springing from the attempts to rationalize the Disappointment, coincided with the autumn of the Millerite movement, when those still clutching to the hope of immi-

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1 Matthew 25:10-12, KJV, author's emphasis.

2 See, for example, Miller's letter to Himes in the Adventist Herald, Dec. 11, 1844, p. 142; quoted from in Damsteegt, Foundations, pp. 113-14.
nostic apocalypse saw themselves as living past the final hour of human probation—an attitude which stifled any inclination to proselytize among non-Adventists. Many went so far as to reject reports of new conversions, seeing the option, as one brother put it, either "to deny the reality of sound conversions, as reported by our brethren, or to deny the whole history of Adventism." Others, however, made allowance for the conversion of of non-Adventists who had not rejected Snow's date and whose minds were still open to new truth—a position which an increasing number of Adventists adopted as October, 1844, receded into the past.

While temporarily perpetuating the shut-door doctrine, Crosier's treatise on Daniel 8:14 perhaps contributed the most toward effecting its decline. By dividing Christ's ministry of atonement into two distinct phases, the forgiveness of sins performed in the first apartment, followed by their blotting out the second, Crosier in fact advocated a continuation of atonement and of the Gospel dispensation. There is yet "a short period of time," he wrote, "in which the 7th angel begins to sound" (Rev. 10:11). But Crosier's hypothesis of what constituted this continuation of Christ's sacerdotal activities left later Adventists with a highly unorthodox and decisively anti-Calvinist doctrine of atonement. Jesus remained the antitypical Passover Lamb, but Satan, according to Crosier, was to be the antitypical scapegoat on whose head all the sins of the saints would be finally be placed.

1 Letter, J.D. Pickands to Snow, Jubilee Standard, June 19, 1845, p. 120; quoted in Damsteegt, Foundations, p. 108.
3 Crosier, "Law of Moses," p. 44.
4 Ibid., p. 43.
vicarious Sacrifice of the Son provided blood which, upon His ascension, He offered to the Father for the remission of sin. Satan, rather than Christ, would bear sin’s penalty; he, rather than Christ, would be the unfortunate recipient of the Father’s unmixed wrath. The transference of sins would occur after Christ finished purging the heavenly sanctuary with His blood in the second phase of His atoning ministry.\(^1\)

The thought of Christ’s making preparation at that very moment to return to redeem His own had the immediate effect of heightening Adventists’ sense of imminence.\(^2\) But as the period of waiting stretched indefinitely into the future, Adventists accepting Crosier’s theory came to improve upon it to make room for potential converts. A vision received by Ellen White in 1849 influenced sabbatarian Adventists to modify the shut-door doctrine. Paraphrasing Revelation 3:7,8, she declared “that Jesus had shut the door in the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it,”\(^3\) meaning that the door of mercy had remained open to some. That "some" eventually came to include "most," even peoples in faraway lands, and the door shut became shut only to those who had rejected the seven-month movement at the time of its occurrence. Later eschatological developments placed the close of probation in the future.

The addition of the investigative judgment to Christ’s post-1844 ministry permanently affixed Crosier’s sanctuary doctrine to the first angel’s message of Revelation 14. In 1850 Joseph Bates introduced the

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 42-43.

\(^2\)Cf. Damsteegt, Foundations, p. 132.

\(^3\)Ellen White, Early Writings, p. 42.
notion of a pre-Advent judgment, commencing in October, 1844, by drawing a distinction between "the hour of judgment" announced by the first angel (Rev. 14:6,7) and the final "Day of Judgment" which Christ foretold in Matthew 25.1 Then in 1855 Uriah Smith pointed out a set of records kept in heaven (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12) on which judgment was made (1 Peter 4:17; 1 Tim. 5:24).2 Finally, in 1857, James White gave final form to these speculations by declaring that upon passing into the holy of holies Christ began "the investigative judgment of the saints, dead and living," which "takes place prior to the second coming of Christ."3

With emphasis now on the open door, the distinction between Christ's pre- and post-1844 ministry became less drawn, a trend that paralleled the decline in the significance of the Great Disappointment which occurred as sabbatarian Adventists developed an identity of their own. John Andrews argued in 1853 that the "MERCY-SEAT" in the heavenly sanctuary indicated a continuation of Christ's earlier function of forgiving sins, even after He had begun blotting them out.4 In Spiritual Gifts (1858) Ellen White referred to Christ's atoning ministry after 1844 as "final atonement,"5 the components of which Damsteegt described as follows:

1Joseph Bates, An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-Typical Sanctuary, By the Scriptures (New Bedford, MA: By the Author, 1850), p. 10.
5Early Writings, p. 253.
(1) It provided an atonement for the forgiveness of sins "for all those for whom mercy still lingers," implying a continuation of Christ's pre-1844 ministry [the open door]; (2) it provided a special atonement for the pre-Advent judgment which included three atoning phases: (a) pardon or forgiveness of sins "for those who died, not receiving the light upon God's commandments, who sinned ignorantly"; (b) blotting out of the sins of the righteous dead; (c) blotting out of the sins of the righteous living.¹

In 1864 Ellen White included the crucifixion as part of the atonement, thus abandoning Crosier's view that the atoning process began after the ascension.² This revision signified a shift in her writings, and in Adventist thought in general, toward Protestant orthodoxy, which culminated in her endorsement of righteousness by faith at the Minneapolis Conference of 1888. The shift was not complete even then, however; for while new truths could be added to the catechism, old truths were never fully dropped, only slightly modified. In the Great Controversy (1888), Ellen White still claimed that divine satisfaction for the claims of the law was accomplished by Christ's activity of blotting out sins in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.³

In its earliest form, the sanctuary doctrine appeared as a kind of gnosis, esoteric knowledge intended for erstwhile participants in the seven-month movement who had been seeking an explanation for the delay that would carry them through the tarrying time. Later elaborations then allowed for evangelism among the uninitiated. The mature form of


the doctrine betrays a liberal anthropology, which may point to certain roots in the cultural milieu of early-nineteenth-century New England. The premise of the sanctuary soteriology was that ignorance was chiefly responsible for the human dilemma. Man breaks the law of God because he does not know better, not mainly because he is unable to keep it. But once he learns the truth, living up to that truth should be fully possible, for there is nothing in man's nature that would prevent it; so the implied thinking went.

The remnant of Calvinism in the sanctuary theology is that every sin must be strictly accounted for, so that the pardoning and blotting out of each individual sin is necessary for atonement. But the sins pardoned are primarily past sins, that is, sins committed in ignorance before receiving the new light on God's law. Ellen White wrote:

[Christ made] his final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers, and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This atonement is for the righteous dead as well as the righteous living. It includes all who died trusting Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God's commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts.¹

Those to whom truth has been revealed, however, are without excuse and, therefore, will be cut off from divine mercy (the shut door) if they fail to reform.

Damnation comes, then, by rejecting "new light," that is, by committing an intellectual error, or, what is more often the case, by failing to exercise one's free will toward that which one knows is right. Whereas Augustine, Luther, and Calvin had taught that humans were born in a state of damnation in need of divine grace, Adventists taught

¹ *Early Writings*, p. 254.
that their primary need was knowledge, new truths that would instruct them on how to live in harmony with God's laws. As free moral agents, they taught, each individual determines his own destiny, for better or worse, by acting or failing to act upon the amount of light he has seen. This implicit denial of original sin corresponded to sabbatarian Adventists' Arian bias; for most Adventist leaders were indeed Arians: James White, Joseph Bates, Uriah Smith, John Loughborough, J.H. Waggoner, and D.M. Canright, to name only the most prominent.¹ As in Unitarianism, which spread by leaps and bounds in early-nineteenth-century New England, Adventist Christology emphasized Christ, Our Example, rather than Christ, the Agnus Dei. In His sanctuary ministry, Christ's power to pardon transgressions of the law derived from His shedding of blood, which Adventists viewed more as a supernumerary feat to cap an exemplary life than as a propitiation of divine wrath. Not Christ, but Satan, to whom all sins of the saints were eventually transferred, bore the brunt of the punishment.

In the sanctuary theology Adventists found a way to bypass eighteen centuries of Church tradition, their intent being to gain immediate access to the Jesus of history. In the historic faiths the tradition of the Church—its councils, creeds, holy writings, artifacts, etc.—serves as a kind of mediator between the present and the founding events of the religion. By asserting that Christ's salvific work was not complete at His ascension, but rather had just begun, continuing into the present, Adventist doctrine obviated the traditional role of the Church as

Christ's successor on earth. Since Christ's ministry continued in heaven, no past creed could have validity in the present, because those who wrote the creeds did not possess the present truth; they had not considered the facts that were later added to the deposit of truth by Christ's future ministry in the holy of holies. For Adventists the Church was not so much the substitute for or successor to Christ's historical presence as it was the transmitter of new truths continually unfolding. By contrast, a traditionalist has no use for "present truth," which could only serve to pervert the old. Characteristic of their dissenting come-outer position, Adventists, through their theologizing, subverted orthodoxy, overturning the councils, creeds, and confessions of Christendom.

Christ's removal to the antitypical holy of holies in 1844 began a new dispensation that was to last until the end of earth's history. Living then at the dawn of this final era, Adventists set out to rewrite the creeds of Christendom, taking into account the "new light" received on the final phase of Christ's atoning ministry. The sanctuary doctrine then, while it rationalized the past disappointment of failed prophecy, also prepared the way for the coming of "present truth," laying the groundwork for a sort of John-the-Baptist motif.

The Third Angel

The reform which Adventists seized upon, the "present truth," or, rather, the rediscovered old truth to be restored and that upon which Adventists would build their mission of preparing a way for the second coming of the Lord, was the seventh-day sabbath. The restoration of the
fourth commandment of the Decalogue, which, they decided, was the means by which God had chosen to vindicate His law in the modern world before its end, came to define Adventists' post-Millerite mission. The formulation of this mission signified the end of their Millerism and the genesis of a new Adventist movement, which concerned far more than the second advent. Accordingly, its added concerns disqualified sabbatarian Adventism from being a strictly millenarian movement; for, the kingdom of heaven could not really be "at hand" if its coming required further preparations on earth, while Christ was making His own preparations for leaving the sanctuary in heaven.

The seventh-day, or Saturday, sabbath reform did not originate with Adventists; they adopted it from the Seventh-day Baptists, who, at a general conference in 1843, resolved to publicize their sabbatarian views in order to counter a revival of Sunday reform then occurring.¹ Several Millerites accepted their arguments for the perpetuity of the Decalogue and the sabbath as an everlasting sign between God and His people, and they began observing Saturday as their day of rest. One such Millerite, Thomas M. Preble, a Free-will Baptist, began publishing his convictions in a periodical, the Hope of Israel.² In puritanical fashion (as Seventh-day Baptism had its origins in Stuart Puritanism) Preble charged in a separate tract that Roman Catholic apostacy had been responsible for the change in the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. From historical data he inferred, "Thus we see Dan. vii:25 fulfilled, the 'little horn' changing 'times and laws.' Therefore it

²Ibid., pp. 136-37.
appears to me that all who keep the first day of the week for 'the Sabbath,' are Pope's Sunday Keepers!! and God's SABBATH BREAKERS!!"1 It was about the most effective plea that one might make in a thoroughly Protestant America.

Preble's plea to repair the breach in God's law caught the attention of Joseph Bates, a fairly well-known Millerite evangelist, who eventually got the Whites, in 1846, to join with him in taking up the sabbath reform (or perhaps we should say, "counterreform"). These three individuals formed the nucleus of a small but growing party of sabbatarian Adventists2, whose next task was to develop their private concern for the moral law into a latter-day mission of restoring the Biblical sabbath in preparation for Christ's return. Yet unlike postmillennialists, sabbatarian Adventists did not for a moment believe the whole world would embrace the message; sabbath-keeping would, in the last days, be the identifying mark of the remnant--those who had or would later extricate themselves from the apostacy of Sunday-worshipping Babylon.3

Like the Campbellites, these Adventists also viewed their millennial mission as one of reviving primitive Christianity; but, in sharp


2Ellen White, Testimonies, I:75-76.

3Joseph Bates, The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign, from the Beginning, to the Entering into the Gates of the Holy City, According to the Commandment (New Bedford, [MA: By the Author], 1846; [2nd ed. rev. and enl.], 1847), p. 2.
contrast to Campbell's ecumenicism, they gave the New Testament an undeniably sectarian rendering by making the apostle's day the predominant issue, having the certain effect of fortifying the partition that had come between them and other Protestants during the Millerite movement. Yet this was a far less virulent sectarianism than that expressed by the shut-door doctrine, for the new Adventist mission of sabbath reform allowed for an "open door," accessible to all who would embrace the "present truth." Sabbath-keeping, rather than participation in that which had become past, now became the new mark of Adventist identity and the primary condition of membership in the remnant church.

Whereas the sanctuary doctrine, after having emerged from the compilation of a disparate set of Biblical texts, eventually found its permanent resting place in the first angel's message of Revelation 14, the sabbath reform, as preached by Seventh-day Baptists, already lodged in the message of the third angel.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of th Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.  

Seventh-day Baptists had long identified the "beast" as the Roman Catholic Church, his "mark" as the denigration of the holy sabbath, and his "image" as Sunday-worshipping Protestantism, which, through its contin-

1Revelation 14:9-12, KJV.
ued observance of the pope's alteration of God's law, acknowledged his self-exaltation above God Himself, Who had given man the law as the supreme test of obedience.¹

It was left for Adventists themselves, however, to establish the connections between the messages of the first and second angels. Joseph Bates was the first to point out, in 1847, the ark of the covenant in the heavenly sanctuary, which contained the stone tablets on which God had inscribed the ten commandments with His own finger. This inclusion, Bates argued, represented the continuing validity and particular importance of the Decalogue during the dispensation of Christ's ministry in the holy of holies.² The theme of the sabbath, its violation by the beast and its restoration by the latter-day saints, tied together the messages of the two angels and provided the foundation on which Adventists could assemble a new eschatology from the ruins of Millerism.

After reaching a consensus upon both the sanctuary doctrine and the primacy of sabbath reform in a series of conferences held in 1848, which included Joseph Bates, Hiram Edson, James and Ellen White, and a handful of others,³ sabbatarian Adventists were then willing to relinquish their shut-door notions for good. As alluded to above, it was the addition of sabbath reform to Adventists' concerns that called for an alteration of Crosier's doctrine. Ellen White's vision informing them of the "open

¹See supra, p. 51.
²Bates, Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign, p. [iii].
door" in the heavenly sanctuary came in March, 1849\(^1\)—that is, not long after the conferences at which the sabbatarian mission was formerly decided upon. Before this time, Adventists had not engaged in missionary activity except among former Millerites who had participated in the seventh-month movement.\(^2\)

The shift from "shut door" to "shut door"-'open door" opened the door to a new mission, destined to become the basis for a new church, while it simultaneously appeared to shut the door of Millerism behind sabbatarian Adventists forever. At this juncture Adventists were no longer Millerite millenarians biding their time during the waiting period, but they were a people with a distinctive mission of their own, which, in their view, had to be accomplished before the second advent could occur. In the new version of the doctrine, only those who had consciously rejected the seventh-month movement were excluded by the shut door;\(^3\) thereafter, as 1844 faded into the past, this class of individuals diminished until it became infinitesimal.

Even in the spring of 1847, less than a year after the Whites adopted the seventh day as their sabbath, a vision informed Ellen "that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath," and "have not rejected the light upon it."\(^4\) This was Ellen and her husband's commis-

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\(^1\)See supra, p. 45.

\(^2\)The shift away from an "extreme shut-door" view was probably more gradual than sudden. See Damsteegt's discussion on a progression in the visions of Ellen White from 1845 to 1849, in *Foundations*, pp. 149-63. It must be said, however, that there is no evidence of sabbatarian Adventists seeking conversions of non-Millerites before 1849.

\(^3\)Ellen White, *Early Writings*, pp. 43-45.

\(^4\)Ibid., p.33.
sion to propagate their sabbatarian views among former Millerites. The vision of 1849 brought them to seek conversions among non-Millerites as well. Apparently, then, the remnant included some still in Babylon whom God had not yet rejected and who were still open to new light. Hence, post-Millerite Adventists' conception of mission broadened in a manner reminiscent of early Christianity: the Gospel first went to Jews only, then to Samaritans also, and eventually to Gentiles everywhere. The Adventist mission, too, grew in time to be a global endeavor.

The formulation of a sabbatarian Adventist mission coincided with the demise of Millerite millenarianism, heralding the shift from an end-of-the-world to an in-between-the-times eschatology. Whereas in October, 1844, Millerites could sense the kingdom "at hand," by 1849 the unaccomplished mission of seeking out the remnant to present them with the "present truth" about the sabbath stood between the believer and a less-than-imminent advent. Both Crosier's doctrine of a continuing atonement and James White's remark in 1845 that Adventists were then living in "the patient waiting time"—i.e., "the time of the third angel's message"—were early indications of the trend away from pure apocalypticism. By 1851, when James White wrote the following censure of those continuing to set dates for the second advent, Adventists' former sense of urgency had waned considerably:

2. The message of a 3rd angel does not hang on time. Time is not the least connected with it. The first cry hung on time. The hour of God's judgment was the burden of that message. The 2nd closed up with a definite time; but the 3rd is so far the reverse

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1James White, Ellen White, and Joseph Bates, A Word to the "Little Flock [Brunswick, ME: J. White], 1847, p. 11.
of this, that the angel cries 'here is the patience of the saints.'

3. We are now emphatically in the waiting time, in the time of the 'patience of the saints.' This state was introduced by the disappointment, at the termination of the 2300 days...

6. To embrace and proclaim a time that will pass by, would have a withering influence upon the faith of those who should embrace and teach it, and we fear would overthrow the faith of some. What we have witnessed, for more than six years past, of the sad results of setting different times, should teach us a lesson on this point...

   It has been our humble view for the past year that the proclamation of the time was no part of our present work. We do not see time in the present message; we see no necessity for it, and we do not see the hand of the Lord in it...

   [Our] present duty is to strive to be united in presenting these important truths embracing the 3rd angel's cry."

With the new Adventist mission now firmly established upon the third angel's message, that of the first angel lost its primacy. The sanctuary theology would always be retained but never again receive more than a secondary emphasis; some, understandably, would ignore it altogether. Although Crosier's doctrine in time grew to encompass a quite elaborate soteriology, its primary purpose was always to bridge the Disappointment so as to link the progeny with its parent. (After all, Millerism was and continues to be the heritage of Seventh-day Adventism.) By rationalizing the Disappointment, Adventists gained their victory over it. The sanctuary theology served the function of putting Millerism safely in the past while, paradoxically, infusing it with a spiritual significance which, in turn, legitimated the Adventist movement that succeeded its death. The third angel may have given Adventists a mission along with a glorious vision of destiny, but the first angel provided them with an equally functional myth of origin.

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The Third Angel (Part Two)

Scarcely had the sabbatarian party of Adventists organized a mission to occupy themselves in the time of waiting when they began to elaborate their eschatology, working it into a finely detailed scenario of the end, in which Protestant America, sabbatarians, and the pope were given the most prominent roles. They did not create an eschatology ex nihilo but began with already existing themes. The Seventh-day Baptists had determined the identity of several of the symbols of St. John's vision: the seven-headed, ten-horned beast was papal Rome and his mark Sunday worship. Similarly, from the Millerite expositor Josiah Litch, Adventists inherited their interpretation of the prophecy of 1260 days, given in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, as representing the 1260 years of papal rule that ended in 1798 when Napoleon dealt the papacy a "deadly wound," which was then healed in 1815 (by the Congress of Vienna).¹

The event which did the most to shape the sabbatarian Adventist ideology was the come-outer movement of late Millerism. By departing from the usual practice of identifying "Babylon," the Scarlet Woman of sixteenth century lore, with papal Rome, and assigning it to American Protestantism instead, Millerite expositors established for Millerism and its Adventist progeny a dissenting ideology. Now, in 1851, John N. Andrews, a recent addition to the sabbatarian Adventist party, proposed a way to root this imparted dissent in the eschatology of the republic. The solution came by way of a revised exegesis of Revelation 13:11-18,

¹Josiah Litch, Prophetic Expositions; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment, 2 vols. (Boston: J.V. Himes, 1842), I:95-105.
the passage containing the prophecy of the beast which, "coming up out of the earth, . . . had two horns like a lamb, . . . [but] spake as a dragon."¹

The latter-day drama would revolve around this two-horned beast, rather than that far more hideous ten-horned beast, papal Rome. Andrews wrote:

This power is evidently the last one with which the people of God are connected; for the Third Angel's Message, which immediately precedes the coming of Jesus on the white cloud, pertains almost entirely to the action of the two-horned beast. Compare Revelation 14:9-11 with 13:11-18.²

Although Andrews believed that the two-horned beast would one day persecute the saints, he nonetheless found it possessing of several qualities which he greatly admired: above all, its peaceful disposition—the lamb-like gentleness of its youth, which, he thought, might be explained by its arising, not "by the strife of the winds upon the sea, that is, by the overthrow of other nations and empires" as was true of the European powers but rather "from a new and previously unoccupied territory," where "no other beast exists"³ (the North American continent, notwithstanding the Indians). "In appearance," he wrote, "this beast represents the mildest power that ever rose; for in the prophetic history of the

¹Revelation 13:11, KJV.
²J. Andrews, The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12, Particularly the Third Angel's Message, and Two Horned Beast, 5th ed. (Battle Creek, MI: S.D.A. Pub. Assn., rev., 1892), p. 84. This work contains Andrews's fullest exposition of Adventist eschatology, although his speculations on the two-horned beast were first presented in a Review article, "Thoughts on Revelation XIII and XIV," RH, May 19, 1851, pp. 81-96, probably the most seminal six pages to be found in all of sabbatarian Adventist literature.
³Andrews, Three Messages, p. 82.
governments that have preceded this, no one has been represented by symbols so mild." Then he continued: "We understand these horns to denote the civil and religious power of this nation,—its Republican civil power, and its Protestant ecclesiastical power."

Andrews had nothing but praise for this beast while in its youth-ful, lamb-like form. His patriotism and commitment to Whig principles shine forth in the following passage:

No civil power could ever compare with Republicanism in its lamb-like character. The grand principle recognized by this form of power is thus express: "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Hence all should have a right to participate in making the laws, and in designating who shall execute them. Was there ever a development of civil power so lamb-like before? And what, in religious matters, can be compared with Protestantism? Its leading sentiment is the distinct recognition of the right of private judgment in matters of conscience. "The Bible is the only religion of Protestants." Was there ever in the religious world anything to equal this in its lamb-like professions.

It was this very association of Protestantism with republican government, of Biblical religion with libertarian politics—which amounted to a denial of this Reformer's Erastian ecclesiology—that had served as the mainspring of the Revival. "What is needed throughout the world to relieve its inhabitants of their oppression, but that Republicanism should remodel all their civil governments?" Andrews inquired rhetorically. "The leaven of its principles has deeply diffused itself throughout the nations of the earth." This inexorable march of liberty, that

1Ibid., p. 89.
2Ibid., pp. 89-90.
3Ibid., p. 101.
unfolding of providential design of which Lyman Beecher had oft spoken, one could witness in the revolutions of 1848. Even at the present, he argued, it could be seen as "the poor enslaved nations of the earth" beckoned for the day of their freedom.

But then there was the last part of the text: "and he [the lamb-like beast] spake as a dragon." Despite such promising beginnings, the noble experiment in religious and civil liberty, which the sagacious Founding Fathers had so meticulously devised, would in the end prove to be nothing more than a sham, for malevolent forces were at work. The two beasts, papal Rome and Protestant America, would conspire to join in setting up a one-world government that would put an end to hard-won republican freedoms and replace them with the tyrannical reign of papal monarchy.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him; and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark,

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1See supra, p. 2.


3Ibid., pp. 92-95.
or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.\textsuperscript{1}

Both beasts of the Apocalypse derived their power from the dragon, the serpent—Satan. It would be only a matter of time before the lamb-like beast showed its true dragonic nature. At that very time, the rapid spread of Spiritualism in the nation furnished undeniable evidence of the dragon at work, deceiving former Millerites and others with his erroneous teaching on the state of the dead.\textsuperscript{2} And that ancient heresy, Sunday-worship, a pagan practice before its institutionalization by the papacy, was now assuming a political face in the movement to legislate Sunday reform under the guise of Christian morality.\textsuperscript{3} In the light of Biblical prophecy, one could read the signposts ahead on the nation's road to declension: apostasy, apostasy politicized, the loss of religious liberty, the unification of church and state, papal monarchy, persecution of the sabbath-keeping remnant, JUDGMENT.

Sabbatarian Adventists arrived at this scenario through a reinterpretation of the nation's republican eschatology. Whereas the revolutionary clergy had made a foreign enemy the chief threat to civil and religious liberty, in Federalist preaching the threat was national vice apostasy. John Andrews adopted this Federalist premise and then extended it by asserting that apostasy with regard to the sabbath had become so widespread as to place it beyond all efforts of reform; therefore—the conclusion was inescapable—republican government could not last. Mil-

\textsuperscript{1}Revelation 13:12-17.

\textsuperscript{2}Andrews, \textit{Three Messages}, pp. 95-98.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., pp. 113-114.
ler's proclamation of the "advent message" had given America an opportunity that, if she had taken it, might have led to rectification of past errors and to her transformation into a reformed nation. But American Protestants' "rejection of the truth of God" now left them "the captives of Satan, and the subjects of his deception." America the elect nation, after 1844, lost her favor with God; the "pillar of a cloud" withdrew and now covered only the remnant of the remnant.

Having already made an image to the first beast by acknowledging the pope's alteration of the fourth commandment, Protestantism would soon show its latent draconic nature; for the very nature of Sunday-worship was tyranny. Once a pagan rite, it had been thrust upon the Church by conspiring authorities of church and state after both had become corrupted by their Constantinian unification. A blasphemous pope, backed by the secular sword, aspiring to exalt himself above God Himself, then boldly changed that which could never be changed—God's eternal decree! Sunday-worship then was the very embodiment of that unholy alliance of church and state which had resulted in the subsequent loss of religious liberty throughout Europe and the papacy's despotic reign over civil government.

In 1851 Andrews identified the churches' countenance of slavery as a latter-day manifestation of Protestantism's tyrannical character, and this theme remained a dominant one in Adventist literature until after

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1Ibid., p. 106.
2Ibid., pp. 107-108.
3Andrews, "Revelation," p. 84.
the Emancipation Proclamation.\(^1\) Sunday legislation, however, proved to be the more endurable \textit{bête noire} or sabbatarian Adventists after 1854, when John Loughborough identified it as the specific means by which tyranny would make its advent in America, first in the individual states, then in the capital.\(^2\) In his view, the Protestant churches had already taken that first ominous step toward papal despotism by their advocacy of action that would flagrantly violate the libertarian principles of the First Amendment and thereby compromise the essence of republican government. If a pagan state had originally corrupted the primitive church with its sun-worshipping ways, apostate churches would now corrupt the republic with their misguided Sunday reforms. The partition between the two realms was about to crumble, as it had in the fourth century; yet this time, not only the Roman Church, but also "Babylon," the American empire of Protestant churches, would clothe herself with "civil power and authority to put the saints of God to death."\(^3\) As the text had prophesied, the American government would then serve the antichrist as his executioner—enforce the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, putting to the sword those who were without its mark (Sunday-worship). The two beasts would combine forces to persecute the remnant:\(^4\)

\begin{quote}
[The two-horned beast] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and
\end{quote}

\begin{enumerate}
\item See Chapter Three.
\item Andrews, "Revelation," p. 84.
\end{enumerate}
cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.
And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:
And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Both movements, Sunday reform and seventh-day counterreform, derived from the Federalists' formula that had linked apostasy and vice with anti-republican tyranny; but whereas the Protestant majority viewed Sunday legislation as a way to combat vice and therefore to preserve liberty, sabbatarians saw it as the institutionalization of vice and therefore the very guarantee of tyranny. To create for themselves a dissenting ideology, Adventists did not adopt principles that were alien to the mainstream, but, more cleverly, employed already accepted principles to their own advantage by turning them against the mainstream.

The result was an eschatology that was the most recent in a series of revisions in republican eschatology. During the Anglo-French conflicts, Catholic France was the tyrannical beast and Protestant Britain the remnant; during the Revolution, monarchical England the tyrant and republican America the remnant; and in the Federalist period, atheistic Jacobism the tyrant and again republican America the remnant. Now sabbatarian Adventists identified the American government, controlled by apostate Protestants, as the real tyrant and themselves as the remnant; for even if Protestants were not Catholic, they were still papists, having accepted a papal institution which predisposed them toward popish despotism. While the revivalists had adopted the Federalist program of

\[1\] See supra, pp. 10-13.
stamping out corruption to maintain liberty, sabbatarian counterreformers claimed that after the fall of Babylon in 1844 the revivalists had been working to stamp out liberty for the purpose of enforcing corruption. Ellen White labeled the revivals "false reformations," even going so far as to suggest that they were demonically inspired.\(^1\)

By linking the seventh-day sabbath to the principle of the separation of church and state, Andrews gave the sabbath a Whig interpretation, making it a symbol of religious liberty and the true test of republican principle. Because they observed the Lord's day and not the pope's, sabbatarians alone were free from papal corruption and despotic popery. Through their dissent from republican eschatology, Adventists defined themselves as the quintessential republicans, being the only Americans (save the Seventh-day Baptists) to partake weekly of a republican sacrament, which gave them a libertarian strength to resist tyranny.

Sabbatarian Adventists' dissenting eschatology was another legacy bequeathed to them by the come-outer movement, which had identified fallen Babylon as apostate Protestantism. Andrews, Loughborough, and Bates then gave this interpretation a republican foundation by emphasizing the oppressive character of "the woman drunk with the blood of the saints."\(^3\) They lauded the great American experiment in libertarian gov-

\(^1\) *Early Writings*, pp. 43-44.

\(^2\) *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1: *The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels* (Battle Creek, MI: J. White, 1858), p. 172.

ernment, but claimed that it was coming to an abrupt end because Americans had failed to meet their covenantal responsibilities in their overwhelming rejection of both the advent message and the reform of the true sabbath.\(^1\) The "broken covenant" and the coming judgment were thus made the emphasis of Adventist preaching, just as they had been the emphases in late Millerism.

But the Adventist doomsday message differed drastically from that of Millerism, for its whole bent was toward perfecting the remnant community before the second advent. The emphasis was not so much on the Day of Judgment itself (indeed, it had already begun) as it was on the necessity of being ready to meet one’s Lord and—no less important—to face the troublous times in which the remnant would be persecuted before His return. In this manner sabbatarian Adventists rediscovered the old Puritan use of the jeremiad. They employed it not to avert disaster, but rather to prepare for survival by building the characters that would withstand the fiery trials that lay ahead. The characters that were built, whether or not they would ever meet such trials, were precisely the characters desirable for achieving and maintaining a stable and prosperous community that would pass on its latter-day mission to generation after generation of remnant seed. Whereas the Millerites had directed their mission toward a definite day of deliverance, that of their Adventist successors operated perpetually in the time before the

\(^1\)Adventist writings have always taken great pains to point out that the proclamation of the second advent is not intrinsically a message of doom, but only became one after it was rejected by the churches during the Millerite movement. For a sample of this rendition of the broken covenant, see Andrews, *Three Messages*, p. 61.
end—which was neither immediate nor distant. One would have to look far indeed to find an Adventist selling his business or abandoning the practice of his profession simply because "the time is short." Such action would be ludicrous since the purpose of any enterprise is always to further the work—the work of preparing for the end of time.

Although the communal value of the Adventist doomsday message is attested by the impressive scale of the present denomination's holdings throughout the world, its value was by no means limited to the internal concern of perfecting the remnant community. We have already noted the turn taken in the Millerite movement from optimism to pessimism.¹ Later in Three Messages of Revelation, written during the formative years of the new sabbatarian movement, Andrews expressed what would become a mainstay in Adventist preaching: not its pessimism—for Adventists have always been optimistic of their own future, in both this world and the next—but rather its hustling disposition to exploit the pessimism of others in order to promote the sect's own interests, viz., those of gaining converts and keeping its own members in line.² Andrews' astonishing scenario of the end-times played off a basic dilemma of republican government which lay behind the familiar American paranoia of internal subversion: the Republic grants freedom to those who do not subscribe to her libertarian values, even those who might be plotting to destroy her. Akin to the amoral superman in American fiction who has no internal restraints,³ the agents of papal despotism in

¹See supra, pp. 25-30.
²Ibid., pp. 57-59.
³David Brion Davis, Homicide in American Fiction, pp. 28-55.
America were only too willing to exploit the large measure of liberty
given them—so the theory was.

Observing how the Adventist predictions of the end are employed
within and without, how on the one hand they serve to create a bulwark
against the apostate majority while on the other they appeal to it, the
Adventist mission might seem paradoxical. But then America is the land
for paradox. The First Amendment and following disestablishment of the
state churches made every church in America a sect. In Virginia, Epis-
copali ans were placed on a par with Baptist dissenters; in Massachu-
setts, Congregationalists were given the same legal status as Unitari-
ans. Disestablishment was the end of dissent, for afterwards there was
nothing to dissent from. But then again, all could be dissenters, for
they could dissent from one another. Sidney Mead describes the shifting
alliances occasioned by the competitive parish of the new republic:

A Roman Catholic threat could unite all the other groups—even
the Evangelical and Unevangelical—in a common front of oppo-
sition, especially when as in the West attention was directed to
the supposed social and political threat of the Catholic Church
to "free institutions." On the other hand, evangelicals might
upon occasion borrow a weapon or accept aid and comfort from
Roman Catholics in opposition to Unevangelicals. Evangelicals
would of course unite against Unitarians and Universalists.
Conservative Unitarians might in the stress of conflict with
"the latest form of infidelity" seek substantial aid from the
staunchest of the orthodox, as when Andrews Norton of Harvard
had the Princeton Presbyterian attacks on Transcendentalism re-
printed in Boston. Baptists and Methodists, although antagon-
ists on the frontier, might easily combine against Presbyteri-
ans and Episcopalians. But finally each sect stood by itself
against all others, a law unto itself in defense of its peculiar
tenets which it implicitly held as absolute.¹

Hence, regardless of what the self-proclaimed remnant people (whether

¹Lively Experiment, p. 131.
Adventists, Mormons, or others) said about the rest of the American churches, they always distinguished themselves as the quintessential Americans by their dissent. They made America what the Founding Fathers had intended her to be: religiously pluralistic.\(^1\) Dissent might indeed appear patriotic.

Chapter Three

SLAVERY: THE BEAST'S OTHER MARK

The Antebellum Spectrum

The preceding chapter described the shift of emphasis in Adventist rhetoric from the event of the Second Advent to a mission of reform that would bring it about, and from the message of the first angel (past) to that of the third angel (present). The reform of the biblical sabbath has proved to be the most enduring feature of this mission, but there have always been others besides. Since the denomination's founding in 1863, health reform has come to be regarded as "the right arm of the third angel's message," that is, second only to that of sabbath reform. The year 1863 is significant in Adventist history, not only because it began a new era for the movement as a formal organization recognized by the state giving Adventism a more institutional character (sanitariums, schools, publishing houses, and hospitals followed), but also because in that year the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, bringing to a close what had until then been a conspicuous feature of Adventist rhetoric, its denunciation of slavery as the other evidence of the American republic's true dragonic nature—the first being, of course, Sunday-worship.

Historians have long regarded abolition, next to seeking conversions, to be the main concern of the postmillennial program to build the kingdom of God on earth. Few scholars have failed to see the reformist character of an ideology that stressed the role of human effort in
bringing about the perfect society.\textsuperscript{1} About premillennialism, however, they have not been so sure. Many have assumed that the latter, by placing the Second Advent of Christ before the onset of the millennial kingdom, is inherently pessimistic toward the prospects of social reform, and that, therefore, those espousing this ideology must be withdrawn and uninterested in the affairs of this world. The deduction appears sound, until one observes the actual behavior of some premillennialists; for it would then appear that belief and behavior are incongruous. Edwin Gaustad has remarked of Seventh-day Adventists that " seldom while expecting a kingdom of God from heaven, has a group worked so diligently for one on earth."\textsuperscript{2} Not content with this apparent discrepancy, some scholars have taken up the task of reevaluating the premillennial ideology. To a significant degree, these recent studies have overturned the too simplistic thesis that apocalyptic millennialism, as it is sometimes called, is inherently fatalistic.\textsuperscript{3}


Still, differences between pre- and postmillennialism do exist, even if they are not the differences that some have formerly predicted. Much has yet to be done concerning premillennialists' attitudes toward their society, and, in particular, toward the reform of society. This chapter will examine sabbatarian Adventists' participation (or lack thereof) in abolitionist reform as a case study of this relationship. The Northern evangelicals' agenda for reform was legion: temperance, women's suffrage, and sabbath-keeping, to name only a few. But the most important of these was by far the abolition of slavery. Slavery, more than any other moral issue in American history, tended to polarize and divide, for the very magnitude of the problem demanded a response. Not only did it lead to a division between North and South, but also to a host of divisions within both North and South. This chapter will not address all of these varying responses; only those that most concern Adventists.

At the outset it must be said that Adventists, by and large, were not social reformers.¹ There were notable exceptions, such as John Preston Kellogg, who operated an underground railroad on his farm in southern Michigan, and it is true that nearly all Adventists held Radical-Republican sentiments, but, as Jonathan Butler has written, their Radical-Republicanism was mostly a "'paper radicalism' that evoked more verbiage than action."² But if sabbatarian Adventists were not acti-

¹In a lecture Eric Anderson disparaged articles appearing in Insight which portrayed Adventists of this period as social activists. "Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil War," Denominational History Lectures, delivered at the Workshop in Historical Studies, Loma Linda University, La Sierra Campus, July, 1979, (taped).

vists, neither were they apolitical or uninterested in temporal matters. Their rhetoric tended to follow that of the most radically reformist element in America at the time, the abolitionists. How does one account for this confusing response?

To appreciate the remarkable similarity in rhetoric between Adventists and Abolitionists, we shall first need briefly to survey the various positions on slavery present on the eve of the Civil War. In particular, we shall want to look at the emergence of abolitionism as an influential movement in the decades preceding the war. Only then can we place Adventists where they belonged on the antebellum spectrum of public opinion so as to make comparison possible.

In antebellum America the rhetoric of the slaveholders was the most ideological, in the Mannheimian sense, that is to say, the most intent on preserving the existing social order; while, at the other extreme of public opinion, abolitionist rhetoric was the most utopian, that is, designed to subvert the status quo and replace it with something better. Yet even within the abolitionist position there was considerable degree of variance. Abolitionists of a Garrison stripe were more radical and vehement in their denunciations than evangelical abolitionists. William Lloyd Garrison, by calling the Constitution a covenant of death, was in effect claiming that the nation was so corrupt that it could not be reformed within the existing framework of its society. His unceasing prophecies of doom led the evangelicals in the American Anti-

\[^{1}\text{For a discussion of Mannheim's typology of rhetoric according to its ideological content, see Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968), pp. 173-84.}\]
slavery Society to split with their Unitarian brethren in 1839.¹

Both parties, Unitarians and evangelicals, could be clearly distinguished from other antislavery positions, which one might call "moderate." On the eve of the Civil War, the North was nearly unanimous in its antipathy toward slavery, though moderate opinion considered abolition a far less important goal than the preservation of the Union. Abolitionists, eschewing any form of compromise whatsoever, whether it was Stephen Douglas' popular sovereignty or Abraham Lincoln's free-soil position, endorsed a "Higher Law" morality. All resisted the Fugitive Slave Law passed in 1850. No one better stated the argument for civil disobedience than Ellen White did here:

I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.²

On this issue all abolitionists, including Adventists, were unequivocally utopian, for they maintained that one could not morally live in accordance with the existing social order. Society had to be reformed, or perhaps even replaced, before moral harmony could exist. In opposition to both the president and moderate churchmen, the abolition-

¹Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, p. 183.
²Testimonies, 1: 361.
ist claimed that, if nothing should change, the Union was not worth preserving.

The Spread of "Immediatism" in the Antebellum North

Modern antislavery thought first became prominent with the heirs of sectarian and perfectionist traditions. In the late-eighteenth century certain Quakers, such as George Keith, began to judge slavery by an uncompromising moral standard. They questioned the use of the doctrine of original sin as a rationalization for the institution of slavery. Indeed, they did not regard slavery as an institution at all, not as a social or economic affair that one might address within a political forum, but rather they looked upon it as an embodiment of sin, corrupting both master and slave alike. Slavery characterizes the state of sin, that of bondage, which is man's condition after the Fall; therefore, the perfectionist argued, slavery is fundamentally incompatible with a converted soul. "Emancipation was not an objective matter of social or political expediency, but a subjective act of purification and a casting off of sin," David Brion Davis wrote of this mentality.

Underlying the Quaker's conception of emancipation was the doctrine of immediatism. Adopting the pattern of spiritual conversion, the act of emancipating sprang from a sudden, overwhelming conviction of the

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2 Davis, "Emergence of Immediatism," p. 212.
guilt of slaveholding and a fervent desire to flee from moral contamination. Although originally a sectarian position, immediatism spread until it came to dominate antislavery thought. Opposed to it was gradualism, which embraced the Enlightenment notion of progress toward a desired social objective.¹ David Brion Davis remarked that by 1830 immediatism had "represented a shift in total outlook from a detached, rationalistic perspective on human history and progress to a personal commitment to make no compromise with sin.²"

There can be no doubt that the revivals of the early part of the century nurtured an immediatist disposition. Immediate emancipation was the counterpart to the immediate conversions sought by Charles Finney and his colleagues. Such conversions, Finney taught, should yield fruit immediately; justification implied nothing less than entire sanctification:

The Christian, therefore, is justified no longer than he obeys, and must be condemned when he disobeys. . . . In these respects, then, the sinning Christian and the unconverted sinner are upon precisely the same ground.³

In his view benevolence and selfishness could not be willed simultaneously.⁴ As the sectarians had done before him, Finney repudiated the Puritan doctrine of imperfect sanctification.

This all-or-nothing approach applied not only to slavery, but to

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¹Ibid., pp. 212-215.

²Ibid., p. 228.


all reform. The temperance crusaders did not intend to cease their efforts with the eradication of drunkenness, but directed their attacks at alcohol in whatever quantity. As Whitney Cross noted, there were no degrees of sin in the reformers' minds:

Since wrong was a specific quality, regardless of quantity, and since an offense against the infinite good automatically became itself infinite, any departure whatsoever from divine rule constituted an absolutely enormous crime.

Some of the leading abolitionists were Finney's converts, and their zeal to reform logically proceeded from a Finneyite conception of conversion. On January 10, 1833, Theodore Weld wrote to Elizer Wright, Jr.: "... as long as I am a moral agent I am fully prepared to act out my belief [immediate abolition] in that thus saith the Lord—'Faith without WORKS is dead.'" Likewise, many applied the doctrine of entire sanctification to the corporate sphere as well. Lydia Maria Child identified the continuation of slavery as sin. By countenancing this "national sin" in the body politic, Northerners too were implicated.

Here again, Ellen White's rhetoric accords with that of the abolitionists. In a letter to a Southern sympathizer, Brother A. of Oswego

1Whitney R. Cross, Burned-over District, p. 208.


3Quoted from the Weld-Grimke Letters in Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation,'" p. 181.

4Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation,'" p. 182.
County, New York, she demanded an unequivocal position against slavery in order to avoid complicity: "Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the sacred, important truths for this time. You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the heart, for they are at war with each other." She continued, threatening disfellowshipment and charging him with making a pact with the devil:

We must let it be known that we have no such ones in our fellowship, that we will not walk with them in church capacity. You have lost the sanctifying influence of the truth. You have lost your connection with the heavenly host. You have allied yourself with the first great rebel, and God's wrath is upon you; for His sacred cause is reproached, and the truth is made disgusting to unbelievers. You have grieved God's people, and despised the counsel of His ambassadors upon earth, who labor together with Him, and are in Christ's stead beseeching souls to be reconciled to God.1

Although the abolitionists, as we have seen, derived their own position from the theology of the Revival, not all Northern evangelicals became abolitionists. Finney advocated a benevolence free from all selfish motives; yet such distinterestedness was qualified, for it was a benevolence valued chiefly for its effect upon the individual heart. Conversely, the main motive behind the antislavery stance of most evangelicals was avoidance of personal complicity;2 for, it should not be forgotten, the immediatist did not tend to look at slavery as a social institution.

This is not to say the revivals lacked social purpose. Finney and his fellow itinerants were unabashed millennialists, viewing the Second Great Awakening as a national movement to fulfill America's millennial

1Testimonies, 1: 359-60.

destiny.¹ Yet they also believed that millennium would be reached chiefly through a communion of converted hearts²—certainly not through legal efforts. So long as benevolence remained a quality of the heart, it encountered little opposition among churchmen, but after becoming institutionalized in the form of humanitarian societies, some grew to distrust it. From the immediatist's perspective, institutions were inimical to spirituality. If missionary activities divert from the cause of spiritual regeneration, remarked Hubbard Winslow, "it demands no prophetic tongue to announce our doom."³

By placing the primary emphasis on the heart, Finney qualified as only a half-hearted reformer. In this the most famous evangelist of all, one may find "a major symbol of Protestantism's ambiguous relationship to reform," wrote James Moorhead.

By resting hopes for improvement upon the willingness of individuals to act benevolently, Protestantism also came close, on occasion, to making good intentions a substitute for reform, and conversion and sanctification, nominally prerequisites of social amelioration, could easily become its surrogates.⁴

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¹French observer Alex de Tocqueville was perhaps the first to stress the importance of religion in shaping American public opinion, the controlling force in democratic politics. Ever since, this has been a central theme in American religious historiography. See his chapter, "How Religion in the United States Makes Use of Democratic Instincts," in Democracy in America, pp. 442-49. The title of an article that Lyman Beecher wrote for his magazine Spirit of the Pilgrims in 1831 demonstrates this thesis better than any scholar could. It was, simply, "The Necessity of Religion to the Perpetuity of our Civil and Religious Institutions"; referred to by Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to Civil War (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1966), pp. 68-69.

²Miller, Life of the Mind, p. 69.

³Quoted in ibid., p. 83 (no reference given).

During the heat of the Revival in the early decades of the century, many evangelicals, it seemed, were able to distinguish between sin on a personal and social level. But insofar as the nation's destiny lay behind the revivalists' efforts, such a distinction presented a contradiction rather than a solution. As the revivals tapered off in the 1830s without the millennium in sight, more began to see the corporate nature of the sin of slavery, and more began to equate immediate conversion with immediate emancipation, as the Quakers had long done. The shift may be observed in the Beecher family. Lyman Beecher supported colonization and denounced the "he-goat men" who demanded immediate emancipation. His son, Edward, followed this position until about 1835 and became especially insistent on immediate abolition after the death of editor Elijah P. Lovejoy, in 1837, at the hands of a riotous mob in Alton, Illinois.¹

Nonetheless, the abolitionists, albeit influential, remained a minority right down to the outbreak of hostilities at Fort Sumter. Years later, Henry Ward Beecher recalled that even then most Northern Protestants were willing to concede slavery to the South, if only they were not compelled to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law.² By 1861 public opinion in the North had become polarized, with Adventists unmistakably on the side of immediate emancipation.


²Ibid., p. 93.
Prophecies of Doom

At least three years before South Carolina seceded from the Union, Ellen White prophesied that God would send a scourge upon the nation to punish it for the heinous practice of slavery, identifying it with the "Sins of Babylon." "God will restrain His anger but little longer. His wrath burns against this nation and especially against the religious bodies that have sanctioned this terrible traffic and have themselves engaged in it." The sin of slavery had corrupted all parties involved. It degraded the slave and hardened the heart of the master. Soon, the angel of her vision informed, Divine Justice would show itself.

Said the angel, "The names of the oppressors are written in blood, crossed with stripes, and flooded with agonizing, burning tears of suffering. God's anger will not cease until He has caused this land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of His fury, until He has rewarded unto Babylon double."

On this matter Ellen White was not the only seer in her day. Writing six years earlier, another of Lyman Beecher's many, gifted progeny, Harriet Stowe, in the final installment of her serial Uncle Tom's Cabin, a story about a pious slave of which she claimed to have learned the facts through divine inspiration, made the following appeal to her readers:

This is an age of the world when nations are trembling and convulsed. A mighty influence is abroad, surging and heaving the world, as with an earthquake. And is America safe? Every nation that carries in its bosom great and unredressed injustice has in it the elements of this last convulsion.

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2 Ibid., p. 276.
For what is this mighty influence thus rousing in all nations and languages those groanings that cannot be uttered, for man's freedom and equality?

O Church of Christ, read the signs of the times! Is not this power the spirit of HIM whose kingdom is yet to come, and whose will [sic] to be done on earth as it is in heaven?

But who may abide the day of his appearing? "For that day shall burn as an oven: and he shall appear as swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger in his right: and he shall break in pieces the oppressor."

Are not these dread words for a nation bearing in her bosom so mighty an injustice? Christians! every time that you pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, can you forget that prophecy associates in dread fellowship, the day of vengeance with the year of his redeemed?

A day of grace is yet held out to us. Both North and South have been guilty before God; and the Christian Church has a heavy account to answer. Not by combining together, to protect injustice and cruelty, and making a common capital of sin, is this Union to be saved,—but by repentance, justice and mercy; for, not surer is the eternal law by which the millstone sinks in the ocean, than that stronger law by which injustice and cruelty shall bring on nations the wrath of Almighty God!

In drawing upon the language of Malachi 3, Mrs. Stowe delivered her prophecy in the form of a warning, its purpose being to spur the reader to action. Since the covenant God had made with the forefathers could be broken by a breach on man's part—by a failure to obey Higher Law—prophecy was conditional. In borrowing from the Old Testament Prophets to warn the nation of the price it would pay for continued disobedience over slavery, Mrs. Stowe squared with the old Puritan tradition of calling for repentance through jeremiad.

When war first broke out, moderate churchmen blamed the abolitionists for provoking the South to secede. The abolitionists in turn

attributed the catastrophe to the nation's breach of the covenant in countenancing slavery, so that now both North and South were receiving just punishment for daring to offend divine righteousness for so long.1 "God is punishing this nation for the high crime of slavery," wrote Ellen White. In vision she was shown that the Fugitive Slave Law "was in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ. God's scourge is now on the North, because they have so long submitted to the advances of the slave power.2

When Lincoln took the Northern states into war, his sole objective was to preserve the Union, and for this he was roundly excoriated. Abolitionists and the Radical faction of his party claimed the scourge would continue as long as the problem of slavery was left burning—that the nation could not be preserved until the sin was eradicated from the land. In seeing the Hand of Judgment in the North's defeat at Bull Run, Ellen White adopted the abolitionist line, as she also did when attributing early setbacks to "proslavery men and traitors in the very midst" of the Union armies.3 Both abolitionists and Adventists saw slavery rather than secession lying at the root of the nation's ills.

Armageddon and Apocalypse

The coming of the war forced the Northern churches to take the abolitionists' jeremiads more seriously. Any hopes for achieving the millennium without cataclysm soon dissipated. An article from a Baptist

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1Moorhead, American Apocalypse, pp. 25-28, 43-44.

2Testimonies, 1:264.

3Ibid., pp. 266-67.
quarterly, published in Boston, indicated the shift in mood among post-
millennialists:

We had flattered ourselves that we should escape the desolating 
war which have marked the fluctuating fortunes of the European 
Empire, and that in a pathway of unbroken peace we should sweep 
forward into the cloudless splendours of the Millenial [sic] era 
. . . . Our visions have been suddenly, rudely dispelled.¹

Not even many abolitionists had predicted that war was inevitable; 
their doom-saying consisted mainly of warnings issued within an Old 
Testament framework of conditional prophecy. For as intolerable as 
abolitionists found the existing social order, most sincerely hoped and 
believed it would be reformed. But when the nation failed to heed the 
call for reform, just as they had predicted, calamity ensued.

But neither abolitionist nor moderate abandoned the millennial 
hope. Precisely the opposite occurred: the hope grew exceedingly 
fervid. In the American consciousness, civil war became transformed 
into a cosmic struggle between good and evil—a great controversy, if 
you will. Before long the moderate center of the Republican Party 
dropped its accusations against the abolitionists, while public opinion 
in general turned decisively against the slaveholding South. If the war 
was punishment for the sins of the nation, it was also an opportunity 
for purification and regeneration by ridding the body politic once and 
for all of that pernicious practice.

The war did not shatter America's millennial vision, as one might 
have expected, but instead succeeded in transforming it. The Golden Age 
would not now be achieved either through progress or mass conversions,

¹"The National Crisis," Christian Review 26 (July 1861): 492; 
quoted in Moorhead, American Apocalypse, p. 43.
but rather on the battle field of Armageddon. Since most Protestants believed America to be the modern-day Israel, they believed the world's final destiny hinged upon the outcome of the War.¹ Providential interpretations, such as the following, abounded:

[The War] is one of the last mighty strides of Providence towards the goal of humanity's final and high destiny. A few more such strides, a few more terrific struggles and travail pains among the nations; a few more such convulsions and revolutions, that shall break to pieces and destroy what remains of the inveterate and time-honored systems and confederations of sin and Satan, and the friends of freedom may then lift up their heads and rejoice, for their redemption draweth nigh.²

Now where did sabbatarian Adventists stand in all this? As said earlier, by identifying slavery as the cause of the War, they strictly followed the abolitionist line of argument. The pages of the Review and Herald attest to how deeply indebted Adventists were to evangelical reformers for their antislavery rhetoric and for their analysis of the nation's distraught condition. The majority of articles in the Review concerning slavery consisted of reprints taken from other evangelical publications. After one article reprinted under the heading, "Warning!," the editor, Uriah Smith, wrote the following remark:

Shall we set down the Independent as an "Advent" paper! How else can we account for the appearance in its columns, without note or comment, of the above compilation of texts, as scriptures con-

¹Moorhead, American Apocalypse, pp. 63-65.

taining warnings applicable to the present time?¹

The applications the editors made of these articles, however, often differed from the way the authors probably intended them to be taken. On the front page of the issue of September 9, 1862, the Review reprinted a poem that seemed uncanny because it had been written by a woman in Europe several years before the War began. It ended with a couplet, "And the Union, though spurned by the slaveholder's scorn,/ shall be guarded by Northmen for ages unborn," after which James White added the commentary, "It is strikingly accurate except where it caters to the popular and delusive hope of a good time coming."² Similarly, in a preface to a reprint from the American Missionary, Uriah Smith seized upon one of the all too common jeremiads coming from the evangelical press, using the occasion to promote his view of America as dragon-like:

From the following article it appears that we are not alone in our views of the hypocritical and wicked character of this nation . . . had probably no reference to the prophecy concerning this nation [Rev. 13: 11-17], its testimony is nevertheless unequivocal that though in profession this government is just and peaceable and pure, in its actions it gives the lie to its profession, and shows itself unjust, corrupt and wicked. Though in appearance it is innocent and "lamb-like," it "speaks like a dragon."³

Notice that Uriah Smith did not say, as do Adventists today, that America would one day "speak like a dragon," but rather that it so spake

¹RH, Sept. 16, 1862, p. 125. Besides this and numerous other articles from the New York Independent, a widely circulated evangelical paper that was moderately reformist, one may also find reprints from the Oberlin Evangelist, American Missionary, Watchman and Reflector, The Principia, Premium Tract, Anti-Slavery Standard, and American Missionary.

²RH, Sept. 9, 1862, p. 113.

at that very time. Here we may indeed find a marked contrast between the typical evangelical abolitionist and at least one Adventist leader, for, unlike the former, Smith, by identifying the nation as the two-horned beast of Revelation 13, claimed that the United States had become so corrupt as to render itself irredeemable. Yet he at least was careful to distinguish between the Republic as it had once been and as it had now become; for Smith did not concur with the extreme Garrisonian rhetoric that the Constitution had been a covenant of death—i.e., that the Republic had been flawed from its inception. Rather, Smith seemed to view the cause of abolition to be like those of the Millerite movement and sabbath reform, as a missed opportunity to conform to "new light."

Ellen White shared Smith's disbelief that the conflict would be resolved peacefully. In a testimony to the church which she wrote in early 1862, she predicted that England would prey upon the nation's divisions and thereby effect its fall:

> When England does declare war, all nations will have an interest of their own to serve, and there will be general war, general confusion... Had our nation remained united it would have had strength, but divided it must fall.¹

Yet, as dire as these words may have sounded, the kind of pessimism that Adventists exhibited for the future did not drive them to the passivity of a purely fatalistic position. As it was with postmillennial, evangelical reformers, Adventists took these prophecies of doom to be calls for action. The closer they drew toward the Apocalypse, the more imperative it became for them to act immediately. In the same

¹*Testimonies*, 1: 259-60.
testimony as the last quoted, Mrs. White made this stirring appeal:

The signs of Christ's coming are too plain to be doubted . . . God calls upon all, both preachers and people, to awake. All heaven is astir. The scenes of earth's history are fast closing. We are amid the peril of the last days. The scenes which are passing before us are of sufficient magnitude to cause us to arouse and urge home to the hearts of all who will listen. The harvest of the earth is nearly ripe.¹

While Adventists were diligently preparing themselves for the second advent, the Northern evangelicals eagerly participated in the war effort by administering agencies of relief for soldiers and, after Emancipation, for the freedmen too.² But the "coming of the Lord" anticipated by Adventists was altogether different from that of which Union troops sang,³ and, accordingly, they did not pin their hopes upon an earthly millennium to follow the visitation of Divine Wrath.

Part of the reason for Adventists' unwillingness to invest their energies in abolitionist reform lay in their scriptural interpretation. In 1859 Anson Byington, John's older brother, wrote the Review to discontinue his subscription because Adventists were doing nothing about slavery.⁴ He attributed the lack of action to their literal reading of

¹Ibid., 1: 260-61.
²Some of the most prominent of these were the United States Christian Commission (a ministry to soldiers), United States Sanitary Commission (a predecessor of American Red Cross), Soldier's Aid Society (local), Woman's Central Relief Association (New York City), and the Freedman's Bureau, established in March, 1865. Moorhead, American Apocalypse, pp. 65-72.
³Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn to the Republic" begins, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, . . ."
⁴Anson Byington, whose brother was the first president of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference, was never himself an Adventist.
a passage in Revelation 13, which makes reference to bondsmen present during the last days.¹

But a more fundamental reason for Adventists' lack of interest in social reform was their belief that the present society would soon be replaced by a far better one. As Ellen White wrote in 1863 (after the Emancipation Proclamation):

Our kingdom is not of this world. We are waiting for our Lord from heaven to come to earth to put down all authority and power, and set up His everlasting kingdom. Earthly powers are shaken. We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly.²

The difference between abolitionist and Adventist attitudes toward antebellum society and the reform of it is to be found, not mainly in the rhetoric of each, but rather in the application of rhetoric. How similar were the former and how different were the latter can be seen in the first article on the war that appeared in the Review after the debacle at Fort Sumter. In these last two paragraphs James White set forth the basic position that Adventists were to hold throughout most of the conflict:

Meanwhile let us not suffer our minds to become too much absorbed in this controversy, nor be led away by any undue excitement. What we should ever keep before our minds is, that every new development of the signs of the times is a fresh evidence that the end of all things and the consummation of our glorious hope are right upon us. It should lead us to give ourselves more diligently and earnestly to the work of preparation. The true issue, after all, is between the King of kings and the powers of darkness; and the present turmoils will ere long cul-

¹RH, March 10, 1859, p. 124.
²Testimonies, 1: 360-61.
minate in the great battle of Armageddon when everlasting victory will perch upon the banner of the Lord of hosts. Let those who wish to be on his side then, make haste to marshal themselves into his service now.

It is pleasant to look away beyond these scenes of commotion and strife to that time when all enemies shall have been put under the feet of Christ, all opposing rule put down, the last enemy, death, destroyed, and the kingdom under the whole heaven be given to the saints of the Most High to be possessed by them in peace and righteousness and joy forever and ever.¹

One may find in the foregoing passage several points which Adventists and abolitionists held in common. Both looked for the Hand of Providence operating in profane history and sought to find in the "signs of the times" the key that unlocked the future. Both claimed that the Civil War came as divine punishment for the national sin of slavery. Both thought that the war would eventually "culminate in the great battle of Armageddon,"² and both believed that the consummation of the glorious millennial hope was "right upon" them. Most important, both were thoroughly utopian, because they rejected the social order as it was and actively sought to replace it with a better one--indeed, the ideal one--that would follow. But here the similarity ends.

For while one group, believing that society could be transformed through the eradication of slavery, actively sought to achieve such transformation by the same, the other group, believing that the existing society would not be transformed, worked instead to prepare individual


²See ibid. Neither party claimed that the Civil War itself was Armageddon, but both thought the war might lead to it. This was after the Millerite fiasco date-setting went out of vogue. See Moorhead, American Apocalypse, p. 57; James White's denial that the Civil War would be the last in "Thoughts on the Great Battle," RH, Jan. 21, 1862, p. 61; and Ellen White's prediction that a short period of peace would follow the present conflict in Testimonies, 1: 268.
souls for its replacement. Still, the two groups, Adventists and abolitionists, were probably closer to each other in their general view of things than either were to less radical segments in American society. The distinction then between pre- and postmillennialism, while still important and especially so with respect to social reform, is not nearly so significant as the distinction between apocalyptic millennialism—i.e., the belief in an imminent millennium ushered in by cataclysm—and all gradualist or static philosophies of history.

Precisely because of the similarity in world view, Adventists could readily appropriate the abolitionists' arguments against slavery, their social analyses and rhetorical attacks on the status quo, all to suit their own purposes. Abolitionist rhetoric served as the springboard from which Adventists could launch their own programs of personal reform. Adventists were not social reformers; their activism was confined to themselves and their community.

The Last Days Extended

With the outbreak of hostilities at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, the predictions of the North's "Jeremias" came true. The nation was severely punished for its sin of slavery. The first article on the war in the Review appeared on May 7, 1861, informing its readers of its intention to provide commentary on the events "after the excitement and smoke of the scenes ... [had] passed away." Right down to the very day that Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, the

1James White, "The War."
Review continued to print articles by Adventists and abolitionists prophesying the nation's doom. Lincoln, a pragmatist and moderate, received more than enough criticism early in the conflict to initiate his thinking on the political value of emancipation.

But the doomsday rhetoric was eventually displaced by the harsh realities of a long and bloody war. By the time the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, the circumstances had already forced Adventists to ponder the prospect of a draft. In the issue of August 12, 1862, James White set forth a position, a trial balloon, as it were, sent up to elicit debate among the brethren. After repeating the biblical pronouncement that slavery would continue "down to the end of all earthly governments," that there would be neither emancipation nor a millennium before the second advent, he then turned against a radical pacifist position of disobedient resistance in the event of a draft:

2. The position which our people have taken relative to the perpetuity and sacredness of the law of God contained in the ten commandments, is not in harmony with all the requirements of war. The fourth precept of that law says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy;" the sixth says, "Thou shalt not kill." But in the case of drafting, the government assumes the responsibility of the violation of the law of God, and it would be madness to resist. He who would resist until, in the administration of military law, he was shot down, goes too far, we think, in taking the responsibility of suicide.

We are at present enjoying the protection of our civil and religious rights, by the best government under heaven. With the exception of those enactments pressed upon it by the slave power,

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1See, for example, James Sawyer, "Is the Nation Guilty?" RH, Sept. 23, 1862, pp. 133-34; and in the same issue, dated the day after the Proclamation, Lydia Maria Child's "Letter to the President" (pp. 130-31), urging emancipation, which was reprinted from the National Republican.

its laws are good. We may call in question the policy of the present administration in keeping the precious blacks, who are worth several hundred dollars each, out of the dangers of war—on whose account the present war is—and sending the valueless white man, not worth a dime in market, to fall in battle by thousands. But whatever we may say of our amiable president, his cabinet, or of military officers, it is Christ-like to honor every law of our land. Said Jesus, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii, 21. Those who despise civil law, should at once pack up and be off for some spot on God's foot-stool where there is no civil law.

When it shall come to this, that civil enactments shall be passed and enforced to drive us from obedience to the law of God, to join those who are living in rebellion against the government of Heaven, see Rev. xiii, 15-17, then it will be time to stand our chances of martyrdom. But for us to attempt to resist the laws of the best government under heaven, which is now struggling to put down the most hellish rebellion since that of Satan and his angels, we repeat, it would be madness.¹

James White's double reference to the United States as "the best government under heaven" was perhaps a reaction to the extreme statements regarding the Babylonian and dragonic character of the nation which Andrews and Smith had been making. To James White cooperation rather than confrontation or disobedience now appeared the most desirable course for Adventists.

The letters that ensued were, on the whole, favorable toward James White's moderate stance. One respondent went even further, suggesting that Adventists volunteer to join the fight against the rebels.² In the issue of September 30, 1862, John Loughborough attempted to interpret the New Testament's prohibition, "Do violence to no man," in a way that

¹James White, "The Nation," RH, Aug. 12, 1862, p. 84.

would justify participation in a just war.\textsuperscript{1} The prominent holdout was George Amadon, who even in the war's final months was still counseling against Adventists' participating in the conflict.\textsuperscript{2}

Even before the war had begun, sabbatarian Adventists began a series of actions that demonstrated their willingness to accommodate rather than to confront the Beast—perhaps even to see it now as still lamb-like and not yet dragonic, as still liberty-loving, saving its tyrannical manifestations for a later time. At a conference held in Battle Creek in September and October, 1860, Adventists laid plans to obtain legal status for their organizations, adopting the name Seventh-day Adventist. During the war years, SDAs then banded into state conferences, and those into a General Conference in May of 1863.\textsuperscript{3} Having acquired from the state official recognition as a church (formerly regarded as one of Babylon's features), Adventists were then able to gain approval of their status as non-combatants in the conflict.\textsuperscript{4} This enabled them to serve in the military if called but without having to bear arms.

During the first year of the conflict, before Adventists in Michigan had as yet begun to feel its actual effects, both James and Ellen

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\textsuperscript{1} John Loughborough, "Do Violence to no Man," \textit{RH}, Sept. 30, 1862, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{3} R.W. Schwarz, \textit{Light Bearers}, pp. 93-98.
\textsuperscript{4} This action was reported in the \textit{Review} by J.N. Andrews, "Seventh-day Adventists Recognized as Non-combatants," Sept. 13, 1864, p. 124.
\end{flushright}
White thought Armageddon itself might issue from the present war.\(^1\)

While Adventists might lament the bloodshed, the war could still give them comfort in the thought that the end of the age was near. But as the war progressed, drawing Adventists themselves into the conflict, the hope of a soon millennium, in whichever version, was worn thin. All parties turned their attention toward the immediate prospects of peace.

The war was especially unfortunate for Adventists in that it coincided with their efforts to give the movement a new life as an institution. There was still much work yet to be done before the Saviour could come. The truth had to be spread, but war had the effect of confining it. One can sympathize with James White's concern:

The spirit of war overruns the spirit of true piety, and hinders the progress of Christian truth and holiness in any country where both exist. And unless the especial providence of God favors the cause of non-combatants, in case of drafting men for the service, they are liable to be brought where military law will demand of them what they regard a [sic] violation of the Higher Law. These, doubtless, are some of the reasons why the Apostle makes it the first duty of Christians to pray that they may be able to lead quiet and peaceable lives, and not be hindered in their efforts to bring men to a saving knowledge of the truth.\(^2\)

Just as the Adventists mission was acquiring a new form, the winds of strife threatened to halt its advance. James White enumerated the difficulties: (1) if Adventists who had been drafted chose not to serve, the $300 commutation fees would deplete their resources; (2) if they did not commute but instead went into non-military service, their own ranks would be depleted; (3) those who would bear the truth were being "drawn

\(^1\)See above, n. 47, p. 91.

\(^2\)James White, "Non-Combatants. Their Duty in Reference to the Present War," RH, Jan. 31, 1865, p. 76.
away to the field of carnage"; and (4) the nation had become so pre-
occupied with war that its citizens could scarcely attend to religious
matters. The winds must then be restrained by the four angels before
the 144,000 were sealed: in order for the cause to continue, "the war
must stop." James then called the church to set aside four days for
fasting and prayer, "commencing Wednesday, March 1, and continuing till
the close of the following Sabbath."¹ On April 25, 1865, he could
report: "The four successive days of humiliation, fasting and prayer
were observed by our people everywhere. These meetings of the deepest
interest ever held by our people.²

As the war drew to a close and a Northern victory became certain,
even Uriah Smith, who could usually outdo most other calamities, reveled
in the prospect of peace:

... none have [sic] more reason to rejoice than the command-
ment-keeping people of God, and none can rejoice more understand-
ly [sic] than they. They see in the prospect not only the im-
mediate effects that others see, ... but they see in it, a ful-
fillment of prophecy, an answer to prayer, a bright token that
the great Shepherd of Israel is going before his flock. We
therefore thank God for the visible manifestation of his hand
in our national affairs.

But Smith, as if not to ruin his reputation, would not pause long for
celebration:

But the people of God will, in the light of the world, avoid
an evil into which others will very likely fall. They know that
no permanent peace can again visit this earth. The days of quiet
are past. The prophet has declared, looking at this very time,

¹James White, "The Time Has Come! For the Fulfillment of Revela-
tion VII, 3," RH, April 25, 1865, pp. 164-65 (reprinted from the issue
of Feb. 21, 1865).

that the nations were angry, and that anger will not subside. Tumult and distraction are largely mingled with the remaining brief chapter of her history. And while multitudes will see nothing in the close of the rebellion and the overthrow of slavery, but long years, perhaps ages, of prosperity and peace, to the student of prophecy it appears far otherwise. Peace now, to him does not mean repose nor security. It means activity in working for God and his cause. It means a little in which to spread the truth, and prepare as many as possible for the still darker storms that are impending. Are we ready for the opportunities that Providence is apparently about to put in our hand?¹

In the very next issue of the Review, Smith would have cause to report on final calamity in this sad chapter of American history—the assassination of President Lincoln:

By this event, a vail [sic] of uncertainty is thrown over the future condition of this country. We are reminded by this that we are not to settle down in the idea that peace with flowery wings is here, and harmony and prosperity are before us. When we have reached a time when the chief magistrate of this nation, and his prime minister, can be assassinated in cold blood . . . may we not fear that the quiet and happiness of the nation are gone forever?²

Smith may have been a pessimist, but his pessimism was not without a grounding in fact. While other evangelicals allowed themselves to be deluded by visions of a quick reconstruction, the South now having been rid of slavery, Smith would not so be taken. His statement concerning the future of the Negro race in America was indeed prophetic:

Slavery will be dead only in name. It will still exist in fact. There will still be bondsmen in this land, bound in fetters in disenfranchisement, proscription and prejudice, more galling and oppressive than the iron manacles that have heretofore clanked upon their bleeding limbs.³


²Uriah Smith, "The Nation's Appalling Calamity," RH, April 18, 1865, p. 156.

³Uriah Smith, "Is Slavery Dead?", RH, June 20, 1865, p. 20.
But whatever the signs of the times for the remnant happened to be, whether war or peace, famine or prosperity, slavery or freedom, they always spoke the same message: you must work harder for God and His cause. Realizing along with everyone else that the kingdom of God would not come without toil, Seventh-day Adventists settled down for an extended stay in "this old world." For as James White was the first to learn, and as many would learn after him:

[The American Christian] has really as much interest in this old world as any man. Although it has been sadly changed from its primeval glory by the curse, and by the flood, and has been rent by inward commotion, and has waxed old like a tattered garment, and has been crimsoned by war and bloodshed, and everywhere is seen resting upon it the blight and mildew of sin, yet here he must stay and act his part, until the Prince of Peace shall come and reign.  

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1James White, "Non-Combatants," RH, p. 163.
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