

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF APOCALYPTICISM

Volume III

THE ORIGINS OF APOCALYPTICISM
IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Edited by
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Continuum
New York/London

2000

The Continuum Publishing Group Inc
370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd
Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB

1998

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The encyclopedia of apocalypticism / edited by Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Contents: v. 1. The origins of apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity / edited by John J. Collins — v. 2. Apocalypticism in Western history and culture / edited by Bernard McGinn — v.

3. Apocalypticism in the modern period and the contemporary age / edited by Stephen J. Stein.

ISBN 0-8264-1252-1 (set : pbk.)—ISBN 0-8264-1253-X (v. 1 : pbk.)

1. Apocalyptic literature—Comparative studies. 2. End of the world—Comparative studies. I. McGinn, Bernard, 1937- . II. Collins, John Joseph, 1946- . III. Stein, Stephen J., 1940- . BL501.E53 1998

291.2'3—dc21

97-46016

CIP



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Apocalypticism in Colonial North America

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MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE ORIGIN AND RISE of the national mythology of the United States in the Puritan endeavor to set up their New Jerusalem in the New World. According to this familiar argument, American Puritans saw themselves as God's chosen people on an "Errand into the Wilderness," there to set up a city upon the hill as a shining beacon to the rest of the world. Come the millennium, New England and the American continent at large, would be transformed into the eschatological New Jerusalem, where Christ would set up his throne to govern the effete nations the world over. In short, the appropriation of the City of God to the American hemisphere, modern scholars have argued, instilled in the colonists a sense of purpose that came to fruition during the First Great Awakening, the American Revolution, and in the American missions to the Third World in the nineteenth century. Whether or not English Puritans justified their removal to the New World in eschatological terms is an issue that has divided the scholarly community since the 1980s. One school of thought (historians of religion and literary scholars) argues that the Puritan fathers' emphasis on purity of doctrine and church discipline, on conversion as a prerequisite to church membership, and on de facto separation from the lukewarm Church of England was informed by a fully articulated millenarian credo that sought to anticipate the City of God in America. These ideas were inscribed into the

typology of their errand and invoked in the jeremiads of their descendants, who summoned the ghosts of their illustrious ancestors to revitalize their mission whenever a crisis threatened their survival. The creation of this mythic errand occurred in the decades after the Half-Way Covenant (1662) and proved so adaptable to the changing needs of the revolutionary pulpit a century later that it was constantly reinvented as the Puritans' own usable past, this time as a quest for a civil millennium in which God's American Israel was now called upon to defend its civil and religious liberties against the encroachments of the British Antichrist.

Modern historians tend to project this errand back into the motivation of the first settlers and thus read the literature of the transmigration in light of its later manifestation. Be that as it may, a second school of thought examines much more mundane factors of economic and political pressures that encouraged relocation. These historians stress specific "push" and "pull" factors that led English citizens to abandon their old home for opportunities in the New World. Promotional tracts of the period emphasized overcrowding, poverty, lack of opportunity, or simply political and religious oppression as reasons for leaving England. Conversely, economic improvement, free tracts of land, exploitation of natural resources, and religious freedom are listed as pull factors for those who could be lured away by new opportunities in America. More recently, a third school of intellectual historians has challenged the old paradigm that end-time visions invested the Puritan errand from the very start. Members of this group argue that *no* millenarian ideology informed the Puritan exodus during the first wave of emigration, because such issues did not become pronounced until a full decade *after* the first wave of settlers had arrived in New England. Still others have amplified this ongoing revisionism by demonstrating that Puritan New England did *not* proclaim Boston as the future site of Christ's millennial throne (as is commonly believed), but located the eschatological New Jerusalem in Judea and expanded the Christianography of salvation to include America. For better or worse, it is against this background that apocalypticism in colonial America must be examined.

☞ MILLENNIALIST THEORIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT _____

The codification of apocalyptic hermeneutics was slow in coming—the plethora of diverging interpretations may strike modern readers as a veritable confusion of Babylonish tongues. Many seventeenth-century millennialists were dismayed to discover that there was no consensus about the state of the

golden age: whether literal, spiritual, in heaven, or on earth; or indeed when the millennium was to occur, whether past, present, or future. To appreciate how American eschatologists fit into this debate, when and why they departed from their European colleagues, and how three basic patterns of millenarian interpretation became codified at the beginning of the eighteenth century, we briefly need to turn to the eschatological theories of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to understand their development. Such English Reformation theologians as John Bale (1495–1563) and John Foxe (1517–1587) did their share in unlocking the prophetic mysteries. While Bale correlated the prophetic peregrination of the church in its fight against Satan with specific events in secular history, he dated the thousand-year reign of the “church invisible” (Rev. 20:4–5) from Christ’s resurrection, in 33 C.E., and with St. Augustine asserted that Christ ruled in human hearts rather than in any visible organization. John Foxe inherited Bale’s ideas and contributed his famous martyrology *Acts and Monuments* (1573). This work greatly influenced Elizabethan reformers in their efforts to portray the English nation as God’s chosen people on the vanguard of the Protestant Reformation.

Whereas many reformers employed prophecy as a means to spur on the Protestant Reformation, the more radical-minded successors in the first half of the seventeenth century tried to turn England into a Puritan stronghold. Apocalypticism furnished them with ideological direction. Among the late-sixteenth-century Protestant heirs to Bale and Foxe was the Cambridge-trained theologian Thomas Brightman (1562–1607), whose *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (Frankfurt, 1609) is a fresh commentary on Revelation, greatly appealing to the congregationalist movement of the period. While both Bale and Brightman read John’s Revelation as prophetic history of the periods before, during, and after the millennium, they parted company on the nature of Christ’s kingdom. Brightman’s fervent millennialism sought to establish a pure church polity this side of paradise, because particular visible churches and their largely Presbyterian polity could be identified with the invisible kingdom of God. Brightman did not correlate the millennium with Satan’s concomitant binding, but rather saw them as two separate events following each other: Satan’s binding began with Constantine the Great becoming the first Christian emperor of Rome (ca. 306) and ended in 1300, with the invasion of the Ottoman Turks; next, Christ’s millennial reign began from the reformation of Wyclif (ca. 1300), ending in the day of judgment, a thousand years later (in 2300). For Brightman, then, Christ’s spiritual reign was already in progress, and his saints of the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:4–6), consisting

of his martyrs and witnesses, were presently ruling through their spiritual successors in the church militant on earth.

If Thomas Brightman thus made the church militant part of the ongoing millennium and placed the church triumphant after the day of judgment, then his German colleague, Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638), at Herborn University, significantly revised our understanding of prophetic periodization. In his tract *Diatribē de Mille Annis Apocalypticis* (Herborn, 1627), Alsted did not place the millennium of Antichrist's binding in the past (as did Bale), nor as Brightman in the present, but, with Francisco Ribeira (1537–1591) at his elbow, projected it into the future. This revision was a decisive break from traditional interpretations of these matters. Significant for later Puritan interpretations in England and America is Alsted's insistence on Christ's spiritual reign on earth and a *corporeal* first resurrection "in which the Bodies of the Martyrs [only] shall rise" (*The Beloved City, Or, The Saints Reign on Earth A Thousand Yeares*, 2nd ed. [London, 1643], 17). The remaining saints, less holy than the martyrs but far different from the wicked, would not rise until the "Universal Resurrection of all the dead" (p. 19). This hyperliteralism of the first resurrection marks a hermeneutic split between those who allegorized the first resurrection as a conversion of individuals by grace "common unto all good men and happeneth daily" (p. 18) and those for whom this event was a literal and corporeal resurrection of Christ's martyrs. The allegorists would eventually give rise to a so-called postmillennialism of which Daniel Whitby (1638–1726), Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), Joseph Bellamy (1719–1790), and Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) are eighteenth-century representatives, whereas the literalists would evolve into the so-called premillennialist camp as represented in Cotton Mather's mature eschatology. However, these handy (albeit too neat) distinctions remain problematic for most of the seventeenth century in that both groups spoke of an inchoate, progressively unfolding millennium of mortals who would not attain eternal life until judgment day, in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:11–15). Perfection and immortality would not be the lot of this mixed multitude of saved nations until they, too, had undergone death, corporeal resurrection, and life everlasting in the church triumphant. Not until the concept of the saints' Rapture at Christ's second coming (2 Thess. 4:15) was fully understood did the inevitable consequences of Alsted's hermeneutical break become the deciding factor in the split between pre- and postmillennialists.

Alsted's eschatology, then, stands at the crossroads between a premillennialism of the supernatural type advocated in Cotton Mather's "Triparadisus"

(1724–1727) and a postmillennialism of the developmental type erroneously attributed to Daniel Whitby's *Treatise on the True Millennium* (1703) and proliferated in America by the disciples of Jonathan Edwards and the nineteenth-century apostles of progress. The much-touted postmillennialism (which has been attributed to Jonathan Edwards as its first American progenitor) seems therefore little more than a variation on a familiar theme outlined by Alsted more than a century earlier. The point of departure between the two systems, then, is determined not by whether Christ's visible return occurs at the beginning or end of the millennium, but by whether the first resurrection was to be understood as a literal and corporeal resurrection of the saints and martyrs or merely as a spiritual resurrection of the saints through conversion or of the church's reformation. Indeed, the nucleus of both systems was already present in Alsted. As I shall demonstrate below, the millennialist systems of American theologians, from the Puritan exodus to the Revolution, were little more than variants of Alsted's system—even if his eighteenth-century emulators employed the trappings of Enlightenment thought to clothe their received ideas in new garb.

The next step in the development of apocalypticism that affected how Americans viewed the millennium came through Joseph Mede (1586–1638), a nonconformist with Anglican sympathies, master of Christ College, Cambridge. His most significant work for our purposes is *Clavis Apocalyptica* (London, 1627), a commentary on Revelation that described St. John's visions as coterminous prophecies about the development of church and state. Mede's most important contribution is his analysis of the inner coherence of John's Apocalypse, which led Mede to identify (even coin the phrase) "the Synchronisme and order of the Prophecies of the Revelation." By this *Synchronisme* he meant "an agreement in time or age: because prophecies of things falling out in the same time, run on in time together, or Synchronize" (*Key of the Revelation*, 2nd ed. [London, 1650], pt. 1, p. 1). According to Mede's eschatology, Antichrist's reign of 1260 years was to be dated either from 456, the fall of Rome under Genseric the Vandal or twenty years later, in 476, when the last of the Roman emperors, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by Odoacer the Hun. Antichrist's fall, Satan's binding, and Christ's second coming—all could therefore be expected either in 1716 or 1736. With this Archemedian fulcrum in place, Mede had at once solved the types of problems that had plagued the systems of John Bale and Thomas Brightman.

Like Alsted before him, Mede situated the millennium in the future upon the fall of Antichrist and made Satan's binding for a thousand years coterminous with the corporeal resurrection of the raised saints (first resurrection). Moreover, those alive at the beginning of the millennium would reign on

earth: "Those who shall be Partakers of this Kingdome are described to be of two sorts: 1. The deceased Martyrs, who . . . shall resume their Bodies and Reigne in Heaven. 2. Such of the living as have not worshipped the Beast, nor his Image, neither received his marke, &c. These shall Reigne on Earth" (*Paraleipomena: Remaines On some Passages in The REVELATION* [London, 1650], 24–25). It is significant that, unlike Alsted, Mede placed the corporeal saints of the first resurrection in the heavens as permanent occupants of Christ's celestial city. Yet like his predecessors, Mede also asserted an inchoate millennium. While more or less free from Satan's encroachment, the saved nations of "Virgin-Christians of the *Gentiles*" and "the Nation of the *Jewes*" now converted to Christianity (p. 25) would still retain the sting of mortality, their sinful dispensation, and ultimate disease and death not obviated until the second resurrection at the end of the millennium. By all accounts Alsted and Mede are perhaps the most significant Protestant millennialists of the early seventeenth century. Their guidelines became the touchstone for all those who shared similar concerns.

Mede's colleague John Cotton (1584–1652), vicar of St. Botolph's in Lincolnshire, was guided by similar expectations after he had established himself in New England in 1633. Cotton's calculations about the coming millennium, however, centered on 1655 and were not formulated until roughly 1639, six years after his establishment in the First Church of Boston, in New England. By that time, he was preaching a series of sermons on the Apocalypse that linked the covenant, regeneration, and church membership with the visible church. In his *The Churches Resurrection, or the Opening of the Fifth and Sixt verses of the 20th Chap. Of the Revelation* (London, 1642), his *Pouring Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642), and *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation* (London, 1655), Cotton adapted Thomas Brightman's Augustinian First Resurrection (Rev. 20:4–6) as a *spiritual rebirth* of individuals and of reformed churches that excluded the unregenerate by making conversion the litmus test for church membership. With Thomas Goodwin's *Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (London, 1650) at his elbow, Cotton charged the holy ministers with examining applicants' regeneration before admitting them to the communion table. Cotton's *Churches Resurrection* deserves detailed attention because it has been at the center of the recent critical debate. As mentioned above, many intellectual historians and literary critics point to John Cotton's emphasis on individual conversion prerequisite to church membership in New England as having been galvanized by his millennialist endeavor to set up the New Jerusalem in the American wilderness. What is often ignored, however, is that in his *Churches Resurrection* Cotton is

as much preoccupied with positioning his own theories between those of Bale and Brightman on the one hand and Mede and Alsted on the other, as with the purity of New England's church ordinances, doctrine, and polity. To shed new light on the issue we need to understand exactly what Cotton's millennium looked like in order to determine if at any time before or after his migration to America he tried to establish the New Jerusalem church in New England. The millennial reign of the saints would begin with Antichrist's fall and Satan's binding in 1655. At that point, God would employ "powerfull Ministers" who would bind Satan with "the strong chaine of God's Ordinances Word and Sacraments and Censures" (*Churches Resurrection*, 5).

Satan's binding during an inchoate millennium signifies to Cotton the purity of church discipline, doctrine, and polity by admitting only regenerate members. As with Alsted, the rulers with Christ in heaven would be his martyrs: "those that were branded before as Hugunots, and Lollards, and Hereticks" would nearly be the only ones worthy to wear crowns of righteousness. Yet unlike Alsted, Cotton's martyrs "lived in their Successors," among the regenerate of saved nations during the millennium. And as in the case of Alsted and Mede, these saved nations were little more than a mixed multitude of regenerate and unregenerate (both still mortal and sinful), of church members and the wicked nations now bound "in chaines of . . . Admonition and Excommunication" (p. 6). The unregenerate among them "remaine dead in sinne" and would be excluded from the spiritual blessings bestowed upon the saved nations. The first resurrection then is twofold: a resurrection of particular persons dead in sin but renewed by regenerating grace (Eph. 2:1; 5:14; John 5:25, 28) and of particular churches recovered from their spiritual apostasy and dead estate in idolatry and superstition (Rom. 11:15; Ezek. 37:1-10). The martyrs and witnesses would invisibly govern through "Men of the same Spirit" (p. 6) the nations of the earth, "either keeping them out, and binding them, leaving them under Satan if they would not come in: Or if they be come in, binde them with this great chaine that they shall not trouble the Church any more, as carnall members use to doe" (p. 10). This context then establishes why Cotton emphasized church purity and admissions tests. Not, as some critics have argued, because Cotton and company wanted to set up their own New Jerusalem in Boston—for that belonged to the church triumphant following judgment day at the end of the golden age (in 2655)—but to make sure New England's churches would not be excluded from the millennial church, shut out as it were from God's ordinances, and thus share in the lot of the wicked nations as they rise with Gog and Magog against the

camp of the saints. Individual regeneration and the resurrection of individual churches were therefore crucial to Cotton, if New England was to have a share in the millennium.

Mere church membership, however, was not enough: "If we do not now strike a fast Covenant with our God to be his people . . . then we and ours will be of this dead hearted frame for a thousand yeares; we are not like to see greater encouragements for a good while then now we see . . ." (p. 17). In short, Satan was being bound gradually through the ongoing reformation; the first resurrection of the churches, however, still lay in the future and would not begin until Antichrist's fall: "Therefore let it be a serious warning to every one not to rest in Reformation and formes of it, and to blesse yourselves in Church Membership, because to this day, this first Resurrection [of the churches] hath not taken its place, nor will not take his place till Antichrist be ruined" (p. 20). Communicants had to experience true regeneration, or else their church membership would remain inefficacious. Likewise, true reformation of the church could be achieved only after Satan's binding, through a process of clerical preaching and censuring that would not achieve completion until the church triumphant. It is therefore absolutely imperative to Cotton's millennial system that New England's churches have tests of regeneration to *anticipate* the pure church, or else New England, like her unregenerate sister in Old England, would become part of Gog and Magog's final destruction by forfeiting her present opportunity to join in Christ's salvation. Notwithstanding the emphasis on high admission standards for new applicants to church membership, Cotton was fully aware that New England's churches could no more than anticipate the New Jerusalem state this side of the millennium. But he was quick to point at the vast gulf that separates anticipation from accomplishment, the church militant from the church triumphant. Not even during the millennium could complete purity be actualized.

Although Cotton's millennial fervor did not reach its full flower until about six years after his establishment in the First Church of Boston, his stringent requirements of regeneration of every communicant and exclusion of the unregenerate are clearly informed by his millenarian theories about the resurrection of the churches in an imminent millennium. Certainly, Cotton's position was not an isolated case but was shared by a number of his colleagues whose efforts to purify New England's churches through admissions tests were informed by the same millenarian concern for their survival into the millennium. These ideas were shared by his New Haven colleagues Peter Bulkeley (1583-1659) in *The Gospel-Covenant* (London, 1645), by William Hooke (1601-1678) in *A Short*

Discourse of the Nature and Extent of the Gospel-Day (London, 1673), and by John Davenport (1597–1670) in “An Epistle to the Reader,” published in Increase Mather’s *Mystery of Israel’s Salvation* (London, 1669).

Like Thomas Goodwin in England, John Davenport became an ardent congregationalist through Cotton’s preaching in 1633. Davenport ultimately joined Cotton in New England in 1636, but settled in the New Haven Colony in 1648. There Davenport set out to make the visible as close to the invisible church as a means of anticipating the New Jerusalem condition on earth, by attaining “perfection of light, and holiness, and love, as is attainable on this side of heaven” (“Epistle,” in Increase Mather’s *Mystery* [1669], n.p.). His millennialist ideology differed from that of Goodwin, Alsted, and Cotton only in that Davenport’s chiliasm led him to embrace the idea of Christ’s physical and visible co-regency on the millennial earth with his corporeal and immortalized raised saints over the still mortal saved nations. More significantly, Davenport singles out for praise those who rescued millennialism from this stigma of infamy, including Thomas Goodwin in *The World To Come; Or, The Kingdom of Christ Asserted* (London, 1651) for having restored “the literal exposition of the first Resurrection” to the millennial system and for proving that “the world to come” (Heb. 2.5) carries a double signification: first, an inchoate millennium of the church militant, “a state between the state of the world as now it is”; and, second, the perfection of the church triumphant at the end, “the state of things after the day of judgment, when *God shall be all in all*” (“Epistle”). Davenport commends Mede’s *Key to the Revelation* for making his synchronism of parallel events the key to unlocking the mystery of John’s Apocalypse. Lastly, he celebrates Alsted’s *Beloved City* for demonstrating that the millennium was not past but future. Perhaps that is why Davenport was so adamant about his chiliasm that he did not renounce it even after the collapse of Cromwell’s Interregnum and the anathema of the Fifth-Monarchists. Davenport’s millennialism expressed here is also informed by the momentous events of Sabbateanism in Europe, which prompted Increase Mather (1639–1723) to write his *Mystery of Israel’s Salvation* in the first place. For Davenport, then, the return of European and Ottoman Jews to Jerusalem betokened the nearness of the second coming—all the more reason to press on with the reformation of the churches in New England.

This agreement between these notable New Englanders of the first generation should not lead one to assume that there was a consensus among the millenarians of the period. Far from it. In fact, their views on the millennium often differed as much as their views on church government and admissions tests. Thomas Parker (1595–1677), pastor of Newbury, Massachusetts, is a

case in point. His Presbyterian leanings and standards of church admission had more in common with those later held by Jonathan Edwards's maternal grandfather Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729) of Northampton, than with John Cotton of the Boston church. If Cotton, Davenport, and Hooke tried to keep the visible church as close to the invisible by limiting church membership to the elect, Thomas Parker admitted virtually anyone with the faintest stirrings of grace. The church doors in his Newbury congregation were open as wide as any barn door in New England—or at least as wide as those of Stoddard in the Connecticut Valley fifty years later. In his *Visions and Prophecies of Daniel Expounded* (London, 1646), Parker argued for a chronological scheme of the millennium that had more in common with the preterist systems of Augustine, Bale, and Brightman than with the futurist systems of Cotton, Alsted, or Mede. According to Parker's system, the millennial reign was already in progress in his lifetime, intermitted only by the destruction of Gog and Magog, in the last forty-five years before the last judgment. The ministers of "particular Churches," who admit the yet unconverted elect "into the community of the whole Church of New Jerusalem[,] shall hereby be instruments of bringing them into the heavenly perfection, and shall therein be glorified with their converts" (pp. 148–49). Parker's views on the millennium, then, shaped his position on church membership as well: even the weakest must be admitted to safeguard their membership in the church triumphant.

Thomas Shepard (1605–1649), minister at Cambridge, had a view of church admission similar to those espoused by Davenport and Cotton, but Shepard was far less willing to let the unpredictable nature of millennialist exegesis determine his views on such crucial issues. The most interesting of his sermons on the topic is his *Parable of the Ten Virgins* (London, 1660). Here Shepard speculated about two comings of Christ—the one, a spiritual appearance to call Jews and Gentiles in their final ingathering before the destruction of Antichrist; the other, a literal, corporeal appearance of Christ to judge the world at the end of the one-thousand-year reign (*Works*, 3 vols. [1971 ed.], 2:24–26, 507–10). Either way, the Bride of Christ had to be holy and clean to receive the groom—even though there would remain enough foolish virgins left unprepared at his coming. But lest New England deem itself wise beyond safety, Shepard made sure that no carnal hypocrites might delude themselves with false security. He shared John Cotton's emphasis on an inchoate millennium or "Middle Advent," even as both deferred Christ's literal return in the clouds of fire to the day of judgment. Since both preparationists like Shepard and anti-preparationists like Cotton described the sequence of events leading

up to and during the millennium in essentially the same terms, the issue of premillennialist gloom or postmillennialist optimism, as critics are wont to argue, seems altogether moot. Even if Shepard (unlike Cotton) still expected the slaughter of the martyrs and witnesses to occur before the golden age, it was the preparation of the heart in terms of personal conversion (Cotton's spiritual first resurrection) that safeguarded an individual's entrance into the millennium. Even on this issue, then, both clergymen saw eye to eye.

Matters of church government and the purity of its members were also much on the mind of John Eliot (1604–1690) of Roxbury, New England's Apostle to the Indians. He began his missionary work among the Indians in 1646, translated the Bible into their Algonquian language, and published several Indian grammars, to speed their conversion. Cultural differences notwithstanding, Eliot's admission requirements for his communities of praying Indians were as stringent as for any English settler and required years of preparation. Guided by his belief in the Indians as the remnants of the Lost Tribes of Israel in America, he tried to do his best to convert them to the gospel of Christ and thus to bring home Indian Jews. As could be expected, Eliot's millennialism grew more fervent with the rise of Cromwell's Interregnum, and in the wake of the execution of Charles I, Eliot wrote a tract on the form and nature of Christ's millennial government. It does not come as a surprise that when Eliot's *Christian Commonwealth* belatedly appeared in London, in 1659, on the eve of the Restoration, he caused his fellow New Englanders great embarrassment. To appease English critics, the Massachusetts General Court forced Eliot to recant and had his tract publicly burned in 1661. The bone of contention was his insistence on Christ as "the only right Heir to the Crown of England"—a rather impolitic if not seditious argument that could do anything but please the more mundane interests of Charles II ("Preface," Bv).

Eliot's millennialism has much in common with that of Thomas Goodwin and John Cotton. Like his colleagues, Eliot allegorized Christ's millennial reign on earth as the leadership of holy ministers who were preeminently guided by the Bible. For Eliot, then, Oliver Cromwell's Interregnum had "*cast down not only the miry Religion, and Government of Antichrist, but also the former form of civil Government, which did stick so fast unto it, until by an unavoidable necessity, it fell with it*" ("Preface," Bv), and the millennial reign was imminent. What then did Eliot's government look like? It was a covenanted community of visible saints in which civil and ecclesiastical society would be modeled after the patterns established by Moses and evident in the division of angels in myriads: in the order of tens, hundreds, thousands ("Preface," B4–B4v). Arranged in groups with one elected ruler for every ten

households, these elected officials would form a council of five, governing fifty families, a council of ten for every one hundred families—all the way up to the highest council of rulers headed by Christ. Eliot's government would thus be administered by councilors convening in progressively higher courts while receiving guidance from the Holy Scriptures. Thus, the Word of God would become the supreme measure for all the world. Eliot instituted this form of government in his communities of praying Indians with some success. If his Mosaic administration was thus closer to biblical precedent than any colonial government in Boston, then Eliot, ironically, set some sort of beacon for the capital of the Bay. He was wise enough not to press the issue.

The layperson's point of view on matters apocalyptic is represented in Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New-England* (London, 1654). Like Judge Samuel Sewall's much later *Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica* (Boston, 1697), Johnson's text demonstrates that millennialism was not solely in the domain of the clergy. As a military leader of Woburn, Johnson (1508–1672) knew much about service in the militia. It is therefore not surprising that his millennialism is surcharged with images of the church militant—the church in battle against Antichrist—led by Christ and “freeing his people from their long servitude under usurping Prelacy” (*Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence*, ed. J. F. Jameson [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910], 23). Assuming the prophetic voice of some latter-day military leader in the army of Christ, Johnson intoned his millenarian rallying cry: “You are called to be faithful Souldiers of Christ, not onely to assist in building up his Churches, but also in pulling downe the Kingdome of Anti-Christ, then sure you are not set up for tollerating times” (p. 30). It is significant that throughout his *Wonder-Working Providence*, Johnson speaks of the battle against Antichrist as having begun—a clear indication that his fervency was informed by an imminent millennium. No wonder Johnson does not shrink from encouraging his Christian soldiers to die gleefully, for the promised resurrection would almost be instantaneous: “Babylon is fallen. . . . Nay I can tell you a farther word of encouragement, every true-hearted Souldier that falls by the sword in this fight, shall not lye dead long, but stand upon his feet again, and be made partaker of the triumph of his Victory: and none can be overcome, but by turning his back in fight” (p. 271). It is unclear whether Johnson believed that those who died fighting against Antichrist were saints of the first resurrection, who would then (as Alsted and Davenport believed) share in the corporeal first resurrection and in Christ's government on earth.

As can be gathered from the evidence so far, millennialism was certainly a significant facet in the works of the leading ministers of the period. But we

must be cautious not to project such fervency back into the settler's motivation for emigrating to New England in the first place—certainly not during the first wave of migration (1620–1640s). The earliest Puritan documents with sustained millennial fervor in New England can be dated from 1639. There was no divine “Errand into the Wilderness” at the outset. Rather, with the political crisis in England, the coming Civil War and Interregnum, just as much as with the proliferation of eschatological theories in the early decades of the seventeenth century, millennialism became a defining feature in the sermon literature of the time. As can be seen in Johnson's providence history, New England millennialists (clergy and laypeople alike) invented a religious errand as a means to stem the tide of reverse migration to Old England—when the crown of England was likely to be offered to the king of kings. We also need to be reminded that neither Johnson nor any of his confreres believed that perfection was possible on either side of the millennium. In fact, there is sufficient evidence that at least until the time when, in his “Triparadisus” manuscript, Cotton Mather (1663–1728) began to advocate a supernatural millennium of immortal saints both in heaven and on earth, the inchoate millennium of progressive sanctification tempered by sin, disease, and death (even among the saved nations) was the standard form of millennialism—certainly in the authors discussed here.

☞ PREMILLENNIALISM, THE CONFLAGRATION,
AND THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL _____

The debate about whether the millennium of peace was past or future spilled over into the next generation of American eschatologists. Perhaps the best example of how some of its leading representatives struggled with this issue can be seen in Increase Mather's “New Jerusalem” (ca. 1689–95) and in *A Dissertation on the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (London, 1709) as well as in Cotton Mather's eschatological tract “Problema Theologicum” (1703). It is safe to say that both father and son were of one mind on these issues until roughly 1720, when son Cotton began to put forth his new theories in “Triparadisus,” recently published in *The Threefold Paradise of Cotton Mather* (1995). His earlier “Problema Theologicum” (ca. 1695–1703) (ed. Jeffrey S. Mares, *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 104/2 [1994]) is an attempt to persuade his Salem colleague Nicholas Noyes (1647–1717) to relinquish his preterist millennium in favor of Alsted's futurist system. At the opening of his argument, Mather identifies as his principal opponents those who placed the millennium of the church either (1) at *Christ's birth*, or (2) at

Christ's death, or (3) at the *fall of Jerusalem* by the Romans in 70, or (4) at the *baptism of Constantine I*, who became the first Christian emperor of Rome in 306, or (5) at *Luther's Reformation* in 1517. And in one fell swoop, as only Cotton Mather knew how, the pastor of the Second Church of Boston attempted to set the record straight: Christ will appear at the beginning *and* end of the millennium; the first and second resurrection are both literal and corporeal; the raised saints of the first resurrection would rule visibly in a *literal* New Jerusalem in the heavens, hovering over the restored Jerusalem in the new earth ("Problema," 423; *Threefold Paradise*, 245); the millennium begins with a literal yet partial conflagration confined mostly to Italy and ends with a global fire dissolving the elements; and last but not least, an inchoate millennium of raised saints ruling over the saved nations of mortals who had escaped the partial conflagration.

For our purposes, Cotton Mather's views on the first resurrection are again crucial for the development of his later eschatological system in his *Threefold Paradise*. He berated his allegorizing colleagues who saw the first resurrection merely in terms of a person's conversion and of the church's reformation. But, as if remembering that his illustrious grandfather John Cotton had espoused the exact same allegorical position in *The Resurrection of the Churches* more than sixty years earlier, Mather became more conciliatory: "It will not Do! It implies that the Martyred Saints, *Lived again*, only in their *Successors*, not in their *own Persons*; whereas, the *Resurrection*, as the word itself imports, is of *the Same*." In fact, it would be disheartening to these saints and martyrs if they came alive only in their successors, who carry out their bidding in the millennial earth (p. 407). To settle the issue once and for all, Mather enlisted Justin Martyr (ca. 100–ca. 165), Irenaeus (ca. 130–ca. 200), Papias (ca. 60–130), and Polycarp (ca. 69–ca. 155) in his battle against the allegorizers of the first resurrection, among whom Mather identified Jerome (ca. 342–420), Eusebius (ca. 260–ca. 340), Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637), and Caesar Baronius (1538–1607).

If Mather seemed more than certain on the issue of the corporeal nature of the raised saints in heaven, he was more cautious on the issue of their mortal counterparts on earth. Like his predecessors, he believed in an inchoate millennium of saved, albeit mortal, nations. In this early work, he did not quite know what to make of those nations who had not yet come to accept Christianity. These "Nations in the Remoter Skirts of the World," Mather speculated, "will not be under so high a Dispensation of Christianity, as those that ly nearer to ye *City of God*, & under its more Direct and Shining Influences" (p. 422). These intractable nations required "a Rod of Iron" to make them see the light, their remaining sinfulness constantly leading them astray. Thus wondering,

Mather raised the issue point blank: "How far *Sin* shall be extinguished and Extirpated among the *Righteous*, by whom the *New Earth* is now inhabited?" (p. 423). Thus wondering, Mather listed it as a theological query alongside the issue of the rapture (2 Thess. 4:15) and invited his fellow millennialists to present their written answers in print or at their next meeting.

Mather was not happy with such an imperfect millennium, in which saints and sinners would still be plagued by sin, disease, and death. Neither did he like the idea of two separate conflagrations, a partial one destroying the papal dominions of Italy at the beginning, and a global one at the end of the millennium—offered as a hermeneutical compromise in Drue Cressener's *Judgements of God upon the Roman-Catholick Church* (London [1689], 284–99). But how else would the saints alive at Christ's second coming escape the burning fire, unless the conflagration were limited in space and time to a particular region of the Old World? Joseph Mede had not solved this issue to his satisfaction either, for he too had opted for a double conflagration when he limited the initial conflagration to "exactly M.DC furlongs, or 200 Italian miles" of the papal territories in Italy—however, leaving the ancient terrain "occupied by the *Babylonians*, *Persian*, and *Graecian* Kingdomes . . . untouched" (*Works*, 4th ed. [1677], 593). Neither was Mather happy with Mede's vacillation between an inchoate millennium of gradual improvement within history and a supernatural millennium in which the saints alive on earth would attain their immortality suddenly and rapturously in the clouds of heaven (2 Thess. 4:17), before being returned to fill the earth with their immortalized offspring (*Works*, 775).

These issues rankled him a great deal and were subject to countless debates with his father Increase at least until 1720, yet Cotton tried to make amends in his final treatise on the issue. Instrumental in Mather's break with his predecessors and decisive for the development of premillennialism in America was a little-known tract by Praisegod Barbon (fl. 1670s), whose *Good Things to Come* (London, 1675) addressed the issue of an inchoate millennium as well and argued for a supernatural solution. The immortality of the saints would be attained either by a corporeal resurrection of the dead or by a corporeal transformation of the living: "the one, is by dying; and after lying a time in the grave: rising again, or being raised out of the prison grave at the sounding of the trumpet of God. . . . The other way is, by not dying, but being changed, in a moment, at the very same time, the dead are raised [2 Thess. 4:17]. This change: is a mystery; a secret: not much taken notice of" (p. 53). In short, the raised saints, just as much as the changed saints (saved nations), would attain their immortality miraculously, the one by corporeal resurrection, the other by corporeal transformation without first incurring

death. Both classes of saints would be endowed with immortal bodies, yet their function in the millennial earth would differ greatly. No doubt the position of the raised saints would be more illustrious, their principal function to serve as kings, priests, and governors over their fellow inhabitants; the changed saints, though not far behind, would be mainly concerned with the more menial tasks of rebuilding and repopulating the burned earth with immortal offspring—duties from which their superiors were exempted (*Good Things*, 59–65). Suddenly, all the pieces of his eschatological puzzle seemed to fit together, and Mather could now iron out the remaining kinks as he penned down his new system less than a year before his death.

The Petrine conflagration of the globe (2 Peter 3) was one of those problems that could now be addressed with some consistency, for the earth's predicted dissolution was now no longer impeded by the saved nations, whose remaining mortality had necessitated a limited conflagration to allow for their escape. Indeed, this inelegant solution had been less than satisfying, but with Mather's new system of the changed saints in place, he could turn his back on Mede, Cressener, even his father, Increase, and assert a single, yet global conflagration at the opening of the millennium (*Threefold Paradise*, 314–16). With this puzzle solved, Mather could now address a much more threatening problem of a different sort raised by the Dutch jurist and theologian Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and by his English colleague Henry Hammond (1605–1660). In its literal sense, Grotius and Hammond argued, the Petrine conflagration was applicable only to the historical destruction of Jerusalem; any futurist application of the fire dissolving the heavens and the earth would violate the historical context of the prophecy and had to be understood in an allegorical sense. Preterists like Grotius and Hammond thus subverted the very foundation on which much of the literalist's expectation of the future conflagration depended.

That the Atlantic proved no barrier to the hermeneutical tempests gathering strength in Europe can be seen in Mather's *Threefold Paradise*. His incessant calculations of prophetic chronometry repeatedly provoked a retrenchment of his avowed literalism. Yet while Mather willingly compromised on his literalist stance on the restoration of the Jewish nation, he drew his line of battle in front of the camp of the metaphorists, who ridiculed the hyperbolic language of the Hebrew prophets. Grotius's allegorist disciples missed the whole point by ignoring the prophetic intent of scripture, Mather countered. Nor did they understand the typological design of the "Prophetic Spirit," for which "the lesser *Particular Judgments*" were "an *Earnest* as well as a *Figure*, of the *General One*, wherein the *Frame* of Nature shall be dissolved" (p. 184). Preterist exege-

sis, Mather retorted, attenuated the prophetic spirit, which, true to God's design, intended a double fulfillment. The smaller event generally accomplished in the historical past of the prophet's own time really signified a second, much larger, and most of all, literal fulfillment in the latter days. This was certainly the case with the Petrine prophecy, Mather judged, which in predicting the immediate fall of Jerusalem actually intended the passing away of heaven and earth at Christ's second coming. In redressing the contradictions of his millenarian thought, Mather—like his English colleagues—was forced to adjust his taxonomy to maintain the interior logic of his system. At the same time, he safeguarded his literalism by merging Cartesian notions of the earth's fiery magma with the modifications introduced by John Ray (1628–1705), Thomas Burnet (ca. 1635–1715), and ultimately by William Whiston (1667–1752), whom Mather admired greatly. Mather was not far behind his English colleagues in explaining the supernatural conflagration in terms of its feasibility. And gathering evidence about volcanoes existing in every hemisphere, he was convinced that the Lord of Hosts would muster at his coming the unextinguishable fire of the deep to do his bidding: "What Commotions, what Convulsions has this Planet, in many Parts of it suffered from Subterraneous *Combustions*, and such Amassments of *Igneous Particles*, which are an *Eternal Fire*, breaking forth at those formidable *Spiracles*, which if they had not been afforded, the Globe would, no doubt, have been torn to Peeces!" (*Threefold Paradise*, 209). In short, the holocaust of nature did not require supernatural intervention—all that God had to do was to withdraw his restraint from the fiery magma locked up in the earth, and the whole globe would turn into a lake of fire.

Praisegod Barbon's *Good Things to Come* (1675) also helped Cotton Mather to solve yet another puzzling issue that had long resisted clarification. Most millennialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries insisted that the Jewish nation would play a central part in the second coming of the Messiah and in the theocracy of the new heavens and the new earth. St. Paul had foretold the restoration of the Jews in Romans 11, predicting that their unbelief would be removed, and natural Israel would then embrace Christianity in everlasting communion with the Ancient of Days. Most millenarians agreed, therefore, that the Jews' return to the Holy Land and their national conversion were the most reliable signs of Christ's second coming and of the end of the times of the Gentiles. More important, these events were prerequisite to the golden age, which would be postponed until their accomplishment. Few millenarians differed from this mainstay of Christian exegesis popularized by Joseph Mede. He theorized that nothing short of a miracle could effect this

conversion, whose smaller type was evidenced in St. Paul's mystical conversion on the road to Damascus: "That of the *Jews* may be like it; *viz.* That though many were present with *S. Paul* at that time, yet none saw the apparition of Christ, nor heard him speak, but *Paul* alone" (*Works*, 767). This exegetical issue did not enter the limelight of eschatological speculations until the renowned Dutch Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657) published his tractate *Spes Israelis* (1648), in which he validated earlier eyewitness accounts by Antonio de Montezinos that the Lost Tribes of Israel had been discovered in the Peruvian Andes. This alleged discovery in America raised tremendous hopes among millennialists all across Europe, and when Sabbatai Sevi (1626–1676), a Turkish Jew from Smyrna, proclaimed himself the Messiah and called on European and Ottoman Jews to return to the Holy Land, the excitement of the 1660s reached a feverish pitch.

Increase Mather spoke for all of his Puritan colleagues in New England when he pleaded for the literal restoration of Israel in his book-length *Mystery of Israel's Conversion* (London, 1669) and in his updated interpretation *Diatriba de Signo Filii Hominiis* (Amsterdam, 1682) in response to several European colleagues who were prone to read Romans 11 as an allegory of the Christian church. Championed by Hugo Grotius, Henry Hammond, Jacob Batalerio (1593–1672), James Calvert (d. 1698), John Lightfoot (1602–1675), later joined by Richard Baxter and others, these notable scholars adopted a preterist interpretation of Romans 11 and asserted with Grotius that St. Paul's prophecy had literally been fulfilled in the first two centuries of the Christian church when the churches of Palestine, Asia Minor, and Rome mostly consisted of Christian Jews. St. Paul's prediction, so they argued, must therefore be understood literally only of the Christian Jews and their offspring, who through intermarriage with their Gentile brethren lost their distinction. Any latter-day conversion of the Jews as a nation was therefore illogical and had to be understood of the surrogate Israel, the Christian church. This radical subversion of millenarian hope triggered a widespread debate in which the literalist and allegorist camps positioned their arms at each other's hermeneutical foundation.

In his old age, the renowned English clergyman Richard Baxter (1615–1691) defected and went over to the allegorists—much to the dismay of all those who appreciated his conservative Presbyterianism. In justifying his new position in *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ* (London, 1691), he dedicated his treatise to Increase Mather, then residing in London and negotiating New England's second charter at the court of William and Mary, calling on his American friend to debate the issue. Mather complied in his *Dissertation Con-*

cerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation (London, 1709), but did not publish his rejoinder until almost two decades after Baxter's death. Back in New England, Cotton Mather joined the debate by issuing his *Faith of the Fathers* (Boston, 1699), a catechism that aimed at converting Jewish readers in America. The anticipated conversion of the Jewish nation just before the millennium never quite squared with Cotton Mather's own conjecture that Christ's sudden coming, like a thief in the night, would find the whole Christian world in a dead slumber. How could the sleepy world be caught off guard by his coming, if such telling signs as Israel's national conversion were to precede the second coming? Something did not jibe here. And to join the post-millennialist camp of Daniel Whitby, whose *Treatise of the True Millennium* (1703) asserted the rise of a Jewish monarchy during the millennium, was altogether out of the question to Mather. Perhaps Hugo Grotius's preterist reading deserved another chance. If St. Paul's prediction was really fulfilled in the times of the early church and in the surrogation of the Gentiles as the elect, then the Jews' literal conversion was already past and thus the surprise of Christ's coming in the clouds of fire could still be maintained. So ruminating in the last decade of his life, Cotton Mather defined his ultimate thoughts in his *Threefold Paradise* (pp. 295–318), in which he turned allegorist on the issue of Israel's conversion by insisting on their surrogation by Gentile Christians, yet lambasting all those who dared to join Grotius and allegorize the envisioned conflagration. The fine lines between literal and allegorical exegesis had to be drawn somewhere to keep the house in order.

Mather's friends in Boston were shocked to find a defector amidst their own conservative ranks. Judge Samuel Sewall (1652–1730) tried to ward off such deist inroads by dusting off his earlier *Phaenomena* (1697), reminding Cotton of his father's orthodox position in *Mystery* (1669) and *Future Conversion* (1709), and appending Samuel Willard's literalist defense, *The Fountain Opened* (1700), to the second edition of his *Phaenomena* (Boston, 1727). In the next generation, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) held fast to orthodoxy and pointed to Judea as the land where God's promise would be fulfilled: "Without doubt, they will return to their own land" yet "remain a distinct nation" even after their conversion, to be "a visible monument of God's wonderful grace and power in their calling and conversion." In the Holy Land, "Religion and learning will there be at the highest; more excellent books will be there written," and "all nations will be as free to come to Judea, or to dwell in Jerusalem, as into any other city or country, and have the same privilege there as they themselves" ("Notes on the Apocalypse," ed. Stephen J. Stein, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977],

5:135). Postmillennialists like Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins were not far behind their master in asserting the literal accomplishment of Romans 11. The destruction of Antichrist and his pagan and Moslem allies prior to the millennium "will open the way for their return to the land given to their ancestors," Hopkins determined. But whether God's ancient people would "continue a distinct people" during the millennium or "intermix with others" can only be settled after the fact (*A Treatise of the Millennium* [Boston, 1793], 119, 120). At the fall of the Roman Antichrist and of his Turkish ally, the "powerful obstacles to the coming in of the Jews" would be removed, Connecticut's own Thomas Wells Bray (1738–1808), pastor of Guilford, Connecticut, intoned in his *Dissertation on the Sixth Vial* ([Hartford, 1780], 39), during the American Revolution.

It is safe to say that with a few exceptions, the return of God's ancient people remained an exegetical touchstone in the millenarian treatises throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet such niceties of interpretation were not always taken too literally as the pressures of political upheavals in America called for a prompt response from the pulpit. Perhaps the zeal of the moment prevailed as the revolution loomed on the horizon; for as America's patriotic clergy called on God's newly chosen people to defend his American Israel against the tyranny of the English Antichrist, the civil millenarians of the period had long forgotten Nicholas Noyes's neat (perhaps too neat) distinction between the literal application of God's prophetic promises to his ancient people and the "Analogical sence" and "Analogical Accomodation" to God's surrogate Israel, the Protestant church in America (*New-Englands Duty and Interest* [Boston, 1698], 10, 42).

☞ THE GREAT AWAKENING AND JONATHAN EDWARDS _____

Much, perhaps too much, has been made of Jonathan Edwards's heady assertion that the revivals in his day might be "the beginning or forerunner of something vastly great" in America (*Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England* [1742], *The Works of President Edwards*, 4 vols. [New York, 1864], 3:316). If his conniving colleagues ridiculed him for reading the spiritual awakening in New England as signs of the millennium lately begun in Northampton, modern critics are no less liable to fall into the same trap—albeit for different reasons. Roughly until the early 1980s, historians of the period were wont to see the events of the First Great Awakening (1734–35; 1739–43) as some sort of latter-day manifestation of the Puritan errand into

an American wilderness. The surprising conversions up and down the Connecticut Valley began in the winter of 1734–35, sporadically swept across New England, and climaxed in mass revivals in the years between 1739 and 1743. Such unprecedented outpourings of the spirit certainly required official interpretation especially in the wake of charges by Old-Light theologians that Jonathan Edwards and his compeers had fallen prey to dangerous enthusiasms and delusions. But there were others who looked on these occurrences in New England with much more expecting eyes. Inquiries from home and abroad kept fueling the debate. Thomas Prince (1687–1758), for instance, was eager to publish eyewitness accounts of the surprising conversions in his *Christian History* (2 vols.; Boston, 1744–45) for his inquiring readers on both sides of the Atlantic. Likewise, John Gillies (fl. 1740–1760s) edited his *Historical Collections* (2 vols.; Glasgow, 1754) and involuntarily supplied grist for the mills of later historians in search of their own usable past. If Edwards's contemporaries constructed their interpretations as signs of providential history unfolding in front of their very eyes, early-nineteenth-century participants in the "Second Great Awakening" (1790–1840) just as much as late-nineteenth-century historians reinvented Jonathan Edwards as an ideal if not convenient figure to reify their own views of a First Great Awakening as a formative event in American religious history. This "interpretive fiction" says as much about our present need of reconstructing cultural history in our own image as it does about past historians who inscribed their own agendas into the subtexts of their histories. Whether "great" or small, the Great Awakening and its principal participants are presently being reinvented not the least in the republication of Jonathan Edwards's works in the mighty Yale edition (1957–).

Be that as it may, we may do well in examining the development of Edwards's eschatological thought in terms of the continuity or discontinuity of his interpretive environment. If Edwards really did focus myopically on America as the center of latter-day activities (as historians searching for the roots of America's national identity are wont to discover), then we should be able to substantiate these interpretations in the deep structure of his millenarian theories. Among his most valuable works on the issue are his "Notes on the Apocalypse," a running commentary on Revelation, begun in 1723 and continuously revised until his death in 1758; *An Humble Attempt* (Boston, 1747), a transatlantic endeavor to encourage concerted prayers to hasten the millennium (both in *Apocalyptic Writings*); *A History of the Work of Redemption* (1774), a historical and prophetic interpretation of soteriology from the creation to the end of the millennium, in thirty sermons preached in 1739 (ed. John F. Wilson, *Works* [1989] vol. 9); and his recently published *The "Miscel-*

lanies" (ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *Works* [1994], vol. 13), Edwards's encyclopedic commonplace book on all issues relevant to his theology. If Edwards did expect to hear the silver trumpets in his own day, his public and private calculations of the millennium should provide us with helpful insight into the matter. The earliest published example of Edwards's calculations is his *Humble Attempt*. Here Edwards voices his dissatisfaction with Moses Lowman (1680–1752), whose *Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John* (London, 1737) is central to an understanding of Edwards's theology. Lowman conjectured that Antichrist's 1,260-year reign would terminate in 2016 "more than two hundred and fifty years hence" (*Humble Attempt*, 394). Edwards did not like this late date at all and objected that Lowman placed Antichrist's rise "300 years later" than Joseph Mede did in his chronology (p. 403). Mede's old mainstay of commencing the rise of Antichrist at Genseric's destruction of Rome in 456 or with the deposing of Romulus Augustulus, Rome's last emperor, in 476, yielded much earlier dates, according to which the fall of Antichrist could be expected either in 1716 or 1736. But while the latter date may have played some part in Edwards's response to the first outpouring of the spirit in the winter of 1734–35, by the time he was writing his *Humble Attempt* (1747), Mede had long been proven wrong (*History*, 412). But neither Lowman nor his French Huguenot colleague Charles Daubuz (1673–1717) seemed to furnish satisfactory calculations. Perhaps a much more revealing comment can be found in his private "Notes on the Apocalypse," esp. nos. 11–16, which have been dated to the "late spring or early summer of 1723" (p. 77). Commenting on Revelation 13 and 20, Edwards conjectured that Antichrist's reign began in 606 and would therefore "end about 1866," even though he did not completely dismiss Lowman's conjecture about the year 2,000 ("Notes," 129). These two references provide a framework for Edwards's own expectation of Antichrist's fall. Yet Edwards is quick to remind us that this crucial event would *not* occur all at once, but during a period of gradual decline ("the drying up of the Euphrates") at which time Antichrist's revenues exacted from his regal supporters would totally dry up (*Humble Attempt*, 410).

In explaining these events, Edwards kept supernatural explanations to a minimum, stressing Antichrist's gradual decline over a long period of time, rather than resorting to a miraculous intervention of God. Antichrist's waning power was already apparent since Luther's reformation in 1517. The loss of French Canada to the British, terminating the French-Indian War (1754–63) further contributed to the pontiff's loss of revenue, the rebellion of Spain and Portugal, and "the late peeling and impoverishing the Pope's temporal dominions in Italy, by the armies of the Austrians, Neapolitans and Spaniards"; the

“almost miraculous taking of Cape Breton, in the year 1745, whereby was dried up one of the main sources of the wealth of the kingdom of France”; the great earthquake of Lima (1746), which disrupted the flow of silver and gold to the Spanish crown; the loss of the French fleet under Duke D’Anville in 1747 (King George’s War, 1744–48)—these and more were all signs of the sixth vial poured out on Antichrist, whose gradual, yet inevitable demise was already in progress (*Humble Attempt*, 421, 422, 423). Whatever the year of this final dissolution and whatever shape, form, or opinion Antichrist might assume, Edwards called for concerted prayers on both sides of the Atlantic to cast him out—even if Antichrist lately changed his spots, appearing in the guise of Anabaptism, Quakerism, Socinianism, Arminianism, Arianism, and Deism (*History*, 430–32).

That Antichrist would not relinquish his reign without battle unto death was all too clear to anyone who understood the prophetic “slaying of the witnesses” (Rev. 11:7–10). In fact, Jonathan Edwards worried in his *Humble Attempt* that if Moses Lowman were right in placing this dreadful calamity in the future, such an expectation of carnage just prior to the millennium of peace would be “a great damp to their hope, courage, and activity, in praying for, and reaching after the speedy introduction of those gloriously promised times” (p. 378). The anticipation of such doom would positively “deaden and keep down, life, hope and joyful expectation in prayer,” for in quickening the coming of Christ’s kingdom, the saints were in effect hastening their own doom: never in this life would they see the glory of Christ’s coming (p. 379). Edwards could not reconcile himself to this futurist application. And like Mather before him, he was certain it was an event of the past as described in the martyrology of John Foxe, where the slaughter of the Waldenses, Albigensians, Bohemians, Huguenots, and Calvinists in Poland, Palatine, Lithuania, Holland, even in England under Queen Mary and King Charles I, fully answered the description of this prophetic event (*History*, 419–29). It is interesting to note here that Edwards’s American colleagues distanced themselves from Edwards’s preterization, even as they joined his concerted effort to pray for the coming of Christ (*Humble Attempt*, “Preface,” 310).

Besides, Edwards objected, the gradual decline of Antichrist’s power since the Reformation would render this slaughter impossible—even if Satan’s visible empire on earth would join forces against true religion: the Antichristian kingdom (the beast), the Mahometan kingdom (the false prophet), and the heathen kingdom (the dragon). They would join forces in all parts of the world as the heathens would battle “against Christianity in America, and in the East Indies, and Africa,” just like “the Mahometans and papists do in the other parts of the world” (“Notes,” 174). Of all these looming events, the

bloody defeat of the Ottoman Turks in 1697 and during the Russo-Turkish War (1735–39) was a harbinger of things to come ("Notes," 190–91). As is clearly evident from the many pages of commentary that Edwards invested in this issue, the horrors of Antichrist's global warfare in Edwards's postmillennialist system were not all that different from the awesome description of Christ's supernatural destruction of Antichrist as championed by premillennialists of Cotton Mather's persuasion. In either system, the events leading up to the millennium pictured fearsome desolation that only the strong in faith could broach with some measure of confidence. Whatever the precise nature of this imminent catastrophe, God would see to it that his people would not come to harm.

The main features of Edwards's millennialism were certainly not new in his day, and neither Daniel Whitby, nor Moses Lowman, nor Charles Daubuz can be credited for being his principal source of inspiration on these issues. Again crucial here is that Edwards followed the Augustinianism of his predecessors Brightman, Alsted, and Cotton and allegorized the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) as a spiritual conversion of individuals (Edwards, "Notes" 144–45; see also 151). Significant too is that Edwards's millennium remains inchoate, a mixture of the saints in heaven ruling through their spiritual successors over their mortal and sinful counterparts on earth. The corporeal resurrection of body and soul would be "absolutely necessary" for both classes of saints (Rev. 20:6, 14), for the soul in separation from the body cannot achieve "complete happiness" (*Miscellanies*, 179). This union, however, would not occur until judgment day, when God would establish his literal new heavens and new earth, of which its inchoate counterpart was merely a spiritual type. St. John's Revelation is not hyperbolic, Edwards insisted, but employs "mixed prophecies" that have "an eye to several events" ("Notes," 150) adumbrated in double manifestations: the first during the golden age of Christ's spiritual reign and the second after the literal resurrection at the end, when the New Jerusalem descending from heaven (Rev. 21:2) would be established on a literal new earth located in an altogether different part of the universe ("Notes," 151–52).

Edwards's double application of the new heavens and new earth has frequently been mistaken for the same eschatological event in time. It is evidently inspired by his British colleagues Thomas Burnet, William Whiston, and Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who had much to say about the predicted conflagration of the earth (2 Peter 3), its condition, and location following its dissolution. Edwards was certainly familiar with their daring theories. Adopting some of their interpretations, Edwards insisted that the Petrine conflagra-

tion was not a metaphor for human warfare, as Sir Isaac Newton opined in his famous *Observations upon the Prophecies* (London, 1733), nor an allegory of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, as Grotius and Hammond argued in their *Annotations* (1642) and *Paraphrase* (1653), but a literal melting and total dissolution of the earth's elements (Thomas Burnet, *Sacred Theory of the Earth* [1684–91]). This hyperliteralism becomes significant in light of William Whiston's conjecture that after its conflagration by a passing comet "the Earth will desert its present Seat and Station in the World, and be no longer found among the Planetary Chorus" (*A New Theory of the Earth* [1696], 5th ed. [London, 1737], pt. 2, pp. 289, 291). Edwards was not far behind his English colleagues. As the eternal abode of the corporeal saints following the universal resurrection, the new earth must surpass in glory even its millennial predecessor. A purging by fire, Edwards felt, could no more than facilitate the "primitive state" of this new earth, but not a "new creation." It was therefore more likely that "this globe with all its appurtenances is clear gone, out of the way; and this is a new one, materially as well as in form." Its location, though the Bible did not say so, would likely be in "some glorious place in the universe prepared for this end by God, removed at an immense distance from the solar system" ("Notes," 140–41), while the old earth consumed in the flames of fire "shall be the place of the damned" (*Miscellanies*, 376, no. 275). Edwards knew enough about the state of contemporary science to assert with Burnet and Whiston that God's prophecies did not represent these cosmic phenomena "according to philosophic verity, but as they appeared to our eyes." Yet Edwards was convinced "that this place shall be remote from the solar system" ("Notes," 141–42). A totally new creation of the globe was all the more logical, Edwards observed, because nothing in nature could last forever. The habitation where the blessed would reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:5) must needs be an eternal abode not subject to mutability: "'Tis manifest God did not make these fleeting systems for an eternal duration as might be more fully shown, if the place were proper for such a philosophical discourse" ("Notes," 141–42). From these passages we can gather that for Edwards the restitution of all things after the day of judgment, when the corporeal saints would enjoy immortality in primitive purity, did not imply stasis or cessation of all deterioration, but an everlasting rise and fall of all matter. Not even God's restitution of all things could offset the inevitable laws of nature.

What then did Edwards's millennial earth look like, when Satan was bound, the gospel preached universally (albeit the saints on earth retaining their mortality and sinful disposition)? For Edwards, the whole earth would be filled with universal peace and love. Naturally, there would be righteous

governors who love their people, ministers who cherish their parishioners in sweet harmony, people who joyfully submit to their rulers, churches without division or strife, discipline without dissent, and all inscrutable points of biblical exegesis clarified for good. "It may be hoped that then many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines, and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Turkey—and not only very learned men, but others that are more ordinary men, shall then be very knowing in religion" (*History*, 480). In short, all nations in all parts of the habitable globe would be united in "sweet harmony." Geographic isolation would cease through improved communication and "the art of navigation" fully dedicated to holy uses, as the saints the world over would gather around Christ's throne in Judea, "at the center of the kingdom of Christ, communicating influences to all other parts" ("Notes," 134). With all things in beautiful proportion, there would be "a time of great temporal prosperity," improvement of health, ease, material wealth, and "great increase in children," as each and every one "shall build houses, and inhabit them" (*History*, 480–85) and benefit from all useful knowledge and improvements in "the arts and sciences" (*Humble Attempt*, 338–39, 342–43, 359).

Edwards's inviting description of these Edenic prospects reverberates in the works of his principal disciples, the Congregationalist minister Joseph Bellamy, of Hartford, Connecticut, and Samuel Hopkins, fervent abolitionist pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island. Both clergymen were faithful to the Edwardsian tradition of the millennium and differed only in minor points from his New Light exegesis. For instance, in his homily *The Millennium* (Boston, 1758), Bellamy largely dissociated his millennialism from direct references to contemporary events. Yet everyone of his parishioners knew what he meant when he offered comfort in visions of hope and peace so befitting this "terrible darkness" of the French-Indian War (1754–63). In the glorious days of the millennium, universal peace would prevail, all war would cease, and the nations beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4). No doubt, such soothing words (no matter how apolitical in outlook) were welcome balm in the face of wartime ravages, when death and desolation depleted the resources of the colonies. But come the millennium in 2016, as Moses Lowman seemed to suggest, Bellamy was certain everyone would diligently work in his calling, live in his own house, and eat the fruits of his own labor, while all the losses and suffering of the great war would be forgotten in the billions of new offspring populating the new earth: "And if *all* these shall *know the Lord* . . . it will naturally come to pass, that there will be more saved in these thousand years, than ever before dwelt upon the face of the earth from the foundation

of the world" (in *The Great Awakening*, ed. A. Heimert and P. Miller [1967], 628–29). And if Bellamy were not mistaken in modifying the conjectures of Thomas Burnet and William Whiston, then the ratio between the eternally lost and saved would be 1 in 17,476 during a millennial period of peace and plenty that might last as long as 360,000 years (*Millennium*, 617–20, 628–30).

That Bellamy's popular *Millennium* greatly impressed parishioners far and wide is well known, notwithstanding the fact that Hopkins at century's end did not see why God would need 360,000 years to accomplish the task of saving his elect. A literal period of a thousand years would be totally sufficient. In chapter 2 of his *Treatise of the Millennium* (Boston, 1793), Hopkins agreed with Lowman and Bellamy that the hoped-for millennium was little more than two hundred years off. Yet that did not deter Hopkins from dedicating his tract to all those who would live during those halcyon days. In fact, Hopkins's glowing description rose to a veritable crescendo of symphony and anticipated bliss as he sketched his picturesque vision on the canvas of his readers' imaginations. Though far from being immortal, human beings would continue to incur death, yet without "painful sickness or distress of body and mind" and without grief to their "surviving relatives and friends" who would "expect soon to arrive" in the invisible world as well (p. 75). While here on earth, they would enjoy eminent degrees of holiness short of perfection. Holy teachers would enlighten the nations in all useful branches of the arts and science that promote spiritual and bodily comforts in this life. Unanimous belief in God and unanimity in his worship would banish all sectarian strife and disagreeable doctrines while promoting political harmony through separation of church and state (p. 79). Though hardly a republican government of, by, or for the people, Christ's monarchy would uphold material prosperity through improvements in the "art of husbandry" and the cultivation of the soil, increasing its productivity "20, 30, and perhaps an 100 fold more" (p. 71). Great discoveries and inventions in the mechanical arts would ensure that "all utensils, clothing, buildings, &c. will be formed and made, in a better manner, and with much less labour . . . beyond our present conception" (p. 71). No "more than 2 or 3 hours in a day" would be necessary to acquire one's wherewithal, leaving ample time for "reading and conversation" and the improvement of one's mind (p. 72). No doubt, the global population would increase in an unprecedented fashion without leading to strife, famine, or war.

International communication would be fostered by one universal language taught throughout the world. And "this useless and imprudent waste of time and money" to which millions of young scholars were subjected in learning dead languages, Hopkins's Yankee ingenuity surmised, would finally cease

(p. 75). That Samuel Hopkins not even once alluded to the American Revolution or the independence of the United States so painfully acquired during his lifetime certainly speaks loudly. The internecine rhetoric of Federalists and Anti-Federalists, the contrasting visions of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, clearly indicated to Hopkins that the political Messiah had not come to the young republic, the millennium not begun. It was far safer to concentrate on the timeless promises of God than to be swept up by the patriotic rhetoric of his misguided colleagues.

If Hopkins's vision of abundant happiness struck a responsive chord in his parishioners, then Elhanan Winchester's *Universal Restoration exhibited in a Series of Dialogues* (London, 1793) would equally appeal to those who had no patience with a wrathful God condemning all sinners to eternal perdition. An English Baptist turned Universalist, Elhanan Winchester (1751–97) came to the United States late in his life and preached his new doctrine to whoever was willing to listen. His tract is modeled after Justin Martyr's famous *Dialogue with Trypho* (ca. 156), in which a sympathetic interlocutor raises questions to facilitate the teacher's programmatic answers. In his *Universal Resurrection*, Winchester took issue with the Calvinist doctrine of arbitrary election and eternal reprobation, asserting instead that all humans, no matter how sinful, would ultimately attain redemption through a cycle of retribution, conviction, and conversion. The doctrine of eternal punishment (no matter how small the crime) seemed unreasonable to this former Baptist, for a God of fairness could not be presumed to punish humanity eternally: "The current doctrine of *endless misery*, destroys this rule of equity and proportion: for though it contends for degrees of future punishment, yet it makes the duration the same, whether men sin more or less" (p. 5). Besides, such indiscriminate punishment would merely harden reprobates in their belief that God's punitive measures were akin to vindictiveness.

More to the point, Winchester argued, the apostles rarely ever used the term *everlasting* (*aiōnian*) in the context of "damnation" (p. 17). And mustering more than fifty passages in which the terms *everlasting* and *forever* signified a limited period of time (e.g., Hab. 3:6), Winchester brushed aside all those who relished the eternal fires of hell where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (pp. 18–19). Even the "second death" (Rev. 20:14) could not be everlasting, but was limited to a specific duration of time, while the earth's elements were turned into liquid fire. Besides, since the melting earth would be the seat of hell, it could only last as long as there were "combustible matter" available. It followed that those who partook in the second death would also be restored to eternal life on the new earth, their period of punishment in the

lake of fire terminated, when sinners had sufficiently atoned for their iniquity. Subsequent to their restoration, they would willingly undergo conversion and gladly join the saints of the New Jerusalem in the worship of Christ their Redeemer. In this manner, the "universal deliverance of all men from the bondage of sin" would be accomplished (p. 181), and eternal happiness be the lot of all humanity. Such promises of universal redemption certainly appealed to Winchester's spiritual descendants in early-nineteenth-century America, as the Transcendentalists formulated their credo of humanity's divinity in union with an all-loving Over-Soul.

☞ MOUNTAIN GLOOM AND MOUNTAIN GLORY:
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE ARMS
OF THE BLACK REGIMENT

If Winchester represents the first stirrings of Universalism in the young republic, then David Austin (1760–1831), Yale graduate and Presbyterian colleague in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, is a milestone of rabid millenarian fervor, wedding his patriotic rhetoric of freedom and independence to liberty of (Protestant) conscience. Austin's *Downfall of Mystical Babylon* (Elizabeth Town, 1794) eagerly asserts his Edwardsian roots by reprinting Bellamy's *Millennium* and Edwards's *Humble Attempt*. Yet Austin's mixing of the sacred with the profane goes beyond anything that either of his predecessors would have deemed appropriate or safe. The United States of America represented to David Austin the apocalyptic "stone cut out of the mountain" soon to cover the whole earth (Dan. 2:31–45). Young America, to Austin, is that prophetic "kingdom of the stone," born on 4 July 1776, steeled in the War of Independence, and soon to become the kingdom of the mountain in its conquest of the political pagans the world over: "Behold the *regnum montis*, the kingdom of the mountain, begun on the Fourth of July, 1776, when the *birth* of the MAN-CHILD—the hero of the civil and religious liberty took place in these United States. Let them read the predictions of heaven respecting the increase of his dominion—that he was *to rule all nations with a rod of iron*. . . . Behold, then, this hero of America wielding the standard of civil and religious liberty over these United States" (pp. 392–93). The American man-child must spill the blood of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny by smashing the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Antichrist, Austin intoned, as he called on his fellow ministers to wield their spiritual weapons in pulling down the anti-Christian strongholds across the Atlantic.

Thus, for the United States to become the kingdom of the mountain and cover the whole earth, a second, albeit spiritual, revolution would have to take place (sometime in 1813) in which the ideas of liberty, democracy, and Protestantism would mop up the rubble of the anti-Christian Babylon. "Is not the *Stone* now rolling against the feet and toes of the mighty image?" Austin enthusiastically appraised the French Revolution and its break from the tyranny of church and state (p. 390). But while the European world was doing its share of fighting the beast, the church, escaped on the wings of an eagle, was safely ensconced in the American wilderness: "she hath her station upon the broad seal of the United States; and from thence has perched upon the pediment of the first government-house, dedicated to the dominion of civil and religious liberty, where she is still to be seen, an emblem of the protection of Providence towards our present government, and towards this our happy land" (p. 415). And while thus celebrating the victory of good over evil, David Austin built landing piers in the Long Island Sound to facilitate the return of American Jews to the Holy Land: the second coming was at hand. The notion of a civil millennium in which miter and scepter were supplanted by liberty of conscience and political independence can be traced to the emergence of a republican eschatology in the decade before the French and Indian War. While some historians see this civic millennium as a direct outgrowth of the Great Awakening with its New Light emphasis on prayer, piety, and conversion, other historians point to eighteenth-century political philosophy and millenarian apocalyptic shared by both New and Old Light theologians. To suggest, however, that disillusioned postmillennialists turned to statecraft for signs of the second coming when the religious awakenings in the mid-1740s dwindled to a mere trickle seems to ignore the secular application of the prophecies implicit in Daniel and Revelation. New Light millennialists did not have to replace their pious dictums with political metaphors to reawaken their parishioners, because all prophecies were to be interpreted by their post-facto accomplishment in the course of empire. Jonathan Edwards's *History of Redemption*, first preached between March and August 1739, is certainly no exception. Be that as it may, it is fair to suggest that this hybrid eschatology of politics and religion breathed new life into an ancient script when in the wake of the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Quebec Act of 1774 millenarian tracts featured King George as Antichrist, the American colonists as the New World Israelites shackled in Egyptian bondage, and Jehovah of armies as an American minuteman ready to cast his plagues upon any English (or French) pharaoh unwilling to let his people go. On this basic level, all denominations could make common cause and enlist behind the banner of

virtue, liberty, and providence in God's American Israel. Opportunities for such a cause came early on.

Early in King George's War, New England's regiments captured the French bastion of Louisbourg, in Nova Scotia, in July 1745 and founded Halifax as an English stronghold against the Catholic Acadians and their Indian allies. Newspapers and sermons up and down the east coast celebrated Protestant victory over their antichristian enemy to the north. This blow against the "Man of Sin" furnished new themes for the political sermons in the decades before the Revolutionary War. As if Thomas Prince and Joseph Sewall of Boston had dusted off Cotton Mather's inveterate *Shaking Dispensations* (1715) and his only sermon in French *Une Grande Voix Du Ciel A La France* (1725), the fall of that "French Leviathan, the oldest son of Antichrist" was nothing less than "the Doings of God" (Prince, *Extraordinary Events the Doings of God* [Boston, 1745]). And as King George's War wore on into the French and Indian War (1754–63), the "Gallic threat" in French Canada virtually engrossed the spotlight in the sermon literature of the period. Painting images of bloodshed and rape, enslavement in Catholic dungeons and forced conversions by Jesuits no less, the black regiments of Ebenezer Pemberton (1705–1777), Gad Hitchcock (1719–1803), Solomon Williams (1700–1776), Isaac Stiles (1697–1760), and a whole host of others thundered from their pulpits doom and destruction—if God's people in Protestant New England did not unite behind the banner of their British majesty: "It is possible, our land may be given to the beast, the inhabitants to the sword, the righteous to the fire of martyrdom, our wives to ravishment, and our sons and daughters to death and torture" (John Mellen, *The Duty of All to be Ready for Future Impending Events* [Boston, 1756], 19–20).

This Gallic threat to Protestantism was little short of rivaling the heinous Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when Guy Fawkes (1570–1606) tried to blow up king and parliament for the glory of the Church of Rome. By invoking the ominous language of warfare between Satan and Christ in the battle of Armageddon, ministers lent cosmic significance to the minutiae of infantry combat, mixing pious maxims with the ideals of civic liberty. Sermons were surcharged with ominous forebodings as parishioners flocked to the churches to hear the latest news from Quebec improved with apocalyptic significance. In the unfolding events of the period, Old- and New-Light millenarians made common cause in focusing more on Antichrist's fall than on saving souls. This shift in focus set the stage for the Peace of Paris (1763), in which France relinquished her Canadian colonies to the British crown. Babylon has fallen, Harvard's euphoric Samuel Langdon (1723–1797) proclaimed; "the final ruin of

that spiritual tyranny and *mystery of iniquity*" was at hand (*Joy and Gratitude to God* [Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1760], 42–43).

The genre and language of the apocalypse proved so adaptable to the civic needs of clergy and statesmen that the myth of the Puritan Errand was put to new use: our ancestors came to America for freedom of religion and to preserve their political liberties. And just like Jonathan Mayhew (1720–1766), Andrew Eliot (1718–1778), Nathaniel Appleton (1693–1784), Eli Forbes (1726–1804), Mather Byles (1707–1788), and Abraham Keteltas (1732–1798), James Cogswell (1720–1807) yoked the sacred with the profane: "Liberty is one of the most sacred and inviolable Privileges Mankind enjoy; without it Life itself is insipid and many Times burdensome. . . . Endeavor to stand as Guardians of the Religion and Liberties of *America*; to oppose Antichrist . . . [as] the art of War becomes a Part of our Religion" (*God, the Pious Soldier's Strength and Instructor* [Boston, 1757], 26, 11). In the excitement of the moment, the fine line between God's will and colonial politics was largely obliterated. As usual, Jehovah of armies was on the side of the victor. In celebrating the victory of the British crown over Antichrist's eldest son, the American colonists were proud to be English subjects.

All of that would change with one stroke. Scarcely had the colonial troops returned home when the Stamp Act of 1765 incensed the pulpit with the tyranny of arbitrary taxation without representation. The corruption of the Hanoverian court was all too obvious when King George III threatened his American subjects with loss of liberty if they did not pay for the expense of the recent war. If that were not enough, the Quebec Act of 1774 added insult to injury as royal George restored Canadian civil law and confirmed freedom of worship for all Acadians, Roman Catholic or no. Such a betrayal of the Protestant cause betokened King George's complicity in this Catholic plot. Samuel Sherwood's famous *Church's Flight into the Wilderness* (Boston, 1776) is a representative example of the sermon literature of the period: French atrocities against Christ's "humble followers" are ominous, and the "corrupt system of tyranny and oppression, that has of late been fabricated and adopted by the ministry and parliament of Great-Britain, which appears so favourable to popery and the Roman catholic interest . . . awfully threatens the civil and religious liberties of all sound protestants" (in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730–1805*, ed. Ellis Sandoz [1991], 502). In short, the blending of apocalyptic fervency with civil liberty forged expectations for a civil millennium that climaxed in the American Revolution. In this eruption, political rationalists and millenarians of all shades made common cause in unleashing the full force of their pulpit rhetoric that had previously battered the walls of the fortress of Louisbourg. Satan's plot to enslave God's

people in America was most of all evident in the tyranny of British power: standing armies, corrupt politicians, taxation without representation. The fervor of the moment heightened the divine mandate against all types of oppression, as the pulpit issued the call to arms: "We must beat our plowshares into swords, and our pruning-hooks into spears." Remember "that terrible denunciation of divine wrath against the worshippers of the [British] beast and his image." For all those who received his mark in their forehead would be tormented forever and ever in the fire and brimstone of Christ's coming (Samuel West, *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, May 29th, 1776*, in *The Pulpit of the American Revolution*, ed. John Wingate Thornton [Boston, 1860], 318).

The conflation of sacred and secular metaphors mobilized intellectuals just as much as it did backwoods farmers who were tilling their stony glebe. It also inspired a group of visionary poets among the Connecticut Wits, who celebrated America's rising glory in their epic poems about the young republic. In hindsight, it is not surprising that the revolutionary pulpit did not develop any fully matured eschatological system until long after those heady days were over and theologians had sufficiently distanced themselves from the events to give them meaning. By that time, the Second Great Awakening was taking shape, and American patriots, employing sacred and secular metaphors with ease, reinvented the Puritan Errand, the Edwardsian Awakening, and the Revolution to give mythic dimension to the new nation. Of all the many writers who incorporated these new myths into their works, Herman Melville said it best in his antebellum novel *White-Jacket: or The World in a Man-of-War* (1850):

We Americans are the peculiar chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. God has given to us, for a future inheritance, the broad domains of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are the pioneers of the world, the advance guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours. (*The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford et al. [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970], 151)

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- Zakai, Avihu. 1992. *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Anglican settlers extended a "Genesis-type" concept of England as a chosen nation into America while Puritan settlers employed an "Exodus-type" ideology borne out in apocalyptic crisis and constructed in terms of the church's flight into the wilderness.