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Marching to Zion: Social and Political Foundations of Nineteenth-Century Christian Zionism¹

This paper seeks to answer the question “What were the social and political underpinnings of nineteenth-century support for Jewish restorationism?” What did early nineteenth-century evangelicals see in the culture and politics of their day that reassured them God was working in their lifetime toward the fulfillment of prophecy, specifically Jewish restoration to a national homeland? In the following pages I want to look primarily at events of the last part of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century (1776-1856). It was during these years that the *social* and *political* foundations for a Jewish homeland converged with the centuries-old *biblical* and *theological* foundations. Against the backdrop of contemporary political events in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States, evangelicals in the first half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain and the United States were able to see the stage setting for the drama of Jewish restoration. The coalescing of history, politics, and theology in the events of the era reassured Christians of God’s continued divine plan for the Jewish people.² It was also during these years beginning in the 1790s, that broader interest and

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¹ The term Christian Zionism in relation to pre-twentieth century events is an anachronism; the preferred term being Christian Restorationism or restorationism, however, while attempts have been made for consistency, in this study, the terms can be understood as being synonymous.

² One of the most extensive treatments to date is Mayir Vreté, “The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought 1790-1840,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 8:1 (January 1972): 3-50.

belief in Jewish restoration “grew, ripened and started to spread widely.”³ Though it would be another hundred years before Christian and Jewish voices joined in unison for restoration, there were Christian calls for it long before Zionism became part of the international political vocabulary.

Prophecy, Politics, and Jewish Restoration

No idea arises in a vacuum. Whether social, political, theological, economic, or historical, every concept, dream, and desire (biblical or non-biblical) emerges in the midst of a culture and history. It is what social and cultural historians as well as theologians and philosophers term *Zeitgeist* (literally “spirit of the age”). Thus, when F. F. Bruce, the Brethren scholar of the New Testament stated that the concept of the rapture of the Church espoused by John Nelson Darby was not an aberration of thought, but connected with ideas that were “in the air in the 1820s and 1830s among eager students of unfulfilled prophecy,” he illustrated the role of culture in shaping religious ideas.⁴ Every biblical doctrine is interpreted and applied in the midst of human history. He illustrated the concept of *Zeitgeist*. It is a concept that can be very useful to the fields of historical theology and systematic theology (especially eschatology). The same is true of the nineteenth-century hope and dream of the restoration of the Jews to a national homeland. In the centuries between the Diaspora after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 there were many who hoped and prayed for such a

³ Vreté, 3.

⁴ F. F. Bruce, Review of *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin* in *Evangelical Quarterly* 47 (January-March 1975): 58. For recent interpretation of Darby’s cultural environment, see Mark Sweetnam and Crawford Gribbon, “J. N. Darby and the Irish Origins of Dispensationalism,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52:3 (Sept. 2009): 569-77. The fullest analysis to date is Paul Wilkinson’s *For Zion’s Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Studies in Evangelical History and Thought) Exeter, UK: Paternoster Press, 2008.

restoration, but it was in the nineteenth century that political momentum was achieved with vocal and tangible support for such a reality.

It has been said that God is the hand in the glove of history. His providence and sovereignty are manifested in time and space in the events of history fulfill to prophecy and move human history toward its consummation and conclusion. Thus it was that in the years especially following the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century that the dream of Jewish restoration spread especially within the British Empire, including the American colonies. This culminated in the nineteenth century in a unique transatlantic idea that would only fully be realized in the twentieth century.

The political genealogy of the birth of the state of Israel in 1948 is a centuries-old idea of the restoration of the Jews to a national homeland. As a political dream (as opposed to a theological idea), it first gained momentum and ascendancy as a transatlantic movement in the years following the American Revolution.

Christian Zionism's (restorationism's) historical foundations reflect elements of earlier religious and political thought as received from British Puritanism with regard to a national hope for Jews. American colonial Protestant theology regarding Jewish restoration built upon seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English Puritanism. Like their English predecessors, American Puritans saw many parallels between Jews of the Old Testament and themselves. In the New World there was a sense of spiritual and historical recapitulation as the Puritans sojourned on their own "errand into the wilderness," an oft-used phrase alluding to the forty-year trek in the wilderness by the Israelites after their departure from Egypt as recorded in the Old

Testament as well a prophetic journey into the wilderness detailed in Revelation 12:6-7 and understood by the Puritans as referring to themselves.⁵

Influential colonial ministers such as John Cotton, John Davenport, and Increase Mather shared a deep belief in restoration. Statements regarding Israel's biblical history also were readily applied to contemporary concerns. This transference of and identification with Israel's history created an enduring belief in the uniqueness of the American experience and a foundation for future Zionist endeavors. After the American Revolution, theological belief in Jewish restoration was joined with emerging political perspectives. This created a belief in the newly independent American nation that a similar political future awaited Jews in the not distant future. In the nineteenth century there were British theological and political perspectives that transferred to the United States and merged with American religious and political ideas to create American Christian Zionism.

After the American Civil War, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, political and theological ideas merged to create the force that would become Zionism. What is unique about this development from a political perspective is the blending of disparate British and American political dreams held together by transatlantic theology, specifically, dispensationalism. The focus of this paper is on the *political* and *cultural* elements of the first half of the nineteenth century that helped set the stage for wider religious and cultural acceptance of the idea of Jewish restoration in the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

While the theological genealogy of contemporary American evangelical support for Israel can be traced in part to British Brethren leader John Nelson Darby, the *political genealogy* is not

⁵ Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10-11, 65, 143-54. Perry Miller's *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956) attributes the metaphor to a 1670 election sermon by Samuel Danforth entitled "A Brief Recognition of New England's Errand into the Wilderness" but the book's first essay with the same title fails to articulate the more significant biblical and prophetic identification by the Puritans with the phrase.

part of that lineage. Darby and other Brethren were intentionally non-political, and their dispensational views did not penetrate Anglican evangelicalism or British politics in its early years.⁶ Yet, these developments in the United States and Great Britain, predating the Balfour Declaration (1917), provided a significant foundation for present-day American evangelical support for Israel and continue to influence U.S. foreign policy.

Nineteenth Century Religious Underpinnings

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precedents and attitudes deeply influenced later theological and political thought. Puritan political and millennial thought in England and the American colonies affected views that became strongly entrenched and deeply held (consciously and unconsciously) after the American Revolution in the new American nation.

Sustained interest in the restoration of Israel, commonly correlated with Christian millenarianism, began with English Puritanism in the late sixteenth century.

Apocalyptic interest and millenarian interpretations were rejuvenated by the growing interest in Hebrew and biblical studies, widespread dissemination of the Bible in English, and contemporary social and political events.⁷ Reiner Smolinski notes: “Virtually all seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century millennialists on both sides of the Atlantic agreed that even though the Jews were still languishing in their Diaspora, Jehovah had not forgotten his chosen people and would, in due time, restore them to their once-elevated position among the nations.”⁸

⁶ Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals, Protestant Sectarians from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 195-248.

⁷ See Robert G. Clouse, “The Rebirth of Millenarianism” in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 1970), 42-65.

⁸ Reiner Smolinski, ed. *The Threefold Paradise of Cotton Mather: An Edition of “Triparadisus”* (Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 21.

British Puritanism and Jewish Restorationism

It was in England, especially before and during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, that the idea of a future restoration to a national homeland in Palestine, as part of the biblical doctrine of the last days, gained theological prominence among the Puritans.⁹ Puritans before Cromwell's era had articulated belief in Jewish restoration in Palestine but when, in 1655, Cromwell permitted Jewish return to England after an expulsion of nearly three hundred years, the idea became more visible in religious thought. However, it would be a long time before belief in Jewish restoration became a widespread political, as well as theological, idea. The idea was first and foremost a theological idea with the political dimension being added in the nineteenth century.

Puritans strongly identified with Old Testament history and theology.¹⁰ As they studied the Bible with renewed vigor in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, there was great interest in the apocalyptic writings from which they inferred a teaching of restoration.¹¹ Along with belief in the future conversion of the Jews to Christianity was the expectation that much of this would occur within the geographical boundaries of a restored homeland.

Puritan belief in restoration was not benevolent advocacy but part of a Christian view of history wherein Jews would ultimately be converted to Christianity during the last days, defined as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth and the thousand-year era (millennium) prophesied in Revelation 20. Most Puritans were postmillennial, believing that the return of

⁹ Douglas J. Culver, *Albion and Ariel: British Puritanism and the Birth of Political Zionism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 60. See also Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: New York University Press, 1956; reprint, New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 122.

¹⁰ Tuchman, 125.

¹¹ Carl F. Ehle, Jr., "Prolegomena to Christian Zionism in America: The Views of Increase Mather and William E. Blackstone Concerning the Doctrine of the Restoration of Israel," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977, 44.

Christ would come after a thousand year period of social and civil improvement during which the message of Christianity would permeate the earth geographically and culturally. However, a few in England and America held to a premillennial return of Christ. In this scheme, the return of Christ occurs prior to the millennium throughout which Jesus Christ reigns physically on earth.

In both postmillennial and premillennial Puritan eschatology there was a role for Jews, and restoration to a homeland in Palestine was part of the scheme. However, the nature and importance of the Jews differed between postmillennialist and premillennialist interpretations. Restoration was one of several eschatological motifs, but it was not the most prominent. The most prominent eschatological idea was the expectation of the rise of an Antichrist figure variously interpreted throughout the centuries as an individual or an institution including various monarchs and the papacy.¹²

One of the first Puritan advocates of a territorial national restoration of Jews to Palestine was Francis Kett (d. 1589). In 1585, the Cambridge educated clergyman published *The Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Mans Glorification Containing the Godly Misterie of Heavenly Jerusalem*. The work was considered heretical by the bishop of Norwich, and ecclesiastical and civil authorities tried and executed Kett because of Arian teachings within the book. However, the work also espoused belief in a restoration of Jews in Judea. Kett's death drew attention to his theology, with both advocates and detractors of his eschatological beliefs producing their own writings on restoration.

Critique of Kett's ideas came quickly in the 1590 publication of a Latin work entitled *De Universali et Novissima Judaeorum Vocatione*, by Andrew Willett (d. 1621), a distinguished

¹² See Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*. New York: Harper Collins, 1994 and Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

theologian and textual critic. Yet, Willett's rebuttal was insufficient to stop belief in restoration. Others soon and steadily followed in Kett's ideological footsteps.¹³ Notable among the Puritan proponents of restoration were Thomas Draxe (d. 1618), Thomas Brightman (1562-1607), Giles Fletcher (1549-1611), Henry Finch (1558-1625), and Joseph Mede (1586-1638).

From 1608 to 1615, Thomas Draxe published at least five substantial works in which he argued that because of God's covenant with the Jews in the Old Testament, they must be restored at a future date. There would be a national conversion and restoration wherein he declared "Jewes shall towards the end of the world, be temporally restored into their owne Country, rebuild Jerusalem, and have a most reformed, and flourishing Church and Commonwealth."¹⁴ Two of the era's dominant figures in biblical hermeneutics were Thomas Brightman, a postmillennialist, and premillennialist Joseph Mede. Both wrote boldly of a future restoration of Israel.

It was through an English translation of Brightman's Latin work *Apocalypsis Apocalyseos*, first published posthumously two years after his death, that "systematic treatment *par excellence* of the idea of Jewish restoration came in 1615."¹⁵ Brightman's *Revelation of the Revelation* told "how the Jews will return from the areas North and East of Palestine to Jerusalem and how the Holy Land and the Jewish Christian church will become the centre of a Christian world."¹⁶ Brightman's work was extremely influential, becoming a cornerstone for future theological interpreters of restoration.¹⁷

Giles Fletcher, a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Russia, was a follower of Brightman. Not just a diplomat, Fletcher was also poet,

¹³ Culver, 72-75.

¹⁴ Thomas Draxe, *An Alarm to the Last Judgement* (London: Nicholas Okes for Matthew Law, 1615), 22.

¹⁵ Culver, 79.

¹⁶ Toon, 30.

¹⁷ Culver, 79.

historian, and prolific writer. While in Russia he came to believe that the ten lost tribes of Israel, carried captive by Shalmaneser V in 722 B.C., were to be found among the Tartars in the Caspian Sea region. He subsequently wrote a work on the subject espousing belief in future conversion of the Jews to Christianity and restoration to their ancient territory in Palestine.¹⁸ Fletcher's book, *Israel Redux: or the Restauration of Israel* (shortened title) was published posthumously by the Puritan divine Samuel Lee in 1677. Regarding Jewish restoration, Lee declares that Fletcher affirms the "certainty of their return in God's due time."¹⁹

Henry Finch, a contemporary of Fletcher's, was a key proponent of Israel's future restoration and wrote a seminal work on the subject in 1621, called *The World's Great Restauration or The Calling of the Jewes* (shortened title). When it was published Finch was a Member of Parliament and a highly respected legal scholar. Finch believed strongly in restoration and provided an extended presentation on it. Epstein observes: "Finch's argument may be considered the first genuine plan for Restoration."²⁰ Finch's volume, asserting the future conversion and restoration of Jews, taught that the biblical passages that speak of a Jewish return to a homeland are to be taken literally, not allegorically.²¹

Finch believed that after their conversion and restoration the Jewish nation would be divinely exalted above other nations. He declared:

Then shall be established that most glorious kingdom of Jerusalem, under which all the tribes shall be united. So ample shall be their dominion that not only the Egyptians, Assyrians, and the most extensive countries of the East, converted by their example, but

¹⁸ Culver, 89-94.

¹⁹ Samuel Lee, Preface to Giles Fletcher, *Israel Redux: or the Restauration of Israel; or the Restauration of Israel exhibited in two short treatises* (London: S. Streeter for John Hancock, 1677), sheets A3-A4.

²⁰ Lawrence J. Epstein, *Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984), 8.

²¹ Peter Toon, "The Latter-day Glory," in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 1970), 32.

even the rest, the Christians, shall of their own accord, *submit* themselves and acknowledge their primacy.²²

James I was offended by Finch's statement that all nations would become subservient to national Israel at the time of her restoration, and Finch and his publisher were arrested shortly after the book's release. The King viewed the statements as a libel and had Finch examined before the High Commissioner, an office created by James I to deal with such matters. Finch and his publisher, William Gouge, were released several weeks later after making written disclaimer of and apology for portions deemed derogatory to the sovereign.²³

Though Finch did not meet the same fate as Kett, his imprisonment shows the atmosphere of the era, especially with regard to the relationship between Puritans and the state (and its established Church). It was within this larger conflict that the Puritan concept of restoration emerged and the idea, like much of Puritan thought, was not readily accepted in all political and religious circles. Culver observes, "In each body where public opinion in that day could be sounded, there was reaction to this manifesto of Jewish restoration. Parliament, Pulpit, and University each mounted an assault on the idea."²⁴ It was in the midst of such opposition and persecution that Puritans began looking beyond the shores of England (and Europe) to the New World where expression of their theology could flourish without social and political impediment.

Antagonism against Finch also raised a broader awareness of his views and defense of them. Most notable was that by Joseph Mede, professor of Greek at Christ's College, Cambridge (and teacher of John Milton). Mede's work, *Clavis Apocalyptica*, was released in Latin in 1627. Five years later an extended edition was released, and in 1642 it was translated into English and

²² Henry Finch, *The World's Great Restauration or The Calling of the Jewes* (London: William Gouge, 1621), 194, see also pages 74-75.

²³ J. M. Ribb, "Henry Finch," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. VII.

²⁴ Culver, 117. See also pages 125-33 for political reactions to Finch's ideas.

published by the authority of the Long Parliament as *The Key of the Revelation*.²⁵ Mede, the father of English premillennialism, was also an ardent advocate of restoration. Mede's interpretive framework for prophecy was significant for his presentation of parallel structures in the book of Revelation. This perspective, extensively expounded, appealed greatly to other interpreters of prophecy such as John Milton and Isaac Newton. In Mede, there was the attempt at a scientific methodology, "a new technique in manipulating prophetic texts . . . that his admirers glorified as equal in importance to Aristotle's syllogistic reasoning."²⁶ However, others, such as the Fifth Monarchists, also looked to Mede's views in support of extreme theological and political interpretations.²⁷

Many influential English writers during the seventeenth century used Mede's work, including John Milton, Samuel Hartlib, Henry More, Isaac Newton, and "virtually every Independent minister in England and Wales."²⁸ Many Presbyterians also followed Mede's exegesis of Revelation 20. His collected works went through several editions in the two centuries after his death and became standard theological references in both England and America. It was largely through them that premillennialism and restoration crossed the Atlantic Ocean and greatly influenced Puritans in the American colonies. As the idea of restoration reached the colonies, it also continued to grow in England.

Each of the English Puritans discussed affirmed belief in a prophetic restoration of the Jews and each added an element to that belief, thus contributing to an expanding theological concept and body of literature. In summary this developed idea was that in the future the Jews would be converted to Christianity and be restored as a nation to Palestine in accordance with

²⁵ Clouse, 56.

²⁶ Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 91-92.

²⁷ See B. S. Capp, "Extreme Millenarianism" in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 1970), 66-90.

²⁸ Clouse, 62.

what Puritan biblical interpretation understood to be a divine, eternal, and immutable decree. It was this core idea, interpreted in light of the new “errand into the wilderness” that developed in American theology.

American Colonial Puritanism and Jewish Restorationism

Support for restoration was very strong in colonial America and during its early years as a republic. Both premillennial and postmillennial supporters carried the millennialism of English Puritanism to the colonies in all of its fullness. Both schemes advocated restoration, and American colonial experience and expressions of America’s historical and theological significance were soon added to the eschatological equation.

As theology, politics, and history converged in the colonies, the “Americanization of the apocalyptic tradition” occurred and was embraced with overlapping political, social and theological dimensions.²⁹ Ruth Bloch writes of the transatlantic movement of the millennial idea: “Many, perhaps most, of the leaders of the 1630’s [*sic*] thought about their migration to New England in terms of millennial prophecy. . . . Although less radical than English revolutionary millennialism, American Puritan millennialism proved the more culturally persistent.”³⁰ Notable also is that transatlantic movement of millennialism was not one-way. American publications and people also crossed to England, some supporting the Fifth Monarchy associations and agitation.³¹

²⁹ Stephen J. Stein, “Transatlantic Expressions: Apocalyptic in Early New England,” in *Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides and Joseph Anthony Wittreich (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 273.

³⁰ Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 11. See also her essay “The Social and Political Base of Millennial Literature in Late Eighteenth-Century America.” *American Quarterly* 40:3 (September 1988), 378-96 and Michael Lienesch, “The Role of Political Millennialism in Early American Nationalism.” *The Western Political Quarterly* 36:3 (September 1983), 445-65.

³¹ Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, 11. See also, J. F. Maclear, “New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 32:2 (April 1975), 223-60.

During the colonial era, two prominent New England leaders were John Cotton (1584-1652), who supported restoration following Brightman's postmillennial eschatology, and Increase Mather (1639-1723), who did so following Mede's premillennialism. The enormous influence of both of these clergymen—Cotton, an immigrant, and Mather, a first-generation native-born citizen—demonstrate the significant transatlantic theological connection of the era.

It was in the sermons and writings of Increase Mather, ministering in both England and Ireland after his graduation from Harvard College, that restoration was most visibly present in colonial America. This theme would be furthered in the ministry of Mather's prolific son, Cotton (who, though premillennial, later repudiated restoration).³² After his return to Massachusetts in 1661, Increase Mather wrote the most comprehensive work on restoration yet to appear in Puritan theology, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (London, 1669).

Mather continued to preach and publish on Jewish conversion and restoration, which he saw as a precursor to the millennium, throughout his ministry. The difference for Mather from some of his predecessors and friends such as Richard Baxter (1615-1691) was a belief that the millennium would be preceded by a dramatic return of Christ to inaugurate the millennial kingdom.³³ In 1682, Mather published a sequel to *Mystery* in Latin. Printed in Amsterdam, *Diatriba de Signo Filii Hominis (Discussion of the Sign of the Son of Man)* furthered the idea of Christ's premillennial return and Jewish conversion and restoration. Mather continued the idea in *A Dissertation Concerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (London, 1709). With the publication of each of these and other works, Mather's reputation and influence grew and his vision of the future was promulgated beyond New England's shores.

³² Ehle, 188-93.

³³ Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 274.

Mather's writings also had a positive message in which he focused not on future punishment, as had earlier Puritans, but on divine rewards for righteous living. It was a premillennial perspective with an optimistic viewpoint. Following the hermeneutics of Joseph Mede and Thomas Goodwin, Mather propounded a well-defined plan of prophetic events in which restoration was a significant part.³⁴ In the *Mystery*, Mather argued six reasons why there would be restoration and declared that it would be both a spiritual and temporal restoration foreshadowing physical renewal of all things in the universe.³⁵ Mather's last work to extensively treat restoration, *A Discourse Concerning Faith and Fervency in Prayer and the Glorious Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, on Earth, Now Approaching* (Boston 1710, London 1713), was his most popular work and was reprinted frequently in America and abroad.³⁶

Increase (and Cotton) Mather's premillennial thought remained strong until Jonathan Edwards (1703-58) asserted a postmillennial perspective—a view that was again ascending in England and New England, and, as before, “the Atlantic proved no barrier to the hermeneutical tempests gathering strength in Europe.”³⁷ Edwards also believed in Jewish conversion and restoration. He declared, “Without doubt, they will return to their own land; because when their unbelief ceases, their dispersion, the dreadful and signal punishment of their unbelief, will cease too.” Yet his eschatology was postmillennial.³⁸

The enormous influence of Edwards on American religion also affected millennial expectations. Edwards proposed a postmillennial view, similar to Alsted's, that was to dominate

³⁴ Hall, 274-75.

³⁵ Ehle, 110-23.

³⁶ Ehle, 175-76; Hall, 325.

³⁷ Reiner Smolinski, “Apocalypticism in Colonial North America,” in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 3, *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and Contemporary Age*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 1988), 51.

³⁸ Jonathan Edwards, “Notes on the Apocalypse,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 5, *Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 135. On Edwards's postmillennialism, see C. C. Goen, “Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology.” *Church History* 28:1 (March 1959): 25-40.

American religious history throughout the last half of the eighteenth century and three-fourths of the nineteenth century.³⁹ Premillennialists and postmillennialists both believed in a millennial kingdom but they differed on the nature of it. It was the views of Edwards that became mainstream American eschatology. But the enduring belief of both views was Jewish conversion and restoration.⁴⁰ There was, at times, a blurring of interpretation between ancient Israel and the American people during and after the American Revolution. But affinity toward the idea of a Jewish homeland never ceased. Indeed, political leaders such as Presidents John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln expressed similar sentiments.⁴¹ Prophetic speculation in Europe and America continued throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially after the French Revolution, which gave many prophetic interpreters a specific date and event that was used for apocalyptic speculation. Political and religious ideas co-existed drawing strength and support from one another. Beneath each political idea was a religious idea, especially in the case of Jewish restoration.

Nineteenth-Century Historical Underpinnings

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there were a number of political and historical developments or “signposts” pointing toward Jewish restoration.⁴² The years from 1776 to 1914 gave rise to a new outlook around much of the world. Historian C. A. Bayly states: “Contemporary changes were so rapid, and interacted with each other so profoundly, that this period could reasonably be described as ‘the birth of the modern world.’”⁴³ During this great age

³⁹ See James H. Moorhead, “Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800-1880.” *The Journal of American History* 71:3 (December 1984): 524-42.

⁴⁰ Smolinski, 55.

⁴¹ Michael J. Pragai, *Faith and Fulfilment: Christians and the Return to the Promised Land* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1985), 49.

⁴² The Jewish population of Europe in 1800 was about 2 million out of a total population of 188 million (1.1%). In 1850 the numbers were 4.1 of 266 million and by 1900, 8.7 out of 400 million. Salo W. Baron, “The Jewish Question in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of Modern History* 10:1 (March 1938), 51.

⁴³ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 11.

of industry, colonization, and globalization, there was also the “rise of global uniformities in the state, religion, political ideologies and economic life.”⁴⁴ But this uniformity and awareness of other peoples and cultures also caused tensions within and among societies that “created many hybrid polities, mixed ideologies, and complex forms of global economic activity . . . [and] heightened the sense of *difference*, and even antagonism, between people indifferent societies, and especially between their elites.”⁴⁵ Political and religious ideologies and events abounded creating a vibrant and revolutionary era that transcended national and colonial boundaries. Two of the most significant were the revolutions in America and France. Bayly notes:

It was in the realm of ideas that the impact of the revolutions was most obvious to contemporaries. They quickly understood that the ideological consequences of the dramas of 1776 and 1789 were of world-class importance and not simply local revolts. Visionary thinkers announced that the American Revolution heralded “a New Order of the Ages” for the whole of humankind. French Jacobin radicals later proclaimed the epochal importance of the French Revolution as they tried to extend it throughout Europe and beyond. Black slave in the Caribbean seized on the idea of revolution for their own emancipation. The clear enunciation of the principle of “No taxation without representation” and of the “rights of man” had an extraordinary impact. . . . Many Asians, Africans, and South Americans, however, received and transformed these dangerous new doctrines in situations *already* riven by conflict between ideologies with a global reach. . . . Quite localized movements of resistance could now access and use universalistic ideas of godliness and deploy them against the world empires.⁴⁶

In the aftermath of both revolutions thoughts of Jewish restoration (without the violence of other national struggles) were an unintended but not unwelcomed consequence. Yet, it must also be understood that the political upheavals in Europe in the nineteenth century (along with increases in population and migration) often also exacerbated European anti-Semitism.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Bayly, 1.

⁴⁵ Bayly, 1.

⁴⁶ Bayly, 86-87.

⁴⁷ For example, Baron notes that while Russia, which had not permitted any Jews in the nation before 1772, decided to allow their migration into newly-acquired southern regions, Jews were no permitted into the province of old Muscovy. In Prussia after the Napoleonic wars the Jews were divided into twenty-one regions, each with an entirely different status and they were not permitted to move from province to province without special permission in Vienna, Jewish “tolerance” licenses were issues on case by case basis. While most of these restrictions were removed with political emancipation acts in the last of the nineteenth century, Russian restrictions remained until the

American Revolution and Political Independence

The social and political reverberations from the American Revolution were long and loud. When in 1836, American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his poem “Concord Hymn,” (commemorating the battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775), the words “the shot heard ‘round the world,” his imagery was appropriate and realistic. For many citizens of the newly-founded United States, American independence confirmed religious and political sentiments and ideas regarding the uniqueness of the American people and the Puritan experiment in the New World. John Winthrop’s sermon words “We shall be as a City upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us” preached aboard a ship to newly arriving settlers in 1630 seemed as true in the days following the 1783 signing of the Treaty of Paris as they had a century and a half earlier.

Closely tied to support by the American colonists for the revolt against Great Britain was the belief that Americans were part of a divinely-appointed political endeavor—one that drew from the imagery of the Israelites in the Old Testament. Michael Oren writes:

The colonists’ image of themselves as the New Israel attained special poignancy during the War of Independence. Casting King George III in the role of pharaoh and the Atlantic acting as the Red Sea, patriot writers likened George Washington to Moses, and John Adams to Joshua leading their people to freedom. For Alexander Hamilton, an Episcopalian who had learned to read Hebrew in his youth, the destiny of America was not unlike that of the Jews, a people whose history was “entirely out of the ordinary course of human affairs” and “the effect of some great providential plan.” The Yale president Ezra Stiles noted that the number of Israelites present at Mount Sinai—three million—was precisely the population of the United States at the time of independence. Harvard’s Samuel Langdon suggested that “instead of the twelve tribes of Israel, we may substitute the thirteen colonies of the American union.” The image of those tribes crossing the wilderness to Canaan adorned the Seal of the United States proposed by Franklin and Jefferson.⁴⁸

revolution of 1917 (54-55). For positive national political actions such as those of the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), see Baron, 64-65.

⁴⁸ Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), 85.

Once independence was achieved, it was not a large political and religious step to begin to think that a homeland could and should also be established for the Jews. Such a homeland would fulfill prevailing theological expectations of postmillennialism (returning Jews to the land before the return of Christ) and political aspirations for political independence for Jews not unlike that of the citizens of the new American republic.⁴⁹ What began as a small-scale revolt against taxation and petty tyranny ended with the inauguration of a global age of revolution that lasted more than four decades.

In England during these same years and the ones immediately following the American Revolution writers such as James Bicheno saw in current events the fulfillment of prophecy and encouraged Jewish restoration. Bicheno's *The Signs of the Times* (1792-1794) went through several editions and argued that the French Revolution and the wars that sprang from it were a precursor to the millennial kingdom.⁵⁰

The French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars

In July 1813, John Adams, the second president of the United States wrote to another former president, Thomas Jefferson, regarding the millennial views Joseph Priestley, a common friend and prominent Unitarian. The fact that such correspondence occurred and that its subject was the eschatology of a Unitarian (who fluctuated in perspective from the 1770s-1790s) shows how common and accepted was eschatology in the era. Perhaps even more significant (though not unusual) is Priestley's understanding of the French Revolution, then in the midst of the "Reign of Terror," as being the visible fulfillment of prophecy and his belief that the restoration

⁴⁹ For the effects of the conflict on American Jews of the age, see Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution on American Jews," *Modern Judaism* 1:2 (September 1981): 149-60.

⁵⁰ Vreté, 8.

of the Jews to their homeland would precede both their conversion to Christianity and the Second Coming of Christ.⁵¹

The tumultuous years of the French Revolution (1789-1799) involved enormous social, political, and religious upheaval and change in France with global ramifications. As a result of the revolution, the French political structure changed from that of an absolute monarchy with feudal privileges for the aristocracy and Roman Catholic clergy to a radical republic based on Enlightenment principles and a rejection of Christianity as a viable source for social and political guidance.

At the time of the revolution, France was a country with enormous social problems and a population of nearly thirty million (80% rural). There were epidemic diseases, acute food shortages and famine, a highly-structured society, an inequitable tax system, poor social services, and a national financial crisis (brought on in part by the monarchy's support of foreign wars). These problems, among many others, set against a backdrop of conspicuous consumption by the aristocracy created a social and political environment highly susceptible to revolutionary ideas and Enlightenment values. "The American cry of 'No taxation without representation' was particularly meaningful in France."⁵²

The inability of the central government to generate needed reforms coupled with political dissension within the political body the Estates-General led to open revolt against the monarchy and the storming of the Bastille, a medieval fortress-prison in eastern Paris, on July 14, 1789.

(Frequently used for the subjects/victims of arbitrary royal authority, it held only seven prisoners

⁵¹ Clarke Garrett, "Joseph Priestley, the Millennium, and the French Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34:1 (Jan.-March 1973), 51, 56. Interestingly, Garrett notes that Priestly's views are part of a continuous strand of centuries-old support: "In England, Priestly's philosemitism was a tradition that like millenarianism can be tracked back to the seventeenth century. Similarly, in France, it constituted a continuous thread in Jansenism from Dauget to Grégoire" (57). In 1791, Priestly published works affirming that Jesus would literally descend from the clouds and the dead would be raised (58).

⁵² Bayly, 95.

in 1789, but remained a potent symbol of royal power.) Its seizure by the Paris crowd marked the end of the absolute monarchy and the beginning of a new era that would end with the defeat and exile of Napoleon Bonaparte. Throughout the era, the status of Jews in France drew special attention in many religious and political circles as the revolutionary cry “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*” rippled like a stone in a pond throughout various social groups and ethnic communities in France.⁵³

Along with the French Revolution and the overthrow of the French monarchy came the toppling of the Roman Catholic Church in France. For many students of prophecy, the apparent demise of Catholicism, coupled with the removal of the monarchy, signified great prophetic fulfillment. Since the Reformation, many had believed the papacy and Roman Catholicism to represent alternately, either the Antichrist or the fourth beast of Daniel 7. In the aftermath of the revolution many interpreters, especially in England and France, believed prophecy was literally being fulfilled and that Jewish restoration was imminent—in 1794-1795, more than ten major prophetic works appeared addressing current concerns.⁵⁴ British writers such as Richard Clarke, Richard Beere, Richard Brothers, and James Bicheno believed in imminent restoration as a precursor of the millennium and set dates such as 1791, 1798, and 1819 for the restoration.⁵⁵

Regarding the inaccuracy of their dates, Mayir Vreté notes:

That the calculations proved wrong did not daunt the millenarians, for to them the date itself was not of paramount importance. The errors, they claimed, were due to someone or other having misinterpreted the course of current world events—not so much, indeed, their nature or import as rather their extent. What mattered above all was the sure

⁵³ On Jews and the revolution, see Jay R. Berkovitz, “The French Revolution and the Jews: Assessing the Cultural Impact,” *AJS Review* 20:1 (1995): 25-86; Zosa Szajkowski, “Religious Propaganda against Jews during the French Revolution of 1789,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 28 (1959): 103-13 and “Protestants and Jews of France in Fight for Emancipation, 1789-1791” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 25 (1956): 119-35; and Shmuel Trigano, “The French Revolution and the Jews,” *Modern Judaism* 10:2 (May 1990): 171-90.

⁵⁴ See Vreté, 6-13, 44 n. 13.

⁵⁵ Vreté, 30-31.

awareness that their generation was the last of this world or, after the outbreak of the French revolution, rather the first of the Latter Days.⁵⁶

With the rise and defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, prophetic study and speculation intensified significantly with Napoleon often ascribed a central role in the prophetic interpretation.

If the demise of the papacy was understood by many students of prophecy to be foretold in Scripture, it was rise of Napoleon and the identification of him as the Antichrist that ignited prophetic speculation at the turn of the nineteenth century. For many people in Great Britain there was an additional concern and incentive to support restoration. There were persistent rumors of France's intention to restore the Jews to a homeland in the Middle East as part of a greater plan for French influence and control in the region.⁵⁷

Now, the method of the Jewish transportation in their return became a topic of political and strategic discussion and speculation. Would the return be initiated and assisted by Great Britain and her allies or by France, the rival international power? In the context of Anglo-Franco competition and the Napoleonic Wars this was a vexing issue. Some interpreters believed the answer was certainly that British ships would transport the Jews and found certainty in Isaiah 60:9 ("Surely the isles shall wait for me and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from afar. . .") which they understood to mean British ships possibly with the aid of the States of Holland and its vessels.⁵⁸ National pride as well as geopolitical influence and domination became part of the motivation for restoration. For some proponents restoration was a political issue, for others it was a theological issue, and for yet a third group, it was both theological and political. For interpreters such as James Bicheno, who published in 1800 the fullest theologico-political work to date (*Restoration of the Jews, the Crisis of all Nations*), current events and

⁵⁶ Vreté, 31.

⁵⁷ Vreté, 40-41.

⁵⁸ Vreté, 37-38.

British policy were central components of prophetic interpretation. In Great Britain, prophetic fulfillment in current events became a test of national identity and destiny as well as a matter of biblical interpretation.

Politicians, poets, preachers, and the press alike decried the rise of Napoleon and supported war against him. In 1803, when it looked as though Napoleon might invade Britain, poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote to a friend: “As to me, I think, the Invasion must be a Blessing. For if we do not repel it, & cut them to pieces, we are a vile sunken race & it is good, that our Betters should *crack* us—And if we do act as Men, Christians, Englishmen—down goes the Corsican Miscreant, & Europe may have peace.”⁵⁹ For some, Napoleon was not only a political enemy but also a prophetic enemy—the Antichrist.⁶⁰ It is interesting to observe the blending of religion, culture, arts, and politics during the age—each drawing from the other with shared affinities and animosities. Doing so shows the interconnectedness of ideas and how they consciously and unconsciously influence society. One sub-theme that emerges in this time period is the belief in the uniqueness of Great Britain as either a divinely-appointed instrument in Jewish restoration *or* the identification of Great Britain as the New Jerusalem of Revelation.⁶¹ For example, James Hatley Frere, one political and prophecy writer, wrote in 1815 that all prophetic references to Israel should be read as predictions about “the Israelitsh Nation, or Protestant British Nation,” the new “chosen people of God.”⁶² This was a view not dissimilar from the identification of the American colonies and later United States as the new Israel

⁵⁹ Letter to Thomas Poole, 3 October 1803, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956-71) 2:524 cited in Stuart Semmel, “British Uses for Napoleon,” *Modern Language Notes* 120 (2005), 733.

⁶⁰ Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 244-46. See also, Semmel, 737-38. See also, David Brady, *The Contribution of British Writers between 1560 and 1830 to the Interpretation of Revelation 13.16-18 (The Number of the Beast—A Study in the History of Exegesis)* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 217-50.

⁶¹ Semmel, 738.

⁶² James Hatley Frere, *A Combined View of the Prophecies of Daniel, Esdras, and St. John* (London, 1815), 93n, 114 cited in Semmel, 739.

sojourning in the wilderness. *Even though the eschatological viewpoints and biblical interpretations were often inconsistent and diverse, both these transatlantic identifications provide a milieu in which support for restoration could flourish politically and theologically.*

As the nineteenth century began, interest in prophecy grew significantly, especially in light of the meteoric rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and campaign in Palestine and Syria in 1799 created enormous consternation in prophetic studies circles.⁶³ This was especially true in Britain where national animosity with France continued but was reshaped in light of Napoleon's emerging powers and conquests.⁶⁴ For some, events such as the battles of Trafalgar (1805) and Waterloo (1815) had prophetic as well as geopolitical importance.

Empires and Colonialism

Beyond the American and French Revolutions, ideas of and support for restoration also must be seen against the backdrop of British and European exploration, colonization, conflict, and competition for global empires. (Additionally, after the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, there was the slowly emerging presence of the United States in the international realm and the Middle East.⁶⁵) Though such things were already part of western history for several centuries, the region that in the early twentieth century would come to be called "the Middle East," acquired new significance and prominence in nineteenth century geopolitical struggles. Also not to be overlooked were political struggles and revolts in the Caribbean and events in Africa such as the establishment of Liberia in 1822 (proclaimed

⁶³ Brady, 242-46, 297-98. See also, Nathan Schur, *Napoleon in the Holy Land* (London: Greenhill Books, 1999), 117-21 for Napoleon and Jews in the Holy Land.

⁶⁴ See David Brady, *The Contribution of British Writers between 1560 and 1830 to the Interpretation of Revelation 13.16-18 (The Number of the Beast) A Study in the History of Exegesis* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 242-46, 289, 297.

⁶⁵ On the United States in the Middle East, see Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to Present*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.

independent in 1847) for freed slaves in the United States. New nations, new national identities, and competing ideas of politics and citizenship flourished both in support of and reaction to European colonial powers. In every instance, there were theological as well as political discussions and commentaries on such events.⁶⁶ *A Jewish nation was only one of many national desires. It was not an aberrant political idea, but rather, one that fit well with the tenor of the era. When coupled and bolstered with theological support, it gained even greater intensity.*

Middle East politics and “the Eastern Question” became a growing concern in the nineteenth century. What was to become of the declining Ottoman Empire? European powers eyed territories under Ottoman control with envy and desire.⁶⁷ This was especially true for the British who desired to retain influence, control and resources on the Indian subcontinent.⁶⁸

By the 1840s, various Christian desires and calling for a Jewish state or at least semi-sovereign colonies were beginning to blend with emerging European concerns regarding the political future of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁹ Thus, in 1938 (a decade before the establishment of Israel and in an article that notes National Socialism’s desire to annihilate the Jews), Baron wrote that from the 1840s until the establishment of the British Mandate in 1922, “there runs a continuous line of publicist formulations and governmental negotiations, in which British imperialist ambitions mingled with religious messianism, utopian social reform, and the realities of Jewish nationalism to bring about the rise of a powerful international Zionist movement.”⁷⁰ It

⁶⁶ See for example, Martyn P. Thompson, “Ideas of Europe during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55:1 (January 1994): 37-58 and Andrew F. Walls, “Africa as the Theatre of Christian Engagement with Islam in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 29:2 (1999): 155-74. On the British Empire specifically, see Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

⁶⁷ See Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A Story of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 301-21.

⁶⁸ See, Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.

⁶⁹ Baron, 62.

⁷⁰ Baron, 63.

is important to note that these discussions were “supplemented by various territorial trends, in which territories other than Palestine were advocated as more suitable locations for a Jewish homeland.”⁷¹ Although evangelicals and some Jews insisted on a homeland in the Holy Land on the basis of theology, for others, the geographic location was open for discussion.⁷² With the rise of pogroms against Jews, especially in Russia in the late nineteenth century, these discussions became more focused and intense.

Nineteenth-Century Social and Political Underpinnings

While there were ideas of revolution politically throughout the era, socially and culturally Romanticism was the prevailing ideology and both nurtured an environment supportive to Jewish restoration.⁷³ Of the era, Paul Johnson writes:

All over the world, the last wildernesses, in the pampas and the steppes, in the Mississippi Valley and Canada, in the Himalayas and Andes, were being penetrated or settled by the advanced societies, and their peoples were being subdued, in some cases annihilated. Never before or since had so much cheap land become available, and the hungry peoples of Europe were moving overseas in vast numbers to possess it.

These, political, economic and demographic changes, all with precedent in their scale and future significance, were accompanied by powerful new currents in music and painting, literature and philosophy, some ennobling and refreshing, some sinister.⁷⁴

Reciprocating ideas in political theory, philosophy, and the arts generated moods of optimism and belief that political changes were inevitable either through ordinary or extraordinary means. These ideas, especially in Great Britain and Europe, coupled with the remarkable technological developments of the Industrial Revolution generating diverse social and political movements.

⁷¹ Baron 63.

⁷² I. W. J. Hopkins shows the importance of mapping during this era for religious and political ideas in “Nineteenth-Century Maps of Palestine: Dual-Purpose Historical Evidence,” *Imago Mundi* 22 (1968), 30-36.

⁷³ For trends in the United States during the age, see Robert K. Whalen, “‘Christians Love the Jews!’ The Development of American Philo-Semitism, 1790-1860,” *Religion and American Culture* 6:2 (Summer, 1996): 225-59.

⁷⁴ Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), xvii-xviii.

Romanticism and revolution filled the imaginations of people generating diverse cultural and political movements that shared core ideas. Romanticism and revolution were like two fireworks shot into the sky that exploded into starbursts with hundreds of illuminating ideas.

Politically, Romanticism fostered idea and movements of nationalism across Europe. In places like Germany and Poland the legacy of the French Revolution coupled with growing desires for new states and separate identities. By mid-century, in 1848, revolutions tore across Europe in cities as diverse as Paris, Milan, Venice, Naples, Palermo, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Kraków, and Berlin.⁷⁵ These then generated strong peace movements that often had eschatological overtones influencing the postmillennial ideas of Europe in the last half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Once again, theological ideas were reflected in the culture.

In the visual arts, painters such as the Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746-1828) captured the mood of the day in his work *Third of May 1808* (1814), commemorating Spanish resistance to Napoleon's armies during the occupation of 1808. In 1830, French artist Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) painted *Liberty Leading the People* that commemorated the July Revolution of 1830 (and fifty years later inspired the Statue of Liberty). John William Waterhouse's (1849-1917) work *The Lady of Shalott* (1888), depicted a scene from Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1832 poem of the same name in which a young lady yearns for the love of Sir Lancelot who is isolated in a tower near King Arthur's Camelot. This work shows the interplay of literature and art during the age as well as the renewed interest in the ideas and history of the medieval era (including Neo-Gothic architecture). In England this interest affected Jewish emancipation by generating renewed interest in historic injustices against Jews—a theme also articulated in Sir Walter Scott's literary work *Ivanhoe* (1819).

⁷⁵ Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), ix.

⁷⁶ See Alexander Tyrrell, "Making the Millennium: The Mid-Nineteenth Century Peace Movement," *The Historical Journal* 21:1 (March 1978): 75-95.

Also important visually in this era was the art of William Blake. His artistic depictions of biblical and prophetic themes captivated viewers. His works such as “The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed in Sun,” “The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun,” “The Great Red Dragon and the Beast from the Sea,” and “The Number of the Beast is 666” painted between 1805 and 1810 graphically portrayed eschatological themes as did his later epic poem with 100 illuminated engraved plates *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1820). Though eclectic and unorthodox in his theology, his cultural influence is not to be overlooked.⁷⁷

A fifth and final example of Romanticism in the visual arts is the famous 1818 painting by the German Romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer)*. In this work, a young man stands on a rocky precipice viewing a vast landscape. He is a halted traveler, loving nature but uncertain of the future and wary of its technology—a theme captured repeatedly by artists, poets, and writers. They were divided over modernity and uncertain about the changing world around them.⁷⁸

Musically, the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, Hayden, Paganini, and Liszt dominated with themes of nationalism, the use of folk music, and restless key modulations. In the literary world, writers such as Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), and William Blake (1757-1827) mirrored the spirit of the age influencing multitudes with complex ideas.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Stephen J. Vicchio, *The Legend of the Anti-Christ: A History* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 246-47.

⁷⁸ Johnson, 996-1000. On Blake against the politics of his day, see David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*. 3rd ed. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1991.

⁷⁹ See for example, Peter Kiston, “Coleridge, the French Revolution and ‘The Ancient Mariner’: Collective Guilt and Individual Salvation,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 19, The French Revolution in English Literature and Art Special Number (1989): 197-207; Michael Ragussis, “Writing Nationalist History: England, the Conversion of the

Perhaps most significant for this study is William Blake's preface to his epic "Milton a Poem," penned in 1804 and published in 1808. *When coupled with Sir Hubert Parry's 1916 musical rendition of it in the hymn "Jerusalem," it would be difficult to overestimate the cultural and political importance of this work.* Inspired by the apocryphal story that Jesus as a young boy or man accompanied Joseph of Arimathea and traveled to England and visited Glastonbury, the poem and song link Jerusalem to England as well as the New Jerusalem of Revelation 3:12 and 21:2. Eclectic in his theology, Blake's works had strong millennial themes that drew from a variety of sources and influenced religious and secular thought of the day. Blake's work mused:

And did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon Englands mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On Englands pleasant pastures seen !

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills ?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold:
Bring me my Chariot of fire !

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In Englands green & pleasant Land.

Drawing on the texts of "chariots of fire" in 2 Kings 2:11 and 2 Kings 6:17, Blake encourages his readers (and Parry's singers) to create a country such as that written of in the legend.

According to the legend and poem, just as Jesus had briefly created a heavenly environment on

Jews, and *Ivanhoe*," *ELH* 60:1 (Spring 1993): 181-215; and David Bindman, "William Blake and Popular Religious Imagery," *The Burlington Magazine* 128:1003 (Oct. 1986), 712-18.

the British Isle, so now should Englishmen work to overcome the horrible social conditions of the “dark Satanic mills” of the Industrial Revolution.⁸⁰

Not unlike the American “Battle Hymn of the Republic” written by Julia Ward Howe, Blake’s “Preface” and Parry’s “Jerusalem” link national identity to biblical imagery. In the case of Blake, the words created a strong sense of national English destiny with the biblical concept of Jerusalem. It would not take much in the national psyche to shift these ideas to creation of a Jewish homeland that was expected to have strong colonial ties to England and the British Empire. (It is also important to understand the hymn “Jerusalem” was written in 1916 in the midst of the events of World War I.)

It was against this cultural, social, and political backdrop that nineteenth century evangelicals began to coalesce politically and theologically to push for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Although their efforts took longer than any of them expected, they believed that history and prophecy had converged in their age to create a homeland for Jews and fulfill a long-awaited dream. In both the United States and the British Isles, and to a lesser extent in France, Germany and Prussia political movements, national dreams, and a variety of cultural forces flowed together to create a torrent of hope.

Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism and Jewish Restorationism

Throughout the nineteenth century, the ideological strands of restorationism were woven into the tapestry that became Christian Zionism by the end of the century.⁸¹ Drawing from common Puritan heritage, in both Great Britain and the United States, there was a continued

⁸⁰ The phrase is considered by most to be a reference to the 1791 fire of the Albion Flour Mills, the first major factory in London and one that was powered by the steam engines of James Watt.

⁸¹ See Donald M. Lewis’ excellent work, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

theological expectation of restoration. This expectation then blended with national political sentiments and circumstances.

Based upon their own recent political experiences, advocates in the United States came to expect that there would be an independent national Jewish homeland. In Great Britain, a homeland was envisaged in which Jews would reside in Palestine as part of the British Empire, fulfilling biblical prophecy but upholding current geopolitical realities. The British response to this vision was two-fold, reacting to romanticism and revolution. In ideological response to the romanticism of individuals such as William Blake, popular sentiment, though not religious, came to support a vision and identification of Jerusalem firmly grounded in English soil that had little or no political connection to the Middle East.⁸² The second response, as noted earlier, was geopolitical in relation to the French Revolution and later Napoleonic attempts at geographic expansion in the Middle East that threatened British interests there and in India.⁸³ Both responses kept an awareness of a cultural, historical, religious, and geopolitical British connection to the Middle East as the Holy Land.

Christian support for restoration in Great Britain continued and grew throughout the nineteenth century, but it was shaped by ideas and events of the age. Protestant religious support for restoration was neither monolithic nor a majority perspective in either America or Great Britain, but it was growing.

British Anglicanism and Jewish Restorationism

In the decades following the Interregnum, Anglicanism came to dominance in England. There was always within it an Evangelical party with roots in Puritanism stemming from the

⁸² Although Blake's words from his Preface to *Milton*, did not gain national recognition and popularity until Parry's 1916 accompaniment during World War I, they express a growing attitude of the day. See, Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-3, 57-60.

⁸³ Bar-Yosef, 2-3.

Protestant Reformation or informed by the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century, but Evangelicals, although influential, were in the minority, although influential.⁸⁴ Prophetic studies were no longer prominent in politics but remained strong in popular religion and academia.

Whalen observes:

In England, the fires of millenarianism were damped after the Restoration, although they never ceased to smolder. . . . The French Revolution rekindled prophetic scholarship and fueled it for years. . . . A definite date—ca. 1789—was now established with which all other prophecies could be correlated. What followed was one of the greatest outpourings of chiliastic literature in Western history. This literature at once picked up the theme of the conversion and restoration of the Jews, a theme so dear to the hearts of Puritan divines a century before.

Given the closeness of the transatlantic evangelical community, it was inevitable that this reinvigorated philo-Semitism would quickly appear in the United States.⁸⁵

This reappearance emerged in the nineteenth century and became especially prominent after the American Civil War.

Throughout the eighteenth century, postmillennialism was the prevailing British eschatological position, but in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat, premillennialism began to grow. Scotland writes:

The defeat of Napoleon did not end millennial speculation. The 1820s were a decade of confusion and political uncertainty following the ending of the war. . . . A number of Evangelicals came to the conviction that the latter days were beginning and though the end was not yet, it was not far off. . . . Associated with this new premillennialism there emerged a growing new support for Jewish projects.⁸⁶

Indicative of this support was widespread distribution of publications espousing restoration, such as Hugh McNeile's *Popular Lectures on the Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (1830).

In 1825, the London Society for Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews established a permanent post in Jerusalem on the belief that it would be the capital of Christ's millennial

⁸⁴ Nigel A. D. Scotland, *Evangelical Anglicans in a Revolutionary Age: 1789-1901* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 2.

⁸⁵ Robert K. Whalen, "Christians Love the Jews!" The Development of American Philo-Semitism, 1790-1860." *Religion and American Culture* 6:2 (Summer 1996): 227.

⁸⁶ Scotland, 172-73.

kingdom.⁸⁷ It was premillennial enthusiasm such as this that influenced Lord Shaftesbury to encourage political action for restoration.

Estimates vary on the strength of Anglican Evangelical and premillennial clergy during the first half of the nineteenth century, from a conservative figure of less than twenty percent to more a more liberal estimate of almost fifty percent.⁸⁸ As the century continued, the number of Anglican premillennialists also increased. For example, J. C. Ryle (1816-1900), bishop of Liverpool, wrote the “Pre-Millennian Creed” affirming belief in a future re-gathered Jewish nation in the Middle East.⁸⁹ Protestants across the denominational spectrum signed the document, including prominent Victorian clergy such as Charles Spurgeon. Because of the combative ecclesiastical and political history of the Puritans, many who claimed the label Evangelical in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries distanced themselves from their Puritan heritage, though not necessarily from Reformed theology.⁹⁰

Premillennialism also remained strong in Anglicanism among upper-class Evangelicals, such as Hugh McNeile, known as Recordites. This group strongly advocated for restorationism.

⁹¹ Premillennialists, especially within Anglicanism, did not hesitate to voice support for restoration.

The pervasiveness of millennialism in Victorian England had many social and political ramifications. Millennialists were active at all social levels in the reform and political movements, advocating for such causes as repeal of the Corn Laws and the mid-century

⁸⁷ Scotland, 173-74.

⁸⁸ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* Part 1, 3rd ed. (London: A. & C. Black, 1971), p. 446; Charles Smyth, “The Evangelical Movement in Perspective,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* 7:3 (1943): 166. See also Greyson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Sectarians from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155-57.

⁸⁹ J. C. Ryle, *Are You Ready For The End Of Time?* (Guernsey, Scotland: Guernsey Press, 2001), 8-10.

⁹⁰ David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1989), 36.

⁹¹ Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 9.

international peace movement. Postmillennialists, especially, saw participation in these venues as a precursor to the millennium.⁹² Many religious advocates did not hesitate to embrace a multitude of causes, sacred or secular. Enthusiasm among premillennialists was just as fervent but narrower in the supported activities.

British Nonconformists and Jewish Restorationism

Theologically, the largest group of nineteenth-century supporters of restoration was found among Nonconformists. Although not all Nonconformists supported the concept (Methodists, for example), restorationism was a widely held viewpoint. As part of the multifaceted Evangelical movement, they numbered millions in Britain. Although postmillennialism was widespread during this period, there were also many premillennialists. Bebbington notes, “Whereas in the first three decades after the French Revolution it was normal among students of prophecy to expect a steady spread of Christian truth, from the 1820s onwards there was a growth of premillennial advent hope.”⁹³

However, support by Nonconformist premillennialists for restoration was intentionally and decisively non-political. They believed that Jews one day would be reconstituted as a nation in the Middle East as part of the fulfillment of a divine prophetic plan, but they were not political activists on behalf of the idea. Although some Anglican premillennialists embraced a fusion of prophetic and imperial calculations supporting restoration, Nonconformists did not. There was activism in some humanitarian activities such as the abolition of slavery, but efforts for restoration were rare and religious leaders discouraged political activism.⁹⁴ Because they were generally not of the social class that was politically dominant they did not blend religious and

⁹² Tyrrell, Alexander, “Making the Millennium: The Mid-Nineteenth Century Peace Movement,” *The Historical Journal* 21:1 (March 1978): 79-83.

⁹³ Bebbington, 83.

⁹⁴ Bebbington, 72. See also, Bebbington’s *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Moody and Spurgeon* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 199-200.

state interests. Premillennialism touched every level of the social strata, but premillennial Nonconformity, unlike Anglican premillennialists, avoided politics.⁹⁵

Of particular significance to the later rise of American Christian Zionism was the work and thought of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). It would be Darby's presentation of premillennialism, especially dispensationalism, that American supporters would follow from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the present. Paul Boyer notes, "Darby was far from alone in teaching a Jewish return to Palestine, but in placing this event at the heart of his dispensational system, he had a profound long-term influence."⁹⁶ Though Darby avoided political activism, later advocates of dispensationalism, especially in America, fully engaged in the political process. Although some critics of Darby identify him as a major source of Christian Zionism, this is incorrect from a political and historical perspective. Many Christian Zionists in the United States would follow his theology, but the impetus for political activism was not in Darby's thought.⁹⁷ As will be seen later, the political connection came from Lord Shaftesbury in England and later, in the United States, from William E. Blackstone.

Early Nineteenth-Century Political Endeavors

The political foundations of American evangelical support for Israel grew out of the political ideologies and realities of political independence in the United States and imperialism in Great Britain. The fusion of these two ideas, independence and imperialism, provided a ground in which the seed of Christian Zionism germinated, helped by the efforts and attention of political and religious leaders in both nations.

⁹⁵ Bar-Yosef, 191-93.

⁹⁶ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 89.

⁹⁷ For critics mistakenly claiming a Darby connection, see Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1995), pp. 89-91 and Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 50.

In Great Britain, the influence of Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Palmerston provided the necessary political impetus for establishing a designated territory in the Near East as both a Jewish homeland and a colony for the British Empire. The imperial interests and religious sentiments of these two British leaders, especially Shaftesbury, created a strong political voice within nineteenth-century British government for returning Jews to Palestine in order to foster regional stability and further British imperial interests. Although it would take several decades for this to come to fruition, the impetus for it came from them. Stephen Sizer writes of such leadership, “Zionism would have remained simply a religious ideal were it not for the intervention of a handful of influential aristocratic politicians who came to share the [premillennial] theological convictions of [Lewis] Way, [Edward] Irving, and Darby and translated them into political reality.”⁹⁸

In the United States, in the late nineteenth century, the political activism of Christian businessman William E. Blackstone rallied religious leaders across the religious and denominational spectrum to advocate for a Jewish homeland in Palestine that would guarantee for Jews an independent nation similar to the United States. American supporters shared the British vision of Jewish restoration but differed in the political nature of that restoration, looking toward independence rather than colonization.

It was these transatlantic political endeavors, particularly the Blackstone Memorial and the Balfour Declaration, that provided the political foundation for contemporary Christian Zionism. When coupled with the theological foundation prominent in each nation, the result was a dynamic concept awaiting realization in twentieth-century events. The combining of religious

⁹⁸ Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 55.

sentiments and political values was powerful, enabling political and religious advocates of restoration to gain wide support for the cause even though their motives differed.⁹⁹

Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Palmerston, and Jewish Restorationism

The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801-1885), was an early and active proponent of Jewish restoration to Palestine. As early as 1838, Shaftesbury was urging the British government to act to help Jews—especially those in England, Russia, and Europe—to return to Palestine. An ardent evangelical and president of the British Bible Society, Shaftesbury was frequently offered cabinet posts by both Whigs and Tories, although he accepted only two ministerial posts, at the India Board of Control (1828-1830) and at the Admiralty (1834-1835). He entered the Commons as a Tory member in 1826 and had a parliamentary career in the Commons and Lords that spanned more than fifty years.

In the late 1820s and 1830s Shaftesbury's evangelical Anglican leanings became pronounced, and he became active in the Church of England home and foreign missionary societies, taking a lead both in evangelism efforts for the conversion of Jews and the project for creation of a Jerusalem bishopric in 1841. Shaftesbury believed that creation of the Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem was a significant step in efforts to convert Jews in the Middle East and establish a colonial foothold in the region. Owen Chadwick writes of this: "Ashley's mind united the practical with the prophetic in a fascinating harmony. He wrote a memorandum for the foreign secretary, based upon religion and apocalypse but supported by prudent reasons of commerce and politics."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Lawrence J. Epstein, *Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1984), 29.

¹⁰⁰ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part I*. 3rd ed. (London: A. & C. Black, 1971), 189. Although some have argued that it was because of Shaftesbury's influence that a consulate was established in Jerusalem in 1839, M. Vereté has demonstrated that this was not the case. Shaftesbury was enthusiastic about the establishment, but his influence with Palmerston came to bear after Palmerston decided to establish a consulate. Shaftesbury's efforts

Shaftesbury owed much of his evangelical position to the long friendship and influence of one of the era's most prominent Anglican Evangelicals, Edward Bickersteth (1786-1850). Bickersteth was a prolific advocate of premillennialism, encouraging spirituality and social reform based upon eschatology. Ervine writes of Bickersteth's influence on Shaftesbury, "Indeed the urgency of the social reforms promoted by Lord Ashley (later Lord Shaftesbury) sprang directly from the eschatological ethics of his mentor Bickersteth."¹⁰¹

It was from Bickersteth, who argued for "future literal restoration" of the Jews, that Shaftesbury acquired the premillennial eschatology he subsequently applied to politics.¹⁰² Shaftesbury's theology became the foundation of his politics. Georgina Battscombe writes that Shaftesbury "would have agreed with the most literal Millennialist in stressing the essential link between the return of the Jews to Palestine and the Second Coming of Christ, a theory that was to have vital influence not only on his religious outlook but also upon his political activities."¹⁰³

She notes:

To understand Ashley at all it is essential to understand his religion, and to understand his religion is it necessary to understand his ideas about the Second Advent and the immense hold which they had upon his mind. These ideas were very definite and almost to be described as practical; there was no trace of mysticism about his religious attitude.¹⁰⁴

Although Shaftesbury's premillennial views may strike contemporary readers outside as unusual, they were not seen as such at the time and should not be dismissed. Battscombe observes:

Many Millennialists were highly respectable figures both in the Church and at the universities. . . . Millenarianism deeply influenced the whole of Evangelical thought and

likely reinvigorated Palmerston, but they were not the catalyst for his initial decision. That decision was motivated by geopolitical considerations in relation to French and Russian interests in the region.

¹⁰¹ W. J. Clyde Ervine, "Bickersteth, Edward," in *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography: 1730-1860*, Donald M. Lewis, ed. *Volume I: A-J* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 93.

¹⁰² Edward Bickersteth, *The Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land, in Connection with Their Future Conversion and the Final Blessedness of Our Faith*. Second edition, enlarged. (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1841), xi.

¹⁰³ Georgina Battscombe, *Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer, 1801-1885* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 101.

¹⁰⁴ Battscombe, 102.

practice. For that reason this strange system of belief is something of real historical importance, not to be dismissed as mere folly. Literal-minded and humourless they may have been, but men like Ashley and Bickersteth were not fools.¹⁰⁵

Shaftesbury's involvement in British politics and policies in Palestine was extensive.

When he succeeded in having a friend, William Young, appointed Britain's Vice Consul in Jerusalem, Shaftesbury expressed great excitement in the pages of his diary. For 29 September 1838, he wrote:

Took leave this morning of Young, who has just been appointed her Majesty's Vice-Consul at *Jerusalem!* . . . The ancient city of the people of God is about to resume a place among the nations, and England is the first of Gentile kingdoms that ceases "to tread her down." . . . I shall always, at any rate, remember that God put it into my heart to conceive the plan for His honour, gave me influence to prevail on Palmerston, and provided a man for the situation.¹⁰⁶

In 1839, Shaftesbury published an article in *Quarterly Review*, suggesting that a pro-British colony in Palestine could well serve British interests in the region. Such a colony could provide England with imports of cotton, silk, herbs, and olive oil and produce for the region a significant farming and cattle business.¹⁰⁷ In this, Shaftesbury wrote, "we may discern a manifest benefit to our political situation."¹⁰⁸

Shaftesbury was extremely interested in the conversion of Jews to Christianity and envisaged a Jewish colony in Palestine that would provide a home for European Jews, whether converted or not. He was especially interested in the prospect of Russian Jews immigrating to Palestine. He wrote:

That which Napoleon designed in his violence and ambition, thinking "to destroy nations, not a few," we may wisely and legitimately undertake for the maintenance of our Empire.

¹⁰⁵ Battiscombe, 103.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, vol. 1 (London: Cassell Publishing, 1886), 123

¹⁰⁷ Lord Shaftesbury, "Review of *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land* (Lord Lindsay)," *Quarterly Review* (January 1839), 188-89.

¹⁰⁸ Shaftesbury, 189.

The affairs of the East are lowering on Great Britain—but it is singular and providential that we should, at this moment, have executed a measure, which will almost assure us the co-operation of nearly two millions in the heart of the Russian dominions.¹⁰⁹

However, religion was not his only concern. Shaftesbury believed that England’s safety and economic well-being was closely tied to its treatment of Jews and declared:

Our efforts should the more be directed to promote their temporal and eternal welfare. . . . Both as a Church and as a nation, we have much to hope for in the welfare of the people of Israel; and—since prosperity is to be the portion of those who pray for the peace of the Holy City.¹¹⁰

In 1840, the “Treaty of London for the Pacification of the Levant” addressed what was known throughout much of the nineteenth century as the Eastern Question or the Syrian Question.¹¹¹ After it was signed in London by the Turks, English, Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, Shaftesbury confided in his diary that he believed the time for fulfillment of biblical prophecies regarding restoration of the Jews to Palestine had arrived. On 24 July 1840, he wrote:

Anxious about the hopes and prospects of the Jewish people. Everything seems ripe for their return to Palestine; “the way of the kings of the East is prepared [Revelation 16:12].” Could the five Powers of the West be induced to guarantee the security of the life and possessions of the Hebrew race, they would now flock back in rapidly augmenting numbers. Then by the blessing of God I will prepare a document, fortify it by all the evidence I can accumulate, and, confiding to the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty, lay it before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.¹¹²

The historical, political, and theological ramifications of Shaftesbury’s statement are enormous.

Epstein writes:

British Restorationists had never waited for Divine intervention nor had they relied on the Jews to restore themselves. Now the Restorationists would never again be content with

¹⁰⁹ Shaftesbury, 190.

¹¹⁰ Shaftesbury, 191, 192.

¹¹¹ See Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Bible and the Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 158-74. For a fuller discussion, see M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996.

¹¹² Hodder, 167.

producing propaganda. From Lord Shaftesbury on, the Restorationists would take an active political stance to support their beliefs.¹¹³

In the imperial designs of European powers in the Middle East, Shaftesbury saw the merging of diplomacy and theology, with England as the key actor. Shaftesbury moved swiftly to continue this progress. Although he believed that he was playing a part in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, he also was well aware that his activities were political and were accepted in the government on the basis of their value to British economic and imperial interests rather than theological ones. It was fears of Russian intrusion into the region that most alarmed the British. On 1 August 1840, Shaftesbury wrote in his diary:

Dined with Palmerston. After dinner left alone with him. Propounded my scheme, which seemed to strike his fancy; he asked some questions, and readily promised to consider it. How singular is the order of Providence! Palmerston has already been chosen by God to be an instrument of good to His ancient people; to do homage as it were to their inheritance, and to recognise their rights without believing their destiny. And it seems he will yet do more. But though the motive be kind, it is not sound. I am forced to argue politically, financially, commercially; these considerations strike him home; he weeps not like his Master over Jerusalem, nor prays that now, at last, she may put on her beautiful garments.¹¹⁴

Shaftesbury understood his activities as filled with biblical significance and symbolism, and though he was delighted with what he saw as progress, he was also cautious.

Diary entries over the next few weeks were filled with comments regarding return of the Jews to Palestine.

Aug. 24th.—Palmerston tells me that he has already written to Lord Ponsonby [British ambassador in Constantinople], to direct him to open an intercourse with Reschid Pasha at Constantinople respecting the protection and encouragement of the Jews. . . . Those gentlemen who have now got access to the columns of the *Times* will, by over-zeal, bring a charge of fanaticism on the whole question. . . .

¹¹³ Epstein, 33.

¹¹⁴ Cited in Hodder, 167.

Aug. 29th.—The newspapers teem with documents about the Jews. Many assail, and many defend them. . . .

Sept. 25th.—Yesterday began my paper for Palmerston, containing, in full, the propositions for the recall of the Jews to their ancient land. “Recall” is too strong; it is simply a “permission,” should they think fit to avail themselves of it. . . .¹¹⁵

The paper for Palmerston was finished on 25 September 1840, and in it Shaftesbury proposed colonization of Palestine by Jews. He believed this would provide two major benefits—a remedy for political difficulties in Syria and economic viability for the region. He also argued that, “the benefits to be derived from it would belong impartially to the whole civilised world.”¹¹⁶ In this document Shaftesbury proposed colonization under a guarantee of multinational protection although this did not necessarily conflict with nor diminish his desire for British influence and benefit.

Although Shaftesbury’s hope that his proposal would be included as an amendment to the London treaty was not realized, he was able to project his Christian Restorationist views in the political arena and advance his theology through political activism. His voice was not strong enough to gain the desired results, but it did raise awareness to which others would add and upon which others would act.¹¹⁷ He translated a religious idea into a political initiative.¹¹⁸

Shaftesbury’s efforts were groundbreaking and his familial and political connections afforded him unique opportunities to act upon his religious beliefs in the realm of British politics and foreign policy.

¹¹⁵ Cited in Hodder, 167, 168. Shaftesbury’s reference to “columns of the *Times*” pertains to extensive debate carried in the newspaper throughout the spring and summer of 1840 (e.g., 25 April; 11, 25 June; 3, 17, 18 August) surrounding reports of persecution of Jews at Damascus as a result of alleged Jewish atrocities and ritual murder of Christians.

¹¹⁶ Letter to Palmerston cited in Hodder, 169

¹¹⁷ James A. Saddington, “Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948,” Ph.D. diss. Bowling Green State University, 1996, 61-64.

¹¹⁸ Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon: A Call to Partnership for Middle Eastern and Western Christians* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1995), 92.

Lord Palmerston (1784-1865), related to Shaftesbury by marriage, was interested in Palestine and the Jews for political rather than religious reasons, although Shaftesbury ascribed Palmerston's actions to Providence (in spite of his reputed moral improprieties). As one of Great Britain's most powerful foreign secretaries, serving for sixteen years (1830-1834, 1835-1841, 1846-1851), and Home Secretary (1852-1855) and Prime Minister (1855-1865), he was extremely influential in promoting British influence and interests at home and abroad. For him, British control of the Middle East, especially Palestine, was a matter of safety for the empire, of "who would be the occupier of the road to India."¹¹⁹ However, Shaftesbury was a catalyst in Palmerston's encouraging the government to support Jewish restoration in order to sustain the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁰

Shaftesbury had dined with Palmerston on 1 August 1840 and pushed his Restorationist ideas upon the Foreign Secretary. For a mixture of political and personal reasons Palmerston did not ignore Shaftesbury's and others' restorationist urgings but acted upon them, writing to the British ambassador, Lord Ponsonby. In that letter, Palmerston wrote:

There exists at the present time among the Jews dispersed over Europe, a strong notion that the time is approaching when their nation is to return to Palestine. . . . It would be of manifest importance to the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return and to settle in Palestine because the wealth which they would bring with them would increase the resources of the Sultan's dominions; and the Jewish people, if returning under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mehemet Ali or his successor. . . . I have to instruct Your Excellency strongly to recommend [the Turkish government] to hold out every just encouragement to the Jews of Europe to return to Palestine.¹²¹

Palmerston was being encouraged by Shaftesbury and others to look to Jewish restoration as part of the solution to the Syrian Question. Yet, any action taken by him or other political figures

¹¹⁹ Palmerston, cited in Tuchman, 170.

¹²⁰ Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 9.

¹²¹ Cited in Tuchman, 175.

inevitably changed the political and religious dimensions of the issue. Thus there was a shift from a colonialism of paternalistic oversight to one in which there was to be intentional Jewish political participation with a long-term view to self-determination.¹²² However, the presence of a viable organized political voice within English and European Jewish communities in support of such a colony was not yet present. Theological desires preceded political realities, but the hopes of the restorationists were not abandoned.¹²³

Although the Crimean War (1852-1854) again focused English and European attention on parts of the Middle East, restorationists after Shaftesbury lacked sufficient personal and political influence to realize their goal.¹²⁴ While Shaftesbury never abandoned hope, ongoing political realities in England, Europe, and elsewhere overshadowed Jewish restorationism. The idea remained, but the impulse passed. It was not, however, lost to history. Tuchman notes:

Through the agitation that his proposals had aroused the British public was gradually made aware of the strategic advantages to be gained from a sphere of influence in the Middle East. . . . The idea of a British annex there through the medium of a British-sponsored restoration of Israel began to appeal to other minds than Ashley's. His followers, however, invariably stressed the strategic arguments that he had added only half-heartedly to the old religious objectives.¹²⁵

Politics and theology continued to fuel Christian dreams of Jewish restoration. Events such as Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) and the Russian pogrom of 1881-82 against Russian Jews strengthened political fears that Russian influence and adventurism in the East would thwart British domination there and in India. Balance-of-power politics stimulated theological desire among many across England and Europe for Jewish restoration. There was a blending of religious, cultural, political, and humanitarian motivations as the idea of restoration

¹²² Epstein, 35-36.

¹²³ Epstein, 36-38.

¹²⁴ Tuchman, 210-11.

¹²⁵ Tuchman, 208.

took hold.¹²⁶ However, lack of awareness and coordination among Restorationist groups and individuals impeded political progress.

Meanwhile, in the United States, support for a Jewish homeland would be diverted to concerns of national survival as the American Civil War tore the nation apart. Momentum would arise again, even stronger than before, especially with the growth of dispensational theology, but it would do so in a new era of national and international politics. It would be a different spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*) but the same dream.

Realization of a Jewish homeland was still nearly a century away, but the political foundations were forming not only in England and Europe but also in the United States. From the transatlantic blending of political and religious values, strong support for a Jewish homeland in the Middle East would emerge and have lasting effects. Probably the greatest solitary impetus for this in the United States was William E. Blackstone (1841-1935).

On the eve of the Second World War and as National Socialism's anti-Semitic legislation and atrocities were in the initial stages of the Holocaust, Salo W. Baron summarized political realities for western Jews in the nineteenth century:

In retrospect it may be asserted that the problems of Jewish emancipation, assimilation, anti-Semitism, Jewish nationalism (including minority rights), and the restoration of the Jews to Palestine increasingly engaged the attention of statesmen, publicists, demagogues and, on certain periods of stress, also of the European masses. As in all other social problems, partial solutions merely substituted new for old difficulties. Their failure was most pronounced in fields in which the lack of a permanent international agency prevented international action to cope with a problem essentially transcending in scope the respective national boundaries.¹²⁷

When one looks at the social and cultural landscape of the early to mid-nineteenth century there is much to consider with respect to Jewish restoration. World events, the effects of American independence, the French Revolution, the abolition of slavery and creation of Liberia, political

¹²⁶ Epstein, 41.

¹²⁷ Baron, 65.

ideologies, the fine arts, literature, religion, emerging movements of nationalism, revolutionary movements and peace movements, the rise and fall of empires and colonialism, European politics, exploration, and European Jewish emancipation all played a role in creating a cultural environment that would one day lead to restoration.

Evangelicals reading their Bibles and studying prophecy in the nineteenth century believed they saw in their culture affirmation of God's sovereignty, providence, and fulfillment of prophecy. They were not espousing views from the fringes of society. Rather, they were creating and acting upon a biblical framework and prophetic interpretation of widely-accepted ideas and common cultural experiences.

The political dream of nineteenth century evangelicals for the return of Jews to a national homeland in the ancient land of Israel would not be realized in their lifetimes. Nor could they foresee the realities of the global nightmares of two world wars. But their hopes were not unfounded and their *understanding of and participation in* nineteenth century national and international politics serves as a monumental reminder for Christian social and political responsibility in the present day. Values have consequences in every age, including our own.