Bicentennial of the Brush Run Church
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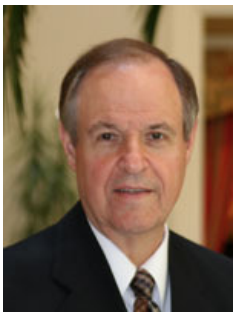
Echoes of Millerite Millenarianism among the Founders and Heirs of Brush Run



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A member of my Disciples congregation, who had roots in and strong ties to the Seventh -day Adventist tradition, asked, "Why don't Disciples preach and teach more about the Second Advent of Christ? I miss attention given to the 'signs of the times' and the ardent expectation of the imminent return of Christ." Knowing that I had also personally come from Seventh-day Adventism, her question was intended for me. Since both the Disciples and Adventist traditions had been birthed and come of age in the same turbulent century, each finding its own distinctive voice, why had Disciples failed to capture and retain something of the apocalyptic fervor that characterized the first half of the nineteenth century? It was a fair question, one that admits no simple answer.

Disciples were attracted to and influenced by the apocalypticism generated in the Millerite millennarian movement of the 1830s and 1840s. A careful examination of the religious and social context of the rise of the Stone-Campbell movement therefore necessitates the study of a number of precipitating factors, including Millerite millenarianism and its echoes in the movement. The Millerite movement cast a wider influence across a greater spectrum of American society than is usually acknowledged, an influence far in excess of its enduring theological importance. Echoes may be detected in the writings of Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott, the primary focus of this chapter. What follows traces the rise of Millerism, giving special attention to the interpretation of the biblical apocalyptic literature that fueled its dramatic ascent. In tandem with this historical appraisal, I will note the influence of and reaction to Millerism in Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott. Although Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) preached widely, since he never wrote anything beyond his

famous *Declaration and Address* (1809), his voice is silent on this topic,[1] although he probably indicated in private conversations as well as in sermons his opinions about Millerism. Similarly lost to us, except in fragmentary form, are the reactions of the rank-and-file Disciples of the period, although they, too, must have taken special notice of the apocalyptic excitement in the religious atmosphere of the time. Although my focus will be upon Stone, Campbell, and Scott during the period from about 1830-1845, I will in conclusion try to respond, at least partially, to why the echoes of the apocalyptic Millerite movement have all but vanished among the descendents of Brush Run.

William Miller's Vision of the Future

The Stone-Campbell movement developed amid religious excitement all along the Atlantic seaboard, particularly in New England, New York, and throughout the mid-western states. Most religious historians in large part attribute this excitement to the general, restless mood of conflicting optimism and pessimism climaxed by the election of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency in 1829. Jackson personified and symbolized political redemption for the common person, while evangelical Christianity of the period offered spiritual redemption. These were the "restless thirties and forties" of the nineteenth century. Everything seemed threatened, whether sacred or secular. Great uncertainty prevailed.[2] The foreboding economic panic of 1837 gave impetus to new religious and social movements, as hopes of a new order, whether politically or religiously in the present age or in the eschatological age to come, helped compensate for economic woes.

One of the religious movements to arise and achieve national prominence during this period is generally known as *millenarianism*. Millenarianism, particularly in the form of utopian visions of the future, spawned Mormonism, the Oneida and sister communities, founded in New York by John Humphrey Noyes in 1848, who believed that Christ had returned in 70 C.E. and that it was possible to set up the millennial kingdom here and now, the Shaker or Shaking Quaker movement, formally known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, which for a short period competed with Stone's Christians in south central Kentucky, and the Millerites. With their predictions of a specific date on which the Second Advent of Christ was expected to take place, it was the Millerites who generated the greatest religious excitement during a period from 1831-1845. Millerite millenarianism offered transcendent hope for an alternative order to replace the decaying, dying one of nineteenth century. There

[1] On the general topic of eschatology in Thomas Campbell, cf. Hans Rollmann, "The Eschatology of the *Declaration and Address*," in *The Quest for Christian Unity, Peace, and Purity in Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address: Texts and Studies* (ATLA Monograph Series 46; ed. T. H. Olbricht and Hans Rollmann; 2000), 341-63.

[2] Richard Wentz, *American Religious Traditions: The Shaping of Religion in the United States* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 315.

were many, albeit isolated precursors to this movement. As early as the 1820s, the literature of the day, as well as sermons in the churches, began making frequent reference to the Second Advent. With the birth of the Millerite movement in 1831, that focus intensified.[3]

William Miller (1782-1849), the person from whom the Millerite millenarian movement takes its name, was a farmer from Low Hampton, New York. The unassuming Miller would no doubt painfullly be embarrassed today to learn he has become the poster child for all forlorn efforts to predict the end of the age.[4] Disenchanted with human nature and the optimistic deism that had attracted him during and following the War of 1812, in which he had served as a captain in the infantry, he revisited the Christianity of his childhood, according to some, on the basis of a battlefield conversion,[5] and joined the Baptist church at Low Hampton in 1816. In the same year, seeking personally to resolve nagging theological questions urged upon him by his deist acquaintances, he commenced an intense study of the Bible. Largely self-educated, Miller's approach was to make his way systematically through the biblical books in order, beginning with Genesis, unraveling the meaning of texts as best he could, using, he claims, only Alexander Cruden's *Concordance* and the Bible.[6] The apocalyptic books particularly caught his attention. "I was thus brought, in 1818, at the close of my two years' study of the Scriptures, to the solemn conclusion," he wrote, "that in about twenty-five years from that time [1818] all the affairs of our present state would be wound up."[7]

So dramatic, unexpected, was this conclusion, he decided to devote a further period of time to reviewing his interpretation. Four years later, in 1822, he set forth what he called his "Compendium of Faith." This Compendium, written in an old sheriff's record book and intended only for his eyes, apart from his views on apocalyptic prediction, reads like an affirmation of historic Christian teaching with a slightly Calvinist Baptist perspective.[8]

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[3] Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 181-94.

[4] Miller is mentioned in almost all religious historical studies of this period as an example of excessive apocalypticism. Cf. Leon Festinger, et al., *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 12-30.

[5] Jonathan Kirsch, *A History of the End of the World: How the Most Controversial Book in the Bible Changed the Course of Western Civilization* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 183.

[6] This could hardly have been the case. Miller's writings on apocalyptic texts reflect the work of other interpreters in the century. It may be that he did not make a regular habit of consulting them, but he did, at certain points appear to avail himself of outside scholarship, particularly in matters of history. Miller was, by all accounts, an avid reader with wide interests.

[7] Miller, *William Miller's Apology and Defence* [sic] (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1845), 11-12.

[8] For its entire text, cf. Leroy Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (4 vols.; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946-54), 4:466-67. Since most of the original texts of Miller, Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Walter Scott, and others were not accessible to me during the writing of this chapter, in many instances I have had to depend upon reliable secondary sources. In each case, I have indicated the secondary source from which I have drawn the citation, giving the reader the requisite information for verification.

Although Miller would work out the details of his view about the imminence of the Second Advemt of Christ over the next two decades, his view that Christ would return "in about twenty-five years," was largely based on an interpretation of the time periods mentioned in Daniel: the "time, two times, and half a time" (7:25; 12:7; cf. Rev 12:14; 13:5); 2,300 "days/evenings and mornings" (8:14); 70 "weeks" (9:24-27); 1290 "days" (12:11); 1335 "days" (12:12). Together with these time periods, he included the "day, the month, and the year" of Rev 9:15.[9] All of these time periods, he concluded, converged "on or before 1843."[10] For all these computations, he employed the principle that in such prophetic [apocalyptic] texts a day equals a year, a formula widely accepted in apocalyptic interpretation at the time.[11] "I believe," he wrote, "that the Scriptures do reveal unto us in plain language that Jesus Christ will appear again on this earth, that he will come in the glory of God, in the clouds of heaven, with all his Saints and angels,"[12] on or before 1843.

How had he arrived at the date 1843?

"If . . . we could obtain any clue to the time of their commencement," Miller pondered, "I conceived we should be guided to the probable time of their termination; and, as God would not bestow upon us an [sic] useless revelation. I regarded them as conducting us to the time when we might confidently look for the coming of the Chiefest of ten thousand, One altogether lovely."[13]

The "time, two times, and half a time"[14] of Dan 7:25, which Miller computed as 360 + 720 + 180 days, together with its parallels in 12:7; Rev 12:14; 13:5, commenced with 538 C.E., the beginning of papal domination of the old Roman Empire, according to Miller, and terminated with 1798, the year Napoleon took Pope Pius VI prisoner and broke the long-

[9] This text, under the sixth of the seven trumpets, reads: "So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind" (Rev 9:15).

[10] Miller, "Compendium of Faith," Art. XV. Cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:467.

[11] Cf. Ezek 4:6 ("When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah: forty days I assign you, *one day for each year*."); Num 14:34 ("According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, *for every day a year*, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years"). The year in these calculations Miller (and many others) rounded off to 360 days. It should be noted that the term "prophecy" was widely used in the nineteenth century for what biblical scholars now call more precisely, "apocalyptic." The Scripture quotations contained herein, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and used by permission. All rights reserved.

[12] Cited in Paul Boyer, "The Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic Outside the Mainstream in the United States," in *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age* (vol 3 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*; New York: Continuum, 2000), 116.

[13] Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 11. Cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:473.

[14] Literally, this expression in the Aramaic text is "time, times, and half of time." The morpheme *iddanin* may either be vocalized as a plural ("times") or as a dual ("two times"), which is the way it is usually taken.

standing hegemony of the Roman papacy. The "one thousand, two hundred ninety days" in Dan 12:11, he dated from 508 C.E. until 1798, the same year the previous period had ended, while the "thousand three hundred thirty-five days" in 12:12, he also commenced from 508 and ended in 1843. About both dates, 538 and 508, hovers the suspicion that they seem arbitrarily to have been selected to make the prophecy literally come out on the appropriate date, and then history searched to find a reasonable starting point for the prophecy.

More complicated was his interpretation of the "two thousand three hundred evenings-mornings" in 8:14, which appeared in his Bible (KJV) as "unto two thousand three hundred *days*." Due to the KJV rendering, he mistakenly thought the passage read "days," rather than "evenings-mornings," as in the Hebrew, leading him to apply his day/year formula to the number 2300 to arrive at 2,300 years for the total period.[15]

When did this period of 2,300 years commence? Miller discovered a clue in Dan 9:24-27, where another period, the 70 "weeks," are said to be "cut off" (KJV) from an unspecified interlude (v 24).[16] He assumed this period to be the 2,300 years, as that was the nearest time period mentioned in the immediate context. The 70 weeks, which he took to be 70 weeks *of years*, or 490 literal years, based on the day/year principle, began with the decree "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (9:25). This had to be, in Miller's judgment, the decree of the Persian monarch, Artaxerxes I, in 457 B.C.E.[17] Some of the text of this decree is thought to be preserved in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the day, in Ezra 7:11-28. Thus, calculating 2,300 years from 457 B.C.E. leads forward to 1843 C.E., the date when "the sanctuary will be cleansed" (Dan 8:14, KJV), that is, the end of the world.

Early Disciple Interest in Miller

Interest in the book of Daniel in this period was not limited to William Miller. From the 1820s, Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) had also evinced interest in the book. In his debate at Cincinnati, Ohio, with Robert Owen, the noted social reformer and religious critic, in April 1829,

[15] The "evenings-mornings" refers to the morning and evening sacrifices offered at the Temple (Num 28:1-8). Thus the period is really 1150 actual solar days. William Miller, who did not read either Hebrew or Aramaic, the two original languages of the Masoretic text of Daniel, worked strictly from the English KJV. The LXX of this passage may be the source of the KJV rendering: "until evenings and mornings, [that is] two thousand, three hundred days" (lit. tran. From the LXX).

[16] The Hebrew for "cut off" is *hatak*, a Niphal perfect verb signifying "divide," "determine," or "cut." A *hapax legomenon* (mentioned only one time), the word is obscure. Miller's construal, decisive for his interpretation, offers only one possible way of rendering it.

[17] Most biblical historians date the seventh year of Artaxerxes I to 458, not 457 B.C.E. (cf. John Bright, *A History of Israel* [3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981], 379), which would slightly alter Miller's calculation. Seventh-day Adventists, who adhere to Miller at this point, have defended 457 (cf. Siegfried Horn and Lynn Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953).

Campbell pointed to the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy of the metallic image (Dan 2) with its successive Assyria/Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman dominions over the ancient world as an indication of the Bible's astonishing ability to forecast the future.[18] By the stone "cut from the mountain not by hands" (Dan 2:45), Campbell understood the "Christian religion, as represented by the Christian church," the "world's only universal empire." That universal empire will be upon earth, he said, until the "Millennium puts in an appearance." Interestingly, in this debate Campbell shows awareness of the critical tendency to date the book of Daniel, not to the sixth century, but to a couple of centuries before Christ.[19] Campbell's interest in Daniel, it should be noted, stems not from Millerite influence as much as from the general cultural awareness of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that would later give form and substance to Miller's message.[20] It would be August 1831 before Miller began his public lectures. Although it does not contain any numerology, the Millerites often used Dan 2 as one of the prophecies that pointed to the end of the age. Campbell's interpretation in the Owen debate also reflects his postmillennial perspective, which would become a critical element in his rejection of premillennial Millerism.[21]

His postmillennialism comes to the fore in his introduction in *The Christian Baptist* of a new journal, called the *Millennial Harbinger*, whose very name it suggests. This journal, which first appeared in 1830, Campbell predicted, would introduce "that political and religious order

[18] Cf. the apocalyptic interpretation in Dan 2:36-45.

[19] Cited in Jesse J. Haley, *Debates That Made History* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1920), 95-96. The second century Neoplatonist, Porphyry (d. ca. 304 C.E.), appears to have been the first to place the book of Daniel in the second century B.C.E. Hellenistic period. This dating, if accepted, renders most of the prophecies cited by Miller as *vaticinia ex eventu* (cf. Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* [tran. David Green; Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], 472).

[20] Froom documents from original sources a number of European and American scholars, clergy, and biblical interpreters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who turned their attention to Daniel and Revelation, including Samuel McCorkle, a North Carolina pastor, whom Campbell would cite approvingly in the *Millennial Harbinger* (see below). Much interest developed among these interpreters in the time periods in Daniel (*Prophetic Faith*, 4:56-152). The sheer volume of apocalyptic interpretation going on could not help but influence William Miller, despite his claim to consult only his Bible and Cruden in developing his views.

[21] Mainline Christianity today usually understands the second coming in a postmillennialist manner, and does not expect a literal return of Christ. In Campbell's view, the second coming would be manifested in the coming of an idealistic age, viz., the kingdom of heaven. Alexander Campbell and the later Walter Scott, in keeping with most eighteenth and nineteenth century interpreters, held to a similar view, making the former, especially, resistant to the Millerite millenarian claims. The difference between *post*- and *pre*-millennialism has to do with where the millennial reign is placed (see Rev 20). *Pre*millennialism holds that Christ's return precedes the millennium; *post*millennialism, that it comes afterward (cf. J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* [New York: Harper & Row, 1973], 596).

of society called THE MILLENNIUM, which will be the consummation of that amelioration of society proposed in the Christian scriptures."[22]

In the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1831, Alexander Campbell summarized Samuel M. McCorkle's *Thoughts on the Millennium; With a Comment on the Revelations* (1830),[23] a book that suggests Millerite influence, or at least that the speculations of Miller were shared by others. McCorkle had commented on the 2300 days of Dan 8:14. Condoning McCorkle's interpretation, Campbell concludes:

> Making the cleansing of the sanctuary 2300 days, or years, from the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, and subtracting therefrom [sic] the 490 years determined or counted on the Jews, he makes the birth of the Messiah 453 years from the rebuilding of the city and temple; thus leaving 1847 years since the birth of the Messiah for the fulfillment of the 2300 years. This calculation makes the year 1847 the time of the commencement of the Millennium.[24]

In this statement, we see Campbell's postmillennialism in the background. The date of 1847, he suggests, would begin the era, although not necessarily exactly one thousand years, that would lead up to the second coming of Christ. This was not the date for the Second Coming itself. For Campbell, the kingdom of God began with the ascension and coronation of Christ, and the bestowal of the Spirit (Acts 1-2), so the kingdom had already been on earth for over 1800 years.[25] Before the Second Advent, the "original gospel" would be proclaimed to the world, the Jews converted, and the "apostate city"—Babylon the Great—overthrown. Campbell called this the "Millennial Church." Its task was to convert the world in preparation for the Advent. Before the Advent, there would come an end to sectarianism. Wars and crime would cease. Health would become more vigorous, labor less taxing, and lands more fruitful. America, land of the free, would be the epicenter of this great, new age.[26] Subsequent to these

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[22] Cited by Eva Jean Wrather, *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom, a Literary Biography* (3 vols.; ed. D. Duane Cummins; Fort Worth, Tex.: Texas Christian University Press, 2005-2009), 2:291-92.

[23] McCorkle, *Thoughts on the Millennium; With a Comment on the Revelations* (Nashville: Republican & Gazette, 1830).

[24] Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (April 1831): 165, as cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:260. McCorkle, a premillennialist, interpreted the 1000 years of the millennium symbolically, using the year/day principle, as 365,000 years.

[25] For a description and analysis of Campbell's view of the kingdom of God, see Stephen V. Sprinkle, *Disciples and Theology: Understanding the Faith of a People in Covenant* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1999), 29-33.

[26] Leroy Garrett, "Campbell, Alexander," *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (ed. D. A Foster, et al.; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 124.

developments, the Lord would come as a "thief in the night."[27] In 1833, he expressed hope that "a new age is soon to be born; and the great regeneration is at hand."[28]

Barton Stone (1772-1844) took notice of Miller as early as 1833. In September of that year—almost a full decade before Miller's prediction would reach its climax—Stone mentioned his belief Christ would return at beginning rather than the end of millennium. He did not, however, assign a date to this premillennial conviction. Instead, several events had to occur before the Second Advent. The "return and salvation of the Jews" and the "fullness of the Gentiles" had to be "brought in."[29] These two events were, in turn, dependent on a union of Christians. That God was working to unite Christians in the Christian movement, Stone was convinced; to him, this was the primary sign the anticipated millennium approached. In preparation, as an essential social reform, Stone also urged Christians to free their slaves and give them opportunity to immigrate to Liberia.[30]

In October, again in the pages of the *Christian Messenger*, he sketched his eschatology. Before the coming of Christ, the "spurious church of Christ," generally identified with those churches resisting union and clinging to their accumulated denominational traditions, would be judged and destroyed, leaving the "true church of Christ" unscathed and prepared for the eschaton. Satan would be bound for a thousand years, and would not be able to torment the earth. The saints would rise from the dead, and together with the living, transformed saints, reign on earth with Christ. At close of the millennium, Satan would be loosed and wicked revivified to fight against the saints. Although Satan would gather them together in an army, their resistance would be futile; they would suffer "vengeance of eternal fire."[31]

Like Barton Stone, at this point in his career (1830s), Walter Scott held to a premillennial view. Thus, he differed fundamentally from Campbell in his placement of the Second Advent in relation to the millennium. Scott cherished belief in an imminent Second Advent of Christ.[32] This made Scott more susceptible to Millerite claims. By 1840, he had accordingly adopted Miller's views concerning the immediate return of Christ, the "hope of the gospel," and had shown increasing interest in Miller's prediction that the world would end in 1843/1844. A

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[27] 1 Thess 5:2. Campbell, *Christian System* (1839), 144-45, 151-52, 290-91. That the church is called to participate in the renewal of society, heaven, and earth, is traceable in Campbell's thought back to the covenantal Dutch theologian, Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669), and is rooted in a broad eschatology (Sprinkle, *Disciples and Theology*, 103).

[28] *Millennial Harbinger*, 1833, as cited in Leroy Garrett, *A Preface to Alexander Campbell* (European Evangelistic Society, 1991), 12.

[29] Cf. Rom 11:25-27.

[30] *Christian Messenger* 7 (Sept 1833): 274-75, cited in Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 224.

[31] *Christian Messenger* 7 (Oct 1833): 313-14, as cited in Williams, *Barton Stone*, 223-24. Even a casual reading of Rev 20:1-10 will show that Stone's eschatology is based upon a literal reading of this passage, in keeping with most of the premillennialists of the nineteenth century.

[32] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:34.

number of articles written by Scott on these predictions appeared in the *Christian Evangelist*, the journal he edited. Together with the Millerites, for instance, Scott accepted that the four empires—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the resulting ten kingdoms of Europe, as understood symbolically in Dan 7:15-27—were leading civilization to its demise. Furthermore, also as with the Millerites, he taught that the apostasy of papal church, Babylon, Mystery, "clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels" (Rev 17:4), the papal Inquisition, and French revolutionary anarchism and atheism, were evidences of approaching millennium.[33] Although it is difficult to tell, he may have also seen the interdenominational growth of Millerism as one evidence of movement toward Christian unity, and thus as an indication of the nearness of the millennium. In one of many disagreements with Scott, Campbell criticized him for adopting some of these views, but Scott persisted in his belief that the Danielic prophecies foretold the imminent end of the world,[34] a view he held right up until the climax of the Millerite movement.

Climax of the Millerite Movement

According to William Miller, the Danielic prophecy climaxing around 1843 or 1844 predicted a total, eschatological transformation of the church. The expression, rendered by the KJV, "the sanctuary shall be cleansed" in Dan 8:14, he interpreted as referring to the church. "We may reasonably suppose ["cleansed"] means that complete redemption from sin, both soul and body, after the resurrection when Christ comes the second time 'without sin unto salvation.'"[35] By linking this prophecy with many other New Testament passages, he could draw into his eschatological net such indicatives as this from the late first century C.E.: "We are now God's children; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he [Christ] is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). Thus, around the beginning of 1843, or at the latest, the opening of 1844, Jesus would return to earth to purify

[33] Scott, *The Millennial Harbinger* (January 1830): 34-35, as cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:259.

[34] Mark G. Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity* (rev. ed.; St. Louis: Chalice, 1997), 110.

[35] Miller, "A Few Evidences," as cited in F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1944), 41. Cf. Heb 9:27-28. As most modern biblical translations note, this expression should be rendered "restored," not "cleansed." It refers to the purification and restoration of the Temple from the desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 B.C.E. (cf. 1 Macc 4:36-58). Although recognizing the primary semantical range of this word to be "restored," "justified," "vindicated," etc., contemporary Adventist interpretation still regards "cleansed" as the best rendition of the Niphal form of the Hebrew *tsadaq* in this verse. "At the end of that time the sanctuary was to be vindicated—restored to its rightful place," concludes one Adventist study of this problem. "But that restoration involved cleansing; hence we have the entire picture of cleansing, restoration, and being made righteous" (Committee on Problems in Bible Translation, *Problems in Bible Translation* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1954), 176-77). Adventists today hold that Miller's chronological calculations were correct, but mistaken in the primary event he foresaw. Daniel 8:14 refers instead to the work of final judgment to begin in Heaven in 1844, which involves a work of cleansing from sin. Hence there is a contingency in Adventist interpretation to preserve something of the semantic significance of "cleanse" for *tzadaq*.

and redeem the church. His initial predictions regarding this date, as we have seen, were tentative: "about 1843," or "between" March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844, the formal dates of the beginning and ending of the Jewish year in the 1840s.

When March 1844 came and went, Miller realized, and to his credit subsequently admitted, that he had obviously made some kind of error. Perhaps the calculations had been mistaken. An ardent follower, zealous but without exegetical skill, pointed to Habakkuk, wrenching it from its original historical setting: "There is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay" (Hab 2:3).[36] Furthermore, leaders of the movement, other than Miller, found in Leviticus a dramatic rallying cry: "You shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land" (25:9). It so happened that the tenth day of the seventh month in the Jewish Karaite calendar for 1844, which the Millerites had now come to regard as more precise than other Jewish calendrical systems, fell upon October 22. In a revisionary move, this date was selected as the terminus of the final prediction.[37] Somewhat reluctantly and cautiously, as was his nature, Miller finally agreed to this date as a correction of his calculations. "I see a glory in the seventh month which I never saw before. Thank the Lord, O my soul! . . . I am almost home. Glory! Glory! Glory! I see that the time is correct."[38] He did vacillate in late September or early October, however, that "if he does not come within 20 or 25 days, I shall feel twice the disappointment I did this spring."[39]

The initial disappointment in March now gave way to an even more fervent anticipation. More converts, persuaded time was truly running out, joined the movement, some being forced to leave their churches to do so. At its height, from many denominations the Millerite movement may have attracted as many as fifty thousand followers.[40] Tension mounted as summer progressed, heightened by the sudden, unexpected appearance of a comet in heavens. Revival meetings grew larger. Since they expected soon to be in the kingdom of God, certainly before winter, devout farmers left their crops in the field. Shop-owners closed their businesses. Students neglected their classes. Some believers confessed to unsolved crimes, determined to do everything in their power to meet the Lord with a clear conscience. One man sent $120 to a New York insurance company with a note: "The Lord is at hand. This was unlawfully taken from

[36] In Habakkuk, this oracle of judgment (Hab 2:1-5) concerns the anticipated invasion of Judah by the "Chaldeans," presumably, the Neo-Bablyonians, in the early sixth century B.C.E. Cf. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (tran. P. R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 414-22.

[37] Richard W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1979), 48.

[38] Cited in Hudson, *Religion in America*, 196.

[39] Cited in Damian Thompson, *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1996), 287.

[40] Wentz, *American Religious Traditions*, 320-21.

you, and I ask forgiveness for the Lord has forgiven me much."[41] At Derry, N.H., the celebrated poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, visited a camp meeting held by the Millerites in September 1844, leaving behind this description:

> Here were sober, intelligent men, gentle and pious women, who, verily believing the end to be close at hand, had left their counting-rooms, and workshops, and household cares to publish the great tidings, and to startle, if possible, a careless and unbelieving generation into preparation for the day of the Lord and for that blessed millennium—the restored paradise,—when, renovated and renewed by its fire-purgation, the earth shall become as of old the garden of the Lord, and the saints alone shall inherit it.[42]

October 22 dawned with the devout Millerites gathered in such groups, many much smaller, all across the eastern seaboard.

When the hour struck midnight that day, however, Miller's followers tragically experienced profound, bitter disappointment. Later, the day would be appropriately labeled the "Great Disappointment," and as such it is still referred to in Seventh-day Adventist literature. One farmer, Hiram Edson, bitterly exclaimed, "Our fondest hopes and experiences were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. . . . We wept, and wept, till the day dawn."[43] Most in the movement felt completely disillusioned. Many grew embittered. The Low Hampton Baptist church, as a kind of reprimand for the embarrassing false hopes Miller had aroused, excommunicated him. By the spring of 1845 he had come to the conclusion that the 1844 movement was not "a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense," and subsequently opposed any new theories that pretended to offer an explanation for the disconfirmation of October 22.[44] Near the end of Miller's life (1845), he admitted his mistake: "That I have been mistaken in the time, I freely confess, and I have no desire to defend my course any further than I have been actuated by pure motives, and it has resulted to God's glory. My mistakes and errors God, I trust, will forgive." Furthermore, he wrote: "As the prophetic periods, counting from the dates from which I have reckoned, have not brought us to the end; and as I cannot tell the exact time that chronology may vary from my calculations, I can only live in continual expectation of the event. I am persuaded that it cannot be far out of

[41] Cited in Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, 255.

[42] Whittier, "The World's End," *Prose Works* (vol. 1 of *The Writings of John Greenleaf Whittier*, vol. 5; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1889), 1:423. Cited in Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, 231.

[43] Cited in Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 81.

[44] Don Neufeld, ed., "Miller, William," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1966), 789.

the way, and I believe that God will still justify my preaching to the world."[45] To his final day, Miller persisted in the opinion that although his calculations had proved erroneous, the event that he placed at their culmination would not.[46] Jesus would soon return to earth. Miller died December 20, 1849, at the age of 68, discredited and virtually forgotten.

Some disenchanted Millerites subsequently joined the Shakers, the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. Others remained steadfast in the hope of an imminent eschaton, believing there had been still other undiscovered errors in the calculation of prophecy or in the events assigned to the dates.

In the aftermath of the Great Disappointment, one group of Millerites met at Albany, N.Y., in 1845 to form a conference that unfortunately later split into three groups, the *Evangelical Adventist Church*, which is virtually extinct today; the *Life and Advent Union*; and the *Advent Christian Church.*[47] The Life and Advent Union merged with the Advent Christian Church in 1964. Others in 1861 followed James and Ellen White (1827-1915) to form the *Seventh-day Adventist Church*, the largest and most successful group of Millerite, apocalyptic origin.[48]

While those who eventually became the Advent Christian Church continued to set dates for the second coming, first 1853, then 1854; those in the Seventh-day Adventist movement offered instead a new interpretation of the Millerite prophetic calculations. The event described as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Dan 8:14, they assigned, not to an earthly, but to a heavenly event. Christ had begun a new phase of his priestly ministry, they believed, a work of universal judgment.[49] On October 22, 1844, in keeping with the 2300-day prophecy, the

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[45] Miller, *Apology & Defense*, 33-34.

[46] Jerome L. Clark, *1844* (3 vols.; Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1968), 1:63.

[47] Clark, *1844*, 1:64-65. The Advent Christians report 26,236 members (1997), with 311 churches and 525 ministers in the United States; 286 members, 7 churches, 7 ministers in Canada. An additional 28,478 members are worldwide. Aurora University, Aurora, IL, is their chief educational institution (J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions* [6th ed. Detroit: Gale, 1999], 529). I am unable to obtain statistics for the Evangelical Adventist Church. Seventh-day Adventists claim 16 million members worldwide, but have spawned numerous schisms (see below) over their 160-year history.

[48] Of the modern denominations, having roots in the Millerite movement, in addition to those listed here, may be considered the Church of God (Seventh-day); Church of God General Conference; Church of the Blessed Hope; Seventh-Day Adventist Reform Movement; Davidian Seventh-Day Adventist (Shepherd's Rod); Branch Davidian; United Seventh-Day Brethren; and Primitive Advent Christian Church. According to Lowell Tarling, in a kind of *via negativa*, the nature of the Seventh-day Adventist church may be clearly discerned by studying the groups that have broken away from it. "The sum of the parts of the offshoot movements is equal to the corporate identity of the mainstream [Adventist] church" (*The Edges of Seventh-Day Adventism: A Study of Separatist Groups Emerging from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844-1980)* [Barragga Bay, Bermagui South: Galilee, 1981], *passim*. Quote on 2). The Waco, Tex., disaster centering in David Koresh, who had become independent from the Shepherd's Rod and Branch Davidians, was the result of one of the many schisms from Seventh-day Adventism.

[49] This is ultimately based on a typological interpretation of the Day of Atonement ritual in Lev 16, when the Israelite high priest made an annual ritual appearance in the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary (or Temple). The Day of Atonement in early Judaism came to be viewed as a kind of judgment. The influence of the visionary

heavenly assize began a careful examination of the life record of all people who have ever lived. This judgment now continues. When finished, Christ will finally blot out the sins of all believers, but hold the wicked accountable. Then Christ will return to earth a second time, "not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb 9:28). It is readily apparent this reinterpretation removes the chronological calculations from historical verification but, at the same time, after 160 years, creates a painful, existential crisis.[50] The Second Advent can scarcely be considered "imminent" in view of the almost two centuries between the Millerite movement and the present, and the almost two millennia since the time of Jesus. This crisis is not unique to Adventism, however, but inherent within the New Testament and the church in general.[51] The Adventist reinterpretation of Miller's view of 1844 only aggravates this tension.[52]

Disciple Reaction to the Millerite Disillusionment

Barton Stone, nearing the end of his life (he died November 9, 1844, only two weeks after October 22), reacted to the disappointment of October 1844 with cautious hopefulness. Although he had followed the movement from afar with definite interest, premillennialist though he was, he never embraced it enthusiastically. In the November, 1844, *Christian Messenger*, a posthumous note appeared under his by-line:

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experience of Ellen White on the adoption of this view was considerable. Although Adventists do not appeal to White in the sense they appeal to the Bible, she offers a kind of para-scriptural support for their eschatological and other beliefs. White not only influences the interpretation, but also serves to fill in many of the gaps that are left over after Adventist scholars have constructed a historicist eschatology from the biblical apocalyptic texts. The denomination's eschatological emphasis places great weight upon the apocalyptic writings.

[50] This reinterpretation supports Festinger's conclusion that such social cognitive dissonance generally results in one of three responses: (1) alteration of previously held beliefs; (2) acquiring new information further to support the disconfirmed belief; (3) ignoring or reducing the factors causing the dissonance (*When Prophecy Fails*, 25-26).

[51] E.g., see 2 Pet 3:3-13. In his magisterial *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer observes that "the whole history of 'Christianity" down to the present day . . . is based on the delay of the Parousia, the non-occurrence of the Parousia, the abandonment of eschatology, the progress and completion of the 'de-eschatologising' of religion which has been connected therewith" (tran. W. Montgomery [1910]; repr., New York: Macmillan, 1954), 358). As time continues to pass, Gordon Kaufman astutely notes, the church is less and less able to witness to the central conviction of Christian faith, that "the kingdom of God is really breaking into history" (*Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968], 395). Cf. the discussion of the "delay" in G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ* (Studies in Dogmatics; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), 65-95.

[52] Although the church has long officially abandoned date-setting, internally it continues to struggle with what it calls the "crisis of delay," and has offered a number of explanations, including the reality that the gospel, as Seventh-day Adventists understand it, has yet to be proclaimed to all peoples of the earth, or that world's "cup of iniquity" has not yet become full, or that members of the church are not yet morally or spiritually perfect enough to warrant the return of Christ, etc. (See Harry Mattison, "When Will the Work Be 'Finished'?" *Review & Herald* [March 31, 1977]: 8-9, for a list of these reasons). Adventist theologian Hans K. LaRondelle suggests that the chronological significance of many of the biblical prophecies should be relativized and "deliberately omitted as irrelevant" with respect to the eschaton. Thus the timing of the Second Advent remains shrouded in mystery ("Did Jesus Intend to Return in the First Century? *Ministry* [May 1983): 10-13. Quote on 12).

> We have long observed, that when once the mind becomes intensely fixt [sic] on this subject [prophetic predictions], it seems to relax its hold on every other, and is oftener floating in the unexplored regions of fancy, than of truth; and loses the spirit of pure devotion, and contracts a zeal for opinions, and inspires too often an unholy opposition against those who differ. . . . Our firm conviction, from observing the signs of the times, [is] that some mighty revolution is just ahead, and that it behooves all men to be ready to meet it. But, [as to] when, how, or what that revolution may be, we confess our ignorance."[53]

Alexander Campbell, who had already been distancing himself from Millerism before October 1844, viewed the Millerite failure with mounting criticism. As we have seen, Campbell had followed Miller's calculations to the point where he expected 1847, not 1844, as the commencement of the millennium (in a postmillennialist scheme). In 1842, as a part of twenty-six installments in *the Millennial Harbinger* begun in 1841 on "The Coming of the Lord," he had referred to Miller as that "excellent Baptist brother, Elder William Miller of New York,"[54] and an "amiable enthusiast and pious expectant of the world's end in 1843."[55] He disagreed with Miller on the precise date. Miller's calculation, he shrewdly and accurately observed, depended upon the starting point for them. It is a "gratuitous assumption," he also argued, to assume the earth is the "sanctuary" of Daniel and its destruction a "cleansing." As 1843 approached, Campbell's editorials on the Millerite movement intensify. By October, the editorial series abruptly ends, probably in response to the failure that spring of the Millerite expectations.[56] When Christ does return at the end of the millennium, Campbell noted in his concluding editorial, he will come "in a way which perchance but few of us either expect or are at all prepared for,"[57] a subtle, final verdict on the Millerites.

Once the Millerite furor had ended in disaster, Campbell resumed advocating his postmillennial eschatology, which he felt had been singularly, but obliquely confirmed by the Millerite failure.

Like Campbell, Walter Scott lived well beyond the demise of Miller. As we have seen, he shared in the general excitement over the Second Advent stirred up by Millerites. In the pages of the *Christian Evangelist*, he often advocated a premillennial notion of the Advent. In *The Evangelist*, Scott explicitly discussed the Millerite movement. From late 1830s to early 1840s,

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[53] *Christian Messenger* 14 (Nov 1844): 216-17. Cited in Williams, *Barton Stone*, 227.
[54] Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (March 1842): 97.
[55] Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (February 1843): 49-58.
[56] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 4:264-65.
[57] Cited in Garrett, "Campbell," *Encyclopedia of Stone-Campbell*, 124.

he expressed increasing interest in the prophecies of Miller that the world would end in 1844. Once the date Oct 22 1844 passed, however, Scott largely set these interests aside.[58]

It bears noting that the inevitable disillusionment of the Millerite movement may have been a catalyst for Scott's shift from a premillennial to a postmillennial perspective, and thus closer to Alexander Campbell's eschatology. In the later period of his life, he came to divide history into two main segments: the first, the earthly phase, had to do with the present age; the second, a heavenly phase, with the eternal kingdom of God.[59] Preceding the eternal kingdom would be a gradual transformation of the world to Christian values. In the postmillennial, eternal kingdom the saints would actualize eternal life and the personal presence of God. These views were much closer to Campbell. Moreover, in an even greater sense than the latter, Scott now advocated the idea of human progress, placing great stress upon the hope that America and American Protestantism would play a large role in bringing the Christian faith to the nations.[60] Unfortunately, the turbulent national events leading up to the Civil War shattered Scott's optimism. He died in 1861, ten days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, on the eve of the great national crisis.[61] Disillusionment with the Millerite movement probably had some influence on Scott's radical shift in eschatology.

Millerite Influence on the Disciples

As we have surveyed the landscape of the Stone-Campbell movement through the lens of Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott, we realize that the echoes of the Millerite movement among them were transitory at best. The Advent revival appears to have influenced the Stone-Campbell movement in the same ephemeral way that any widespread, popular movement of the time might have. It did not leave behind a deeper, more profound or enduring theological influence. There are several reasons why the influence was minimal, and why contemporary Disciples theology, similarly, reflects little, if any, apocalyptic fervor.

In the first place, as we note in Campbell's eschatology, the prevailing apocalyptic hermeneutic was postmillennial, not premillennial, as with Miller. Postmillennialism, with its positing of the Second Advent at the *end* of the millennium, not the beginning, led logically to a vision of the gradual transformation of the current order essentially incompatible with a cataclysmic, sudden eschaton. Of the three founders, only Stone appears to have held permanently to a premillennial perspective, and he died only days after Millerism had come to

[58] Mark G. Toulouse, "Walter Scott," in *Walter Scott: A Nineteenth-Century Evangelical* (ed. Mark Toulouse; St. Louis: Chalice, 1999), 17

[59] Scott, *The Gospel Restored: A Discourse of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1836; repr., Kansas City, Mo.: Old Paths Book Club, 1949), 551.

[60] Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship*, 112; idem,"Scott, Walter," *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*, 679.

[61] Eugene Boring, *Disciples and the Bible: A History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1997), 47-48 .

its end. Whether a consequence or not, Scott gradually shifted to postmillennialism after Miller's demise. Campbell held to this perspective through the whole period of Millerism, and his eschatology accordingly tended to exercise a dominant role in the movement. For the rest of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, postmillennial eschatology, whether in a spiritual or a more secular, literal sense, also tended to dominate American Protestant eschatological speculation.[62] The colossal failure of Miller's predictions had the effect of turning all but the staunchest of his supporters from the notion that the end of the world and the beginning of the millennium was imminent. Thus, on the Stone-Campbell movement, the effects of Miller were more like the lessening inland winds and rain of a now dying coastal hurricane, suddenly swept out to sea. The Stone-Campbell landscape was left virtually theologically intact.[63]

Campbell's eschatological postmillennialism tended to protect him from direct influence of Millerism. In a sense, that same postmillennialism, or something very much like it, has similarly since kept Disciples from preoccupation with eschatological speculation.[64] For Campbell's part, with the maturity of his theology, expectation of a millennial age gradually slips from view, finally replaced, according to Leroy Garrett, by a different, more generalized hope in the eventual triumph of God.[65]

Perhaps an even greater deterrence against eschatological speculation among Disciples then and now has been what Walter Brueggemann calls "the failure of a remote God who has not triumphed, a church that has not known so much, and a culture that has not kept its promises,"[66] a disillusionment with failed hopes that epitomized the Millerite Great

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[62] This was true up until about 1914, when the vision of liberal progress shattered in wake of the Great War. Postmillennialism, confronted by a harsh realism, has declined in influence ever since (Millar J. Erickson, *Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millennium* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977], 61-62.

[63] Exceptions to this are the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, who later separated from the Disciples. These denominations, influenced by the fundamentalist, dispensational theology of the early 1900s, have tended to adopt amillennial or premillennial views of the eschaton, and to preserve something of the apocalyptic fervor known in Millerism and in later evangelical Christianity. Historical and political events of the late nineteenth century continued to fuel expectations that the eschaton was near. Moses Lard (1818-1880), Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874), and James Harding (1848-1922), writing in their respective journals, expressed premillennial hopes. Some linkage between the premillennialism of these editors and other leaders of the soon-to-be Churches of Christ, and the premillennialism of Barton Stone may be traceable. A premillennial or amillennial eschatology continues among the modern Churches of Christ. (Hans Rollmann, "Eschatology," *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*, 306-7). Since this study is concerned primarily with the Disciples, discussion of the eschatology of the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ is left aside.

[64] "Whether his [Campbell's] millennialism is translatable into a contemporary Disciples theology is doubtful" (Sprinkle*, Disciples and Theology*, 38). "Disciples of Christ, as well as most Christians in the 'mainline churches,'" writes Ronald Osborn, "continue to share a vision of a social order reformed or transformed according to the biblical witness" (*The Faith We Affirm: Basic Beliefs of Disciples of Christ* [St. Louis: CBP Press, 1979], 93).

[65] Garrett, *Preface*, 14. Cf. *Millennial Harbinger* (1865): 517.

[66] Brueggemann, *A Social Reading of the Old Testament: Prophetic Approaches to Israel's Communal Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 43.

Disappointment, and all other such expectations. In 1844, owing to the failure of Millerism, most Disciples turned from anticipation of the Second Advent. Miller is really only one example—perhaps the most notorious—of such apocalyptic speculation throughout the centuries and which continues even to the present day. As late as 2000, many believed the end of the world would come in that year; more recently, the year 2012 has been singled out for this distinction. The experience of Miller, however, appears to have been lesson enough for Disciples. "About that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" the Markan Little Apocalypse has it (Mk 13:32). Disciples then and now wisely avoid pinning their hopes on obscure apocalyptic predictions.

Finally, the greatest deterrent from continued influence of Millerism lies in the theological and exegetical hermeneutical shift between Miller and present-day Disciples. Miller, Campbell, Stone, and Scott were hermeneutical children of their time, an era when apocalyptic writings such as Daniel and Revelation were often understood along *historicist* lines. That is, they were regarded as gradually unfolding in the historical arena the future of the church and the world from the times of the original authors and apostles until the end of the world.[67] *Futurism*, which regards most of Revelation and parts of Daniel as yet future from the present age, from their perspective was yet to be exploited and made popular in the teachings of John N. Darby (1800-1882).[68] This strand of interpretation gained widespread appeal during the early 2000s through the apocalyptic fiction of the *Left Behind* Series, which popularizes a dispensational approach to Daniel and Revelation.[69]

Since the 1850s, however, with the discovery, publication, and study of numerous non-canonical apocalyptic writings such as 1-3 Enoch, the Apocalypse of Adam, 2 Esdras, 2-3 Baruch, and so on, has greatly clarified our understanding of this cryptic literature. This historical approach to apocalyptic has recognized what some interpreters in the mid-nineteenth century, including Campbell, had already intuited, viz., apocalyptic was a literary style whose primary focus was the era in which it was written. Its symbolism offered reflection on current events and general expectation of what lay in the near future, and encouragement to the beleaguered faithful. Comparison among the biblical apocalypses, such as Daniel and Revelation, and the extra-biblical apocalyptic writings has shown that the apocalyptists were almost entirely

[67] The use of Daniel and Revelation as a repository of future predictions was present almost from the start of the Christian era. Its chief climax appears to have come with Joseph Mede (1586-1638), whose writings on Revelation have greatly influenced subsequent generations (Christopher Rowland, "Apocalypticism," *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* [ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld; 5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2006-2009], 1:192-93). Froom documents in meticulous detail the history of the interpretation of these two books (*Prophetic Faith*, vols. 1-4).

[68] Futurism may be traced to Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), who posited that most of the book of Revelation would have concentrated fulfillment near the end of time, rather than gradually, as in historicism (Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:489-94.).

[69] Cf. the discussion of dispensationalism in Erickson, *Contemporary Options*, 109-24.

concerned with the circumstances of their own time. This has led most scholars of this literature, including Disciples, to a *preterist* reading. In a preterist hermeneutic, "attention is paid entirely to the book in its ancient context," according to Christopher Rowland, with emphasis "more on past meaning rather than present use."[70] Today, in mainstream biblical scholarship, interpretation of apocalyptic generally follows a preterist tendency. Futurism enjoys popularity in fundamentalist and evangelical scholarship. Very few modern scholars espouse a historicist approach. Seventh-day Adventists, as heirs of the Millerite movement, represent one of the few groups who do.

This great body of apocalyptic scholarship has furthermore shown that the various numerological figures appearing in Daniel, for instance, have symbolic rather than literal significance. Efforts to press a literal application of these figures have too frequently been "based on ignorance of the biblical literary forms."[71] The 2300 "days" of Dan 8:14, so pivotal in Miller's calculation, turns out in retrospect to stand for the period of the suppression of the regular morning and evening offerings under the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, from 167-164 B.C.E. Thus the reading in the Hebrew MT for this phrase, *ad erev boqer 'alpayim ushlosh me'ot*, "until evenings-mornings two thousand three hundred," indicates 1150 actual days, or approximately the period of the suppression, not an 1844 date for the end of the world. "Forces sent by him [Antiochus IV] shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offerings and set up the abomination that makes desolate," offers a reading of this event later in Daniel (11:31).[72]

For the better, Disciples have turned away from historicism with its penchant for reading the newspaper in the light of the biblical text, and have adopted a more rationalistic view of this literature, much in keeping with current modes of interpretation.[73] Like Campbell, Stone, and Scott, we are children of our times, times in which a historical or literary-critical interpretation of Daniel and Revelation prevails. This does not mean this is the only way such

[70] Rowland, "Apocalypticism," 1:193. Historicism, futurism, and preterism are terms that seem to have fallen out of use in theological circles. However, no obvious replacement for them appears to be available for classifying these different trends in the interpretation of apocalyptic, hence they are used here. A fourth option, *idealism*, is sometimes mentioned. In idealism, apocalyptic literature is seen as primarily symbolic, with only a symbolic relationship to events in actual history.

[71] Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992), 239.

[72] The concentration of so many of Daniel's visionary experiences upon the Maccabean era constitutes a major factor in the dating of the final form of the Danielic apocalypse to the second century B.C.E. On this and the other time periods in Daniel, cf. André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (tran. David Pellauer; Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 164-65, 248-50.

[73] Modes of interpretation tend to arise when a social culture exists to support them. Hermeneutical approaches can shape a culture, as in Millerism and the Adventism that followed it, and the culture, in turn, supports the hermeneutics that gave birth to it. In this respect, contemporary Adventism finds itself inseparably wedded to a historist hermeneutic. Contemporary Disciples are nurtured by and support a historical-critical model of interpretation. This model of interpretation is currently undergoing a transition as newer methods of interpreting Scripture and theology are being incorporated.

literature may be read. It is, however, the most viable, credible reading of apocalyptic available at the present time. It is also a major factor in supplanting whatever echoes of the Millerite movement may still be faintly reverberating among Disciples.[74] Although in no way tied to a literalistic interpretation of apocalyptic, however, Disciples do continue to ground their ecclesiology and evangelistic mission in hope for the future.[75]

In sum, this is a long, involved answer to my friend's query, "Why don't Disciples preach and teach more about the Second Advent of Christ?" The answer, complicated as it is, involves the rise—and demise—of the Millerite movement and its muffled echoes among the Disciple heirs of Brush Run.

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[74] Judging from personal experience, I have encountered among rank-and-file Disciples more influence from the dispensational, futuristic *Left Behind* Series than from the older, Millerite historicism. This futuristic eschatology has more kinship with historicist speculation than with preterism. Both futurism and historicism, however, fare poorly in the light of contemporary biblical scholarship.

[75] Rollmann, "Eschatology," in *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*, 307.