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# The Bible in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*

## Biblical Use and Interpretation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Late Nineteenth Century

Amy Easton-Flake

Despite the gradual erosion of the Bible's significance in American consciousness after the Civil War, the Bible remained "the most imported, most printed, most distributed, and most read written text in North America up through the nineteenth century."<sup>1</sup> The Bible's authority was not static but was continuously established as individuals and the nation turned to it for direction on living a Christian life as well as for the answers to religious, social, and political issues.<sup>2</sup> For most members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the nineteenth century, the Bible likewise remained their primary religious text even as they embraced and incorporated the new works of scripture revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Scholars such as Gordon Irving, Christopher C. Smith, Kent P. Jackson, and Philip L. Barlow have helped us understand how Joseph Smith and other Church leaders used scriptures in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>3</sup> However, with the notable exception

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1. Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777–1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.

2. For more, see Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 375–79; Seth Perry, *Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018), 1–9, 76.

3. Gordon Irving, "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1973): 479–87; Christopher C. Smith, "Joseph Smith in Hermeneutical Crisis," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 88–91; Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith and the Bible," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 1 (2010): 38–40; Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991; citations from updated edition, 2013).

of Barlow's opus *Mormons and the Bible*, scholars have not studied how members of the Church of Jesus Christ used and interpreted the Bible in the later part of the nineteenth century. In his seminal work, Barlow offers an excellent contextualized analysis of major strands of biblical interpretation within the Church of Jesus Christ as demonstrated by such notable figures as Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, B. H. Roberts, Joseph Fielding Smith, and William H. Chamberlin.<sup>4</sup> He also astutely recognizes that "[his work] is simply an attempt to make finite a nearly infinite task," and he calls in his 1991 preface for "more time-concentrated studies" of how members of the Church are using the Bible as well as for studies that focus on lay individuals, men and women, who reside inside and outside of the United States.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Barlow's call has gone virtually unanswered for the past thirty years.

To begin to address the significant gap in current understanding of how lay members of the Church of Jesus Christ used and interpreted the Bible after the 1840s, I have conducted an extensive primary study to identify, categorize, and analyze all the references to the Bible found in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent* from 1880 to 1900.<sup>6</sup> My study provides general as well as specific and contextualized insights. First, I identify and explain leading assumptions that govern Church members' biblical interpretation within the context of Protestant use and interpretation in the later part of the nineteenth century. Next, I provide an overview and analysis of the statistical findings that emerged from my study. Then, informed by this general understanding of how and which books and passages of the Bible were being used, I devote the majority of the article to identifying and analyzing the major uses and doctrinal themes underscored by the passages individuals quoted and interpreted. Taken as a whole, these parts provide insight into the general membership of the Church of Jesus Christ and greatly expand our comprehensive understanding of how members of the Church interpreted and used the Bible in the late nineteenth century.

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4. See Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 80–161.

5. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, xxii.

6. Because writers did not set off the scriptures they quoted with quotation marks or provide reference to chapters and verses, identifying all the scripture passages and references is a time-consuming and difficult task. Consequently, while my research assistants and I have tried to be as thorough and careful as possible as we read through every line of the *Millennial Star* and *Woman's Exponent* from 1880 to 1900 to find each scripture reference and passage, we likely have missed some passages.

## Prevailing Assumptions Governing Biblical Interpretation within Context

The deep commitment members of the Church of Jesus Christ had to the Bible in the nineteenth century is underscored by the frequency and nature of biblical references in their writings. A study of early periodicals printed by the Church from 1832 to 1846 revealed that “the Bible was cited nearly twenty times more frequently than the Book of Mormon.”<sup>7</sup> When one considers both the Bible’s preeminent status in nineteenth-century America and the vast number of Church members who were converts from Protestant faiths, this finding is unsurprising. What is perhaps surprising is that this statistic continues to the end of the nineteenth century, as judged by scripture usage in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*.<sup>8</sup> Verses from other restoration scripture such as the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price actually appear in these periodicals more frequently than verses from the Book of Mormon, accounting for approximately 8 percent of all scripture references compared to those referring to the Book of Mormon at 4.46 percent.<sup>9</sup> These findings should be tempered, however, with the recognition that no definite distinction can be made between why and how Church members used and incorporated different works of scripture. This indicates that all these texts were considered scripture and that the decision of which scriptural text to incorporate was likely simply a matter of familiarity and expediency.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the assumptions that guided Church members’ understanding of the scriptures were similar to the literal, commonsense approach followed by many of their contemporaries. Informed by the most influential epistemologies in early-nineteenth-century America—Scottish

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7. Grant Underwood, “Book of Mormon Usage in Early LDS Theology,” *Dialogue* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 53.

8. Scripture references to the Book of Mormon appear 607 times in the *Millennial Star* (494) and the *Woman's Exponent* (113) between 1880 and 1900. The total number of scripture passages identified in the two publications was 13,596; consequently, references to the Book of Mormon account for 4.46 percent of all scripture references.

9. Scripture references to the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price appear 1,094 times in the *Millennial Star* (919) and the *Woman's Exponent* (175) between 1880 and 1900. The total number of scriptures identified was 13,596; consequently, references to the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price account for 8.05 percent of all scripture references.

10. For a good discussion on how early Mormon converts viewed and incorporated the Book of Mormon into their religious devotion, see Janiece Johnson, “Becoming a People of the Books: Toward an Understanding of Early Mormon Converts and the New Word of the Lord,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 27 (2018): 1–43.

Common Sense Realism and Baconian Science, which emphasized that individuals' senses could provide direct and uncomplicated knowledge of the world that was available and comprehensible to all—Americans' privileged commonsense or "literal" readings of the Bible were thought to be apparent to everyone. They believed that the Bible had direct application to modern times, the meaning of scripture was clear and unchanging, biblical narratives were real and accurate, religion and science were compatible, and prophetic statements were the word of God and were to be fulfilled exactly as written.<sup>11</sup>

In the last third of the nineteenth century, Americans' understanding of the Bible underwent significant changes as new findings from historians, archaeologists, and world travelers provided access to the ancient world of the Bible and allowed it to be approached in scientific, historical, and new theological terms. The discovery of earlier New Testament manuscripts and the project of revising the King James Version of the Bible in light of new understanding of Hebrew and Greek eroded some people's belief in the Bible's infallibility as transmission and translation issues came to light. Scholars of the Bible now engaged in "so-called lower criticism—textual criticism that aimed at establishing the original text of scripture free from mistranslations—and higher criticism which sought to discover the historical background of the biblical texts, their authors, sources, and literary characteristics."<sup>12</sup>

Looking at late-nineteenth-century periodicals produced for and by members of the Church, we discover that members who wrote for and read these magazines received at least some exposure to ideas coming out of higher criticism. On occasion, we find Church members engaging with different sources regarding biblical interpretation as they quote

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11. For more, see George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 80–84; Noll, *America's God*, 376–85; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 10.

12. C. S. Gifford, "American Women and the Bible: The Nature of Woman as a Hermeneutical Issue," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. A. Y. Collins (Chico, Calif.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1985), 22. For more on this new scholarship, see Mark Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regent College Publishing, 1986), 11–31. For more on developments that challenged traditional approaches to reading the Bible as God's inspired, infallible word, see Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), 11–12.

from, refute, or recommend the work of scholars and Protestant theologians. More often than not, Church members refuted new ideas, but at times—similar to their Protestant contemporaries—they acknowledged insights from geology, anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and history that enhanced their understanding of the Bible or shored up biblical claims.<sup>13</sup>

Most often, though, the writing in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent* reveals that members of the Church, similar to lay individuals in other faith traditions, continued to employ a noncritical approach to their reading of the scriptures. They sought for timeless and universal truths, emphasized connections between biblical characters' lives and the lives of the readers, drew moral inferences, used the New Testament as a lens to interpret the Old Testament, and employed various modes of interpretation including association and proof texting.<sup>14</sup> Members of the Church of Jesus Christ remained in the mainstream of nineteenth-century American Christianity Bible usage as they continued to see the Bible as the inspired word of God and to turn to it for guidance and comfort. What most separated Church members' understanding and interpretation of the Bible from their Protestant contemporaries was their emphasis on acquiring knowledge through revelation in addition to scripture (the Bible was not seen as the final authority but as a springboard to revelations from God),<sup>15</sup> their open acknowledgement that the Bible contained mistakes of translation and transmission,<sup>16</sup> and their use of the Bible to support their own faith practices and theology.<sup>17</sup>

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13. See, for example, "Recovery of an Ancient Record," *Deseret News*, July 9, 1879, 6; "Moses and the Red Nile," *Millennial Star* 58, no. 24 (June 11, 1896): 381–83; "Confirmation of Scripture," *Millennial Star* 52, no. 40 (October 6, 1890): 638; "Jephthah's Vow," *Deseret News*, August 22, 1888, 7.

14. For more, see Taylor and Weir, *Let Her Speak for Herself*, 14–17; Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 11–12, 27–31.

15. For more on how Mormonism appealed to both revelatory and empirical longings, see Steven C. Harper, "Infallible Proofs, Both Human and Divine: The Persuasiveness of Mormonism for Early Converts," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 104–6, 110–12. For more on the Bible as a springboard, see Jackson, "Joseph Smith and the Bible," 38–40; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 46–47.

16. Most significant is Smith's statement in the Wentworth letter, "We Believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." The Wentworth letter was republished in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1842): 706–7. See also Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 14:226–27 (August 27, 1871).

17. For a more detailed, contextualized overview of how biblical interpretation within the Church changed over the nineteenth century, see Amy Easton-Flake,

## Methodology for This Study

With this general overview in mind of the assumptions that governed members of the Church of Jesus Christ's use and interpretation of the Bible, we now turn our attention to the specific information gained through a focused analysis of biblical usage within the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*. I modeled my initial methodology for this study after one of the most useful articles I found in my research on early interpretation of the Bible within the Church—Gordon Irving's "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s." In his study, Irving identified as far as possible all the biblical references in three Church periodicals published between 1832 and 1838—the *Evening and the Morning Star* (1832–34), the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (1834–37), and the *Elders' Journal* (1837–38)—and then analyzed them to produce some impressive findings.<sup>18</sup> Similar to Irving's study, mine identifies as far as possible all the references to scriptures in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent* printed between 1880 and 1900. By comparing my study of the last two decades of the nineteenth century with Irving's study of the first few years of the Church of Jesus Christ in the 1830s, we gain important insights into how use and interpretation of the Bible changed or remained constant over the course of the nineteenth century. By focusing on both the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*, we add a significant gender component to our understanding.

The *Woman's Exponent* was the obvious choice to bring in women's voices because it was the first "journal owned by, controlled by and edited by Utah ladies."<sup>19</sup> The *Woman's Exponent* was an eight-page, three-column quarto newspaper issued bimonthly for most of its forty-two-year run from 1872 to 1914. Never owned or officially sponsored by the Church—although official Church leadership did approve of it—it provided a space for women to express their viewpoints and interests (and was regarded by most as the organ of the Relief Society). The first edition stated that "the aim of this journal will be to discuss every subject interesting and valuable to women,"<sup>20</sup> and a detailed index of its

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"Nineteenth-Century Biblical Interpretation," in *The Bible in the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, ed. Taylor Petrey and Cory Crawford (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

18. Irving, "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," 479–87.

19. Louisa Lula Greene, "Woman's Exponent: A Utah Ladies' Journal," *Woman's Exponent* 1, no. 1 (June 1, 1872): 8.

20. Greene, "Woman's Exponent: A Utah Ladies' Journal," 8.

content over its forty-two years in print reveals that it lived up to its aim.<sup>21</sup> To represent men's voices at the end of the nineteenth century, I chose to study the *Millennial Star*.<sup>22</sup> Published in Liverpool, England, the *Millennial Star* was issued weekly during the twenty-year period under study. Although printed for and addressed to the British Saints, it represents Church members in Utah well because the editors and most of the authors were missionaries or Church leaders from Utah. While the *Millennial Star* regularly contained secular and informational articles on world news, scientific discoveries, and Church and local news from Utah, the vast majority of its weekly content was devoted to spreading the gospel and uplifting and teaching members of the Church. The periodical offered a mix of writing from leaders and lay individuals, containing correspondences from missionaries, reports from local and Churchwide conferences, explanatory articles about various gospel principles, and reprints of articles from the *Deseret News*.

### **General Findings within the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent***

In order to determine which books and sections of the Bible members of the Church were fond of citing, the Bible passages used in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent* between 1880 and 1900 were identified and tabulated: 9,613 individual or blocks of biblical passages were in the *Millennial Star* and 2,282 were in the *Woman's Exponent*. Table 1 gives the results of this tabulation. Each five-year period is tabulated separately, followed by the total for the twenty-year period. The first figure given is the number of passages cited, while the figure below it shows this number as a percentage of the total number of passages tabulated

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21. For historical background on the *Exponent*, see Sherilyn Cox Bennion, "The Woman's Exponent: Forty-Two Years of Speaking for Women," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 226-39; Carol Cornwall Madsen, *An Advocate for Women: The Public Life of Emmeline B. Wells, 1870-1920* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2006), 34-66. Also, Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Remember the Women of Zion: A Study of the Editorial Content of the *Woman's Exponent*, a Mormon Woman's Journal, 1872-1914" (master's thesis, University of Utah, 1977).

22. For men's voices in the nineteenth century, slightly more options were available. The *Juvenile Instructor*, edited by George Q. Cannon, and the *Contributor*, edited by Junius F. Wells, were possible options, but since they are both aimed at youth, they are less ideal. The *Deseret News* seemed to be another possible option, but upon investigation I found that the Bible was used very infrequently because the majority of the paper was focused on secular aspects of life.



Table 1. *Woman's Exponent and Millennial Star* Bible Usage by Category

	<i>WE</i> 1880-84	<i>WE</i> 1885-89	<i>WE</i> 1890-94	<i>WE</i> 1895-99	<i>WE</i> 1880-99	<i>MS</i> 1880-84	<i>MS</i> 1885-89	<i>MS</i> 1890-94	<i>MS</i> 1895-99	<i>MS</i> 1880-99	<i>Irving</i> 1830s
<b>Genesis</b>	45	38	38	18	<b>139</b>	54	136	65	64	<b>319</b>	<b>36</b>
	6.11%	5.45%	7.38%	5.45%	<b>6.10%</b>	2.20%	4.49%	4.11%	2.51%	<b>3.32%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Other Pentateuch</b>	31	25	16	7	<b>79</b>	72	134	81	73	<b>360</b>	<b>44</b>
	4.21%	3.59%	3.11%	2.12%	<b>3.47%</b>	2.94%	4.42%	5.12%	2.86%	<b>3.74%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Historical</b>	37	27	23	15	<b>102</b>	57	88	44	33	<b>222</b>	<b>16</b>
	5.02%	3.87%	4.47%	4.55%	<b>4.28%</b>	2.33%	2.91%	2.78%	1.29%	<b>2.31%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Writings</b>	74	64	57	54	<b>249</b>	89	192	52	90	<b>423</b>	<b>74</b>
	10.04%	9.18%	11.07%	16.36%	<b>10.93%</b>	3.63%	6.34%	3.29%	3.53%	<b>4.40%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
<b>Major Prophets</b>	45	51	42	28	<b>166</b>	189	320	142	246	<b>897</b>	<b>183</b>
	6.11%	7.32%	8.16%	8.48%	<b>7.28%</b>	7.71%	10.56%	8.89%	9.64%	<b>9.33%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
<b>Minor Prophets</b>	15	14	17	4	<b>50</b>	48	80	54	69	<b>251</b>	<b>96</b>
	2.04%	2.01%	3.30%	1.21%	<b>2.19%</b>	1.96%	2.64%	3.41%	2.70%	<b>2.61%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>
<b>Gospels and Acts</b>	308	313	200	118	<b>939</b>	1,037	1,119	675	1079	<b>3,910</b>	<b>345</b>
	41.79%	44.91%	38.83%	35.76%	<b>41.20%</b>	42.31%	36.94%	42.67%	42.30%	<b>40.67%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>Paul's Letters</b>	113	93	78	48	<b>332</b>	601	577	310	573	<b>2,061</b>	<b>300</b>
	15.33%	13.34%	15.15%	14.55%	<b>14.57%</b>	24.52%	19.05%	19.60%	22.46%	<b>21.44%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>
<b>Other Letters</b>	30	35	31	23	<b>119</b>	150	188	92	189	<b>619</b>	<b>63</b>
	4.07%	5.02%	6.02%	6.97%	<b>5.22%</b>	6.12%	6.21%	5.82%	7.41%	<b>6.44%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Revelation</b>	39	37	13	15	<b>104</b>	154	195	67	135	<b>551</b>	<b>54</b>
	5.29%	5.31%	2.52%	4.55%	<b>4.56%</b>	6.28%	6.44%	4.24%	5.29%	<b>5.73%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Old Testament</b>	247	219	193	126	<b>785</b>	509	950	438	575	<b>2,472</b>	<b>449</b>
	33.51%	31.42%	37.48%	38.18%	<b>34.44%</b>	20.77%	31.36%	27.69%	22.54%	<b>25.71%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>
<b>New Testament</b>	490	478	322	204	<b>1,494</b>	1,942	2,079	1,144	1,976	<b>7,141</b>	<b>762</b>
	66.49%	68.58%	62.52%	61.82%	<b>65.56%</b>	79.23%	68.64%	72.31%	77.46%	<b>74.28%</b>	<b>63.0%</b>
<b>Total NT &amp; OT</b>	330	311	215	330	<b>2,279</b>	2,451	3,029	1,582	2,551	<b>9,613</b>	<b>1,211</b>

in that time period. For comparison's sake, Irving's findings for passages used in the Church periodicals between 1832 and 1838 are listed in the last column on the right in table 1. For ease of viewing, I have used standard biblical categories to report my findings.

Perhaps most striking is the clear predominance of passages coming from the Gospels and Acts. Across both the *Woman's Exponent* and the *Millennial Star*, the Gospels and Acts were consistently referenced more than any other category—ranging from 36.94 percent to 44.91 percent with a median of 40.94 percent. Paul's letters were the next most frequently cited, accounting for 14.57 percent of all scriptures in the *Woman's Exponent* and 21.44 percent of all scriptures in the *Millennial Star*. Looking at the Old Testament, the Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) were cited most frequently in the *Millennial Star*, accounting for 9.33 percent of all biblical passages. However, in the *Woman's Exponent*, passages coming from the Writings (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon) account for the majority of the cited passages in the Old Testament at 10.93 percent.<sup>23</sup> Overall, Church members displayed a marked preference for the New Testament, with it accounting for 65.56 percent of all biblical passages in the *Woman's Exponent* and 77.46 percent in the *Millennial Star*. Comparing these findings to Irving's earlier findings of 63 percent New Testament usage to 37 percent Old Testament usage, we discover an increased preference for the New Testament in the later part of the nineteenth century: a 2.56 percent increase when comparing the *Woman's Exponent* to Irving's findings and a staggering 14.46 percent increase when comparing to the *Millennial Star*. Reasons for this large discrepancy between the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent* will be addressed later on, but the overall growth in New Testament usage reflected the larger trend in American biblical usage over the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

Turning first to specific findings regarding the Old Testament, I provide three additional tables to help us understand more precisely the extent to which Church members were employing the Old Testament. Table 2 lists the twenty-nine most frequently cited books in the Old Testament and the number of times passages from that book appeared in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*. The second figure

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23. References to the Song of Solomon appear only three times in the *Woman's Exponent* and only four times in the *Millennial Star*.

24. For more, see Eran Shalev, *American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press 2013), 151–52, 156–63.

Table 2. *Woman's Exponent* and *Millennial Star*

## Old Testament Usage by Books

Book	<i>Woman's Exponent</i> 1880–99			<i>Millennial Star</i> 1880–99		
	Number of Uses	Percent of Bible	Percent of Old Testament	Number of Uses	Percent of Bible	Percent of Old Testament
Genesis	139	6.10%	17.71%	319	3.32%	12.90%
Exodus	50	2.19%	6.37%	185	1.92%	7.48%
Leviticus	6	0.26%	0.76%	34	0.35%	1.38%
Numbers	11	0.48%	1.40%	40	0.42%	1.62%
Deut.	12	0.53%	1.53%	101	1.05%	4.09%
Joshua	7	0.31%	0.89%	24	0.25%	0.97%
Judges	11	0.48%	1.40%	3	0.03%	0.12%
Ruth	6	0.26%	0.76%	2	0.02%	0.08%
1 Samuel	24	1.05%	3.06%	37	0.38%	1.50%
2 Samuel	13	0.57%	1.66%	33	0.34%	1.33%
1 Kings	13	0.57%	1.66%	43	0.45%	1.74%
2 Kings	12	0.53%	1.53%	22	0.23%	0.89%
1 Chron.	4	0.18%	0.51%	11	0.11%	0.44%
2 Chron.	5	0.22%	0.64%	19	0.20%	0.77%
Esther	6	0.26%	0.76%	7	0.07%	0.28%
Job	37	1.62%	4.71%	80	0.83%	3.24%
Psalms	97	4.26%	12.36%	176	1.83%	7.12%
Proverbs	86	3.77%	10.96%	98	1.02%	3.96%
Ecclesiastes	26	1.14%	3.31%	65	0.68%	2.63%
Isaiah	114	5.00%	14.52%	539	5.61%	21.80%
Jeremiah	15	0.66%	1.91%	138	1.44%	5.58%
Lamentations	5	0.22%	0.64%	1	0.01%	0.04%
Ezekiel	3	0.13%	0.38%	83	0.86%	3.36%
Daniel	29	1.27%	3.69%	136	1.41%	5.50%
Joel	2	0.09%	0.25%	19	0.20%	0.77%
Amos	9	0.39%	1.15%	36	0.37%	1.46%
Micah	8	0.35%	1.02%	27	0.28%	1.09%
Zechariah	1	0.04%	0.13%	28	0.29%	1.13%
Malachi	22	0.97%	2.80%	103	1.07%	4.17%

given shows this number as a percentage of the total number of biblical passages in that periodical between 1880 and 1900, and the third figure given is the percentage of the total number of Old Testament passages in that periodical. For instance, with 539 references, Isaiah was the most frequently cited book in the *Millennial Star*, accounting for 5.61 percent of all biblical passages or 21.8 percent of all Old Testament passages cited. In the *Woman's Exponent*, Genesis was the most frequently cited with 139 passages, accounting for 6.1 percent of all biblical passages or 17.71 percent of all Old Testament passages; Isaiah was a close second with 114 cited passages.

Tables 3 and 4 provide increasingly detailed information as they list the Old Testament passages cited most frequently in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*, respectively. Twenty of the thirty-nine books in the Old Testament provide 93 percent of all identifiable Old Testament passages in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*.<sup>25</sup> Individuals writing for the *Woman's Exponent* cited passages from 32.51 percent or 302 of the 929 Old Testament chapters; individuals writing for the *Millennial Star* drew from 56.08 percent or 521 of the 929 Old Testament chapters. This is a marked rise from Irving's findings that "fewer than one in six Old Testament chapters were drawn upon by Mormon writers."<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Irving notes that fifty-three passages account for half of all Old Testament passages used,<sup>27</sup> whereas the 48 passages used three or more times in the *Woman's Exponent* account for only 30.45 percent of the Old Testament verses used, and the 53 passages used seven or more times in the *Millennial Star* account for only 27.87 percent of the Old Testament verses used. Collectively, these data points indicate that even though Church members in the 1880s and 1890s were overall using the Old Testament less than Church members in the 1830s, they were using a greater range of Old Testament verses. Findings on how the selectivity and range of New Testament usage altered over the course of the nineteenth century are more complicated.

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25. Compared to Irving's finding that "fifteen of the thirty-nine Old Testament books provided 93 percent of all identifiable Old Testament passages used" (484).

26. Irving, "Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," 484.

27. Irving, "Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," 484.

**Table 3. Most Frequently Used Old Testament Scriptures  
in the *Millennial Star***

<b>Book</b>	<b>Chapters in Book</b>	<b>Chapters Used</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Times Used</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Times Used</b>
Genesis	50	42	<b>1:26</b>	12	<b>22:18</b>	9
			<b>1:27</b>	28	<b>49:22</b>	8
			<b>1:28</b>	15	<b>49:26</b>	12
			<b>2:17</b>	9		
Exodus	40	34	<b>4:14</b>	9	<b>20:13</b>	9
			<b>20:12</b>	8	<b>20:16</b>	9
Leviticus	27	14				
Numbers	36	14				
Deuteronomy	34	25	<b>18:22</b>	7	<b>33:16</b>	7
Joshua	24	8	<b>24:15</b>	10		
Judges	21	3				
1 Samuel	31	16				
2 Samuel	24	6	<b>12:7</b>	11	<b>12:8</b>	14
1 Kings	22	16	<b>15:5</b>	8		
2 Kings	25	11				
Job	42	19	<b>19:25</b>	10	<b>38:7</b>	10
			<b>19:26</b>	8	<b>32:8</b>	8
			<b>38:4</b>	7		
Psalms	150	68				
Proverbs	31	28	<b>29:18</b>	11		
Ecclesiastes	12	12	<b>12:7</b>	8		
Isaiah	66	55	<b>1:18</b>	8	<b>29:14</b>	30
			<b>2:2</b>	23	<b>35:8</b>	9
			<b>2:3</b>	24	<b>54:17</b>	8
			<b>8:20</b>	18	<b>60:2</b>	14
			<b>24:5</b>	34	<b>61:1</b>	8
			<b>24:6</b>	10		
Jeremiah	52	33	<b>1:5</b>	13	<b>2:13</b>	11
Ezekiel	48	24	<b>37:19</b>	9		
Daniel	12	12	<b>2:44</b>	31	<b>2:45</b>	10
Joel	3	2	<b>2:28</b>	13	<b>2:29</b>	7
Amos	9	6	<b>3:7</b>	24		
Obadiah	1	1	<b>1:21</b>	9		
Micah	7	5	<b>3:11</b>	8	<b>4:1</b>	9

Malachi	4	4	<b>3:1</b>	15	<b>4:1</b>	14
			<b>3:2</b>	10	<b>4:5</b>	21
			<b>3:3</b>	8	<b>4:6</b>	26
			<b>3:10</b>	18		

Verses used 7+ times	<b>Count</b>	689
Total 53 Verses	<b>Percentage of Old Testament</b>	27.87%

**Table 4. Most Frequently Used Old Testament Scriptures in the *Woman's Exponent***

<b>Book</b>	<b>Chapters in Book</b>	<b>Chapters Used</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Times Used</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Times Used</b>
Genesis	50	27	<b>1:3</b>	3	<b>3:16</b>	7
			<b>1:26</b>	8	<b>3:19</b>	6
			<b>1:27</b>	10	<b>22:17</b>	5
			<b>1:28</b>	11	<b>22:18</b>	3
			<b>2:18</b>	12		
Exodus	40	20	<b>20:12</b>	4	<b>20:5</b>	3
Leviticus	27	5				
Numbers	36	8				
Deuteronomy	34	9	<b>33:25</b>	3		
Joshua	24	5				
Judges	21	5	<b>5:7</b>	5		
1 Samuel	31	8	<b>15:22</b>	8	<b>17</b>	4
2 Samuel	24	6				
1 Kings	22	9				
2 Kings	25	7				
Job	42	12	<b>1:21</b>	8	<b>38:11</b>	6
			<b>13:15</b>	3		
Psalms	150	57	<b>2:1</b>	3	<b>118:24</b>	3
			<b>12:6</b>	3	<b>127:3</b>	3
			<b>76:10</b>	5		
Proverbs	31	24	<b>4:7</b>	3	<b>29:2</b>	3
			<b>16:18</b>	6	<b>31:10</b>	5
			<b>18:13</b>	3	<b>31:28</b>	5
			<b>19:17</b>	4	<b>31:31</b>	4
			<b>22:6</b>	3		

Ecclesiastes	12	8	<b>9:11</b>	3	<b>11:1</b>	5
Isaiah	66	38	<b>4:1</b>	7	<b>52:7</b>	3
			<b>25:6</b>	5	<b>55:8</b>	5
			<b>35:1</b>	11	<b>55:9</b>	6
			<b>45:22</b>	3		
Jeremiah	52	10				
Ezekiel	48	3				
Daniel	12	8	<b>2:44</b>	4	<b>2:45</b>	4
Joel	3	1				
Amos	9	3	<b>3:7</b>	5	<b>6:1</b>	3
Micah	7	3	<b>4:11</b>	5		
Malachi	4	3	<b>3:1</b>	4	<b>3:16–17</b>	4
	Verses used 3+ times		<b>Count</b>			239
	Total 48 Verses		<b>Percentage of Old Testament</b>			30.45%

To help us look more closely at the New Testament, I offer three additional tables. Table 5 first lists the books in the New Testament and the number of times passages from each book appeared in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*. The second figure given shows this number as a percentage of the total number of biblical passages in that periodical between 1880 and 1900. The third figure given is the percentage of the total number of New Testament passages in that periodical. For the *Millennial Star*, we find that Matthew is cited most frequently, accounting for 14.23 percent of all biblical passages or 19.16 percent of all New Testament passages, followed by John at 10.26 percent or 13.81 percent, Acts at 7.5 percent or 10.1 percent, 1 Corinthians at 5.44 percent or 7.32 percent, and Luke at 5.21 percent or 7.02 percent. For the *Woman's Exponent*, Matthew is again the most frequently quoted, accounting for 19.39 percent of all biblical passages or 29.59 percent of all New Testament passages. After that, though, the order is reversed with Luke coming in next at 8.86 percent or 13.52 percent, then John at 7.06 percent or 10.78 percent, followed by Revelation at 4.56 percent or 6.96 percent and 1 Corinthians at 4.12 percent or 6.29 percent. The greater use of Luke in the *Woman's Exponent* may be attributed to Luke's inclusion of more women in his Gospel as well as the more compassionate image of Jesus that he offers. For instance, Jesus's statement "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), recorded only in Luke, is the second most frequently cited passage in the *Woman's Exponent*.

**Table 5. *Woman's Exponent and Millennial Star*  
New Testament Usage by Books**

<b>Book</b>	<b><i>Woman's Exponent 1880–99</i></b>			<b><i>Millennial Star 1880–99</i></b>		
	<b>Number of Uses</b>	<b>Percent of Bible</b>	<b>Percent of New Testament</b>	<b>Number of Uses</b>	<b>Percent of Bible</b>	<b>Percent of New Testament</b>
Matthew	442	19.39%	29.59%	1368	14.23%	19.16%
Mark	80	3.51%	5.35%	334	3.47%	4.68%
Luke	202	8.86%	13.52%	501	5.21%	7.02%
John	161	7.06%	10.78%	986	10.26%	13.81%
Acts	54	2.37%	3.61%	721	7.50%	10.10%
Romans	60	2.63%	4.02%	313	3.26%	4.38%
1 Corinthians	94	4.12%	6.29%	523	5.44%	7.32%
2 Corinthians	26	1.14%	1.74%	89	0.93%	1.25%
Galatians	20	0.88%	1.34%	155	1.61%	2.17%
Ephesians	34	1.49%	2.28%	246	2.56%	3.44%
Philippians	13	0.57%	0.87%	53	0.55%	0.74%
Colossians	2	0.09%	0.13%	43	0.45%	0.60%
1 Thessalonians	15	0.66%	1.00%	38	0.40%	0.53%
2 Thessalonians	3	0.13%	0.20%	46	0.48%	0.64%
1 Timothy	9	0.39%	0.60%	64	0.67%	0.90%
2 Timothy	17	0.75%	1.14%	180	1.87%	2.52%
Titus	0	0.00%	0.00%	14	0.15%	0.20%
Philemon	0	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.01%	0.01%
Hebrews	39	1.71%	2.61%	296	3.08%	4.15%
James	52	2.28%	3.48%	180	1.87%	2.52%
1 Peter	31	1.36%	2.07%	159	1.65%	2.23%
2 Peter	6	0.26%	0.40%	99	1.03%	1.39%
1 John	22	0.97%	1.47%	142	1.48%	1.99%
2 John	7	0.31%	0.47%	12	0.12%	0.17%
3 John	0	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.01%	0.01%
Jude	1	0.04%	0.07%	26	0.27%	0.36%
Revelation	104	4.56%	6.96%	551	5.73%	7.72%



Tables 6 and 7 provide increasingly detailed information as they list the New Testament passages cited most frequently in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman's Exponent*, respectively. In the pages of the *Millennial Star*, every chapter in the New Testament except for four appeared at least once. While this indicates that greater coverage of the New Testament was occurring at the end of the nineteenth century, writers continued to rely heavily on certain scriptures. For instance, in the 1830s, “eighteen of the twenty-seven New Testament books account for 94 percent of all New Testament passages”;<sup>28</sup> however, between 1880 and 1900 in the *Millennial Star*, 18 books account for 96.74 percent of all New Testament scriptures used, and in the *Woman's Exponent*, 18 books account for 98.13 percent. Thus, 7 books—Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude—are used very rarely no matter the decade or publication. Yet, notably, each of the books does appear at some point within the pages of the *Millennial Star*. When we turn to statistics on individual passages, we find that members of the Church used a wider array of passages in the 1880s and 1890s than they did in the 1830s.<sup>29</sup> While Irving reports that 59 passages account for more than half of all the New Testament passages used in the 1830s,<sup>29</sup> in the 1880s and 1890s, the 52 New Testament passages used 5 or more times in the *Woman's Exponent* account for only 31.06 percent of the verses, and the 59 New Testament verses used 15 or more times in *Millennial Star* account for only 28.34 percent.

**Table 6. Most Frequently Used New Testament Scriptures in the *Millennial Star***

	Chapters in Book	Chapters Used	Passage	Times Used	Passage	Times Used
Matthew	28	28	<b>3:15</b>	30	<b>15:9</b>	19
			<b>6:10</b>	28	<b>16:18</b>	29
			<b>6:33</b>	32	<b>24:14</b>	49
			<b>7:20</b>	18	<b>28:19</b>	37
			<b>7:21</b>	28		
Mark	16	16	<b>1:4</b>	20	<b>16:16</b>	76
			<b>16:15</b>	59	<b>16:17</b>	23

28. Irving, “Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s,” 480.

29. Irving, “Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s,” 480.

Easton-Flake: The Bible in the Millennial Star and the Woman's Exponent  
*The Bible in the Millennial Star and the Woman's Exponent* V 21

Luke	24	24	<b>2:14</b>	18	<b>23:34</b>	26
			<b>22:42</b>	24		
John	21	21	<b>3:5</b>	123	<b>15:16</b>	21
			<b>3:16</b>	35	<b>15:19</b>	21
			<b>3:19</b>	18	<b>17:3</b>	37
			<b>7:17</b>	52	<b>20:17</b>	25
Acts	28	28	<b>2:38</b>	92	<b>22:16</b>	21
Romans	16	16	<b>1:16</b>	39		
1 Corinthians	16	16	<b>1:27</b>	17	<b>12:28</b>	28
			<b>2:11</b>	25	<b>15:22</b>	34
			<b>12:3</b>	20	<b>15:29</b>	39
2 Corinthians	13	13				
Galatians	6	6	<b>1:8</b>	48		
Ephesians	6	6	<b>1:10</b>	23	<b>4:12</b>	28
			<b>2:20</b>	18	<b>4:13</b>	35
			<b>4:5</b>	34	<b>4:14</b>	28
			<b>4:11</b>	31		
1 Thessalonians	5	5	<b>5:21</b>	15		
2 Thessalonians	3	3				
1 Timothy	6	6				
2 Timothy	4	4	<b>3:5</b>	34	<b>4:3</b>	44
			<b>3:12</b>	27	<b>4:4</b>	26
Hebrews	13	13	<b>1:3</b>	20	<b>11:6</b>	19
			<b>5:4</b>	55		
James	5	5	<b>1:5</b>	32		
1 Peter	5	5	<b>3:18</b>	35	<b>3:20</b>	31
			<b>3:19</b>	43	<b>4:6</b>	38
2 Peter	3	3				
1 John	5	5	<b>1:7</b>	22		
Revelation	22	22	<b>14:6</b>	75	<b>18:4</b>	35
			<b>14:7</b>	43	<b>19:10</b>	22
Verses used 15+ times			<b>Count</b>	2024		
Total 59 Verses			<b>Percentage of New Testament</b>	28.34%		

**Table 7. Most Frequently Used New Testament Scriptures in the *Woman's Exponent***

	Chapters in Book	Chapters Used	Passage	Times Used	Passage	Times Used
Matthew	28	27	<b>5:05</b>	5	<b>10:29</b>	5
			<b>5:07</b>	5	<b>10:37</b>	6
			<b>5:09</b>	7	<b>11:28–30</b>	7
			<b>5:11</b>	10	<b>16:18</b>	5
			<b>5:14</b>	5	<b>18:3</b>	5
			<b>5:48</b>	7	<b>18:7</b>	5
			<b>6:9</b>	8	<b>19:14</b>	15
			<b>6:33</b>	10	<b>25:1–13</b>	14
			<b>7:5</b>	6	<b>25:21</b>	22
			<b>7:7</b>	12	<b>25:40</b>	10
			<b>7:12</b>	11	<b>26:11</b>	5
Mark	16	12	<b>7:37</b>	10	<b>16:16</b>	12
			<b>16:15</b>	10	<b>16:17</b>	9
Luke	24	23	<b>2:14</b>	15	<b>21:1–4</b>	8
			<b>6:31</b>	7	<b>22:42</b>	12
			<b>10:37</b>	5	<b>23:34</b>	18
John	21	20	<b>8:7</b>	5	<b>15:19</b>	7
			<b>14:15</b>	5	<b>21:15–17</b>	9
Acts	28	18	<b>2:38</b>	6		
Romans	16	14	<b>12:19</b>	11		
1 Corinthians	16	14	<b>2:9</b>	7	<b>13:2–3</b>	10
			<b>11:11</b>	12	<b>13:5</b>	5
2 Corinthians	13	8	<b>4:17</b>	6		
Galatians	6	5				
Ephesians	6	5	<b>4:5</b>	9		
1 Thessalonians	5	3	<b>5:21</b>	5		
2 Thessalonians	3	2				
1 Timothy	6	5				
2 Timothy	4	4				
Hebrews	13	11	<b>12:6</b>	10		
James	5	5	<b>1:5</b>	13		
1 Peter	5	5				

2 Peter	3	2				
1 John	5	4	<b>4:8</b>	5		
Revelation	22	16	<b>14:6</b>	10	<b>18:4</b>	9
			<b>14:13</b>	24		
Verses used 5+ times			<b>Count</b>		464	
Total 52 Verses			<b>Percentage of New Testament</b>		31.06%	

### Major Themes and Uses of Biblical References in the *Millennial Star* and *Woman's Exponent*

While the sources of Church members' biblical references are enlightening, likely of more interest is the analysis of the content of those passages. To identify the major themes and uses of biblical references in the 1830s, Irving used the 53 verses in the Old Testament and the 59 verses in the New Testament that accounted for more than half of the total verses cited in the periodicals in the 1830s. His analysis of these passages led him to identify the following predominant themes: gospel uniformity, millennialism, primitive Church patterns, apostasy and restoration, and the special role of Israel.<sup>30</sup> While I initially intended to follow Irving's lead and concentrate my analysis on the most frequently used verses, as I went through my thousand-plus-page findings, I realized this would be insufficient for two main reasons: First, the most frequently used verses only account for roughly a quarter of the passages used in the 1880s and 1890s. Second, the verses most commonly cited were often used to stress multiple themes or purposes, depending on the context in which they were employed. Consequently, I determined to look at each passage and record why it was specifically being used in that instance and then look for major themes. The analysis below is based on those findings. I begin with the *Millennial Star* because of its higher frequency of scripture usage over the twenty-year period studied: 9,613 passages compared to 2,282 in the *Woman's Exponent*. It is worth noting that the *Millennial Star's* greater number of scripture passages over the twenty-year period studied is in part due to it being a weekly rather than a bimonthly publication as was the *Woman's Exponent* and in part due to the greater number of articles that specifically

30. Irving, "Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," 480, 483, 486–87.

expounded on gospel topics. Not surprisingly, with almost ten times the number of scriptures being analyzed in this study than in Irving's study (11,895 compared to Irving's 1,211), the number of major scriptural trends has increased. I have divided my findings for each of the periodicals into three tiers for easier access. Tier one contains themes that account for more than 10 percent of biblical usage in each respective magazine; tier two contains themes that account for 5 to 10 percent of biblical usage; and tier three contains themes that account for 3 to 5 percent of biblical usage.

### Millennial Star Tier One

Jesus Christ is at the center of scripture usage in the *Millennial Star*, with almost 25 percent of the identified passages referring to him in some way. It is important to note, though, that most passages were identified as fitting into more than one category. For instance, Matthew 3:13–17 that relates the story of Jesus being baptized by John was tagged as teaching about both Christ and baptism. *Millennial Star* writers most frequently mentioned Christ in regard to descriptions of his nature. Many writers relied on scriptures to describe him in regard to characteristics of his mortal, physical body or to his physical body being separate from that of his Father.<sup>31</sup> Others used scriptures to highlight his specific character, including (most commonly) his forgiving nature, his exact obedience to his Father, his nature as being “not of this world,” his perfection, and his love for all mankind.<sup>32</sup> After discussions of his nature, scriptures that connect to Christ most often explained how salvation comes only through Christ, the purposes and blessings of the Atonement, the necessity of being baptized as he was, or stories about his mortal existence.<sup>33</sup> Other themes of note within these Christ-centered passages include

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31. See J. Z. Stewart, “The Godhead,” *Millennial Star* 49, no. 50 (December 12, 1887): 785–88; “A Dialogue,” *Millennial Star* 45, no. 16 (April 16, 1883): 245–47; “A Friendly Discussion,” *Millennial Star* 59, no. 32 (August 12, 1897): 497–511.

32. See “Characteristics of the Savior,” *Millennial Star* 42, no. 30 (July 26, 1880): 473–75; Edward Isaacson, “A Jew’s Reasons for Believing Jesus Christ to Be the Messiah,” *Millennial Star* 50, no. 23 (June 4, 1888): 353–58; “The Foundation of Christ’s Church,” *Millennial Star* 43, no. 11 (March 14, 1881): 161–63.

33. See Moroni Snow, “Redemption and Regeneration,” *Millennial Star* 42, no. 23 (June 7, 1880): 353–56; Hugh Findlay, “The Gospel an Antidote for the Ills of Man,” *Millennial Star* 42, no. 7 (February 16, 1880): 102–3; Charles W. Stayner, “The King of Kings,” *Millennial Star* 43, no. 9 (February 28, 1881): 129–31.

the Second Coming, resurrection through Christ, and prophets and apostles receiving authority from Christ and speaking for Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps because the *Millennial Star's* primary objective was to share the gospel and uplift and teach members of the Church of Jesus Christ who were often relatively new converts, scriptures found their second most frequent usage (nearly 2,000 passages) in simply being a part of writers' efforts to provide summaries of scriptural texts or explanations of gospel principles (that is, what the principles were and how they differed from other religions' beliefs). These summaries gave easy-to-understand recaps of the events within Bible stories, often without naming any purpose for providing the story.<sup>35</sup> Summaries of the lives of various prophets and important scriptural figures, including Christ's life and ministry, also appeared frequently.<sup>36</sup> Many explanations of gospel principles were for lesser-understood doctrines or doctrines that would be new or different from what converts would have been taught in their prior faith traditions. These principles included tithing, the nature of Christ and God (including that they had bodies), celestial marriage, discerning spirits (including false spirits, human spirits, and spirits possessed by demons), preexistence, foreordination, resurrection, the Creation, the sacrament, and the gathering of Israel.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes even well-known gospel principles, such as charity, temperance, and Christ as our Savior, received this summary-explanation treatment as well.

Following the mention of Christ or summaries and explanations of biblical stories and gospel doctrines, the two most frequent deployments of scriptures (with over one thousand passages apiece) were, first, to refute the arguments of persecutors of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and, second, to argue for the necessity of modern-day

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34. See Hugh Findlay, "The Gospel an Antidote for the Ills of Man," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 7 (February 16, 1880): 102–3; Moroni Snow, "Redemption and Regeneration," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 23 (June 7, 1880): 353–56; "The Foundation of Christ's Church," *Millennial Star* 43, no. 11 (March 14, 1881): 161–63.

35. See "Isaac and Rebekah," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 11 (March 15, 1886): 174–75; B. W. Williams, "The Doctrine of the Bible in Regard to Temperance," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 29 (July 18, 1887): 452–55.

36. See E. Davis, "Our Savior and His Disciples," *Millennial Star* 47, no. 48 (November 30, 1885): 753–55.

37. See "Tithing," *Millennial Star* 46, no. 15 (April 14, 1884): 232–34; Moroni Snow, "Redemption and Regeneration," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 23 (June 7, 1880): 353–56; "The Word of Wisdom," *Millennial Star* 46, no. 11 (March 17, 1884): 168–70; "Discerning of Spirits," *Millennial Star* 58, no. 47 (November 19, 1896): 749–51.

revelation and prophets. Persecutors of the Church included, but were not limited to, the press, scientists, religious leaders, and governments, usually the U.S. government. To defend themselves from persecution, Church members who wrote in the *Millennial Star* included scriptures as part of their defenses of controversial Church policies and doctrines, including polygamy, personal revelation, God and Christ having bodies, modern-day prophets, temples, the truth of the Book of Mormon, foreordination, and the priesthood. There was also a great emphasis on using scriptures to correct other religions' doctrines, especially teachings about baptism and grace.<sup>38</sup> On occasion, the *Millennial Star* would publish literature antagonistic toward the Church paired with a rebuttal to that literature.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the *Millennial Star* would also publish what were called "dialogues" between Church members and those of other faiths. The dialogues were conversations—sometimes fictional and scripted and sometimes based on actual conversations—in which the two people would debate various doctrines using numerous scriptures to legitimate their views.<sup>40</sup>

Likely because beliefs in modern-day revelation, prophecy, and prophets were among the most controversial doctrines taught by the Church of Jesus Christ, many *Millennial Star* articles addressed the reality of personal revelation, prophets and modern-day revelation, and the fulfillments of ancient prophecies. These articles used numerous scriptures to affirm that revelation is the basis of the gospel and that personal and modern-day revelation were standard in the ancient Church, even taking precedence over scripture.<sup>41</sup> Similar to their explication of revelation, writers used scriptures to demonstrate that prophets and prophecy were vital in the ancient Church as well as in the Church of Jesus

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38. See "Inconsistency among Opponents of the Truth," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 13 (March 27, 1882): 200–203; "Perverting the Scriptures," *Millennial Star* 59, no. 10 (March 11, 1897): 154–55.

39. See George Reynolds, "Objections to the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 14 (April 3, 1882): 213–15; B., "The Anti-'Mormon' Elements," *Millennial Star* 51, no. 37 (September 16, 1889): 584–88.

40. See E. H. Nye, "Letter from a 'Mormon' Elder to a Church of England Minister," *Millennial Star* 45, no. 51 (December 17, 1883): 812–14; J. H. A., "Mr. Duncan and the 'Mormons,'" *Millennial Star* 52, no. 42 (October 20, 1890): 657–60.

41. See Edward E. Brain, "Necessity of Continuous Revelation," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 22 (May 31, 1880): 337–40; W., "The 'Falling Away' from the Primitive Faith," *Millennial Star* 43, no. 4 (January 24, 1881): 51–54; John H. Kelson, "Answer to Mr. Conway's Objection to New Revelation," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 32 (August 9, 1886): 497–500.

Christ in the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Prophecy, both ancient and modern, was believed to be literally fulfilled, and many articles used scriptures to show how biblical prophecies had been fulfilled with the Restoration of the gospel or would be fulfilled soon. These prophecies included warning prophecies, prophecies about the gathering of Israel, prophecies about the Apostasy and Restoration, prophecies about blessings for the righteous, and especially prophecies about the Second Coming.<sup>43</sup>

### **Millennial Star Tier Two**

In the second tier of major scriptural trends in the *Millennial Star* are the themes of keeping the commandments and becoming a righteous Church member, baptism, the stages in the plan of salvation, and the concept of salvation itself. Writers for the *Millennial Star* frequently used scriptures to implore Church members to keep the commandments and be good members of the Church. Scriptures were an integral part of writers' exhortations for Church members to pray, pay tithing, be spiritually prepared, grow in all types of knowledge and wisdom, keep the Sabbath day holy, follow the Word of Wisdom, do good works, grow toward perfection, and be united with God and other members of the Church. Special emphasis was placed on building Zion; "building Zion" often meant that one should preach the gospel as well as provide physical assistance to others, such as the poor.<sup>44</sup> Using the scriptures to explicate the many qualities that should define a follower of Christ, writers encouraged Church members to be hardworking, serviceable, charitable, sincere, temperate, and devoted to the gospel.<sup>45</sup> Various individuals from the Bible served as examples of what to do or not do to be

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42. See R., "The Necessity of Continued Revelation," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 30 (July 25, 1887): 472–75; J. H. Paul, "Notes on the Apostasy," *Millennial Star* 59, no. 6 (February 11, 1897): 81–86.

43. See Hugh Findlay, "The Latter-day Kingdom a Necessity to the Fulfillment of Prophecy," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 16 (April 19, 1880): 244–46; C. F. Wilcox, "The Triumph of the Church," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 17 (April 24, 1882): 261; John Cooper, "The Gathering," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 8 (February 20, 1882): 116–17; Matthias F. Cowley, "Apostasy," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 13 (March 27, 1882): 197–99.

44. See A Student of Prophecy, "The Time Swiftly Approaches," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 11 (March 14, 1887): 161–65; "Preaching the Gospel," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 21 (May 23, 1887): 328–31; R., "Charity," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 28 (July 11, 1887): 440–44.

45. To teach and encourage discipleship, Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew 5–7, was particularly popular, with over 350 references.



a disciple of Christ.<sup>46</sup> Some writers used scriptures that warned against sin or chastised individuals, while others focused on the blessings individuals would receive from living the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

With over six hundred passages, baptism was the singular doctrine most commonly mentioned in the *Millennial Star* during the 1880s and 1890s. Four of the seven most frequently quoted scriptures—John 3:5, Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, and 1 Corinthians 15:29—emphasize the centrality of baptism. Writers regularly used scriptures to stress the necessity of being baptized and more pointedly of being baptized properly—by immersion, with proper priesthood authority, and followed by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.<sup>48</sup> To establish ancient precedence for the Church of Jesus Christ’s current baptismal practices, writers frequently mentioned John the Baptist and Paul.<sup>49</sup> They also used scriptures in their discussions on the symbolic nature of baptism and Christ’s role in its efficacy.<sup>50</sup> Because baptism for the dead was a highly controversial topic, writers frequently turned to scriptures to argue that first-century Christians performed baptisms for the dead and to assert that the dead were taught the gospel so that they might have the opportunity to accept it and be baptized via proxy.<sup>51</sup>

Encapsulated in the topic stages in the plan of salvation are scriptures that writers used to address premortal life, the Creation, the Fall, the spirit world after death, the Resurrection and Final Judgment, or heaven and hell. While all these stages received repeated mention, the most oft-discussed stages were premortal life, the spirit world after death, and the Resurrection and Final Judgment. Concerning premortal life, many

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46. See M. A. Youlton, “Our Model,” *Millennial Star* 45, no. 37 (September 10, 1883): 589–91; H. E. Bowring, “Shall We Be Like Them?” *Millennial Star* 48, no. 47 (November 22, 1886): 737–39.

47. See James J. Chandler, “An Exhortation and Warning to the Saints,” *Millennial Star* 48, no. 41 (October 11, 1886): 652–53; G. O., “Blessings and Responsibilities of the Gospel,” *Millennial Star* 48, no. 46 (November 15, 1886): 728–30.

48. See Scott W. Anderson, “Is Baptism Essential?” *Millennial Star* 43, no. 10 (March 7, 1881): 145–47; J. H. A., “Baptism, How and by Whom Administered,” *Millennial Star* 54, no. 24 (June 13, 1892): 376–78.

49. See J. H. A., “Remission of Sins through Baptism,” *Millennial Star* 54, no. 23 (June 6, 1892): 360–62; L. F. Monch, “The Book of Mormon, and the End of the World,” *Millennial Star* 48, no. 14 (April 5, 1886): 209–13.

50. See Charles Kelly, “Baptism,” *Millennial Star* 49, no. 1 (January 2, 1887): 1–6; “A New Tract,” *Millennial Star* 58, no. 52 (December 24, 1896): 817–22.

51. See “Baptism for the Dead,” *Millennial Star* 58, no. 1 (January 2, 1896): 10–11; J. H. A., “Baptism and Its Essentiality,” *Millennial Star* 54, no. 22 (May 30, 1892): 344–46.

writers referred to Jeremiah as an example of foreordination and evidence of life before mortality: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee" (Jer. 1:5). Christ's foreordination to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world also appeared frequently.<sup>52</sup> When discussing the spirit world after death, most writers referenced either 1 Corinthians 15:29 or 1 Peter 4:6 to explain the necessity of missionary work in the spirit world.<sup>53</sup> When discussing the Resurrection and Final Judgment, writers used scriptures to explain the differing degrees of glory among resurrected bodies and heavenly kingdoms as well as the universal nature of the Resurrection and Christ's role as redeemer and judge.<sup>54</sup>

With over 500 references, the concept of salvation itself, most often focusing on how individuals obtain salvation, matched closely the popularity of the other themes within this tier. While many writers used scriptures to explain how faith, hope, repentance, and baptism were necessary requirements for salvation,<sup>55</sup> the predominant idea discussed by a substantial margin was the necessity of combining work with grace to obtain salvation. Most popular were the scriptural accounts of Jesus Christ's and James's explanations of the principle of work in conjunction with grace (Matt. 7:21 and James 2:20).<sup>56</sup> While Christ's role as redeemer was not specifically referenced in most of these discussions, his role is mentioned implicitly through his connection to grace.

### **Millennial Star Tier Three**

Obtaining a place in the third tier of major scriptural trends in the *Millennial Star* are topics that appeared in between 350 and 500 passages, namely priesthood and proper authority, the Apostasy and Restoration, the nature of God the Father, and missionary work. The Church's

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52. See "The Lord's Own," *Millennial Star* 50, no. 13 (March 26, 1888): 200–203; Edward Stevenson, "Pre-existence of Spirits and Immortality of the Soul," *Millennial Star* 46, no. 34 (August 25, 1884): 529–32.

53. See G. O., "The Atonement," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 7 (February 15, 1886): 104–7; Edward Stevenson, "The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 23 (June 7, 1886): 366–68.

54. See O. F. Whitney, "Discourse," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 31 (August 2, 1886): 481–85; J. H. A., "Obtaining Freedom," *Millennial Star* 54, no. 27 (July 4, 1892): 424–26.

55. See G. O., "Faith and Works," *Millennial Star* 54, no. 29 (July 18, 1892): 456–58; Peter Elliot, "Conversation between a Church of England Preacher and a Young Latter-day Saint," *Millennial Star* 45, no. 39 (September 24, 1883): 611–15.

56. See Charles F. Wilcox, "All Things Governed by Law," *Millennial Star* 43, no. 32 (August 8, 1881): 502–3; "Faith without Works," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 29 (July 17, 1882): 456–58.

emphasis on priesthood and proper authority distinguished it from most other faiths in the nineteenth century. Many writers relied on scriptures to discuss the need for ordinances such as baptism to be performed by those holding proper authority.<sup>57</sup> They likewise turned to scriptures to argue that the priesthood, which enabled this proper authority, was only to be found within the Church of Jesus Christ. Scriptures were also an integral part of describing the organization of the priesthood, the keys of the priesthood, and the two types of priesthood (Aaronic and Melchizedek).<sup>58</sup> To show scriptural and historical precedence of the priesthood, writers explained that people like Adam, Noah, Moses, Elias, Abraham, Malachi, Isaac, Jacob, and the Apostles had held priesthood keys. Using these biblical individuals, writers argued for the necessity of modern-day prophets and the priesthood keys they held.<sup>59</sup>

A closely related dominant theme in the *Millennial Star* was proving the reality of the Apostasy and subsequent Restoration of Christ's church through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Validating the existence of the Apostasy was essential to establishing the need for the Restoration; consequently, *Millennial Star* authors carefully provided scriptures that not only supported the existence of the Apostasy but also provided explanations and definitions of what the Great Apostasy was.<sup>60</sup> While some writers used scriptures to show that the Apostasy and Restoration had scriptural precedence, other writers used scriptures about priesthood authority and priesthood leaders like Moses, Abraham, Elijah, and Malachi to argue that a restoration had occurred again through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>61</sup>

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57. See R., "Suggestions to Elders," *Millennial Star* 50, no. 32 (August 6, 1888): 504–7; B., "The Authority of the Elders," *Millennial Star* 57, no. 28 (July 11, 1895): 440–41.

58. See Moroni Snow, "Authority," *Millennial Star* 42, no. 54 (February 2, 1880): 68–71; Joseph F. Smith, "Restoration of the Melchisedek Priesthood," *Millennial Star* 51, no. 25 (June 24, 1889): 385–90.

59. See "Authority in the Church of Christ," *Millennial Star* 54, no. 5 (February 1, 1892): 65–69; "The Foundation of Christ's Church," *Millennial Star* 43, no. 11 (March 14, 1881): 161–63; Joseph Smith, "Priesthood," *Millennial Star* 44, no. 31 (July 31, 1882): 481–84.

60. See Thomas Y. Stanford, "The Apostasy, and Discrepancies in Christianity," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 14 (April 4, 1887): 209–15; Joseph A. A. Bunot, "Great and General Apostasy of the Churches," *Millennial Star* 45, no. 26 (June 25, 1883): 401–5.

61. See H. A. Tuckett, "Did Christ Establish a Church?" *Millennial Star* 57, no. 46 (November 14, 1895): 725–27; Edwin F. Parry, "Joseph Smith's Divine Mission," *Millennial Star* 59, no. 10 (March 11, 1897): 145–52.

Similarly, the nature of God the Father was likely a prominent scriptural theme in the *Millennial Star* because writers wanted to convey the Church's distinctive beliefs about God, namely that God has a physical body and is a separate being from Jesus Christ.<sup>62</sup> Not surprisingly, these are the aspects of God's nature most frequently mentioned in the pages of the *Millennial Star*. Writers also frequently turned to scriptures to discuss God dwelling in heaven, his role as creator and judge, and his work to bring forth the salvation of humankind.<sup>63</sup> Common characteristics attributed to God and supported by biblical passages included his consistency and dependability, his justice and mercy, his forgiveness and jealousy, his omniscience and omnipotence, and of course his great love for mankind. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," was one of the ten most frequently cited verses in the *Millennial Star*.<sup>64</sup>

Because sharing and teaching the gospel was the stated aim of the *Millennial Star*, it is not surprising to find individuals turning to the scriptures to explicitly encourage missionary work. Most biblical references to missionary work in the *Millennial Star* mention or imply its overarching importance regarding the approaching Second Coming of Christ or its status as a commandment from Christ: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).<sup>65</sup> Writers also frequently referenced events from Christ's life that showed him to be the ideal missionary and reminded readers of the biblical prophecies about the gospel being taught to every nation and the kingdom of God filling the earth.<sup>66</sup> Other themes of note that appeared in at least 200 biblical passages were the last days and the Second Coming, the nature and gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gathering of Israel and establishment of Zion.

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62. See "A Dialogue," *Millennial Star* 45, no. 16 (April 16, 1883): 245–47; A. T., "The God We Worship," *Millennial Star* 59, no. 19 (May 13, 1897): 289–91.

63. See S. W. Richards, "God and Life," *Millennial Star* 47, no. 28 (July 13, 1885): 436–39; "Sermon by President Wilford Woodruff," *Millennial Star* 51, no. 14 (April 8, 1889): 209–12; "A Fair Report," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 3 (January 17, 1887): 43–46.

64. See "The Only True God," *Millennial Star* 48, no. 41 (October 11, 1886): 648–51; A. T., "The God We Worship," *Millennial Star* 59, no. 19 (May 13, 1897): 289–91.

65. See N. T. Porter, "One Unchangeable Gospel," *Millennial Star* 56, no. 47 (November 19, 1894): 740–42; G. O., "To the Missionaries," *Millennial Star* 47, no. 23 (June 8, 1885): 360–61.

66. See "Divine Ecclesiasticism," *Millennial Star* 49, no. 22 (May 30, 1887): 337–39; "Discourse," *Millennial Star* 51, no. 23 (June 10, 1889): 353–55.

## Woman's Exponent Tier One

Turning to the *Woman's Exponent*, we find significant overlap with and variation from the *Millennial Star*. The most noteworthy variation involves the two clearly dominant purposes for employing scripture in the *Woman's Exponent*—to provide instruction for living a righteous life and to support women's advancement.

Accounting for nearly 20 percent of all scripture references in the *Woman's Exponent* (over 400 passages), the leading use of scripture in the *Woman's Exponent* was to provide instructions on how to lead a good and righteous life—a life that would presumably lead one to be saved.<sup>67</sup> Often, writers incorporated scriptures as part of their exhortations on the necessity of developing Christlike attributes such as humility, love, mercy, forgiveness, and faith.<sup>68</sup> The Christlike attribute most frequently mentioned (much more than any other attribute) was charity. Writers used scriptures to describe charity in the physical sense (giving to the poor and comforting people) and also in the sense of Christ's love for everyone (including love for enemies and persecutors).<sup>69</sup> In addition to encouraging the development of Christlike attributes, writers for the *Woman's Exponent* regularly offered advice on how to be a good member of the Church of Jesus Christ. They used scriptures to urge readers to keep the commandments, develop their talents, read scriptures, repent, be unified in the Church, keep the Sabbath day holy, resist temptation, and share the gospel message.<sup>70</sup> Writers also frequently relied on scriptures to encourage readers to trust God and to be steadfast and immovable in their devotion to God and his Church. While some writers employed scriptures to warn readers of what would occur if they did not follow the commandments of God, much more often they employed

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67. For a good overview, see Zion's Convert, "Our Character," *Woman's Exponent* 24, no. 20–21 (March 15 and April 1, 1896): 132.

68. See Ida, "Humility," *Woman's Exponent* 14, no. 11 (November 1, 1885): 81; M. A. Welch, "Forgiveness," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 24 (May 15, 1883): 188–89; Susie Stephenson, "Faith," *Woman's Exponent* 18, no. 3 (July 1, 1889): 19.

69. Emma M. Myers, "Charity," *Woman's Exponent* 16, no. 7 (September 1, 1887): 51; Mary Ellen Kimball, "True Charity," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 22 (April 15, 1882): 169; L. L. Greene Richards, "Charity and Labor," *Woman's Exponent* 28, no. 4 (July 15, 1899): 28.

70. B. M., "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 7 (September 1, 1881): 50; S. A. Fuller, "A Few Thoughts," *Woman's Exponent* 17, no. 1 (June 1, 1888): 3; Homespun, "Talk," *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 23 (May 1, 1881): 178; Mary Y. Corby, "Sympathy," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 1891): 19; Mary J. Morrison, "The Sabbath Day," *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 1 (June 1, 1884): 3.

scriptures to remind readers of the promises and blessings that awaited those who faithfully followed Christ.<sup>71</sup>

What is perhaps most intriguing from a gender perspective is that following scriptures used as instruction on living a virtuous life, writers for the *Woman's Exponent* most often employed scriptures to assert women's equality, gendered capabilities and worth, or increasing expansion into public realms. That nearly 250 references (or over 12 percent of all scripture passages) are used in the service of improving women's position is unsurprising when one remembers the *Woman's Exponent's* express focus on women and women's issues.<sup>72</sup> Writers repeatedly turned to the Creation narrative in the first chapter of Genesis or recounted Paul's words, "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11), to validate their argument that men and women are equal before God.<sup>73</sup> They also commonly used scriptures to explain what they saw as women's special responsibilities to unify, comfort, uplift, and defend the Church.<sup>74</sup> They often turned to scripture stories involving biblical women such as Eve, Ruth, Sarah, Rachel, Deborah, Miriam, and Mary to promote their ideals of Christian womanhood or their arguments for the expansion of women's sphere.<sup>75</sup> Through these scriptures, writers regularly

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71. E. B. Wells, "Relief Society Conference," *Woman's Exponent* 24, no. 22 (April 15, 1896): 142; Margaret V. Taylor, "Salt Lake Stake," *Woman's Exponent* 26, no. 17 (February 1, 1898): 246; Mary Ann M. Pratt, "The Way of the Transgressor is Hard," *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 17 (February 1, 1885): 133–34.

72. This represents 248 of 1,999 passages, or 12.4 percent. By and large, writers for the *Woman's Exponent* sought to portray Mormon women as capable, intelligent, independent agents with crucial roles to play in society and God's kingdom. They often sought to raise the status of motherhood and women's domestic labor even as they advocated expanding women's field of action. Likewise, they extolled women's unique virtues in relation to men's even as they asserted women's fundamental equality with men.

73. See L. E. H., "Woman in Politics," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 3 (July 1, 1882): 17–18; "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 16, no. 8 (September 15, 1887): 63.

74. See "Women's Meetings and Conferences," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 6 (August 15, 1890): 45–46; "Relief Society Jubilee—Relief Society," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 18 (April 1, 1892): 140–44; Elizabeth B. Smith, "Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 1 (June 1, 1890): 3; Z. D. H. Y., "A Few Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 23, nos. 9–10 (November 1 and 15, 1894): 204–5.

75. See Aunt Em [pseudonym for Emmeline B. Wells], "The Integrity of Ruth," *Woman's Exponent* 7, no. 12 (November 15, 1878): 89; Adelia B. Cox Sidwell, "Women of the Bible," *Woman's Exponent* 18, no. 17 (February 1, 1890): 136; J. E. C., "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 4 (July 15, 1883): 29; Ruby Lamont, "Sonnets of the Virgin Mary," *Woman's Exponent* 24, no. 4 (July 15, 1895): 25.

showed how women acquired influence and success as they remained pure, chaste, and good. These expressions of women's exalted piety and purity were standard fare in nineteenth-century America and Great Britain; thus, many of these writers fit nicely within the ranks of the nineteenth-century interpreters and female activists who used the Bible to illustrate the power women wielded within traditional gender behaviors and relationships and how familial roles were not limiting or disempowering but expansive.<sup>76</sup> To advocate for women having the vote and a larger role in society, writers deployed scriptural stories involving biblical women such as Deborah, Miriam, and Huldah to recall the respect women had received anciently from men and more importantly from God.<sup>77</sup>

Recognizing these two dominant themes helps explain why writers for the *Woman's Exponent* turned to the Old Testament 34.44 percent of the time while writers for the *Millennial Star* turned to the Old Testament only 22.54 percent of the time. The three books that writers for the *Woman's Exponent* used at a significantly higher rate were Genesis, Psalms, and Proverbs. The most frequently used verses in Genesis and Proverbs, focusing most often on Eve and the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31, were consistently used to assert women's worth and equality with men. The other verses cited from Proverbs provided concise teaching statements for developing a moral character, such as "Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov. 16:18) or "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). Likewise, the verses used from Psalms encouraged desired behaviors or explained attributes of the Lord. Writers for the *Woman's Exponent* appear to have cited the Old Testament at a higher frequency because it includes more examples of female role models, and the succinct verses from Psalms and Proverbs were those that many individuals in nineteenth-century America memorized as part of their daily devotions.

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76. For a more detailed look at how Latter-day Saint women were using biblical women in the *Woman's Exponent*, see Amy Easton-Flake, "Biblical Women in the *Woman's Exponent*: Nineteenth-Century Mormon Women Interpret the Bible," in *The Bible in American Life*, ed. Philip Goff, Arthur E. Farnsley II, and Peter J. Thuesen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 93–97.

77. See E. B. Wells, "Be Wise and Hearken to Counsel," *Woman's Exponent* 5, no. 11 (November 1, 1876), 84; E. B. Wells, "Wise Women," *Woman's Exponent* 8, no. 10 (October 15, 1879): 76; Ella F. Smith, "Woman's Mind Equal to Man's," *Woman's Exponent* 18, no. 22 (April 15, 1890): 177.

## Woman's Exponent Tier Two

Meriting a place in the second tier of major scriptural trends in the *Woman's Exponent* are those topics that have between 150 and 200 references associated with them, namely polygamy, Christ, defense against persecution, and the nature of humankind and their relationship with God.

Statistics on the frequency of scriptures defending polygamy are interesting because after President Wilford Woodruff issued the manifesto ending polygamy in 1890, all discussion of polygamy in the *Woman's Exponent* came to an abrupt halt. Consequently, the 174 scripture passages used to defend polygamy all occurred between 1880 and 1890 and account for 14 percent of all biblical passages during that decade. Similarly, nearly 10 percent of all editorials in the *Woman's Exponent* from 1871 until 1890 were devoted to vigorously defending the practice.<sup>78</sup> Writers of these editorials regularly turned to scriptures to show that polygamy was authorized by God and to call into question fellow Christians who denounced the Church for following God's command while still honoring biblical prophets who practiced polygamy anciently.<sup>79</sup> They also pointed to the practice of plural marriage as evidence that members of the Church were the inheritors of the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>80</sup> Worth noting is that all of these arguments may be found throughout the *Millennial Star* as well; they simply make up a smaller percentage (only 1 percent) of all scripture passages and thus did not receive prior mention.<sup>81</sup> The one scripture-based plural-marriage argument that seems distinct to women is seeing the Lord's answering of Hagar's, Sarah's, and Hannah's prayers as evidence of his divine approval of plural marriage and his watchful care over plural wives both

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78. Carol-Cornwall Madsen, "Voices in Print: The *Woman's Exponent*, 1872–1914," in *Women Steadfast in Christ: Talks Selected from the 1991 Women's Conference* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 72.

79. "Mormonism Will Live," *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 20 (March 15, 1881): 156; Mary J. Morrison, "Celestial Marriage," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 17 (February 1, 1882): 135; Mary Ann Merrill Pratt, "Views on Plural Marriage," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 13 (December 1, 1886): 97–98; Sarah Sudweeks, "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 16 (January 15, 1887): 124–25.

80. See "A Few Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 6, no. 1 (June 1, 1877), 3; Mary Ann M. Pratt, "Scripture Testimony for Plural Marriage," *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 13 (December 1, 1884), 99.

81. Ninety-two out of 8,773 scriptures in the *Millennial Star* reference polygamy.



in ancient times and in the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup> The marked disparity in frequency between the two publications underlines differences in audience, authors, and purposes of the two periodicals. Writers for the *Woman's Exponent* viewed the journal as a place for them to defend and promote their religious faith and way of life. It could be said that the *Woman's Exponent* focused more on the practical and the *Millennial Star* more on the theoretical. Antipolygamy legislation and sentiments had a very tangible impact on women's lives in the Mountain West; consequently, defending polygamy and their freedom to worship how they chose was at the forefront of the journal.

When we turn to the two middle-tier themes that were also prevalent in the *Millennial Star*, important distinctions between how writers in the *Woman's Exponent* and writers in the *Millennial Star* employed scriptures become clearer. For instance, looking at scriptures that speak to the theme of persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ, we find that writers in the *Millennial Star* most often used scriptures to argue that the Church's position on a number of different issues was correct. In contrast, with the exception of polygamy, a reliance on scriptures to defend the Church against specific attacks is noticeably absent in the *Woman's Exponent*. Instead, writers within the *Woman's Exponent* most often employed scriptures to comfort those who were facing persecution. These writers turned to scriptures to show how persecution was an indication of the truthfulness of the Church and a sign that its members were God's chosen people.<sup>83</sup> Scriptures readily illustrated that Satan was at the source of persecution, that persecution was a sign of the times, and that God was aware of his people's plight and would avenge them.<sup>84</sup> Writers regularly cited scriptures that encouraged readers to exercise an active faith and to recognize that God is leading his Church and will

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82. Amy Easton-Flake, "Biblical Women in the *Woman's Exponent*," 97–98. For primary examples, see Sarah A. Fullmer, "Our Franchise," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 24 (May 15, 1883): 185; A Plural Wife, "My Views on Celestial, Plural Marriage," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 15 (January 1, 1887): 115.

83. See A Plural Wife, "Thoughts on the Times," *Woman's Exponent* 14, no. 17 (February 1, 1886): 131; Susannah Heiner, "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 143.

84. See Lula, "A View—February 1885," *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 18 (February 15, 1885): 141; M. A. P. Hyde, "A Woman's Testimony," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 22 (April 15, 1884): 169–70; One Who Knows, "Comments," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 2 (June 15, 1882): 9–10; Ruth, "An Emphatic Protest," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 7 (September 1, 1886): 51.

make everything right in the end.<sup>85</sup> In comparison to the writers for the *Millennial Star*, writers for the *Woman's Exponent* seemed much more interested in providing their readers solace for the persecution they faced than defending themselves against the persecution they received for particular beliefs.

Similar distinctions are found in the way writers in the *Woman's Exponent* versus writers in the *Millennial Star* used scriptures to discuss Christ. While scriptures about Christ in the *Millennial Star* most frequently expounded on Christ's nature and life or how he makes salvation possible, scriptures in the *Woman's Exponent* most frequently focused on the role Christ played in individuals' lives as a model, mentor, and enabler.<sup>86</sup> Writers in the *Woman's Exponent* regularly used scriptures to embolden their readers to follow Christ's teachings and strive to emulate him. Using Christ's example as recorded in the scriptures, they encouraged readers to imitate the Savior in his communion with God, his treatment of others, his eschewing of all temptations, his path of perfection, his longsuffering, and his willingness to submit his will to God's.<sup>87</sup> Charity was the most frequently discussed characteristic of Christ, as writers habitually emphasized Christ's example in the scriptures to encourage readers to display greater kindness and charity, at times toward specific situations or groups of people and at times as general guidance of righteous living.<sup>88</sup> Writers repeatedly cited scriptures to implore readers to look forward to Christ's Second Coming and to be ready for his return.<sup>89</sup> At times, writers also included scriptures to teach of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and divinity, but these

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85. "Some Important Matters," *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 24 (May 15, 1885): 188; M. Holden, "A Few Evening Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 14, no. 11 (November 1, 1885): 81.

86. Camelia, "Passing Thoughts," *Woman's Exponent* 22, no. 4 (September 1, 1893): 27; Zion's Convert, "The Good Shepherd," *Woman's Exponent* 26, no. 7 (September 1, 1897): 188; Mary Y. Corby, "Sympathy," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 1891): 19.

87. Mary Y. Corby, "Communion," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 17 (March 15, 1892): 129; Zion's Convert, "Food for Thought," *Woman's Exponent* 21, no. 3 (August 1, 1892): 22–23; M. E. Kimball, "The Gifts of the Gospel," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 22 (May 15, 1891): 171.

88. Mary Y. Corby, "Lord, Is It I?" *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 7 (October 1, 1891): 55; "The Present Conditions," *Woman's Exponent* 22, no. 15 (April 1, 1894): 116; "The Relief Society Jubilee," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 14 (January 15 and February 1, 1892): 108.

89. Mary Ann M. Pratt, "The Coming of the Savior," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 4 (July 15, 1890): 32; Zion's Convert, "Reflections of a Pioneer," *Woman's Exponent* 26, no. 11–12 (November 1 and 15, 1897): 211.

instances were in the minority.<sup>90</sup> Conversely, writers for the *Millennial Star* did use scriptures to implore readers to follow Christ's example and to teach of the purposes and blessings of the Atonement, but these instances did not constitute the majority of scriptures regarding Christ. Likely in part because the *Millennial Star* was geared to new converts and the *Woman's Exponent* to female members living in the Mountain West, writers for the *Millennial Star* were often more interested in expounding on the nature of Christ and teaching the faith's understandings of him while writers for the *Woman's Exponent* were more invested in how Christ's example could compel readers toward greater sanctification.

This significant distinction in each publication's emphasis to focus more on fundamental ideas and doctrine (*Millennial Star*) or personal application (*Woman's Exponent*) comes through again in the last topic to merit a place in the second tier of the *Woman's Exponent's* scriptural themes: the nature of humankind and its relationship with God. Scriptures in this category most often emphasized the blessings individuals receive from God, the protection and love God offers humankind, the superior wisdom and knowledge God possesses, and humanity's divine potential to become like God.<sup>91</sup> Possessing this recognition of God's love, blessings, and plan for humankind, writers in turn regularly used scriptures to encourage readers to trust God and submit to his will.<sup>92</sup> The emphasis of this topic is clearly on how an understanding of God through the scriptures enables and motivates individuals to interact with him appropriately. In contrast, the related, yet significantly distinct, topic that appeared regularly in the *Millennial Star* was the nature of God, explicating the Church's teachings about God that were either similar to or distinct from other religious traditions.

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90. Phebe C. Young, "Christmas," *Woman's Exponent* 14, no. 14 (December 15, 1885): 105; Mary Y. Corby, "Sympathy," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 1891): 19.

91. M. E. Kimball, "What of the Opposite Element," *Woman's Exponent* 16, no. 6 (August 15, 1887): 45; S. A. Fullmer, "Woman's Voice," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 21 (April 1, 1883): 167; Emily B. Spencer, "The Opposing Party," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 18 (February 15, 1882): 144; M. E. Kimball, "Reflections on the Past," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 11 (December 1, 1891): 86, 84 (article continued from page 86 to 84, which was mislabeled also as page 86).

92. Eliza Woods Wallin, "In Memoriam," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 6 (August 15, 1881): 45; "Elizabeth Howard," *Woman's Exponent* 21, no. 18 (March 15, 1893): 140-41; "Agitation Is Educational," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 1891): 20.

### Woman's Exponent Tier Three

The last scriptural trends we will discuss are the two topics—the last days and the Second Coming, and children and parenting—that had between 70 and 100 passages associated with them. Known as *Latter-day Saints*, the writers of the *Woman's Exponent* believed that they were living in the last days and must prepare for the Second Coming.<sup>93</sup> They cited scriptures that explained the signs and nature of the Second Coming in order to help and inspire readers to prepare for this event.<sup>94</sup> Many of the scriptural references quoted in the *Woman's Exponent* indicated that prophecies about the Second Coming were being fulfilled, specifically prophecies about the destruction and devastation of the earth and the decay of people and society.<sup>95</sup> Writers frequently used scriptures as evidence that the current gathering in Utah was the foretold restoration of Zion, and they encouraged readers to become the beacon on the hill.<sup>96</sup> Some writers also used scriptures to emphasize the special role they believed women had in preparing the Saints and the earth for the Second Coming.<sup>97</sup>

In the *Woman's Exponent*, writers often discussed children, sometimes giving advice on how to properly raise them and other times

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93. See Jemima, "Thoughts," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 23 (May 1, 1882): 179; Elizabeth B. Smith, "Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 1 (June 1, 1890): 3; Mary Ann M. Pratt, "The Coming of the Savior," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 4 (July 15, 1890): 32; "R. S., Y. L. M. I. A., and P. A. Reports—Emery Stake," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 11 (December 1, 1891): 84; Matthew 25:1–13 (parable of the ten virgins).

94. See M. E. Kimball, "The True Church," *Woman's Exponent* 11, no. 2 (June 15, 1882): 15; "The Times Are Significant," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 8 (September 15, 1886): 60; "The Year of Grace 1891," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 14 (January 1, 1891): 108.

95. See Aunt Em, "The Days of Our Grandmothers," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 6 (August 15, 1881): 47; Frances B. Hart, "Fulfillment of Prophecy," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 22 (April 15, 1882): 173; Mary J. Morrison, "Destruction and Desolation Yet to Come," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 16 (January 15, 1884): 122; M. E. K., "Are We Worthy?" *Woman's Exponent* 24, no. 14 (December 15, 1895): 90; "The Comet," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 3 (July 1, 1881): 20; Mary Ann M. Pratt, "Things of Reality Dictated by the Spirit of Truth," *Woman's Exponent* 16, no. 21 (April 1, 1888): 161; "The Times Are Significant," *Woman's Exponent* 15, no. 8 (September 15, 1886): 60.

96. "Jubilee Celebration," *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1880): 20; Hannah T. King, "The City of the Saints," *Woman's Exponent* 10, no. 17 (February 1, 1882): 129.

97. See A Member, "Utah County Silk Association," *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 56; Elizabeth B. Smith, "Reflections," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 1 (June 1, 1890): 3; Mary Ann M. Pratt, "The Coming of the Savior," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 4 (July 15, 1890): 32.

emphasizing their great worth. At times writers incorporated scriptures into these discussions of children and parenting. Most often these scriptures reminded women of their responsibility to guide, protect, and teach their children.<sup>98</sup> At times, writers used scriptures to comfort women and buoy them up in their difficult task and other times to remind them that God would hold them accountable for teaching their children the gospel.<sup>99</sup> The most common refrain regarding children, though, was to see them and treat them as Christ did: “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14).<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

Taking a step back to see what conclusions we may draw from a close, in many ways statistical, analysis of scripture usage in the *Millennial Star* and the *Woman’s Exponent*, we may reasonably conclude that distinctions along gender lines do exist. Women, as shown in the *Woman’s Exponent*, were more apt to turn to scriptures for practical purposes—to acquire instruction for daily living, to bolster their position as women, to find comfort and solace, and to inspire greater effort through learning from Christ’s example. In contrast, men, as shown in the *Millennial Star*, were more apt to use scriptures to establish an understanding of various faith tenets, such as an understanding of Christ, God, baptism, prophets, prophecies, revelation, priesthood, apostasy, restoration, and the plan of salvation. To say that women did not write about these distinguishing Church doctrines would be inaccurate, since scriptures relating to these doctrines do appear throughout the pages of the *Woman’s Exponent*. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to say that men did not use the scriptures to provide instructions on daily living and other practical purposes, since scriptures speaking to these purposes appear frequently throughout the *Millennial Star*. However, the vast statistical

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98. Helen Mar Whitney, “Scenes in Nauvoo, and Incidents from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 9 (October 1, 1883): 71; Zina D. H. Young, “To the Sisters,” *Woman’s Exponent* 22, no. 19 (June 15, 1894): 148; see D. E. Dudley, “Home,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13, no. 20 (March 15, 1885): 155.

99. Mary Ann M. Pratt, “Training Children,” *Woman’s Exponent* 16, no. 11 (November 1, 1887): 81; Hannah T. King, “Babyhood,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9, no. 8 (September 15, 1880): 62; K. L. C., “Scattered Thoughts,” *Woman’s Exponent* 17, no. 17 (February 1, 1889): 131.

100. The Standard, “The Baby,” *Woman’s Exponent* 19, no. 16 (February 15, 1891): 125; Ida May Smith, “Benefits of Primary Association,” *Woman’s Exponent* 19, no. 6 (August 15, 1890): 48.

discrepancies between occurrences of these various scripture usages indicate distinctions along gender lines, thus reconfirming the necessity of bringing women's employment of scriptures into any study that seeks to understand how individuals read scriptures.

Distinctions in scripture usage between the *Woman's Exponent* and the *Millennial Star* also indicate that lay members of the Church of Jesus Christ—whether they be men or women—were not simply repeating the exegesis of their Church leaders but instead were using the Bible to address their own needs and situations—to affirm life decisions, to gain comfort, to understand and promote a devout life, and to explain the doctrines of the faith they chose to follow. So while the male leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has produced the majority of recorded biblical interpretation and has had a great influence on the way members of the Church interpret and use the scriptures, there is still a great need for studies such as this that seek to access lay members' use of scripture so that we may begin to uncover and realize the significance of scriptures in the lives of the Latter-day Saint people and how that looks different across time, location, gender, and age.

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