Mormonism and War: An Interpretative Analysis of Selected Mormon Thought Regarding Seven American Wars

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MORMONISM AND WAR: AN INTERPRETATIVE
ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MORMON THOUGHT
REGARDING SEVEN AMERICAN WARS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
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Master of Arts

by
Robert Jeffrey Stott
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

War is a recurring phenomenon that man--master of the atom and conqueror of the universe--has yet to overcome. Thus the relationship of war to man has been the topic of numerous scholarly works. Moreover, the incongruent relationship that war has had with the Christian philosophy has similarly received a great deal of scholarly attention. Yet even in the voluminous works exploring the inexplicable involvement of the Christian with war, little attention has been given to the relationship of war to a particular Christian sect, the Mormons. For the most part, the impact of violence upon the Mormon mind has been a subject which has evaded scholarly endeavor.

The exceptions to this observation are few in number and generally lack the in-depth treatment that such a problem deserves. Mormon historian B. H. Roberts deals with the Church's involvement in three American wars, but his work is basically a defense of the Church, and therefore does not deal with the deeper philosophical problems suggested here.\(^1\)

\(^1\)B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 6 vol. (Salt Lake: Deseret News Press, 1930).
Another Mormon, Klaus Hansen, has written a work entitled *Quest for Empire,*\(^2\) which defines the Mormon idea of the Kingdom of God. Hansen contends that the Kingdom was political in nature, and that through it the Mormons were preparing for the imminent coming of Christ who would then become a political ruler. Even though Hansen's work has been pivotal in Mormon historiography, he does not deal adequately with the scriptural references to the "wars and rumors of war" which were also an integral part of the Mormon mind in the struggle to build the Kingdom. William E. Berrett and Alma Burton have only touched upon the problem in their *Readings in L.D.S. Church History.* They attempt a definitive analysis of the Mormon attitude toward war, but their book lacks the historical methodology that such a study requires.\(^3\) Stephen L. Richards, a Mormon apostle, has written a work entitled *The Church in War and Peace,* an excellent source for interpreting Mormon thought during World War Two.\(^4\) But like the Barrett and Burton volume, his work also lacks historical methodology and comprehensiveness, and thus becomes an unsatisfactory analysis of the total Mormon attitude toward war.


Two politically oriented works have also attempted to deal with the Mormon attitude concerning war. The first, Jerreld Newquist's *Prophets, Principles, and National Survival*, is a narrative that, for the most part, lacks historical objectivity, and is essentially a compilation of quotations supporting the author's own political bias. Therefore, the chapter on "War and Peace" is not of much use to the discerning scholar.\(^5\) The other work, Richard Vetterli's *The Constitution by a Thread*, is similarly biased, as the author uses only selected sources to support his own political views.\(^6\)

A few additional works have treated some aspects of the Mormon attitude toward war. In his article "Utah and the Civil War," Gustive O. Larson suggests that the Mormons were neither hot nor cold for the union,\(^7\) but it remained for Boyd Eddins in his Master's thesis to tell why; he presents a fine analysis of the role of the Kingdom of God in Mormon Civil War thought.\(^8\) In addition, Louis G. Reinwand has studied the overall millennial thought of the Church, and in one chapter puts the Civil War in that

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perspective.\(^9\) James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan devote a brief chapter to LDS attitudes toward World Wars I and II, but they present little in-depth analysis of the real philosophical issues.\(^10\) Allen, in a recent essay on twentieth century Mormonism, has also dealt briefly with the LDS dilemma caused by the Vietnam war.\(^11\) Perhaps the most complete analysis of recent problems concerning war and Mormon thought, is a compilation by Gordon Thomasson entitled, War, Conscription, Conscience, and Mormonism. This volume brings together a series of essays by various Mormon scholars and students showing the dilemma many of them faced with regard to American involvement in the Vietnam affair.\(^12\) Nevertheless, the Thomasson volume is similar to the rest of the above mentioned material, as it deals only with one of the many American wars.

Thus, it is because of the various inadequacies of these earlier works that this essay will attempt to bring


\(^12\)Gordon Thomasson, War, Conscription, Conscience, and Mormonism, (Santa Barbara: Mormon Heritage Publication, 1971).
together the Mormon attitude toward the several American
wars in one consistent interpretative study. More speci-
ically, the study is, for the most part, an interpretative
analysis of the thoughts of Mormon leaders, the General
Authorities of the Church, who expressed their views during
given wars. It should not, therefore, be considered a defi-
nitive study of the overall intellectual framework with
which the Mormons viewed war, but as a study restricted to
thoughts expressed during times of war.

Each chapter, then, reveals different interpretations that Mormon leaders have given to America's involve-
ment in specific wars. The concluding chapter attempts to
draw each separate analysis into a meaningful whole, analyzing some of the reasons that may have stimulated the various
interpretations.

Yet when one speaks of "interpretations," rather
than "interpretation," it is apparent that a homogeneity
in Mormon wartime thought is lacking, and therein lies the
significance of this study--especially for Mormon readers.
There is seemingly a general assumption among Mormons and
non-Mormons alike, that LDS Church leaders are generally
unified in their public declarations. And Mormons, espe-
cially, look for consistency between such statements.13

13 Some loyal Mormons tend to base their faith on
the assumption of such consistency. That this is not neces-
sarily a requirement however, is shown in James B. Allen,
"Personal Faith and Public Policy: Some Timely Observa-
tions on the League of Nations Controversy in Utah," BYU
Studies, 14 (Autumn 1973), pp. 77-98.
It is a valuable exercise, therefore, to determine the degree to which such a fundamental attitude as that toward war can vary from generation to generation, as well as among the leaders of those generations. Consequently, this study will show that the statements made during any particular war held meaning only for that war and to the specific circumstances that may have surrounded the Church in that moment of history.

The classical Christian mind has tended to place either one of three interpretations on war: pacifism, justness, or righteousness. Consequently, Christian participation or non-participation in that war has ultimately hinged on the particular choice of interpretations. The classical choice of pacifism has required a sense of aloofness with an accompanying renunciation of politics and war. Participation, on the other hand, came from one of two beliefs: the war could be interpreted as "just"—meaning that the war was being waged for the vindication of justice and the restoration of peace, or it could be interpreted as "holy, a crusade being waged under the auspices of God."

This has not been so with the Mormons. The opinions

15 Ibid., pp. 28-29. 16 Ibid., p. 33.
17 Ibid., p. 44.
of the various General Authorities which will be cited suggest that Mormons have utilized all three of these interpretations in any one war, and although they seemingly perceived each war differently, some found a transcending religiosity in each of the American wars—a religiosity which had a tendency to combine the classical positions of "just" and "holy." Therefore, some Mormons found themselves supporting American war as righteous struggles in the eyes of God. Yet others assumed the antithetical position of support—aloofness and pacifism. A war then, could be both virtuous and immoral, supported and decried, all at the same time. Therefore, the Mormon wartime mind, if judged by the opinions of the leaders of the Church, was ambivalent.

The first indication of the ambivalence is found in the books of Mormon scripture, particularly the **Book of Mormon** and the **Doctrine and Covenants**. Their scriptures are replete with references to war and peace and have been used by Mormon authorities to interpret every American war. Yet, as explained above, a Mormon leader could be influenced by many circumstances not mentioned in the scriptures, and consequently his interpretation of LDS writ often reflected those circumstances as well. Thus, one Mormon leader might very well proclaim peace, charity, and love as explained in the 98th Section of the **Doctrine and Covenants** which reads "renounce war and proclaim peace,"\(^{18}\) or he

similarly might read "sue for peace . . . unto all the ends of the earth." Conversely, another Mormon leader during the same war could turn to the Book of Mormon in support of a militant position. The ancient Mormon prophet Nephi could be interpreted as always being prepared for war. Likewise, the Book of Mormon prophet Jarom could be construed as militant when he desired his people to construct "the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war." This ambivalence towards militance is similarly reflected by Joseph Smith, the man who claimed that these scriptures had been revealed to him. Smith displayed this ambivalent attitude when he led Zion's Camp in its abortive attempt to capture Jackson County Missouri, and again, in two nationally circulated pamphlets which he wrote. Concerning Zion, Smith wrote that it was not to be taken by blood; rather it was to be purchased, as the Mormons were "forbidden to shed blood." If blood were shed, Smith prophesied that enemies would swarm upon and scourge the Mormons, driving them "from city to city." Yet after the Mormons were driven from Missouri, Smith proclaimed that

19 Ibid., 105:38-39.
20 Joseph Smith, The Book of Mormon, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920), II Nephi 5:14. Hereafter cited as B of M.
21 Ibid., Jarom 1:8, 9. See also Alma 2:1-31.
the Mormons should not give up their attempts to retake Zion, even until death. On another occasion he argued that the Mormons should "go to live or die on our own lands . . . [and should] pursue this object until it is accomplished." Displaying a thorough knowledge of Manifest Destiny, Smith attempted to use that national mood for his own ends: if America could obtain foreign real estate, the Mormons would then have a place to emigrate, delivering themselves from persecution. Subsequently, Smith contended that the "contiguous territories" of the United States honorably belonged to America. "Let the Union spread from the east to the west sea" proclaimed Smith, and then the liberties found in the United States could be extended to Texas, Oregon, and Mexico. Once those lands had been subdued, Smith militaristically contended that the "iron eyes of power, in the form of a navy" or even an army of 100,000 men could be utilized to protect that newly acquired territory.

Contrary to the Manifest Destiny impulse was Smith's

23 The Millennial Star, 15 (Manchester England: April 1853), p. 262. (Hereafter cited as M.S.)
26 Ibid., pp. 275-277. 27 Ibid., p. 206.
28 Ibid., pp. 275-277.
Alter ego--his pacifism. Thus his desire to spread liberty was not based upon perceived aggressive desires, but upon his belief that the whole world belonged to "one great family." Mankind, Smith declared, was a brotherhood in a universe where peace should reign supreme. Therefore, each time Smith referred to a seemingly aggressive act, he often countered it with an equivalent pacifistic dictum. Each time he referred to this army of 100,000, he often referred to its being an army of peace. On the one hand Smith was a militant expansionist expounding a national sense of destiny for the Mormon concept of the Kingdom of God. On the other, he was a Christian pacifist proclaiming "universal peace, goodwill and union, and brotherly love to all the great family of man." 

Joseph Smith, being the first Mormon prophet and revelator, may have established an ambivalent philosophical or doctrinal precedent for subsequent Mormon leaders. Cause and effect, however, are sometimes not so easily established, and setting Joseph Smith's ideas as a precedent for those who followed him perhaps is one such instance. Nevertheless, the first major American war that provoked a similar antinomy in Mormon wartime thought was the Mexican War of 1846, a mere two years after Joseph Smith's death.

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29 Ibid., p. 208.  
30 Ibid., p. 275.  
31 Ibid., p. 275.
CHAPTER II

MIGRATION AND THE WAR WITH MEXICO

Strike for Zion down with error; Flash the sword above the foe;
Every stroke disarms a foe-man, every step we conq'ring go.

From a Mormon Hymn

Following the assassination of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young became the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Nevertheless, since Smith had incorporated his expansionism and sense of Manifest Destiny into a prophetic declaration, it lingered on in spite of his death. Perhaps it was the failure of Zion's Camp that caused Smith to reevaluate the location of Zion, because he no longer contended that Jackson County, Missouri was the only place of that Zion. The prophets, Smith came to declare

have spoken and written on it [the place of Zion];
but I will make a proclamation that will cover a broader ground. The whole of America is Zion itself from the North to the South . . .

When this prophetic use of "Manifest Destiny" survived the first Mormon prophet, Brigham Young quickly realized its implications--Mormon expansionism.

The Mormons at one time had irrationally believed that Texas would be the place of their New Jerusalem,

1H.O.C., II, p. 275.
particularly the disputed area lying between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers.\textsuperscript{2} As disputed territory, however, the Mormons postulated that access to the land could be gained only by sending between one and five thousand soldiers to help the infant Texan Republic settle the dispute. Orson Hyde went so far as to suggest that the Mormons make "one tremendous push upon Mexico" and subdue the "whole country."\textsuperscript{3} To do so, Hyde maintained, would place them in a favorable position with Sam Houston who would return the favor by giving the Mormons the territory "which God [had designed] to give to his Saints."\textsuperscript{4} Brigham Young, however, had come to realize that Texas would be "square in the path of empire," and consequently decided upon another location for the new home of the Church.\textsuperscript{5}

Cognizant of the national sentiment for expansion, Young

\textsuperscript{2}Hansen, op. cit., p. 83.

\textsuperscript{3}Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, April 30, 1844. Letter found in the Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter cited as Journal History.

\textsuperscript{4}Hansen, op. cit., p. 85. Hyde however reflects a similar ambivalence to that found in Joseph Smith. Hyde continues his letter by suggesting that the Mormons purchase, rather than conquer, the lands in question. If taken peacefully Hyde argued, the Mormons would then "have a delightful soil and climate" and an opportunity to extend their settlement into California. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, Journal History, April 30, 1844. This was harmonious with the scriptures which stated that Zion was to be purchased rather than taken by blood. D & C 63:29-31.

\textsuperscript{5}Bernard DeVoto, Year of Decision, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company), p. 90.
wrote to Jesse Little, an LDS mission president in Washington, asking him to negotiate with President Polk for some form of governmental assistance that would assist the Mormons in immigration. "Take every honorable advantage of the time" counseled Young, "that might facilitate Mormon migration."  

The times, of course, brought war, and war brought the call of the Mormon Battalion, assistance which was requested by the Mormons themselves, perhaps as a follow up to Smith's and Young's attempts to utilize Manifest Destiny for Mormon purposes. The Mormons came to realize that in times of war "the laws of nations" made expansion justified. Moreover, and to the delight of the Mormons, the government had called upon them to undertake that expansion, "giving them the perfect right to go there."  

The battalion had been called, they believed, to precede the children of God through the desert. The request was effected by the "interposition of that all-wise 

7Hansen, op. cit., p. 116.  
8Roberts, op. cit., VIII p. 87. It should be pointed out that the Mormons were going to march into that foreign owned territory with or without war. There were even a number of Mormons who had sailed around the Horn, making their way by ship, to Mexican held California. Under the leadership of Sam Brannan, the shipboard battalion held military drill on the long lonely nights at sea, preparing for any resistance that may have arisen from Mexican inhabitants in California. When resupplying in Hawaii, the seagoing Mormons learned of the war and were supplied with stands of arms and ammunition to assist them with their militarism. Paul Bailey, Sam Brannan and the California Mormons, (Los Angeles: Western Lore Press, 1943), pp. 49-66.
Being, who [could] discern the end from the beginning and overrule the wicked intentions of men to promote the advancement of His cause upon the earth."\(^9\) Thus, if the battalion was mustered into service, it would be "the first army of Israel . . . going forth to lay the foundation" of New Jerusalem,\(^10\) a place where the Mormons could worship according to the dictates of their conscience.\(^11\) It was a practical and expedient aid for moving the Mormons to their destination and was a basic reason the Mormons complied with the request.

Nevertheless, for over a century many Mormon writers have cited the battalion as a paradigm for Mormon patriotism, and have usually ignored the practicality of that Mormon service. Chiseling it into "prose and marble," wrote Bernard DeVoto, the Mormons have celebrated it "as the cruelest and most patriotic service on record anywhere."\(^12\) But after the explanation in Chapter I of Joseph Smith's attempted manipulation of that patriotic sense of destiny, it should not be assumed that those who survived him rapidly deviated from the course he had initiated. Smith had wanted to get away

\(^9\) Journal History, July 23, 1846.

\(^10\) Journal of Wilford Woodruff, July 17, 1846. Microfilm copy found in the Church Historical Department.

\(^11\) Journal History, July 13, 1846.

\(^12\) DeVoto, op. cit., p. 380. An example of this hyperbole is found in a discourse given by Brigham Young. See Brigham Young, address delivered at Salt Lake City, February 18, 1855, Journal of Discourses reporter G. D. Watt, (London, England, 1884), pp. 172-174. Hereafter cited as J.D.
from the Washington regime, and in 1846 the easiest way to do so would have been to furnish the battalion.

Moreover, most contemporary sources indicate that patriotism was not the paramount reason for the Mormons enlisting. Perhaps patriotism lay dormant when the call was made, for very little of it was expressed as the "universal feelings" against the government were "uncommonly wrought up." Even recruiting for the battalion did not alleviate the "prejudice . . . against the government . . ." that was felt throughout the Mormon camp.

Therefore, with the bitter feelings that Mormons were expressing about the government, the Church members' acceptance of the call can perhaps best be understood in the atmosphere of expediency that Joseph Smith had set. He and other Mormon leaders believed an imminent Millennium necessitated the immediate building of a Kingdom of God. Because the destruction of the United States would precipitate that Millennium, they had no desire to associate

15 D & C 45: 63-64.
with the government. The battalion, then, would assist both in moving the Mormons to a desirable location, and in offering financial and practical help to the Church as it migrated towards Zion. 16

From this standpoint the Mormons' enlistment into the battalion was more of a theocratic, rather than a democratic obligation. But in their attempts to raise the five hundred men, Mormon leaders were confronted with the ambivalent dilemma of reconciling religion with aggression. It created antinomy in their beliefs similar to that displayed earlier by the pronouncements of Joseph Smith. Thus the battalion, Mormon recruiters implied, would march under the banner of love and brotherhood; its standard to the world would be peace. Brigham Young had insisted that no fighting would take place. The only fighting the Mormon army need worry about, he counseled, would be among themselves. 17 Orson Hydes' recruiting speeches are similarly marked with this ambivalence. Fallacious thinking had deceived the volunteers into believing they were going to be led into battle. Actually, Hyde maintained, "service in the battalion," would result in the "peaceable possession of a home." 18

Reference to an army of peace, then, was analogous to the 100,000 man army of brotherly love that Joseph Smith

17 Journal History, July 13, 1846. 18 Ibid.
had once alluded to. Yet even with these recurring similarities in Mormon wartime thought, a subtle change was aroused—as evidenced by the excited state of Mormon millennial expectations—with the actual involvement of America in war. The early millennial aspirations of Mormon leaders had noticeably declined with the failure of Zion's Camp in 1834. After that disaster, Joseph Smith had pushed the expected Parousia into the future, and had contended that the Mormons would have to "wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion." But the Mormons had always been told that war and rumors of war would harbinger the second coming, and the hostilities of 1846 seemed to vindicate those predictions. Therefore the millennial urgency expressed by Smith before Zion's Camp was revitalized with the outbreak of war between the United States and Mexico.

Although the reasons those millennial expectations were given new life in 1846 were numerous, foremost was the belief that the United States was bringing to pass events that had "long since been declared by the prophets." America had "cast the Saints out" and then had "turned a deaf ear to their cries." Being that a righteous God would not let the wicked go unpunished, the Mormons maintained that their


Lord would measure unto the United States what it had "meted to others . . . [only] more abundantly." All the signs of the times seemed to corroborate their apocalyptic revelations, making the "peculiar state of [world wide] political conditions" edifying to them. Only by having "mercy and compassion" upon the Mormons, could the United States "liquidate and avert those perplexities of war." War or peace, persecution or compassion? The choice was left to the American people. In the meantime, the Mormons continued their exodus.

If the United States would not repent of its errant ways, the Mormons reasoned that the war would continue; and if war did continue, the only safe place on earth for them would be in their "New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the Saints of the Most High God." It seemed to the Mormons, then, that the apocalyptic cataclysm had begun, but they were concerned because they had not yet escaped to that "city of refuge." They questioned whether the Lord had started the war too soon. Indeed so it seemed, as the "first blow [had been]

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22 M.S., 9 (March 1847), p. 73.
23 M.S., 9 (April 1847), pp. 121-122.
24 M.S., 9 (March 1847), p. 73.
26 D & C 45:66
27 M.S., 9 (April 1847), p. 18.
struck sooner than anticipated."28 "Why had the apocalyptic war begun," they questioned, "when the Mormons were not yet safe in Zion?"

It was a millennialist's conundrum, and one that needed careful consideration. The solution came with an interpretation that would fit the reality of a seemingly premature war. Their overland trek, they told themselves, was leading to a land held by the Mexican government, a government that had always been characterized by a reign of intolerance. Therefore, before the Mormons could settle there, Mexico, because of that intolerance, must receive a "fatal blow" from "American arms, and the more tolerant genius of American institutions."29 In California, for example, four revolutions had occurred in the twelve years prior to 1846.30 This merely indicated to Mormon leaders the depravity of Mexican rule. But if one looked at those revolts carefully, one could draw great parallels between them and the American Revolution. The Californians, like the fathers of '76, had come to see they had been oppressed by a band of idle, proud, and lazy rascals, unfit for governmental power.31 Thus, a justified revolution followed, allowing the people more freedom and liberty from tyrannical

28 Watson, op. cit., p. 22, July 7, 1846.
29 M.S., 9 (June 1847), p. 18.
31 Journal History, July 13, 1846.
oppression.

The Mormons believed that the Revolution of 1776, the Bear Flag Revolt, and now the war with Mexico were all comparable in purpose. It should be noted that the Mormons believed the American Revolution had been used by God, not only to extend liberty to the patriots, but more specifically to secure religious liberty.32 Similarly, the untimely beginning of the Mexican war, in the Mormons' view, was a means whereby God could extend religious liberty to the Mexican territory. At present the territory in which the Mormons desired to settle, allowed "no religion but that of the Roman Catholic."33 Thus the cataclysm had started earlier than anticipated so that the "intolerance of papal power" would be destroyed by the time the Mormon pioneers arrived. This would allow the more "liberal systems of protestant religions" to find their way into Mexico,34 and permit the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Accompanying this Mormon reasoning regarding the safety of their mountainous Zion, came a corresponding increase in Mormon millenial and cataclysmic visions. The

33Journal History, July 13, 1846.
34M.S., (December 1847), p. 351. Mormon vehemence towards the Catholic Church was carried to such an extreme that they began to propagandize that it was the "Romish Church" that had advanced the economics of the Mexican cause. M.S., 9 (June 1847), pp. 182-184.
raging conflict between Mexico and the United States would soon bring to pass the prophesied destruction of Babylon. 35 Yet American troops were winning handily, and if the United States were Babylon, continued American victories did not easily adapt to the Mormons' cataclysmic interpretations. Consequently, the Church leaders worked out another rationale that would accommodate American victory with their apocalyptic hopes.

God, the leaders believed, had mobilized American arms to liberate Mexican territory. As a tool of the heavens, the United States had opened the door for Mormon colonization. This could account for the American success. But after the Mexican government had been thoroughly chastened, these Mormons maintained that it would be the United States' turn to "feel the wrath of yet another chastening hand." 36

America, therefore, was fighting in vain. For after the Mormons became settled, God would use the war and continue the destruction as a means to rid the earth of wickedness. 37 Then later, established in their mountain home, the Mormons could maintain that the war was just beginning. 38 It would be only a matter of time before

35Joseph Smith, Pearl of Great Price, (Salt Lake: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Joseph Smith 2:37, 45; D & C 45:64; Evening and Morning Star, II No. 14, pp. 6-7.
36M.S., 9 (June 1847), p. 187.
37M.S., 9 (October 1847), p. 295. 38Ibid.
peace would be taken from the earth, and God would take charge, just as the Book of Mormon had prophesied.\(^{39}\) The words of the prophets were soon to be fulfilled,\(^{40}\) as God was about to "dash the nations of the earth as a potter's vessel."\(^{41}\) First Mexico and then America, followed by every European nation, until the whole world was involved in a cataclysmic imbroglio.\(^{42}\) These were exciting times for Mormons. The Lord, they believed, had decided to re-peop[e]le the world with a "righteous seed." And while the wicked slayed the wicked, that seed would watch and wait in their city of Zion for the return of their Messiah.\(^{43}\) The righteous blood that had been shed throughout the centuries was soon to be avenged by Almighty God. But blessed were they who dwelled in "safe places until the scourge passes by, and the world is prepared for a reign of peace."\(^{44}\)

Secured in their valley of Zion, perceiving themselves as detached from the war effort, the Mormons made sardonic comments about the cruel, bloodthirsty, and vicious character of the American army. Not only had America murdered the Mormon prophet and cruelly driven the Saints from its midst, but now, during the war with Mexico,

\(^{39}\) M.S., 9 (June 1847), p. 187; (October 1847), p. 295.

\(^{40}\) M.S., 9 (March 1847), p. 73.

\(^{41}\) M.S., 9 (June 1847), p. 187. M.S., 10 (February 1848), pp. 52-53.

\(^{42}\) M.S., 9 (October 1847), p. 295.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.

\(^{44}\) M.S., 9 (November 1847), p. 330.
the beak of the American Eagle again dripped scarlet with the blood of four thousand innocent victims. This time the victims were Mexican.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, secured in their Kingdom, the Mormons seemingly forgot their participation in the Mormon Battalion—which sanctioned this American war—indicating another aspect of the Latter-day Saint wartime ambivalence. Now that they were established in Zion, war became anathema to the children of God. They refused to recognize that they had at one time openly supported the American war effort. Tucked away in the valley of the Great Salt Lake Basin, they failed to acknowledge the "blessings" they had at one time believed had come from the American war effort. In fact, the Mormons now labeled Americans as "marauders." Nestled in their New Jerusalem, they could believe that the United States was just as far from achieving the object of its invasion as it was at the start of the war.\textsuperscript{46}

The war, then, would continue. Even the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo meant nothing to the Mormons. Mexico and the United States, they argued, would continue their fighting,\textsuperscript{47} and consequently the "movements of nations" would bring about the "destruction of Great Babylon."\textsuperscript{48} Probably to their disgust, Mormon leaders were forced to

\textsuperscript{45}M.S., 9 (October 1847), p. 295.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48}M.S., 9 (November 1847), p. 330.
watch and wait until the crisis of Ft. Sumter, when once again all the wartime millennialism that had lain dormant during the intervening decade, would thunder from the Mormon pulpits in Salt Lake City.
CHAPTER III

PROPHECY AND CIVIL WAR: 1860-1865

Tremble ye nations of Gentiles, for yonder
The hosts of the despot in battle array
With engines of war shake the earth in their thunder--
The bright sword is drawn and the sheath thrown away!

Sound the alarm of war,
Through nations near and far,
Let its dread tones be heard o'er land and sea
Zion shall dwell in peace,
Israel will still increase,
Liberty shall ne'er cease
Israel is free!

Annon.

Careful scrutiny should have indicated to the
Mormons that the apocalyptic war which they believed had
started when hostilities broke out between Mexico and the
United States had not really started at all. The war to
which their scriptures referred was supposed to have been
"poured out upon all nations"¹ until the "consumption
decreed . . . made a full end of all nations."² Seemingly
the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed in 1848, should
have put an end to such cataclysmic thinking, but it did
not. Mormons never formally recognized the peace as offi-
cial, and throughout the following decade continued to

¹D & C 87: 1-3.
²M.S., 23 (March 1861), p. 165.
wait for the millennium they believed imminent.

There were events, then, prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, which Mormons interpreted to support these millennial expectations. Foremost of these was the North-South division over the territorial slave problem. Due to this division, the Mormons believed they could interpret the 1848 peace as superficial in nature. Beneath the surface, Mormons argued, America had been "shivered to pieces." "God's controversy with them has commenced," thundered Brigham Young, "and in turn he will sift every nation there is upon the face of the earth." 3 Ironically, the same Mormons who at one time had feared that the scourge was beginning too early were still anxiously, thirteen years later, waiting for it to begin.

Several reasons were presented for the tardiness of the cataclysm, many of which were similar to those given for war in 1846. To many Mormon leaders it was only too apparent that mankind did not understand "the design of their creator in giving them existence in the world." 4 Man was given life, they believed, so that he might show himself worthy of eternal salvation—a salvation which could be achieved only through the gospel as taught by the Mormons. 5 But each time the Mormons had presented

3 Brigham Young, J.D., 9 (October 7, 1860), p. 195.
4 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (July 8, 1863), p. 230.
5 Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 10 (July 27, 1862), p. 15.
the message which could have led mankind to eternal life, the nation declined the "offer that Heaven made to them." Instead of receiving the "message with gladness and thanksgiving," the nation had "cruelly abused and maltreated the messengers for daring to deliver it."

A second reason that Mormons presented as a cause for the impending cataclysm, dealt with the way in which their gospel had been refused. Paramount in this rejection was the assassination of Joseph Smith, an act which had made the "whole of the American people guilty before God." Even now in subsequent years "the blood of the prophets" still called for vengeance, and only war would bring the retributive justice that Mormons believed they deserved. Not only had America murdered the Mormon prophet, but it had also driven the people of the church from American soil. Vindictively, then, Mormon leaders proclaimed that America must suffer the "penalty of her former cruelties."

American cruelty, Saints argued, had not ended

6Orson Hyde, J.D., 10 (April 7, 1863), p. 155.
7M.S., 23 (February 1861), pp. 100-102.
8M.S., 24 (May 1862), p. 273.
9M.S., 27 (July 1865), pp. 411-413. Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (November 6, 1863), p. 287.
10Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 10 (July 27, 1863), p. 15.
with their expulsion to the desert. Consequently, a third reason presented for the looming cataclysmic war was the sending of a Federal Army to Salt Lake. President James Buchanan had not hesitated for a moment, when he heard of Mormon "treasonable activities," to send a 2,500 man army in an attempt to discipline the Mormons. But later when "King Abraham" hesitated to send an army on a similar mission to South Carolina, the Mormons were incensed; Lincoln's hesitation substantiated their claim that Buchanan had acted out of malice towards the Mormons. Therefore they prophesied doom for the "two faced" government. It would perish, proclaimed the Mormons, for attempting to fight "against Zion." The United States, which had "burned strange fire upon the altar of God" by sending that army to Salt Lake, would, "with strange fire . . . . be consumed."

The consumption of the United States would take form as retributive justice against both the North and the South, and result in "dissolution, sorrow, weeping and distress." Because neither side, Confederate or imopm, had offered a hand of assistance to the Mormons in their hour of need, many Latter-day Saint leaders came to believe that neither side ever would. Therefore,

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12 M.S., 26 (April 1864), p. 258; B of M, II Nephi 7:2.
13 Deseret News Weekly, October 24, 1860.
15 Ibid.
just as the school teacher gave two boys sticks, "and set
[them] to whip each other . . . the Lord will suffer them
[the North and the South] to punish each other for their
sins . . . until He gets ready to stop them." 16

The Lord was believed to have laid his hand on the
United States, 17 which would result in the destruction of
the nation. 18 The Mormons believed, just as George Q.
Cannon had remarked, that the nation was "like a cracked
dish." 19 Before long, the whole "face of the United States
[would] be in commotion," 20 on its path to "overthrow,
dissolution, destruction and ruin." 21 It was the Lord's
work, the Mormons contended, and "beyond the power of
President Lincoln, or any faction . . . north or south, to
prescribe a remedy that will heal the fracture or prevent
its widening." 22

Moreover, these leaders maintained that as the
war "widened," it would spread over the whole earth, just

16 George Albert Smith, J.D., 9 (March 10, 1861),
p. 74.
17 Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 10 (June 12, 1863), p. 217.
18 Journal History, January 1, 1864.
19 M.S., 25 (February 1863), pp. 98-99; M.S., 25
20 Heber C. Kimball, J.D., 9 (April 14, 1861),
pp. 54-55.
21 M.S., 24 (January 1862), p. 43.
22 M.S., 25 (February 1863), pp. 98-99.
as Joseph Smith had predicted. The wrath of God would be felt the world over through "famine, plague, and earthquake"; the "thunder of heaven and the fierce and vivid lightening" would make earthly inhabitants mourn. The nations of the earth could not avoid being "drawn into the maelstrom" that whirled through America. Subsequently the "demon of war [would]... remove his headquarters to the Banks of the Rhine." Orson Hyde wrote:

The bloody horse is galloping forth and soon the whole earth would shudder and groan as the vials of the wrath of God shall be poured out... famine shall clothe the nations in dosolation and mourning... thunders and lightenings of heaven shall shake the earth... hail and devouring fire shall play upon men... the sea, turned to blood, shall heave itself beyond its bounds, and the earth open her mouth to swallow up towns, cities and countries... from this time forth terror and woe will hold supremacy among the nations. Devastation, misery, and ruin are the legacy bequeathed to this world in these latter times.

With descriptions of such cataclysmic proportion thundering from Utah pulpits, Mormons watched the nations of the world for fulfillment of the prophetic utterances.

Great Britain in particular held Mormon interest, as it was prophesied that it would one of the first nations

23 M.S., 27 (April 1865), pp. 220-205.
24 D & C 87.
26 M.S., 24 (May 1862), p. 158.
of Europe to feel the wrath of God. The Mormons had been told that Europe had indeed felt the quakes of the American war, but England, as it engaged in an arms race with France, seemed on the verge of entering the war and actually fulfilling prophecy. Reports of riots from Lancashire County further reinforced Mormon beliefs that England was about to vindicate the prophets. "We are forcibly struck," wrote George Q. Cannon,

> with the wonderful manner in which the Lord is bringing to pass the fulfillment of His word . . . The evil effects of the rebellion of South Carolina are sensibly and lamentably felt at the present time throughout Great Britain.

The editor of the Millennial Star then prophesied that unless the people of England repent, the Lord's "wrath and indignation [would] be poured out upon them." Joseph Smith had decreed, however, that the whole world would feel the justice of God's sword. Therefore, the Millennial Star assumed the role of chronicler, observing and recording events that might have presaged the impending world-wide destruction. Since most Mormons believed that it would be only a matter of time before the nations of the earth would fall in pieces, their curiosity

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27 M.S., 27 (April 1865), pp. 200-205.
28 M.S., 24 (November 1862), p. 728.
30 Ibid., p. 234.
31 M.S., 24 (November 1862), p. 728.
32 ...
forced them to watch for signs other than war. As a result, the Star could convincingly report that the war was only one indication of the "rapid approach of the consummation decreed." There were others, the periodical reported, that were just as newsworthy. "If the war," an editorial remarked,

stood alone and unaccompanied by any other indication, it might be passed over or viewed with comparative indifference as one of the many causes of misery which have so long afflicted the human race; but famine, pestilence, and earthquakes, the sea heaving beyond its bounds and strange and terrible disasters by sea and land, though striven to be accounted for apart from and independent of the hand of Omnipotence, are all so many premonitory warnings . . . which should teach . . . [that] the day of wrath . . . opens upon them.33

Nevertheless, the sea could heave, just as the nations could gird themselves for war, but the war indicated nothing without American slaves taking up arms against their masters. The same prophecy that was used to interpret geographical disturbances as cataclysmic in nature, also predicted that "after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters . . . ."34 Hence, it was only after General B. F. Butler of the Union Army mustered northern blacks into service that Mormons became firmly convinced the world was at the end of its rope. It would not be long, they announced, before the Union would induce not only northern blacks to fight, but southern blacks as well. And

33M.S., 24 (June 1862), p. 395.
34D & C 87:4.
when this was done, the prophecy would literally be effectuated.35 Thus, the Millennial Star kept a watchful eye on the Negro troops, and reported they were

... springing up like dragon's teeth from the soil into which they have been crushed. Masters of the ground they tread upon, they are sweeping forward in steady solid legions. Forty thousand strong are already in service ... destined to wield the sword of just retribution ... 34

With the arming of the blacks, the Civil War had seemingly fulfilled the apocalyptic predictions found in Mormon scripture.

Consequently, the seeming vindication of their prophet could portend only one thing—-the long awaited destruction of the United States and the world. The United States would suffer both "long and terrible" in this final death struggle,37 and the world, with its "kings, governors and rulers," would correspondingly sink to the depths of "misery and woe."38 Then arising from the rubble and ash of a destroyed world, would be the Mormon Church, the only "legitimate power" on earth.39

The Mormons believed they had been chosen by the Lord for this particular purpose.40 Thus, they deemed it

35 M.S., 24 (August 1860), p. 531.
36 M.S., 27 (March 1864), p. 186.
37 M.S., 23 (June 1861), p. 347.
38 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (May 24, 1863), p. 177.
39 M.S., 24 (March 1862), p. 158.
40 John Taylor, J.D., 10 (October 6, 1863), p. 250.
necessary to remain neutral from the political affairs of a corrupted world.\textsuperscript{41} As members of the Kingdom of God, and as a separate nation "distinct from other people," they believed themselves to be a significant figure in the "vanguard of human progress and improvement."\textsuperscript{42} For just as soon as the United States had been sufficiently humbled and chastened, the Mormons postulated that it would turn to the example of the Kingdom of God which would then save it from entire destruction.\textsuperscript{43} Once this task was accomplished, the Mormons believed their Kingdom would "fil [sic] the whole earth."\textsuperscript{44}

To fulfill this glorious destiny which had been "forshadowed in the dim predictions of the past,"\textsuperscript{45} Mormons argued that the Lord had removed them to Salt Lake, thereby making them the "only people that should not be at war one with another."\textsuperscript{46} The persecutions that had driven the Mormons westward in 1846 had once been "bitter in ... [their] mouths." But in 1862, with the Mormons seemingly

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{44}John Taylor, \textit{J.D.}, 9 (April 6, 1861), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{M.S.}, 26 (May 1864), p. 313.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{M.S.}, 23 (May 1861), pp. 300; Brigham Young, \textit{J.D.}, 10 (March, 1862), p. 39.
at peace, those same persecutions were "sweet in the belly." 47 Whereas the rest of the world would suffer affliction at the hand of God, the Mormons would remain safe and secure in their mountain home. 48 And the safest way to remain secure was to "renounce war and proclaim peace." 49

The only way to avoid war, these Mormon leaders maintained, was to submit to the "dictation and government of the King of Peace." 50 Therefore, the Mormons desired to serve only God, by "minding [their] own business." 51 War, they believed, was "repugnant to every lofty aspiration and God-like principle in man's nature." 52 Consequently, while war raged around them, the Mormons would remain secluded in their city of Zion until the time came when the peoples of the earth would not "learn war any more." 53

Realizing that not everyone in the world was wicked and warlike, 54 the Mormons proffered their Zion

48 Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 10 (June 12, 1863), p. 230.
51 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (March 8, 1863), p. 109; Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (July 8, 1863), p. 230; E. T. Benson, J.D., 10 (April 6, 1863), pp. 153-154.
52 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (July 8, 1863), p. 230.
53 Brigham Young, J.D., 90 (November 6, 1864), p. 357.
54 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (July 8, 1863), p. 230.
to all "who would not take up the sword against their neigh-
bor . . . ." The Latter-day Saints proclaimed that
"people of every town, county, and state in the union," all
those with a desire to escape the judgments of heaven, "must
fly from their homes and places of business" to Zion. Those who desired to "live in peace," were counseled to
emigrate to the Mormons' "Holy places . . . until the day
of the Lord come." 

As Salt Lake was believed to be the only place on
dearth the angels of destruction would bypass, the Mormons
offered refuge not only to pacifists but to draft evaders
as well. The conscription act, besides being politically
repugnant to the Mormons, was believed to be forcing
many peace-loving men to exile in Canada. But the Mormons
also believed that as an apocalyptic struggle, the Civil
War would spread the world over, Canada included. Conse-
quently, the Mormons counseled that the day would come,

55 M.S., 23 (October 1861), p. 662.
56 Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 9 (May 12, 1863),
p. 56; D & C 87: 8.
57 Brigham Young, J.D., 10 (October 6, 1863), p. 248.
58 Wilford Woodruff, J.D., 9 (May 12, 1861), p. 56.
59 M.S., 25 (August 1863), p. 537; M.S., 24 (March
1862), p. 189. The idea of an isolated Zion, safe from
the influence of the world was such a strong influence on
Mormon leaders, they counseled their congregations to make
themselves entirely self sufficient. An example of this type
of thought is found in Heber C. Kimball, J.D., 10 (June 27,
"when every man who does not pick up the sword will have to flee not to the British provinces, but to Zion for safety." \(^{60}\)

As the apocalyptic war mentioned in their scriptures, the Mormons could point to a "speedy arrival of Christ," \(^{61}\) whose coming would "overtake the world like a thief in the night." \(^{62}\) The reason, Mormons argued, that his appearance would be furtive, was attributed to the blindness of the world to the signs of the times. The seeming fulfillment of prophecy was a useful missionary tool \(^{63}\) which had stimulated the Mormons to "spread the message of warning . . . the world over." \(^{64}\) And these missionary efforts had motivated "many . . . to inquire

\(^{60}\) M.S., 25 (August 1863), p. 537.

\(^{61}\) Brigham Young, J.D., 9 (July 28, 1861), pp. 142-143.


\(^{63}\) These were not the only missionary tools that Mormon leaders utilized. The seeming division of the American protestant churches was also used to make the Mormon solidarity of thought salient. See John Taylor, J.D., 10 (May 1, 1863), pp. 124-125; John Taylor, J.D., 9 (April 28, 1861), p. 235; Heber C. Kimball, J.D., 10 (July 19, 1863), p. 244. Moreover, many Mormon leaders believed that Gentile newspapers were helpful by acknowledging the seeming vindication of Joseph Smith's prophecy. The Philadelphia Sunday Mercury, The New York Bee, and the Royal Leamington Spa Courier, all published articles which in effect, stated that the prediction seemed "to be in progress of fulfillment." M.S., 23 (May 1861), p. 404; M.S., 23 (May 15, 1861), pp. 330-331.

\(^{64}\) M.S., 24 (March 1862), p.
into Mormonism." Unfortunately, these evangelistic developments were not to the extent that Mormons believed the "times" warranted. For the most part, it was merely the inactive Mormons, not the Gentiles, who were "waking up and inquiring" how they could "escape an offended God." In both Europe and the United States, Mormons who had not migrated to Salt Lake prior to the Civil War began expressing an urgent desire to do so after the first shots had been fired on Fort Sumter. In fact, Mormons were told, there had been no time in the history of the European branches of the church when the desire to gather to Zion had been stronger.

65 M.S., 24 (May 1862), p. 286. The Journal History records that these Mormons were called "fossil" Mormons, who were exhibiting signs of life and were "making tracks west." Journal History, June 14, 1861.

66 The Millennial Star published editorials with titles such as "Blindness of the World to the Signs of the Times," M.S., 24 (June 1862), pp. 393-396; "Consequences of Rejecting the Messages of Truth," M.S., 23 (August 1861), p. 499; "Remarkable Phenomena Which are Not Observed By The Wise Ones of this Generation," M.S., 24 (September 1862), pp. 569-571; "Predictions of Warning of No Avail to the Wicked," M.S., 25 (August 1863), pp. 537-538.


68 M.S., 24 (May 1862), p. 312; M.S., 24 (March 1862), p. 189. The magazine published advice on methods to be used in immigrating to Zion. Nearly every issue in volume 24 contains such advice.

Although Joseph Smith expanded his definition of Zion to include the whole of North America, the Civil War seemingly brought about a reinterpretation of that declaration. Zion, therefore, was interpreted to be Salt Lake, not Jackson County, Missouri. Notwithstanding, a corresponding desire to return to the original Zion of Jackson County was also stimulated by the war. In all likelihood, these revitalized desires were provoked by the devastating toll the war had taken upon Missouri. Mormon leaders believed that the Missourians were receiving "the measure which they had meted to others," and that the land was being cleansed for "the return of the Saints." It would not take long, these leaders maintained, before "the city of Zion [would] . . . be laid out and . . . built in Jackson County Missouri." Wilford Woodruff wrote:

The Lord is watching over his interest in Zion and sustaining His Kingdom upon the earth and preparing the way for the return of the Saints to Jackson County Missouri to build up the waste places of Zion. Jackson County had been entirely cleansed of its inhabitants during the year of 1863 which is one of the greatest miracles manifested in our day, and those who have driven the Saints out of Missouri and spoiled them are in their turn now driven out . . . and there is much distress in all the lands where the Saints have been persecuted.

As this passage from the Journal History suggests, the Mormons seemingly committed all of their millennial expectations to the war and its outcome. And the Mormons

69 Brigham Young, J.D., 9 (July 28, 1861), pp. 142-143.
70 M.S., 27 (April 1865), p. 204.
71 Journal History. January 1, 1864,
were so devoted to those expectations that they failed to recognize how near the contending factions were to ending the hostilities. Thus, many believed with Brigham Young that the re-election of Lincoln in 1864 would result in another four years of war.\textsuperscript{72} This mid-decade blindness towards the reality of the war produced pessimistic predictions--similar to those found at the beginning of the war--about the fate of the world. John Taylor expressed the belief in 1864 that the United States was still "crumbling and falling" and would continue to do so "until it [was] no more."\textsuperscript{73} Even in 1865 it appeared to many Mormons that the war was "increasing" in its carnage, with no end in sight.\textsuperscript{74}

These irrational beliefs found near the conclusion of the war were similar to the irrationality expressed at the end of the Mexican-American war. And if Mormon disappointment ran deep after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, it does not take much imagination to see how similar the disappointment must have been following the peace agreement at Appomatox Courthouse. In fact, the Mormons were so disappointed that they acknowledged the peace in only one obscured, eleven word sentence which read: "The army of

\textsuperscript{72}M.S., 26 (December 1864), p. 799.

\textsuperscript{73}John Taylor, J.D., 11 (December 11, 1864), p. 26.

\textsuperscript{74}M.S., 27 (January 1865), p. 27.
Virginia is completely disbanded, and Johnston has surrendered."\(^{75}\)

Consequently, the shock of peace required a drastic reinterpretation of the war. And in that reinterpretation the Mormons were confronted with two choices. The first choice would have been to admit that their millennial expectations were inaccurate. The second would have been to re-evaluate those expectations in the light of an unexpected peace, and adapt them accordingly. Rather than choosing the first alternative, they took the second. Hence, the Mormons pushed their millennial expectations into the indeterminate future, and they reinterpreted their war-time prophecy to fit the futurity of their millennium. In so doing, God could still be interpreted as an integral part of the "things that . . . transpired," and similarly he could be seen as an integral part of the "beginning of sorrow," which Mormons came to believe had "only dawned upon the nation."\(^{76}\) With their millennium pushed into the future, Mormons could maintain that that America was like a "skillful swordsman, who after repeated rounds leans panting upon his sword and only wants breath to reknow the conflict with tenfold fury."\(^{77}\)

\(^{75}\)M.S., 27 (May 1865), p. 303.

\(^{76}\)M.S., 27 (July 1865), p. 413.

\(^{77}\)M.S., 27 (October 1865), p. 682.
After America renewed the carnage of war, the Mormons could renew the prophecy relating to it. But contrary to their wartime beliefs that the conflict had categorically fulfilled revelation, the Mormons, with their postwar reinterpretations, had come to believe that the time was only "close at hand" when the prophecy would be fulfilled. Indeed, they argued, some "very important portions of the prophecy remained to be fulfilled."78

George Q. Cannon is an example of one, who, after repeatedly predicting that the war would fulfill prophecy, changed his postwar interpretations to fit the reality of peace. The pestilence, earthquakes, and hurricanes which Cannon had once jubilantly proclaimed to have fulfilled the revelation, were reinterpreted in 1865. The millennium, Cannon implied, did not logically have to follow these geographical disturbances. They were merely signs of the times that indicated the world was in its last days, months, or even years. Similarly, he no longer believed that Britain was directly involved in an apocalyptic war, but rather it would soon become involved in another war, apocalyptic in nature. It would be inevitable, Cannon

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78 M.S., 27 (December 1865), p. 795; M.S., 27 (April 1865), pp. 200-205; M.S., 27 (September 1865), p. 613.
79 M.S., 27 (March 1865), pp. 186-187.
80 M.S., 27 (October 1865), pp. 681-682; M.S., 27 (September 1865), p. 613.
81 Ibid.
maintained, that England, "in the not too distant future," would find herself "opposed by nations against whose power she will not be able to make headway." 82

The prophetic verses relating to England were not the only ones to receive Mormon scrutiny in postwar days. It was also apparent that war had not brought about a militant uprising of the American Indians, another contingency upon which the Mormons' millennial hopes had been built. The apocalyptic revelation stated that the war would lead the Indians to "marshall themselves, and . . . become exceedingly angry, and vex the Gentiles with sore vexation." 83

As this did not come to pass, the verse was reinterpreted, and its fulfillment became predicated upon the condition that America should first be greatly weakened by the "death of millions in [its] own revolutionary battles." 84

If America were to be weakened by the death of millions, it would be forced to become involved in another war, something that these postwar reinterpretations continuously implied. But by the time another American war had rolled around in 1898, the Mormons had undergone not only the trauma of an unpredicted peace, but Utah had achieved statehood and more millennial expectations had come and gone as well. Since all of these influences on the

82 MS, 27 (September 1865), p. 595.
83 D & C 87:5.
84 MS, 27 (March 1865), p. 187.
Latter-day Saint psyche would permeate Mormon interpretations of the "splendid little war," one thing was certain: wartime commentaries in 1898 would unveil an unprecedented deviation from the two previous nineteenth century wars.
CHAPTER IV

AMERICANIZATION AND THE WAR WITH SPAIN

War is a terrible trade;
But in the cause that is righteous
Sweet is the smell of powder . . .

Miles Standish

Americans, gloriing in their self-esteem and exuberant in their idealism, were "ripe" for war in 1898. And it seemed that the ripest of all were those strongly affiliated with religious denominations scattered throughout the country.\(^1\) The inhumanity of the Spaniard towards Cuban and Philippino "children of God," and the opportunity for missionary activity in the Orient, moved people of all faiths to support United States aggression in the Carribean and Spanish Islands.\(^2\) And the Mormons, officially American citizens in 1898, became just as bellicose as other religious groups in advocating military action.

Martial action was a far cry from the self-proclaimed pacifism of Civil War years. But then the whole concept of Zion had changed during those four decades of peace, and

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 44.
for Mormons, Zion and war went hand in hand. Thus, similar
to Joseph Smith's attempt to justify Mormon expansionism by
proclaiming North America to be Zion, Mormon leaders in 1898
attempted to justify American expansionism. Because Zion
was no longer located in the mountains alone, Mormon paci-
fism was no longer justified. In 1898 the whole of the
American continent again became Zion, and the United
States, not Salt Lake, was again God's choosen land.

Zion, however, was to be a land of peace, and all
those who would not pick up the sword were to "gather unto
Zion." Fortified by the hand of God, no army would ever
overrun it; it would therefore be safe for all peoples of
the world. However, the plight of the Cuban population
was unfortunate for it had no chance to flee to Zion.
Because of this, some of the more vocal Church leaders
searched for a method in which Zion might be justified in
relieving these people of their misfortune.

The laws pertaining to Zion's conduct during given
wars are found in the Doctrine and Covenants. Consequently,

3 M.S., 60 (February 1898), p. 129.
4 Deseret Evening News, May 19, 1898; Deseret Evening
News, June 24, 1898; Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April, 1898, (Salt
Lake: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints),
p. 26 (hereafter cited as CR by date): CR, April 1898,
p. 84. (Anonymous CR entries are listed in the appendix).
5 CR, April 1898, pp. 24-25; CR, April 1898, p. 84.
6 CR, April 1898, p. 81. 7 D & C 98.
some LDS leaders adapted those laws to apply to the political relations between Spain and America. Interpreted literally, the laws stated that Spain, as an aggressor nation, must reject four offers of peace that God's chosen nation would present. Rejection of those offers would then justify America's going to war, and God, watching over the United States, would fight the battles of Zion "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." 8

Since the two countries were not at war, however, America had no reason to raise the standard of peace. Even the sinking of an American battleship, the Maine, a Mormon newspaper announced, was not enough to justify war between the two countries. 9 It was a perplexing question, then, as to how Mormons might justify the liberation of Cuba and still adhere to their scriptural references about Zion.

There were, nonetheless, a number of influences that began to undermine Mormon adherence to these passive scriptural doctrines. Foremost was a revitalized millenialism. Despite this revitalization, however, the apocalyptic beliefs of the "splendid little war" underwent a significant change. Klaus Hansen maintains that accompanying the post Civil War decline in the belief of a political Kingdom of God, was a corresponding decline in the belief

8 Juvenile Instructor, 33 (Salt Lake City: April 1898), pp. 313-315. (Hereafter cited as J.I.)

9 Deseret Evening News, February 17, 1898.
of an impending millennium. Thus, while the Mormons continued to preach millennial sermons, it was also prophesied that the "end was not yet." Perhaps it was this departure from the pacifistic millennial urgency of the two previous wars that contributed to Mormon activism in national affairs. For when this change was combined with other undermining influences, many Latter-day Saints felt assured that waging war would be justified.

Another of these eroding influences was the belief that Spain was without God or justice. Similar to the progressive idea which posed that America had slowly evolved, under heavenly directions, from the institutional governments of medieval Europe, most Mormon leaders believed that America was God's chosen land. Moreover, both the progressives and the Mormons believed that Spain was a medieval blotch in the purity of a progressive western hemisphere, and that as the relic of a bygone age, it was practicing "monarchical absolutism and clerical despotism" a mere ninety miles away from American shores.

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10 Hansen, op. cit., p. 23.
11 CR, April 1898, pp. 24-25; CR, April 1898, pp. 30-32. CR, April 1898, p. 27.
12 CR, April 1898, p. 59.
14 Ibid.; Improvement Era, 1 (Salt Lake City: March 1898), p. 354. (Hereafter cited as I.E.)
15 I.E., 1 (March 1898), p. 354; Deseret Evening News,
Americans, Mormons read, had always looked "with disfavor upon European countries who tried to force their monarchial systems upon the peoples of the New World." Particularly abhorrent, however, was a Catholic nation forcing itself upon a Protestant hemisphere. It was apparent that Spanish hearts were not filled with the "merciful spirit of Christianity," as their Catholic government was perpetrating crimes in Cuba unheard of in the western Christian world.

This lack of a merciful Christian spirit could be expected, nevertheless, as Mormons were also told that Spanish emotions had become anesthetized due to their peculiar culture which bred a "fondness for savagery." The Spanish love of bullfighting, a "degrading and brutal spectacle," was the only evidence Mormons needed to prove their point. Mormon periodicals argued that it was little wonder that "no good [could] come from such a state of affairs." Of course much of the Spanish reputation for cruelty arose from the Inquisition, which, Mormons were told, had lowered the Spanish to "brutes." Therefore, if Spain were to continue clinging to these medieval barbarisms,

19 Deseret Evening News, May 2, 1898.
if it were to continue indulging in "cruelties, sensualities, self-agrandizements, and perpetual pleasures"--if it were to perpetuate these practices it was on the "high road to destruction."\(^{20}\)

The final subverting influence on Mormon adherence to their scriptural references to Zion and peace was the belief that the Latin race was "ultimately destined to obscurity and decadency."\(^{21}\) Correspondingly came a militant Anglo Saxonism. So long as "God and liberty [was] their slogan, so long [would] the anglo-Saxons . . . prosper."\(^{22}\) It was destiny that had forced the white race to the ascendancy, and it was destiny that would lead white America to world supremacy. After all, it was the American who was gifted with the "tenacity of the English," the "sturdiness of the Dutch," the "thrift of the Scandinavian," the "shrewdness of the Scotch," and the "vivacity of the Celtic." All of these traits, Mormons were told, made an invincible American character which would act only upon "religious motives."\(^{23}\) Therefore, counseled the editors of the Improvement Era, the bloodshed, the sorrows, the horrors, "the starvations at our very doorstep, cannot be

\(^{20}\) M.S., 60 (March 1898), p. 441; Deseret Evening News, May 2, 1898.

\(^{21}\) M.S., 60 (March 1898), pp. 440-441.

\(^{22}\) I.E., 1 (April 1898), p. 441.

\(^{23}\) Deseret Evening News, May 19, 1898.
treated with indifference."\textsuperscript{24} Some of these Mormon editorials were apparently demanding action long before the actual outbreak of war. It was criminal, they announced, "for a strong man to remain inactive in his own house, aware that some atrocious crime is being committed . . . in the house next to his."\textsuperscript{25} Similarly, four months prior to war, an LDS editorial accused President McKinley of taking a "vigorless course" of action towards Cuba, and went on to state that America should have intervened "in the name of humanity . . . long ago."\textsuperscript{26}

Thus, months before the outbreak of war, many Mormon articles and editorials had combined a changing exegesis of millennialism with a nationalistic ethnocentrism, and had paved the way for Mormon justification of American involvement. Even so, it was still apparent that the laws of Zion and war had not been entirely subverted.

In direct contradiction to this seeming path towards aggression was the Mormon desire for peace. On the one hand, church leaders were subverting their scriptural references to peace, and on the other they were commending President McKinley for obedience to the laws of Zion.\textsuperscript{27} On the one hand they seemingly desired American

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{I.E.}, 1 (March 1898), p. 354.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Deseret Evening News}, March 21, 1898.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{I.E.}, 1 (January 1898), pp. 212-215.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{CR}, April 1898, p. 84.
intervention, but on the other praised the President for preventing the outbreak of war. McKinley, the presiding officers of the church remarked, was acting under the inspiration of the Lord in his attempts to keep the peace.

Thus, Mormon leaders seemed desirous of both peace and war, and this ambivalent desire is reflected not only in LDS periodicals, but in Mormon sermons as well. Prior to the war most Mormon leaders continually prayed for world peace. Nevertheless, it was also implied, often in the same supplication, that these prayers would be fruitless. Pray for peace, counseled Mormon apostle Francis M. Lyman, but added, "if the time comes when the United States should be in trouble, as it seems to be threatened today," (proving that Spain was a threat to America in 1898 would be a difficult undertaking), the government could depend on the Mormons for martial support. Similarly, another Mormon leader, Franklin D. Richards, presupposed the conflict. When praying for peace three weeks prior to war, Richards remarked that the upcoming struggle would fulfill prophecy. Likewise, John Henry Smith maintained that all efforts for peace should be exhausted before bloodshed was resorted to.

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29Deseret Evening News, April 28, 1898.
30CR, April 1898, p. 58.
31CR, April 1898, p. 82.
32CR, April 1898, p. 56.
Nevertheless, Smith also remarked that wars and rumors of
wars, specifically those in 1898, were God's way of opening
the door "of liberty in such form that all . . . should be
permitted to enjoy in the flesh." War was God's way of
helping the Mormons spread America's message of liberty
the world over. 33

By mid-April of 1898, the Mormons, as well as the
nation, pressed for war. Their aggressiveness had seemingly
overcome their pacifism, as Mormon editorials began rein-
forcing militant LDS attitudes. "The prevailing opinion
among the thoughtful, intelligent, and religious classes of
the country," reported the Deseret Evening News, preferred
war to "any retrograde action that the government might
take which would prolong the conditions . . . existent upon
the isle to the south." 34 Both the secular and the religious
press were unanimous about the propriety of using war to
"redeem a large island almost in sight of our own shores." 35
The "barbarous conditions" must be wiped out. 36 Thus, on
April 21, 1898, McKinley, the nation, and the Mormons went
to war—all under the impression that "Cuba must be freed
by a purifying act of force." 37

The magnitude of this feeling is best illustrated

33 Ibid.
34 Deseret Evening News, April 18, 1898.
35 Deseret Evening News, April 23, 1898.
36 Ibid. 37 Noble, op. cit., p. 18.
by an editorial found in a Congregational Newspaper, stating:

The providence which has worked to this relentless power will work until its cruel grasp upon its last victim has been unloosed. The fatherhood of God which broods over the great nations also broods over the islands of the sea, and has an ear open to the cry of their sorrows and a hand to help in their needs.\footnote{Found in Julius Pratt, Expansionists of 1898, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), p. 285.}

Consequently, the Mormons, as well as other religious denominations, were requested to become a part of that redeeming hand.

Utah was asked to furnish two battalions of light artillery, and one troop of cavalry. The alacrity with which the state complied with the request is one indication of how thoroughly its inhabitants were convinced the American cause was just. It had been suggested months in advance that this would be a righteous cause, and thus when the time came, eligible Mormon men were advised by their leaders to enlist.\footnote{I.E., 1 (May 1898), pp. 519-524; Deseret Evening News, April 25, 1898.} The First Presidency of the Church stated that it was their "unanimous desire and hope [that] ... Latter-day Saints of Utah would be found ready to respond immediately" to the request.\footnote{Deseret Evening News, April 28, 1898.} Failure to enlist in a war for humanity "would be an act of immorality on the part of the citizens of Utah and America.\footnote{Ibid.}"

As a result, Utah was
one of the first "states in the union to furnish the full quota of volunteers."\(^{42}\)

Nevertheless, not all Mormon leaders agreed with the Church's enlistment policy, nor did they all counsel young patriots to go to war. Once again, then, a form of the recurring ambivalence presents itself. Brigham Young Jr., son of the earlier Mormon prophet and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, expressed himself in the millennial isolationist fashion of his father. Prior to the outbreak of war, Young thundered that the Mormon people need not be "beholden to any race of men, to capitalists, to businessmen, to combinations of trusts, or to any society outside their [the Mormons] own limits." The secluded valleys of Salt Lake were unassailable because of the righteousness of the people living there.\(^{43}\) Therefore, Young argued, let the Mormons remain in peace, while the "iniquitous acts of men . . . bring their own destruction,"\(^{44}\) and when war "shall be poured out among all nations . . . in Zion there shall be peace."\(^{45}\)

Thus, when Brigham Young, Jr. spoke of peace, he meant it. Clinging to the tradition of his father, Young was upset over Mormon men enlisting for war with "those who are not of [Mormon] faith." Worshipping the demon of

\(^{44}\)Ibid., p. 27.
\(^{45}\)Ibid.
war was a source of infidelity, as God would only have a people that "served him." Therefore, if Young heard of any Mormon men enlisting, he would call them on a "mission to preach the gospel of peace." Let the wicked slay the wicked while the Mormons "mind their own business." "God" he contended, "would [then] take care of His people."

The Lord, Young proclaimed, would not watch over war-hungry patriots. Consequently, the Mormon leader counseled Latter-day Saints to exhibit their patriotism by being true to their God, and not to throw themselves into "the chasm that had been dug by uninspired men." Since the mission of the gospel was peace, all Mormons should strive to maintain it. America had gone to war with "a bloodthirsty spirit," and Young believed that those who joined the cause "would offend God and surely go off to Hell."

Brigham Jr's attitudes on war probably had a disconcerting effect upon Mormon audiences. For while he decried the war as "anti-Christ," Wilford Woodruff contended

47 Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, April 21, 1898, (Microfilm copy of original at Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).
48 Ibid., April 22, 1898.
49 Journal History, April 24, 1898; Deseret Evening News, April 25, 1898.
50 Brigham Young, Jr., Diary, April 28, 1898.
51 Ibid., April 25, 1898.
52 Ibid.
that God was using the war to "carry out His great purpose." And while Young predicted that all Mormon men who enlisted were doomed to an eternal life in Hell, John Henry Smith reported that all Mormons should support the government "in every proposition of liberty, justice, and mercy . . . so that its mission . . . to the human race might be accomplished." The Mormon people were truly confronted with a problem.

There was, however, a solution to the dilemma. In any questionable act, such as the Mormons going to war, a feeling of guilt or wrongdoing can be strengthened by misfortune. Conversely, guilt can be reduced when the act is followed by success. "Misfortune is construed as Providential punishment," writes Richard Hofstadter, "but success . . . is taken as an outward sign of an inward grace." Therefore, to determine the rightness or wrongness of the war, one merely had to await its outcome. If God was on America's side, America would win. Thus, with Dewey's immediate victory at Manila, divine sanction was confirmed. The modern Samson was as well favored as his

53 CR, April 1898, pp. 31-32.
54 CR, April 1898, p. 56.
56 Pratt, op. cit., p. 287; Deseret Evening News, June 29, 1898.
"namesake in his exploits against the Philistines."

This immediate American victory resolved the Mormon quandry. Contrary to the skeptics, the United States triumph for which the Mormons were grateful, had proven the righteousness of the war. Consequently, when McKinley issued his Christian proclamation requesting the nation to return thanks to God for His participation in the victory, most Mormon leaders quickly complied. God, they believed, was indeed at the helm of American "battles for humanity and right." Even the sinking of the Maine, Mormons were told, was allowed by God to vitalize American altruism and direct it towards suffering Cuba. God had maneuvered the United States into war "for no other purpose than to bring freedom to an oppressed people." It has been a noble American undertaking, and one in which the United States had performed admirably. Thus, a Mormon editorial could maintain that "after having been victorious in every engagement on land and sea, . . . new lustre [was] added to our great nation, not so much in its victories as by its

57 Deseret Evening News, June 7, 1898.
58 I.E., 2 (November 1898), p. 60.
61 Deseret Evening News, April 2, 1898.
wonderful magnanimity and exhibition of high and noble purpose."  

Nevertheless, the "high and noble purpose" which had taken America to war seemed but tenuously related to the war's outcome. America had embarked on the road to imperialism. Yet, many Mormons reasoned that if God had directed the war, then surely he would direct its consequences. Therefore, these same Mormons supported the American imperialistic endeavors. Using Joseph Smith's expansionism as a precedent, these Mormon leaders asked, "Are we going to abandon Hawaii and the Philippines to their fate? Let Spain lay down her colonies in this hemisphere at the altar of civilization . . . as a peace offering to God and man." It was obviously God's purpose to "have the influence of the United States felt in . . . those Asiatic countries." It was the time "when the flag of freedom [would] float over the earth, [even] if the nations have to be smashed in the process of attainment of that glorious destiny."  

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63 Ibid.  
64 Osgood, op. cit., p. 42.  
66 Deseret Evening News, June 29, 1898; Deseret Evening News, July 4, 1898.  
68 I.E., 1 (September 1898), pp. 785-792; Deseret Evening News, June 7, 1898.
However, the use of Joseph Smith's expansionism as a precedent suggests that the Mormons might have had ulterior motives for supporting American imperialism. Smith had attempted to use "Manifest Destiny" for spreading Mormonism. Similarly, Church leaders in 1898 seemed anxious to use imperialism for the same purpose. These Mormons were no different from those "missionary minded sectors who were eager to find outlets for their evangelism."69 They were told, therefore, that one of the major purposes of the war was to loosen the bonds of government that restricted religious liberty. Once this was accomplished, it would then be easy for Mormon elders to spread the gospel.70 Then, America as Zion could fulfill Daniel's dream and "consume all these kingdoms and . . . stand forever."71

Hence, the reinterpretation of America as Zion allowed not only Mormon participation in a war, but also justified America's rise to world power. After the war, most Mormon leaders could argue that "... Zion cannot fail, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of God is there."72 Ambivalently, they could rationalize that war, although it was produced by evil, often resulted in beneficial by-products for everyone.

69Pratt, op. cit., p. 282.
70CR, October 1898, pp. 32-34.
71MS., 60 (1898), Frontpiece.
72D & C 97:19.
concerned. 73

Obviously the Mormons had travelled some distance from their Civil War pacifism, and the road they traversed had led them towards a nationalistic imperialism. It was a long and difficult journey, and one that can best be explained through insights offered by Richard Hofstadter, who believed that men often respond to their frustrations by acts of aggression. Thus, in his work on the Spanish-American War, he maintains that "the underdog forces in the American society showed a considerably higher responsiveness to the idea of war with Spain than the groups that were satisfied with their economic and political position." 74 Indeed, since the organization of the Mormon Church, the Latter-day Saints had believed themselves underdogs of American society. Millennialism, however, had always offered them the hope of relief from the frustrations that accompany an underdog. But with the war in 1898 came a corresponding change in the exegesis of millennialsim. Their expectations for an imminent Parousia had been destroyed by the reality of history, and the only relief that Mormons could find was a belligerent nationalism, justified by interpreting America as Zion.

Nevertheless, as Mormons became a more active ingredient in middle class America, their frustrations, 73I.E., 1 (August 1898), pp. 770-775.
74Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 185.
accompanied by their belligerent nationalism, subsided. And by 1917 all that remained was the accompanying Americanism. In 1917 the Mormons were American.
CHAPTER V

OPTIMISM AND WORLD WAR I

This great cataclysm of war has brought us face to face with the Master's doctrine that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

George H. Brimhall, April 1918

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, and the resulting cataclysm that embroiled all of Europe, shocked many Americans. But riding above their astonishment was a sense of relief that the United States had outgrown those archaic European methods of settling international difficulties, and consequently did not need to get involved. The churches of the nation heaved the loudest sigh of relief and listened to Wilson's proclamation of neutrality with great respect.¹

Vocal Mormon leaders were also among those most desirous of keeping America neutral and passive, as they believed America to be Zion, a land of peace. Since Germany was not likely to "try and land on American shores," they proclaimed there was no need for American concern.² Even if the situation arose in which Germany did attack


the United States, Mormon leaders could argue that "he that fighteth against Zion shall perish" because the Lord would fight its battles.⁴

America, B. H. Roberts wrote, was a place of refuge and safety. America was Zion, "and every man who will not take up the sword against his neighbor must flee to Zion."⁵ It was not America's duty to end the "wicked and unjustifiable European war."⁶ The United States, as most Mormons believed, had already suffered the Civil War as penalty for national sin; there was no need for America to suffer again. These Mormons hopefully maintained that this new period would remain an era of peace for the nation.⁷

Mormons came to believe, then, that it was the Church which offered hope for peace. Moreover, both Mormon publications and leaders seemed adamant in their desires for swords to be molded into plowshares. "The present conflict," Mormon congregations were told, "should prove that peace comes only by preparing for peace."⁸

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⁵CR, October 1915, pp. 131-132; CR, April 1916, pp. 77-78.


"Peace by armed force is a failure," stated Joseph F. Smith, and should be abandoned forever. The only thing that would bring peace to the world was the gospel of Jesus Christ; war was proving only the "insanity of trying to settle international difficulties" by means of violence. A "world perishing in rivers of blood" was in dire need of the spiritual message found in the "Church of the Prince of Peace."\(^8\)

Yet as the war progressed, these Mormon leaders realized that the nations of the world had no desire for their peaceful message.\(^9\) Consequently, many of the outspoken Mormon leaders began to display their nationalism. Zion, they believed, was the only moral power in a wicked world. America, they announced, had no desire to "rule the world by force or to control the commerce of the world."\(^{10}\) This was God's nation--a nation to be emulated by all others. Hence, the only avenue to peace would be when the "self-constituted monarchs [gave] way to rulers chosen by the people." Only then would the "welfare of

\(^8\)Ibid.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 1075; M.S., 80 (September 1918), pp. 568-569.

\(^{10}\)I.E., 18 (October 1915), p. 1074; M.S., 79 (May 1917), pp. 344-347.


\(^{12}\)CR, October 1915, pp. 131-132.
all . . . be permitted to live in happiness."\textsuperscript{13}

This desire for a world spread of democracy indicated another side of Mormon wartime ambivalence. On the one hand these Mormon leaders suggested that America remain neutral, but on the other they were expressing a democratic expansionism. Thus, these same bellicose leaders came to support a national organization that reflected a similar ambivalent position towards America's duty to a world at war. The organization was titled The League to Enforce Peace, and the Mormon First Presidency asked the general body of the Church to give it their "hearty support."\textsuperscript{14} The League was supportable because it appealed both to Mormon passivism, by proposing to vitalize America's moral neutrality to arbitrate for peace,\textsuperscript{15} and to Mormon belligerence. Because if Europe would not recognize this moral position of U.S. neutrality, the League then proposed that America enter the war and, as a moral nation--as God's chosen nation--democratize the world and bring the hostilities to a halt.\textsuperscript{16}

Since President Wilson's proposals for peace were ignored by the Central Powers, it was obvious to these Mormon leaders that the war would continue. Some guarantee,

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{I.E.}, 17 (August 1914), pp. 1075-1076.
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{CR}, April 1916, pp. 77-79.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Abrams}, op. cit., pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}
they maintained, had to be made to insure worldwide safety of "industry and commerce." Therefore, in direct contradiction to the passive side of their ambivalence, Mormon activists began to call for America to enter the war and bring it to a close. Contrary to their earlier peaceful declarations, they became militant. "We want to establish peace," proclaimed Charles Penrose, "but sometimes peace is established only through war." America was subsequently entering the war with the idea of ushering in an eternal peace. The sword of war was drawn against war itself, so that it "might eternally cease upon the face of the earth . . . ."

In 1914, Joseph F. Smith had remarked that the war started because the European nations neglected the fundamental teachings of Christ, all of which were "opposed to war." God would not, nor could not, have "anything to do [with] this war." But after Wilson had called the nation to arms, most Mormon leaders changed their assumptions. By entering the war on the precepts that Wilson

18 I.E., 20 (July 1917), p. 833; M.S., 80 (June 1918), pp. 360-361.
19 J.I., 52 (November 1917), p. 580; CR, October 1918, p. 28.
20 CR, October 1917, p. 103; M.S., 79 (June 1917), pp. 392-393.
22 Ibid.
set forth, the Mormon leader David O. McKay could assert that America was "emulating the principles of the Savior."23 America was liberating mankind from an "autocracy that aims at the enslavement of the world . . . ."24 By drawing the sword in righteousness and unselfishness,25 the United States was protecting "suffering humanity,"26 and, contrary to Smith's earlier remarks, God became directly involved.

With America striving to emulate Christ, "God [would] bless them and make of them the saviors of mankind."27 The destructive forces of the war came under the control of God,28 who was trying to bring about "His reign of liberty and righteousness. . . ."29 And through "Christ's General," Marshall Foch, God's power and glory would be "manifest in eventual victory for the right."30

God was embodied in American doughboys. When a

23 CR, April 1918, p. 81.
26 I.E., 10 (November 1917), pp. 35, 39; M.S., 80 (June 1918), pp. 360-361.
27 CR, October 1917, p. 37.
soldier aimed his rifle, he would "see with the eyes of God," and when he struck he would strike with the "arm of God." Therefore, Mormon leaders counseled young men to go "forth to war," and go "under the influence . . . of almighty God" and of the "Holy Ghost." But the belief that a soldier could go to war under these divine influences brings to light another aspect of the Mormon ambivalence. As a tool of God in a righteous war, a soldier would not be a "destroyer of enemies." He brought life, not death. Under the influence of a divine spirit, a soldier would do good works, "not destroy and shed blood." Consequently, Mormon men were told to go to war feeling "just as our missionaries do when sent out into the world."

Moreover, if American soldiers embodied God, then German soldiers embodied Satan. America, like the Savior, stood for government "by persuasion and long suffering, by kindness, gentleness and love unfeigned," but Germany, "overbearing, contemptuous, and offensively proud," was attempting to bring about a government by "conquest and

34Ibid.
domination."\(^{37}\) This attitude and procedure, Mormons were
told, was similar to Satan's methods of securing things
"by the spirit of force and compulsion."\(^{38}\) Thus, the war
was seen as a belated attempt by Lucifer to use devices
which had failed in the pre-existence. Democracy prevails
in Heaven, while "autocracy prevails in Hell."\(^{39}\) Some
Mormons went so far as to interpret scripture more literally.
Revising I Nephi 14:13, found in the Book of Mormon, one
Mormon author came up with:

> And it came to pass that the plotters against
freedom and liberty, the champions of autocracy or
the cohorts of Kaiserism, (in other words, in the
words of the book, 'The Great abominable church')
did gather together multitudes from all nations of
the gentiles to fight against liberty, Zion, or their
champion, the Son of God, which ever you choose to
call it.\(^{40}\)

The anti-Christ had been disseminated throughout
all of Germany by men whose philosophies were similar to
that of Nietzsche,\(^{41}\) but more important was the man at the
head of that "perverted" school--the Kaiser.\(^{42}\) As a tool
of Satan, stated Heber J. Grant, "no honest person need

\(^{37}\) M.S., 80 (September 1918), p. 609.
\(^{39}\) I.E., 20 (October 1918), p. 1030.
\(^{40}\) I.E., 22 (March 1919), p. 443.
\(^{41}\) CR, October 1919, p. 51.
\(^{42}\) Noble Warrum, Utah in the World War (Salt Lake:
be told where [the Kaiser's] inspiration comes from."  

It was, then, a "damnable profanation of the living God" for the Kaiser to maintain that the Lord was fighting for Germany. Mormon congregations were told that God wanted nothing to do with a nation that broke "solemn pledges, and treat[ed] constitutions as scraps of paper."  

Consequently, the metal tokens allegedly taken from dead German soldiers and used so effectively by Dwight Hillis to propagandize against Germany also became a prominent tool for Mormon vilification of the Kaiser. The tokens read in part, "I, your Kaiser, will appear before God on Judgment Day and assume responsibility for whatever you do under the orders of your officers." This statement aroused Mormon ire. It was unbelievable, they argued, that "any human could make such a blasphemous pretension." It was even more incredible for any "sane person" to believe such a statement and then try to "evade responsibility for wrong doing in that way."  

Yet, by using the tokens to malign the Kaiser, these Mormon leaders were confronted with still another contradiction. On the one hand it was implied that German

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44 Ibid.  
46 J.I., 53 (June 1918), p. 306.
leaders could not rightfully assume responsibility for the war. On the other, however, statements made by the Mormon President, Joseph F. Smith, indicate that the German leaders were indeed the only ones to blame. It was of little consequence, Smith had once remarked, if German Mormons found themselves in the trenches opposing American Latter-day Saints. The matters under contention were not their responsibility. Their leaders, Smith stated, would assume full responsibility for their actions, and it was those leaders who were to blame, "not the people."\textsuperscript{47}

Nevertheless, the propaganda against the Kaiser was effective—probably too effective, as it was not very long before hatred for the Kaiser had evolved into hatred for European Germans, American Germans, and more specifically, Mormon Germans.\textsuperscript{48} Yet the Church—historically perceiving itself as an American organization but worldwide in influence by 1917—did not know how to deal with the problem. The war, then, was the first major instance in which Mormon leaders were confronted with the problem of Latter-day Saints fighting one another. Prior to American entrance into the war, German Mormons living in Salt Lake were counseled not to take sides or uphold the righteousness of "their land's cause." All Mormons, they were told, should "remain apart from the wars and quarrels that

\textsuperscript{47}CR, April 1917, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid.
nations engage in." 49 As Latter-day Saints, there was theoretically no such thing as a "hyphenated citizen," 50 as Mormons were "all brothers in the household of faith." 51

With American involvement, however, generalizations such as the above became mere rhetoric. Initially Mormon leaders encouraged Latter-day Saint men living in America to enlist in the allied cause making no distinction between prospective German and American recruits. American involvement contradicted the "hyphenated citizen" remark; it contradicted the household of faith statement. The commitment of the Mormon leaders to the allied cause implied only one thing--that to be a Mormon living in America meant you were an American-Mormon.

As devout Americans, then, these Mormon leaders asked the body of the Church to authorize the Trustee-in-Trust of the Church to purchase liberty bonds. 52 Since the war was seen as the same fight for which Christ had died, 53 such a purchase was deemed a good investment. Thus, by the end of the war the Mormon Church had purchased over one million dollars worth of bonds, and this total did not include purchases made by many of the Church auxiliary

51 CR, April 1917, p. 11.
52 CR, October 1917, p. 149.
organizations. 54

But the amount invested was believed to be far less than the expected returns, for the war brought to Mormons, as to other churches, an opportunity to advance their own peculiar "godly designs." And to the Mormons, one of those designs was to prove that Joseph Smith had indeed been a prophet. 55 During World War I, the 87th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the section pertaining to an apocalyptic war, was reworded to read "... then war shall be poured out upon all nations." Prior to 1917 the verse in question read, "... thus war shall be poured out upon all nations." This rewording, in effect, gave formal sanction to the post-Civil War let-down and reinterpretations of that scripture; 56 consequently the scriptures became applicable not only to the Civil War, but to any major war, particularly the one currently

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54 Roberts, op. cit., VI, pp. 467-468.


56 Ibid., pp. 248-249. Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary reveals that the word "thus" can mean from this time on or from this source of origin. "Then," on the other hand, can be used to mean "soon after that." Hence the reworded scripture changed the whole exegesis of the interpretation, and the section on Apocalyptic war was given an elasticity. The immediacy of the word "thus" was changed to an indeterminate "then." This change, however, if one does not wish to partake in a semantical argument, is symbolic of post-Civil War Mormon thought. It is the first time that Mormons acknowledged that their Civil War interpretations of the prophecy might have been wrong, thus formally opening the way for reinterpretation.
raging. Thus, Joseph Smith was believed to have prophesied the First World War.

Other scriptures were used to prove Smith's prophetic capabilities, one of which was the 61st section of the D & C. In this passage, Smith predicted there would be a destroyer upon "the waters." "The waters" had most commonly been interpreted to be the Missouri River, but World War I provoked a reinterpretation: "the waters" Smith mentioned were now believed to be the Atlantic Ocean, and "the destroyer" German U boats. Similarly, Mormon congregations were reminded that Smith had predicted famines to cover the earth. It need not be added that the world in 1917 "was a famine stricken world."

But Joseph Smith was not the only Mormon prophet who had received visions of a war-stricken world. Wilford Woodruff, Mormons were told, was another who had predicted World War I. In 1894, as Orson Whitney recalled, Woodruff had stated that

God has held angels of destruction for many years . . . . These angels have left the portals of Heaven, and they now stand over this people and this nation and are waiting to pour out the judgments . . . the next twenty years will see mighty changes among the nations of the earth.

57 Ibid. 58 Ibid.
59 D & C 61:3, 4.
60 J.I., 52 (October 1917), pp. 510-511; CR, October 1917, p. 52.
61 D & C 45: 25; 87:6.
62 CR, October 1917, p. 53. 63 Ibid., p. 52.
Whitney concluded by remarking that it had been exactly twenty years from the time Woodruff had made the prediction until the year war broke out in Europe.  

This vindication of the prophets aroused a dormant millennial thought in many of the Mormon leaders. And just as they had believed "Christ's revelations [were] ripening into actualities," so did they believe the world was preparing for the second coming. It was prophesied that the "great and glorious day of promise . . . [had] come at last the Prince of Peace would reign over the nations of the earth.

Because the Spanish American war had initiated a marked change in Mormon millennial thought, so too had Mormon ideas in 1917 similarly changed. Most of these millennialists were not as willing as their Civil War brethren to affix a millennium to the war's outcome. Rather, they hedged, and were content to assert that if the second coming was not ushered in by the war, at least the struggle would result in a better secular world. The war would bring the dawning of a new age, proclaimed the Millennial Star—one which would see "new hopes, new

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64 Ibid. For other prophecies that were believed to be fulfilled by the war see, J.I., 52 (October 1917), pp. 510-511: Relief Society Magazine, 5 (August 1918), pp. 469-470; I.E., 21 (January 1918), pp. 259-261.


aspirations, new opportunities, and new responsibilities."

It would be an "electric age," and one in which the future lay "radiant in the sunrise of new hope." Perhaps the best expression of this glorious post war vision was written by B. H. Roberts. He envisioned a utopian world arising

... out of this waste of life and treasure. ... There shall come larger liberty to the inhabitants of the earth; a more profound security of joy of life and of liberty, and pursuit of happiness. There will come a better distribution of wealth that is created by a combination of efforts of men, by their daily toil, and the supply of capital that makes possible the labors of men's hands. I look forward to better times, improved conditions and development of larger opportunities and greater blessings than the world has yet known.

One of the most tangible values belonging to that new age was democracy, and most Mormon leaders seemed to justify a great deal of their support for the war upon their visions of a democratized world. Ironically, they believed that a democratized world would lead to a theocratized one. The religious freedom that would accompany a liberated country was seen as a "preparation for the spreading of the Gospel." Nations had to be freed from "centuries of bondage,"

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67 M.S., 80 (November 1918), pp. 718-730.
68 I.E., 21 (January 1918), pp. 233-236.
69 I.E., 22 (December 1918), p. 185.
71 CR, April 1918, p. 81; M.S., 79 (September 1917), p. 597; M.S., 80 (November 1918), p. 728-750.
and "barriers to the proclamation of the Gospel . . . [had to be] broken down. . . ."\(^{72}\) The gospel could be delivered, only "when liberty, free speech, and a free press [were] insured among nations."\(^{73}\)

These dreams of a utopian post war world contained many of the spiritual ideals found in the Mormon concept of the Kingdom of God. By World War I, however, outspoken Mormon leaders had come to believe that the Kingdom of God could be ushered in by their support of a war. Ambivalently, they had come to champion a war, which, with all of its mud, misery and death, was diametrically opposed to the values of the Kingdom they had so earnestly hoped to establish.

On the homefront, some Mormon leaders began to protest sardonically against advocates of those values that belonged to their Kingdom--the pacifists. Indeed, those who were outspoken on this subject indicate how far the Church had come from those early days of persecution when the Mormons had bitterly complained about the loss of their constitutional rights. World War I was a time, they believed, when "men's individualism must be repressed in the interest of the national good."\(^{74}\) It was a time, they implied, when the "treasonable activities of Bob La Follet

\(^{72}\) M.S., 80 (March 1918), pp. 184-186.
\(^{73}\) J.I., 21 (October 1918), pp. 1029-1030.
\(^{74}\) J.I., 52 (September 1917), pp. 460-461.
and men like him . . ." should be suppressed.\textsuperscript{75} There were too many "slackers and pacifists" who did not support the American attempts to squash German autocracy.\textsuperscript{76}

These Latter-day Saint leaders were entirely committed to the American cause; consequently they were hesitant to support any peace proposal that might not ensure their goals. Even when the Central Powers became willing to discuss the Fourteen Points, these Church leaders revealed no desire to relax the American war effort.\textsuperscript{77} The shout "kamerad" meant nothing, as the German heirarchy had broken solemn pledges before and there would be no hesitation, Mormon leaders believed, for them to do it again.\textsuperscript{78} Therefore, Joseph F. Smith, George Albert Smith, and Heber J. Grant all signed a telegram sent to Woodrow Wilson demanding that the "autrocratic and military leaders of the Central Powers" unconditionally surrender. Only then, the telegram concluded, should America consider terms for peace.\textsuperscript{79}

The peace came, and with it the battle over the League of Nations. Here once again, Mormons were found—rather typically by this time—on both sides of the issue.\textsuperscript{80}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75} J.I., 52 (November 1917), p. 5301
\item \textsuperscript{76} J.I., 52, (October 1917), p. 521.
\item \textsuperscript{77} CR, October 1918, p. 142.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid.; M.S., 79 (June 1917), p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{79} J.I., 53 (November 1918), p. 579.
\end{itemize}
These Mormon leaders had just witnessed the end of a war which found them contradicting themselves and drifting into ambivalence and ambiguity. This contradiction and drift was similar to that of other wars. But in 1917 the Mormon Church saw itself as an American church. Religion and nationalism had become inseparable, rendering church members susceptible to propaganda and psychological warfare. Moreover, these LDS leaders came to have definite objectives for the outcome of the war which led them to support it with unrestrained vigor. Thus, in 1917, Church goals and national goals were nearly similar, and for one brief moment in history, God and country became synonymous. Nevertheless, the aftermath of the war and the disillusionment that followed affected the Mormons so that in 1942, they, along with the rest of the country, developed a different rationale for supporting a war.
CHAPTER VI

THE DECLINE OF OPTIMISM AND WORLD WAR II

Mars sits enthroned in fearful majesty
Til his dread works finished, peace no more shall be.

The crusading idealism of 1917 had been packed into
the attic by 1942. Like an overcoat that no longer fit,
it was bundled in boxes of memorabilia and surrounded by
recollections of the Charleston and the Black Bottom, the
flapper and bathtub gin. Idealism had lost its appeal,
and war no longer held meaning nor morality. Never again
would there be such a thing as a just war; "it was just
war."\(^1\) Going to war was similar to taking out the gar-
bage. It was something that needed to be done, but some-
ting nobody enjoyed doing.

Prior to World War II the Mormons were advocating
strict American neutrality. In 1939 Church leaders pro-
claimed that America should demonstrate its love for
humanity and justice by remaining neutral. By using its
moral pacifism, America could "bring an end to the criminal
slaughter . . . and give birth to a peace that shall be
lasting."\(^2\) All international enterprise, these Mormon

\(^1\)Bainton, op. cit., p. 22.

\(^2\)CR, October 1939, p. 17; I.E., 42 (November 1939),
p. 698.
leaders argued, "may be settled by pacific means. . . ."{3} War was merely an investment of time, resources, and lives, with the only returns being the "ill will of everyone." The first world war had proven that American intervention settled nothing.\(^5\) Thus, most Church leaders admonished America to heed the Savior's message: "Blessed are the peace makers; for they shall be called the children of God."{6}

But the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor brought a new set of circumstances to the nation,\(^7\) and to the Mormons as well. America had once again become involved in a world war, and Mormon leaders were again confronted with a serious problem. The Church had in previous wars become closely identified with Americanism. Yet World War I had challenged that identity when Latter-day Saints were found opposing one another in the trenches, and by 1942 the worldwide growth of the Church served only to compound the problem. The Mormon Church could no longer afford to publicly take sides. Thus the First Presidency issued a statement of policy which read in part:

\(^3\)I.E., 42 (November 1939), p. 672.
\(^4\)I.E., 43 (May 1940), p. 261.
\(^6\)I.E., 43 (December 1940), p. 712.
\(^7\)Abrams, op. cit., p. 267.
The Church is and must be against war. The Church cannot wage war . . . . It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes . . . . But Church members are citizens of sovereignties over which the Church has no control . . . . When therefore, constitutional law, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service . . . . their highest civic duty requires they meet the call. 8

The pathos of this statement is self-evident: Outspoken Church leaders, realizing that thousands of Mormons would once again oppose one another from opposite sides of a battle field, could no longer publicly bless the American cause as "holy." Consequently, all Mormons were counseled to go to war with patriotism burning in their bosom, and not to go with the crusading bravado that had characterized their previous participation in American war.

Patriotism, then, was an attempt to justify Mormon participation in the war. It would be vain, said David O. McKay, to try to "reconcile war with true Christianity," or to demonstrate effectively that Jesus had ever approved of war. 9 Nevertheless, McKay postulated two times when a Christian was justified in doing battle: One, which applied to American Mormons, was resisting encroachment upon United States freedom. The second, which applied to Mormons the world over, was loyalty to one's country. McKay believed

8 CR, April 1942, p. 94.

that loyalty was an obligation of every citizen to the
nation in which he resided.\footnote{Ibid.}

But patriotic rhetoric could not effectively dis-
guise the "Americanism" of the Mormon Church; nor could it
conceal the religiosity that most Mormons had historically
attributed to an American cause. The appeal to patriotism,
and even the reference to the war as "just," rather than
"holy" or "righteous,"\footnote{I.E., 45 (April 1942), p. 225.}
was merely verbiage that could
not mask the ulterior religiosity that war had traditionally
held for the Mormons. The war was being waged because some
nations had forgotten the commandments of God\footnote{I.E., 46 (August 1943), p. 480.}
and because the United States was fighting to defeat those "termite-
like" political philosophies\footnote{I.E., 43 (November 1940), p. 698.}
which sought to "dethrone Christianity."\footnote{I.E., 42 (November 1939), p. 656.}
Communism, Fascism, and Nazism had brought
war to the world, and a "Christian nation" like the United
States could not stand by and tolerate it.\footnote{CR, April 1942, p. 90; I.E., 45 (May 1942), p. 295; I.E., 46 (June 1943), p. 338.}
Therefore, when all was said and done, when the flag waving was put
aside and the patriotic loyalty peeled off, the war became
religiously significant. Many Mormon leaders had come to
believe that American entrance into the war was for the
preservation of the plan of salvation. And the Lord would defend that, even at the price of war.

It was the misguided leaders of the world who lacked spirituality and worshiped the gods of materialism that had brought bloodshed to the world. Whenever there was a rise in tyranny, remarked Albert E. Bowen, there was a corresponding decline in Christianity. The war was caused by "unrighteousness" because the people of the world had refused to keep the Lord's commandments. In turn, God would use the war to wipe out sin and unrighteousness.

Moreover, these Mormon leaders did not exclude American sins and unrighteousness as a cause for U.S. involvement. The immorality of alcohol was directly connected to the disaster at Pearl Harbor. Had the sailors been sober the night before, some Mormon leaders maintained, the catastrophe might have been averted. Hollywood's portrayal of lawlessness and nudity was another indication of America's saturnalian ways. If sin had embroiled America

17 CR, April 1942, pp. 71-73.
18 CR, October 1944, pp. 78-79.
19 CR, April 1942, p. 59.
21 I.E., 43 (December 1940), p. 712.
23 CR, April 1944, p. 71-75.
in a civil war, sin could similarly involve America in
World War II. 24 American morality was believed to be
the immorality of Nineveh, Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon,
Rome, and Pompeii, 25 and the United States could very
well suffer the same "lesson" as these cities of old. 26
It was implied that "history [would] repeat itself here
. . . as we desecrate all things holy and sacred. . . ." 27
War, Albert E. Bowen told a congregation, was "only the
outward manifestation of an inner decay," and added that
the decay was not merely "confined to the aggressor coun-
tries . . . [it has] penetrated into all lands." 28 The
American nation was founded, Joseph Fielding Smith argued
by men who accepted the divine truths found in the
scriptures. But it was also

. . . predicted by a prophet of old, that this
land . . . would be fortified against all other
nations [only] . . . as its inhabitants serv[ed]
Jesus Christ; but shall they stray from the Son
of God, it would cease to be a land of liberty
and His anger would be kindled against them . . . .
It is a sad reflection but one that cannot
be successfully refuted, that we have forgotten

24 CR, October 1942, pp. 61-62.
25 CR, October 1945, pp. 121-125; I.E., 48 (May
1945), p. 32.
26 I.E., 45 (October 1942), p. 572; CR, October
1942, p. 162.
27 CR, October 1945, pp. 121-125.
28 Ibid., April 1945, p. 40.
the admonition which came down to us. In forsaking these laws we stand in danger of punishment . . . because [America] forsook the Lord and failed to repent and accept the warnings of their prophets.

Thus, as the Axis powers seemed to have the upper hand early in the war, Mormon leaders frantically pleaded for national repentance "before it [was] too late."\(^{30}\) Alma, a Book of Mormon prophet, had gone out and spiritually regenerated his people when confronted with a war.\(^{31}\) Likewise, Washington and Lincoln both called the nation to repentance when faced with a national crisis. These men had all realized that unless the people turn to the Lord, destruction would overtake them.\(^{32}\) Thousands of lives could be spared, cried Joseph Fielding Smith, if only the people would humble themselves and keep the Lord's commandments.\(^{33}\) "I am sure," continued Smith, that if Americans would put their lives in order, "He [God] would . . . come to our aid and . . . [fight] our battles."\(^{34}\)

Putting one's life in order meant putting one's home in order as well. Rural families had raised generation

\(^{29}\)CR, April 1943, pp. 11-12.

\(^{30}\)CR, April 1944, pp. 71-75; CR, October 1944, pp. 97-98; Relief Society Magazine, 31 (December 1944), p. 704.

\(^{31}\)I.E., 44 (August 1941), pp. 508-509.

\(^{32}\)CR, October 1944, pp. 79-98.

\(^{33}\)Ibid., pp. 145-146.

\(^{34}\)CR, October 1944, p. 145; I.E., 44 (August 1941), pp. 508-509.
after generation of men and women who had given strength to the nation and to the world. "But metropolitan America, lacking rural, social and religious influences, could not keep mechanization and technology from becoming a corruptive influence on the home." As a result, the home was believed to be disintegrating. "The family," Mormons read, was the prime group of society, and needed to be strengthened. No contribution to a nation was greater than to raise "fine stalwart citizens who maintain the standards and ideas of that nation." "No man or nation could survive happily unless every labor be done in obedience to spiritual concepts." Thus, it was through the family, and only through the family, that a nation could prevent a recurrence of war.

The wartime events that had occasioned Mormon pleas for individual and familial repentance slowly changed as the allied prospects for victory began to improve. But for

35 CR, October 1944, pp. 49-51.
36 Relief Society Magazine, 28 (December 1941), p. 840.
the most part, Mormon leaders could offer no reason for these changing conditions. One exception was Richard L. Evans who remarked that Americans had been granted a deliverance "as real as any recorded in Holy Writ." Besides, in the long run it was God who would be the victor. Thus, John A. Widstoe could confidently proclaim that the tide of battle was turned by the Lord for the principles He represented. "Secretly," revealed George Albert Smith, "the Lord has favored us."

It was some relief for these men to envision the tide of battle turning, for they believed the Latter-day Saint Church had a great deal to gain from an allied victory. Such a triumph would liberate those countries that Mormon leaders believed were lacking spirituality. Then, after liberation, "a marvelous work . . . [could go] forth among the children of men"—preaching the gospel to all nations. Post war days would be a time for the Mormons to labor for the Lord, a time to instill the spirit of Christ throughout the world. The war, Mormons believed,

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42 I.E., 48 (October 1945), p. 578.
43 I.E., 43 (February 1942), p. 97.
46 CR, April 1945, p. 39.
48 CR, April 1943, pp. 78-79.
had brought men closer to God, but not necessarily into his church. Thus, the post war volume of missionary work that Mormon leaders envisioned, made their "hearts overflow with joy."49 As a time for great evangelization, these Mormons believed they were on the

... threshold of remarkable events. ... We are entering upon an era of conversion so great that the human mind cannot comprehend its magnitude. We are told in holy writ that every knee must bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. ... This Church is destined to evangelize the whole earth. That is its mission and by the grace of God we are going to accomplish it.50

Of singular importance to evangelization was proclaiming the prophetic virtues of the first Mormon leader, Joseph Smith. By interpreting and reinterpreting many events of the war, some LDS leaders presented a substantial amount of evidence supporting their claim that Smith was a seer. Since the cataclysmic scriptures found in the 87th section of the Doctrine and Covenants has assumed a formalized elasticity during World War I, that section could be applied to World War II as well. As used in the 1940's, this prophecy confirmed that Joseph Smith had predicted the second, as well as the first, twentieth-century war. In the 97th section of that same scriptural text,

49 CR, April 1944, p. 133. Even those gentiles who were killed during the war would have the opportunity to receive the gospel, as Mormon leaders postulated that LDS men would also be killed so that they could preach the gospel to these gentile victims in the spirit world. (I.E., 45 [November 1942], p. 714.)

50 CR, October 1942, p. 73.
also believed applicable to the war, Smith had written
that the "Lord's scourge shall pass over by night and by
day, and . . . shall vex all the people." 51 The "scourge"
was interpreted by Joseph L. Wirthlin to be the squadrons
of flying fortresses that rained "death [on] peoples, cities,
amarmyies, battleships, fleets, and merchant-marine--by day
and by night." 52 Similarly, "the waters" Joseph Smith had
seemingly foreseen as unsafe in 1832, 53 and dangerous in
1917, 54 were believed to be just as perilous in 1942. Ger-
man and Japanese submarines vindicated Smith as a prophet,
for who else but a messenger from God could have predicted
in 1832 "that the waters [in 1943] would be unsafe." 55

There had been other Mormon prophets, however, and
Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve had made certain
that they received credit for their seemingly verified
prophecies. Brigham Young had once remarked that

... when the testimonies of the elders cease
to be given, and the Lord says to them 'Come home;
I will now preach my own sermons to the nations of
the earth.' All you now know can scarcely be called
a preface to the sermon that will be preached with
fire and sword, tempests, earthqweke, hail, rain, 56
thunders and lightenings, and fearful destruction.

51 D & C 97:23.
52 CR, April 1943, pp. 120-124; I.E., 46 (July 1943),
p. 441.
53 D & C 61:14-16.
54 See previous chapter.
55 CR, April 1943, pp. 120-124.
Scarcely had the missionaries been called back from Europe, Lee remarked, when "all hell broke loose . . . and the fulfillment of the prophecy came to pass." Moreover, modern prophecy had commanded the Mormons to gather a two-year supply of food, and had urged Mormon leaders to restrict their travel habits. Subsequently the food, rubber, and gas shortages of 1943 further confirmed the prophetic utterances of contemporary Mormon leaders. As Lee emphasized, the voice of the Lord had spoken through his earthly mouthpiece, "trying to prepare His people for the conservation programs that would be forced upon them." 

Although the prophets seemed to be vindicated, the millennialism that usually accompanied such a vindication was strikingly absent. By 1942 the progressive belief that man had the capacity to enforce peace was gone; the idea that war could be waged to end war had foundered; the Wilsonian hope for a post war utopian world had vanished. Even the secularized Mormon millennialism was nowhere to be found. Thus, perhaps due to the disillusionment and let-down of the two previous decades, Mormons came to embrace a religious conservatism not found in their previous war experience. The only foundation for peace, most Mormon leaders came to believe, was righteousness, built upon obedience to God's commandments and a faith in Jesus

57 Ibid.

Christ. To avoid future destruction, man would have to follow Him who said "I am the way the truth and the life." Peace would never come to the earth until the nations, in reality and not merely in name, became Christian nations. The only law upon which peace could rest was the law of God, and peace would never come to the world until "man-kind yielded to His commandments."

This pessimistic fundamentalism of Mormon thought during World War II marked a radical departure from the optimism of the two preceding wars. From the mid-1930's to the present, then, this pessimism had been reflected in the sermons, books, and articles of most General Authorities who have spoken on the subject of war. Nevertheless, there were still many similarities between Second World War attitudes and those of the earlier conflicts. First, the wars generally offered many Mormon leaders resource material


for faith promoting stories; and, secondly, they stimulated
great expectations for post-war proselyting. But the great-
est similarity, and one that transcends all of the Mormon
wartime experience, was the ambivalence resulting from the
confusion raised over how a Christian church could support
a war. However, during World War II, unlike preceeding
wars, Mormon leaders attempted to avoid any religious con-
notations their wartime involvement might have evoked.
Thus, they labeled the war as "just" rather than "holy," and
construed their participation as "patriotic" rather than
"righteous." Notwithstanding, it was of little consequence
how the war was labeled, for it still held great religious
import for most Mormon leaders. Ultimately, then, it was
supported and decried religiously.

David O. McKay's wholehearted religious endorsement
of the war effort indicates one half of the Mormon ambiva-
ience. Directing some comments on the war to allied sol-
diers, McKay remarked that

We all realize with you, that you are enlisted in a
war against wickedness, and peace cannot come until
the mad gangsters . . . are defeated and branded as
murderers, and their false aims repudiated, let us
hope forever. Yes the conflict must continue . . .
until the establishment of a just peace.64

However, there were some Mormon leaders who appar-
ently did not agree with McKay's philosophy and could not
righteously support the cause at all. J. Reuben Clark
revealed this pacifistic side of Mormon ambivalence when

64 CR, October 1942, p. 68.
he read a statement issued by the First Presidency of the Church. It read in part:

We condemn the outcome which wicked and designing men are now planning . . . Communism on the one side, or some form of Nazism or Facism on the other . . . We renew our declaration that international disputes can and should be settled by peaceful means. This is the way of the Lord . . . . We call upon the statesmen of the world to assume their rightful control of the affairs of nations and to bring this war to an end, honorable and just to all. Animated and led by the spirit of Christ they can do it . . . . Hate driven militarists and leaders, with murder in their hearts, will, if they go through to the end, bring only another peace that will be but the beginning of another war.\(^{65}\)

J. Reuben Clark gave very little support to the war effort. At best, he recognized that the United States had no alternative but to fight, but, for the most part, he kept his opinions to himself during the war years. After the war, however, Clark was an outspoken critic of the United States' handling of the war, and he decried it as appalling. He could not understand why man had devised such brutal means of destruction when God had given him productive, rather than destructive, talents.\(^{66}\) Especially America's use of the atomic bomb had caused Clark to protest with "all the energy [he] posses[ed]." The "murderous means of extermination" that the United States had devised was the "crowning savagery of war." Yet "this fiendish butchery" had drawn from the nation at large, (implicating Mormons as well)

\(^{65}\) Ibid., pp. 15-16.

"general approval." 67

During the wars that lay in the future, Korea and Vietnam, very few comments were made by Mormon leaders. Perhaps this was an attempt to avoid the progressively more apparent ambivalence that war brought to Mormon thought. Nevertheless, when remarks were made, they would still be of a religious substance, because by 1952, and even more so during the 1960's, war had become an effective vehicle for Latter-day Saint evangelism.

67 CR, October 1946, pp. 84-86. Other examples of this ambivalent attitude can be found in Mormon sermons on universal military training. Charles Callis believed that "to be prepared for war is the most effectual means of preserving peace." CR, April 1944, p. 134. Yet most other Church leaders disagreed. I.E., 48 (January 1945), p. 31; I.E., (February 1946), pp. 76-77. Another example, is John Widstoe's belief, similar to Joseph Smith's that a Mormon was expected to love his enemy. I.E., 45 (April 1942), p. 225.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

"I should see the garden far better," said Alice to herself, "if I could get to the top of that hill; and here is a path that leads straight to it--at least, no, it doesn't do that--but I suppose it will at last. But how curiously it twists! It is more like a cork screw than a path! Well this turn goes to the hill, I suppose--no, it doesn't! This goes straight back to the house! Well then, I'll try the other way."

Alice in Wonderland

The issue of violence, which has played a very conspicuous role in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has continually produced a confrontation between the Church leaders' New Testament pacifism and their Old Testament militance--a confrontation that has resulted in ambivalence and has riddled the self-perceived homogeneity of Mormon thought. Moreover, this ambivalence has been displayed in each of the American wars that the Mormon Church has experienced.

Perhaps it would stretch the cause and effect relationship to the extremity by declaring Joseph Smith to be the ambivalent precedent upon which Mormon wartime thought was built. Nevertheless, it was Joseph Smith who first displayed this ambivalent position concerning militance. The pacifism of the Smith who wrote that Zion must be
purchased, is a startling contrast to the Smith who proffered an army of 100,000. This contrast reveals that the earliest Mormon prophet was not exempt from the dilemma that has persistently confronted Mormon leadership throughout the history of the Church.

The first indication of wartime ambivalence presented itself during the Mexican-American War. Participation in the Mormon Battalion implied, if not directly gave, moral sanction to that early American conflict. Yet once the Mormons became established in their mountainous home, most of their leaders decried the American effort as expansionistic and aggressive. Totally ignoring their involvement in the conflagration, they proclaimed America was a ruthless conqueror whose hands reeked from the blood of innocent victims.

The Civil War marked a different form of this recurring ambivalence. Although Mormon leaders seemingly remained unitedly passive during the struggle, it is their unity which reveals the ambivalence. Most of these leaders relished the idea that the war was their own. Because their cataclysmic scriptures had predicted the war and their apocalyptic references had prophesied the downfall of Babylon, these Mormon leaders applauded the war. As a means of ushering in their millennium, they outwardly rejoiced at the devastation. Conversely, however, these same Mormon leaders refused to participate in the struggle. War, they proclaimed, was anathema to the children of God. Therefore, while the
American nation tore itself apart, the Mormons remained ambivalently neutral in their hidden valleys of Salt Lake.

Likewise, statements by Church leaders during the next three American wars indicate the ambiguity of Mormon thought. Brigham Young, Jr., discussing the Spanish American War, Mormon endorsement of the League to Enforce Peace during World War I, and J. Reuben Clark during the Second World War are all symbols of the indeterminate position of the Mormon Church's wartime thought. Significantly this ambivalence did not end with the peace between Japan and the United States in 1945.

The Korean and Vietnamese wars were the two latest American struggles in which this Mormon dilemma had been brought to light. Even though the leaders of the Church have been essentially silent during these two wars, their earlier statements have seemingly set a precedent for general Church thinking. Thus, Mormons argued that America was fighting Communism to guarantee

... to the little rice farmer, who perhaps was unaware of much that was happening, that no foreign power would force upon him a government he did not want; ... to protect the fisherman from a ruthless enemy who would deprive him of his freedom, and his life if he resisted ... to fight Communism so that we, in our great country, hopefully, would never have to fight such battles on our own soil ... [to] defend [the] country ... religion ... family ... and people who desire freedom from the ravaging powers of Satan--in whatever form they came.¹

However, the opposite view was also expressed in an article

appearing in the Improvement Era:

Will the temptation come to the U.S. to assume a role in Southeast Asia, replacing what schoolboys once knew as 'French Indo-China' with a permanent 'American Indo-China?' This prospect is too distasteful to contemplate. The U.S. should withdraw to those points that she must defend for national security. Preferably not on the continent of Asia.  

The fact that these statements were made by two members in the Mormon intellectual community and not by Mormon General Authorities is significant for it reflects the ambivalent tradition inherited by the Mormon membership, and being used as reference by the LDS intelligentsia in their discussions of the Korean and Vietnam wars. In fact, one finds that quotations from the same Church leaders are often used to support both the militant and the anti-war postures.

This historical perspective of the armed conflicts experienced by the Church since 1846 reveals that the present indeterminate attitude of the Church members toward war stems from two probable sources. One of these centers in those books held as scripture by the Mormons—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Proponents of both sides of the war issue claim to validate their positions by quoting

2 I.E., 71 (July 1968), p. 70.

3 Perhaps this was due to the realization that war was causing a great deal of public contradiction. Nevertheless, remarks about war during the Korean and Vietnam war are strikingly absent from the conference reports, and those that are found do not come close to measuring up to the abundancy of such remarks made during previous wars.
from the pages of these scriptures. On the more "hawkish" side of the argument are such men as William E. Berret, Jerreld Newquist, and Richard Vetterli, who all championed American military endeavors by quoting supporting passages from Mormon scriptural works. On the other hand, the more passive side of Mormon thought has its spokesmen as well. Ironically, these pacifistic Mormons also justify their "dovish" position by citing their selected references from the same scriptural volumes that the militants use. Such a condition poses questions regarding those interpreting these scriptures or regarding the consistency of the scriptures themselves. If scriptural interpretations of these men are accurate, the books held to be Mormon scripture are self-contradictory regarding war. Moreover, thus far in LDS history they seem not to have been effectively interpreted so as to give Mormons some definitive guidelines for their militaristic philosophy.

4William E. Berret, "Spirituality and Armed Conflict" Improvement Era, 55 (April, 1952), pp. 242-244.

5Newquist, op. cit., pp. 468-487.


8The following list is not intended to be a definitive list of scriptures relating to war, but rather is a
The second probable source for the present ambivalent attitude toward war on the part of Mormon Church members lies, as suggested earlier, in the ambiguity of statements made by the Church leaders who have, for the most part, viewed American wars from a religious perspective. Yet, inasmuch as God is oftentimes proclaimed to be fighting for each of the opposing armies, the religiosity of war is, at best, an ambiguous concept. Thus, although the LDS leaders seem to try to justify war because of some underlying righteous aspects, they nevertheless claim to be anti war because of a basic Christian morality. Caught in the web of this dilemma, these same leaders often contradict themselves in various speeches. As stated earlier, when one searches the preachments of the Church in support of both sides of the debate, one often finds that quotations from the same General Authority are often used to support both militance


and pacifism.9

As a result of these two precipitators, the general populace of the Church is in a perplexing situation. One sampling of this lies in a recent study conducted at Brigham Young University. The results reveal (1) that a good number of the respondents accepted the General Authorities of the Mormon Church as political reference figures or as opinion shapers,10 (2) the ambivalent position of the Church, inherited from times past, was apparent in the students' attitudes toward the Vietnam war.11

The opinions of the Church leaders are found to vary in two respects: first, among the leaders themselves; and secondly, from one period of war to another. Thus the pacifistic solidarity of the Civil War Church, presents a radical contrast to the Church's crusading militance during the Spanish-American War. Similarly, the ideal of fighting World War I against the actuality of war itself is

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9See H.O.C., VII, pp. 56-57 compared to H.O.C. II, p. 71; Brigham Young, J.D., 2 (February 18, 1865), p. 175; compared to Brigham Young, J.D., 13 (July 11, 1869), p. 149; David O. McKay, Gospel ideals, (Salt Lake: Improvement Era, 1953); compared to The Instructor, 91 (February, 1956), p. 34.

10Out of those sampled on the question, "I would support statement on political and social matters made by General Authorities of the Church," 16% believed such statements to be the literal word of God. 27% believed them to be advice which all Church members should follow. 28% believed them to be good advice, and 13% believed them to be informed opinion. Knud S. Larsen and Gary Schwendiman, "The Vietnam War Through The Eyes of a Mormon Subculture," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, II (Autumn 1968), pp. 153-161.

11Ibid., p. 158.
strikingly opposed to the World War II ideal that war will never cease until mankind yields to God's commandments.

It must now be asked, what caused this divergence of opinion among not only General Authorites, but throughout Mormon wartime thought as an entirety. Perhaps the lowest common denominator is the ambiguity that surrounds two LDS theological concepts which are an integral part of Mormons' wartime thought--millennialism and Zion. Over the distance of 130 years, these two concepts have been interpreted in a variety of ways, and with each distinctive interpretation came a corresponding discrepancy in the attitude toward war.

The early pre-1898 Church seemed to interpret war as the apocalyptic cataclysm that would usher in the millennial reign of peace and good will. Thus, the Mexican-American War and the Civil War found the Mormons trying not to participate. Because these were considered to be wars of the wicked, Mormons believed the righteous should remain aloof and peaceful, and while the wicked slayed the wicked, the righteous would await the Second Coming of Christ which was sure to follow. Yet both the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the Peace of Appomattox shattered these millennial dreams. As a result many of the Mormons came to question these millennial aspirations, and by 1898 these illusions were all but gone.

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These illusory dreams were somewhat revitalized in 1917, but they had been secularized. No longer were millennial decrees the forceful edicts of earlier Mormonism. Rather, declarations of democracy and liberty were issued to the world, and these did not necessarily hold the implication that Christ would accompany the post war peace. Yet even these secularized versions of millennialism suffered at the hands of reality, and by 1942 they were no longer mentioned. Inasmuch as tragedy had usually followed statements of these millennial aspirations, Mormons during World War II no longer were sufficiently confident to make such declarations. War had become a human dilemma. No longer was it a judgment from heaven but merely a fact of the human predicament. Thus, because war was considered to be a secularized phenomenon, the next step was to eliminate as much of the discussion of it as possible from Mormon discourse.

Primarily premillennialist, early Mormon leaders had believed that the elect must be gathered to Zion. Once they were gathered, wars and rumors of wars would scourge the earth in preparation for Christ's imminent return.\(^{13}\) Therefore, Latter-day Saints were commanded to build their Zion "that [they] might escape the power of the enemy and be gathered a righteous people."\(^ {14}\) Thus, after they were safe in their mountainous Zion, the Mexican War and the

\(^{13}\text{D & C 29:8.}\) \(^{14}\text{Ibid., 38:31.}\)
Civil War were believed to be the "tribulations" and "desolations" of which the Lord had seemingly spoken. As indicated above, however, post-Civil War peace forced many of these Mormon leaders to reinterpret their millennialism. Hence, after the Spanish-American war in 1898, these LDS leaders began to emphasize postmillennialist beliefs. Although these postmillennial ideas had always been present, by 1898 there seemed to be a strong tendency for most Mormon leaders to emphasize the "post" rather than the "pre" millennialism. War was no longer a sign of an impending millennium; rather, it became a useful tool for postmillennial evangelism. Mormon missionaries were to proselyte a post war, liberated world. They were to be "messengers before [the Lord's] face to prepare the way before [Him]."15 This form of postmillennial optimism peaked during World War I; nevertheless, the primary postmillennial ideology remained a tenet of Mormon thought during World War II--namely, the belief in worldwide evangelism before Christ's second appearance. Thus, from 1942 to the present, most Mormon leaders have implied that wars were no longer apocalyptic cataclysms but, instead, indications of the progressively worsening condition of mankind, and that only through practicing the precepts of the gospel, will man cease to wage war. Whether the idea is "post" or "pre" millennial is of

15Ibid., 45:9.
little consequence. The significant contribution of millennialism to Mormon ambivalence has been the LDS belief that the Church has had something to gain from war. Whether it was a millennium or merely a gateway to evangelism, most Mormon leaders have looked towards positive benefits resulting from America's being at war. The Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II—all have been seen as methods for promoting God's cause on earth. Even Korea and Vietnam have been fruitful for Mormon proselyting; most Mormon leaders have openly acknowledged the benefits that Mormonism has received from American involvement in these two countries.  

Thus, it has been this near universal acknowledgement of the benefits from war that poses the most paradoxical and perhaps the most condemning evidence of Mormon ambivalence. Mormon leaders have not realized the implications of their statements, for, although they have joyously accepted the fruits of allowing a given war, on the other hand they have also implied that the Church must always be against war. Therefore, in the final analysis, one is forced to conclude that for the Mormons, war has been something despised but accepted, hated but utilized—all at the same time.

The second contributing factor to Mormon ambivalence has been the leaders changing concept of Zion. Quite

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17 CR, April 1942, p. 94.
confusingly, the geographical location of that heavenly city has changed five times, and correspondingly, so have Mormon interpretations of war. As premillennialists, early Mormon leaders had declared the place of gathering to be Jackson County, Missouri. But after the Mormon misfortunes in that state, Joseph Smith was forced to declare all of America to be Zion.  

This amended definition of Zion, in turn, facilitated Mormon immigration. Yet once the Church had located itself in the secluded valleys of the West during the Mexican-American War, Salt Lake assumed the role of the New Jerusalem. Hence for the duration of the war with Mexico and for the entire Civil War, the Mormon interpretation of Zion was synonymous with Salt Lake. As premillennialists, Mormons gathered to Salt Lake and defied the wars of the wicked Babylon. And this, as presented in the preceding chapters, justified their pacifism, which in turn symbolized the Mormon ambivalence. 

The aftermath of these wars, however, stimulated a return to Smith's second interpretation of Zion. Thus, by 1898, the whole of America again became Zion. The premillennialist belief of gathering to Zion ebbed, and postmillennial beliefs--those that did not require such a gathering--surged. Nevertheless, contrary to these popular Mormon concepts of Zion, was a lone voice in the forest

18 H.O.C., VI, pp. 318-319.

19 M.S., 10 (August 1848), p. 264; M.S., 23 (October 1861), p. 662.
declaring that the city of Zion was still Salt Lake. Hence, Brigham Young, Jr., violently opposed to the war and to any Mormon participation in it, draws a direct tie between the changing concept of Zion and ambivalence. For while most LDS leaders used the "America as Zion" concept to justify Mormon armed participation, Young used the "Salt Lake as Zion" idea to decry the war effort. His idea was that while the wicked slew the wicked, the righteous would remain at peace in Salt Lake City, an idea similar to those that had justified Mormon pacifism thirty-six years earlier, but which, by 1898, were mere relics of a bygone age.

In 1917, the concept of Zion again underlay the Mormon ambivalence. Because the laws of Zion could not permit an aggressive war, many leaders of the Church were forced to remain steadfast in desiring American neutrality. Yet, as Americans, these leaders were subjected to the national war psychology and propaganda, leading many of them to advocate some form of American action. Consequently, these leaders advocated moral action and semantically avoided the requirements of their laws. Notwithstanding, moral action was still action, and contrary to their earlier declarations of passive neutrality, they began to support Zion's involvement in war.

Similarly, Zion in 1942 is again directly tied to ambivalence. This time, however, it was through the opinions of J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who, it will be remembered,
symbolized an ambivalence similar to that of Brigham Young, Jr. Clark, however, was from a different generation which consequently had a different conception of Zion. By 1942 a number of Mormon leaders had begun to express the view that Zion was where the heart was. Yet Clark adhered to the older World War I concept of Zion, which declared it to be all of America. In so doing, he symbolized the ambivalent Mormon thought about war.

After World War II, however, the concept of Zion became sufficiently ambiguous to allow any one of a number of interpretations. This was readily apparent by turning to the debate between contemporary Mormon "hawks" and "doves." Each side could cite different, and sometimes the same, Mormon leaders to support their views. The more militant side of the argument tended to support the concept of Zion's being all of America. The passive side, however, had a tendency to support the ideal that Zion was within the individual. Thus, the whole contemporary

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21 To support this point of view, one uses statements from General Authorities who have emphasized loyalty to the U.S. Government. See, M.S., 14 (April 1852), pp. 321-326; Deseret News Weekly, December 21, 1889; Deseret News Church Section, May 12, 1964; D & C 134:1-6.

22 To support this argument, one uses statements made by General Authorities which deal strictly with war and the Christian Ethic. For example, see CR, April 1898, pp. 85-87; CR, October 1912, p. 7; F. D. Richards, J.D., 23 (April 1882), pp. 107-108; D & C 98:32-33.
problem of Mormon thought and war could have been reduced 
to a problem of conflicting loyalties, both of which were 
equally valid in Mormon theology. On the one hand, Zion 
had been reduced to Americanism, a secularized concept 
which demanded Mormon allegiance to the country. On the 
other hand, however, was the equally valid principle of 
placing Zion in the individual heart, or making Zion the 
essence of Christian morality.

In these mid 1970's, this earlier secularization 
of Zion continues, and is a problem from which the Mormons 
will have trouble extricating themselves. As a religious 
ideal, Zion could equally interact with Mormon Christian 
morality. Now, however, there is no balance between the 
Christian ethic and patriotism, and the Mormon Church 
seemingly proffers allegiance to the state as its number 
one loyalty during times of war. Since the concept has 
become "Americanized," Zion can no longer offer a basis 
for Mormon pacifism as it did during the Civil War, and 
the Church can no longer present itself to the world as 
an example of Christian morality. Man, most Mormons now 
argue, will always war with himself, and only the gospel 
of Jesus Christ offers hope of peace to the world. Yet 
this same gospel makes it the duty of individual Mormons to 
support the men who run a wartime government. In effect 
then, these Mormon leaders are indirectly implying that 
their religion offers no hope for the Christian ideal of
peace, as twentieth-century Mormonism cannot practice what it preaches.

The concluding irony of the Mormon attitude toward war may be observed in the fact that Mormonism represents a type of odyssey away from and finally back to Americanism. Early Mormon attitudes toward war were set within a context of "us" against "them," them being Americans. This bipolar outlook was one of the fundamental causes of the Mormon ambivalence. By 1898, however, the Mormons had shown signs of "Americanization." The framework from which they perceived themselves was no longer bipolar in character, and the Mormons began to identify with American values. In turn, their ambivalence toward war altered in character and assumed aspects similar to the ambivalence of the man-on-the-street.

The American mind, for the most part, has been characterized by an ambivalent attitude toward war.\(^{23}\) As an active, dynamic, and aggressive nation, America has looked proudly upon its history of winning the west, conquering the Indian, and its efforts to democratize the world. Americans look back fondly upon many of those intellectuals--Alfred Mahan, Teddy Roosevelt, and Andrew Jackson to name a few--who have glorified war. American ruggedness and individualism have been the literary aspects of our national taste for war. The heroes of Jack London and Ernest

Hemingway have all realized that it's kill or be killed. And the Western hero of Owen Wister, the Virginian, who shoots from the hip to turn back the corrupting influence of the serpent in the garden, has similarly portrayed this attachment to militance.24

Contrary to the militant side of the American mind has been the passive side. As the New World, America shed the corrupting cultural baggage of the Old; the Old World was "incrusted in the blood rust of centuries."25 Thus, the only remedy was the founding of America--a return to nature and a turn in the opposite direction from the decaying edifices of the old order. This land provided an isolationism apart from the decadence of war--like monarchs, aristocrats, and despots. This was a land where man could be free. And natural man, if allowed to be free, would not commit such irrational butcheries as found in the wars of a corrupted Europe.26 The result of these conflicting ideas--militant individualism opposed to passive isolationism--has been American ambivalence. Perhaps the lowest common denominator and a basic cause for the American paradox is found in war itself. As the most irrational of human actions, war and its various

24 Noble, op. cit., p. 155.
25 Lerner, op. cit., p. 919.
forms, have operated in a society founded during the Age of Reason. An age based on the assumption of man's perfectability and rationality. Nevertheless, the causes are not as important as the fact that Mormons came to accept the basic tenets of Americanism. In so doing, they also accepted this fundamental American ambivalence toward war, and unfortunately it merely compounded the problems of an already ambivalent mind.

How long Christians will continue to endorse the gods of nationalism is, perhaps, a moot question. How long they will endorse a statecraft that uses war as a national policy is similarly open to question. Perhaps it was these issues which provoked John A. Widstoe to remark that the bloody wars in which "we have engaged on earth are really a type of murder unacceptable to the Lord of Heaven." Nevertheless, the questions still remain, and so they will stay, until men and nations honestly deal with them. Then, and only then, will the world enjoy the peaceful world envisioned by Isaiah, where men "... shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."  

27 Lerner, op. cit., p. 909.  
30 Isaiah 2:4.
APPENDIX

Due to a lack of space for footnote entries, General Authorities have been anonymously referred to as CR. Below, however, is a list of those anonymous authorities. The list is categorized by given wars, and the numbers preceeding the listed General Authorities corresponds with the anonymous CR entries in the text.

A. SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

4 George Q. Cannon; Matthias F. Cowley; Brigham Young, Jr.

5 Matthias F. Cowley; George Q. Cannon; F. D. Richards

11 Matthias F. Cowley; Wilford Woodruff; Brigham Young, Jr.

12 Francois M. Lyman

27 George Q. Cannon

70 F. D. Richards

B. WORLD WAR ONE

4 Charles H. Hart; Hyrum M. Smith

5 Reed Smoot; Levi Edgar Young

12 Reed Smoot

14 Levi Edgar Young

15 Rudger Clawson

20 B. H. Roberts

24 Hyrum M. Smith

25 B. H. Roberts; Heber J. Grant

27 Hyrum M. Smith

115
35 Anthony W. Ivins
41 Anthony W. Ivins
49 Hyrum M. Smith
50 Charles W. Nibley
51 Joseph F. Smith
52 Joseph F. Smith
60 Orson F. Whitney
62 Orson F. Whitney
65 Charles H. Hart
71 David O. McKay
77 Charles H. Hart

C. WORLD WAR TWO
2 J. Reuben Clark
15 J. Reuben Clark
17 David O. McKay
18 David O. McKay
23 Stephen L. Richards
24 Richard R. Lyman
25 Spencer W. Kimball
26 Richard R. Lyman
27 Spencer W. Kimball
30 Stephen L. Richards; George Albert Smith
32 George Albert Smith
35 John A. Widstoe
37 David O. McKay
41 J. Reuben Clark
46 Albert E. Bowen
47 Richard R. Lyman
47 Stephen L. Richards
49 Charles A. Callis
50 Charles A. Callis

D. CONCLUSIONS

17 David O. McKay; Heber J. Grant; J. Reuben Clark
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MORMONISM AND WAR: AN INTERPRETATIVE 
ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MORMON THOUGHT 
REGARDING SEVEN AMERICAN WARS

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ABSTRACT

America has been involved in seven major wars, but Mormonism's involvement in these wars has evaded scholarly attention. This has been unfortunate because, for the most part, individual Mormon leaders have taken very definite stands in relation to these struggles, and accompanying these stands have been very definite goals for the outcome of these wars. This, in turn, has prompted many of these LDS leaders to view the wars from a religious perspective.

This transcending religiosity combined the classical Christian wartime positions of the "just" and "righteous" war into one category. The third position however, pacifism, was also utilized during given wars. And it is this dual stance, passive aloofness and righteous support, which has made the militant Mormon mind ambivalent. Also contributing to this ambivalence has been the ambiguity of LDS scripture relating to war, and the ambiguity surrounding the LDS conception of Zion and millennialism.

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