Critical Dictionary of Apocalyptic
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Christian Restorationism Prior to 1900

Author: Andrew Crome
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Introduction

Restorationism is the pre-twentieth-century Christian belief that the Jewish people would return (or be restored) to Palestine, an idea often directly linked with apocalyptic and millennial speculation. It has had a direct bearing on Jewish–Christian relations and the politics of the Middle East, and discussion of its history is often directly linked to contemporary debates on Israel-Palestine. As restorationism predates organized Jewish Zionism, the term 'Christian Zionism' is sometimes considered an inappropriate way to refer to it, although a number of commentators use the modern terminology while acknowledging its anachronism (e.g. Merkley 1998; Lewis 2010). In this context, 'restorationism' should not be confused with the primitivist theological movement that shares its name with and was important in American Christianity in the nineteenth century.

Restorationism's fortunes have waxed and waned over Christian history, with particular interest developing in the mid-seventeenth, late eighteenth, and mid-nineteenth centuries in Europe and North America, ultimately leading to the emergence of contemporary forms of Christian Zionism. At different points, restorationists have come from a variety of denominational and theological traditions. Other than a belief in the territorial restoration of the Jewish people, they did not necessarily share viewpoints on other theological issues. Restorationism was therefore never a 'movement' as such, although particular organizations (especially in the nineteenth century) broadly espoused restorationist viewpoints. Neither did restorationists necessarily share a specific apocalyptic or millennial position—restorationism had pre- and postmillennial adherents, and latterly incorporated both historicists and dispensationalists. Historical specificity is therefore vital when examining different waves of restorationism in Christian history.

Medieval Precursors

Following the Church Fathers, the majority of medieval theologians argued that the Jewish people had lost any special role in God's plans for the future. Although some early writers, such as Justin Martyr (c. 100–c. 165 ce), suggested that Christians would enjoy an eschatological reign from a physically restored Jerusalem, Augustine's (354–430 ce) millennial scepticism was more influential in the long term. One effect of this was the allegorization of the land promises of the Hebrew Bible, which were instead applied to

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Christians in spiritual and non-physical ways, so that God was understood to have no end-time role for the Jewish people. Instead, their preservation could be considered as a witness to God's punishment of their sin (Cohen 1999). Alongside this, speculation around the role of an Antichrist linked the figure to a false Jewish messiah who would restore the Jews to Palestine and rebuild the Jerusalem temple (Almond 2020). Neither of these positions were conducive to positive views of Jewish restoration.

However, alongside condemnation of Jews, a concurrent belief was that a substantial number would convert to Christianity in the end times. The Apostle Paul's statement that 'all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:25) offered Christians the possibility of a more positive future for Jews than as followers of the Beast/Antichrist. The influential Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore (1135–1202) tied this expectation of Jewish conversion to Christianity to the coming of his third age, a period of blessing on earth. Some of those influenced by him, such as John of Rupescissa (1310–c. 1365), heralded a coming Jewish restoration to Palestine under a last world emperor, who would also move the papacy to Jerusalem for a literal thousand-year peace. This view was one factor (among many) in John of Rupescissa's imprisonment by the Avignon curia (Lerner 2001, 79–82). Thus, belief in a physical restoration of Jews to Palestine was relatively rare in medieval Christianity—it suggested heresy, or the possibility that one was acting as a forerunner for the Antichrist. In the doctrinal flux of the Reformation, however, it found a more receptive audience.

The Reformation Period

The sixteenth-century reformers called into question many established interpretations of scripture and showed increased enthusiasm for returning to Old Testament texts in their original Hebrew. Renewed emphasis on scriptural languages led to greater interaction with both rabbinic commentaries and contemporary Jews, although attitudes to the latter showed few signs of major change. Martin Luther (1483–1546) remains infamous for his virulent anti-Semitism. John Calvin (1509–64), the father of the 'Reformed' or 'Calvinist' tradition, was less acerbic, but equally sure that land promises in the Hebrew prophets applied spiritually to Christians. The main branches of both the Lutheran and the Calvinist reformations therefore continued to hold that there would be no return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland.

Partially, this was motivated by a fear of 'radicalism'. The so-called radicals (in fact, a broad range of groups, often hostile to one another) were frequently associated with holding millenarian hopes and harbouring hatred of authority. The 1530 Augsburg Confession attacked those 'spreading certain Jewish opinions' about an earthly reign of the Saints (XVII.5). These fears were vividly actualized in the violence, polygamy, and excess associated with the Anabaptist attempt to establish a 'New Jerusalem' in the German city of Münster in 1534–35. Contemporaries often linked hopes for Jewish restoration with a radical and violent form of millennialism. The 'Forty-Two Articles' of the Church of England (1553) condemned 'heretickes called Millenari… [who] caste them selves headlong into a Jewishe dotage' (Article 41), while the Second Helvetic Confession (written 1562, published 1566) attacked 'Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment' (XI.14). Some Christians who proclaimed Jewish restoration in this period played into these preconceptions of radicalism. Examples include, Roger Edwardes (fl. c.1540-1591), who corresponded with sometime royal astrologer and mathematician John Dee (1527-1609) on a Jewish return, and the Arian Francis Kett (d. 1589), who proclaimed that Christ was currently in the Holy Land bodily gathering followers together (Clucas 2012).

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An altogether more conservative trend emerged in the seventeenth century, most importantly in the works of puritan biblical commentator Thomas Brightman (1562–1607). In posthumously published commentaries on Daniel, Revelation, and the Song of Songs, Brightman argued that the prophetic texts were primarily concerned with the earthly future of the Jewish people, who would rule the world from Palestine after converting to Christianity: ‘What, shall they return to *Jerusalem* againe? There is nothing more certaine, the Prophets do every where directly confirme it and beat upon it’ (Brightman 1644, 544).

Although Brightman favoured Presbyterian church government, he remained a serving minister in the Church of England at his death. His ideas, first published in the United Provinces (the modern Netherlands) in 1609, soon gained traction among other writers. In 1610/11, Elizabeth I’s former ambassador to Russia Giles Fletcher (d. 1611) argued for the restoration of the Jewish ‘ten lost tribes’ to Palestine (Crome 2014, 178). In 1615, Coventry clergyman Thomas Draxe (d. 1618/19) predicted that Jews would constitute a glorious restored nation in Palestine: ‘all the Prophets seeme to speak of this returne’ (Draxe 1615, 81). The lawyer and Member of Parliament Sir Henry Finch’s (c. 1558–1625) *The World’s Great Restauration, or, The Calling of the Jews* (1621) predicted both restoration and earthly predominance for the Jews. His suggestion that kings would lay their crowns at the feet of Jews in Jerusalem received short shrift from the Court of High Commission, which imprisoned him for the book. Future Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573–1645) preached a sermon before James I and VI condemning the idea of Jewish restoration as insanity. Most influentially, the Cambridge scholar and premillennialist Joseph Mede’s (1586–1638) works predicted a Damascene conversion of the Jewish people and the probability of their restoration to Palestine. Like Brightman’s, his works were more widely popularized in the maelstrom of the 1640s as England headed towards the chaos of the Civil Wars.

The Civil Wars and Interregnum

The 1640s and 1650s saw the popularization of restorationism and provided opportunities for it to be more openly discussed in England. Many prominent Puritan ministers, including Jeremiah Burroughs (1600–46), Thomas Goodwin (1600–80) and William Strong (d. 1654), repeatedly emphasized the coming return of Jews to Palestine. As Goodwin wrote, the Ottoman Empire would be ‘overthrown by or for the Jews, to make for them to get possession of their own land’ (1683, 58).

Restorationism also found a ready audience in New England, where English émigré ministers such as John Cotton (1585–1652) preached a Congregationalist eschatology heavily influenced by Brightman. Cotton looked forward to a time when Jews would convert and ‘convey into their own countrie’ (1642, 196), while his compatriot Ephraim Huit (d. 1644) looked for their ‘gathering together to plant themselves in Judea’ (1644, 340).

Changes in England drove prophetic excitement. The execution of Charles I in 1649 and the potential for a fully reformed church fuelled expectations that prophecies were being fulfilled. In January 1649, two English Baptists based in Amsterdam issued a petition to the Council of State to work with the Dutch to restore Jews ‘to that Land promised to their forefathers’ (Cartwright and Cartwright 1649, 2). At the opening of the so-called Barebones Parliament in July 1653, Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) proclaimed his desire that the new legislature might precipitate God ‘bring[ing] the Jews home to their station “from the isles of the sea”’ (1845, 52). As Brightman and other commentators had suggested 1656 as the proposed

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date for Jewish restoration, such hopes appeared with increasing frequency as the date approached.

Cromwell did his part to help fulfil these hopes of Jewish restoration and its millennial implications, calling a conference at Whitehall in 1655 to discuss the possibility of readmitting Jews to England, reversing their expulsion by Edward I in 1290. Cromwell and restorationist preachers worked with the Amsterdam Sephardi rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604–57) in order to help bring the scheme to fruition. The rabbi argued along both commercial and prophetic lines, exaggerating messianic hopes among Jews while implying that they would soon be restored to the Holy Land. First, however, they must be scattered to 'the ends of the earth', as suggested in Deuteronomy 28:64—in other words, before Palestine, they must settle in England. Ben Israel drew on a number of millennial themes in order to make his case. These included the claim of the discovery of the ten 'lost tribes' (who vanished from Jewish history after the Assyrian exile in c. 722 bce) in South America. This fed into a Europe-wide debate as to the identity of Native Americans, recently given fresh impetus in England by *Jewes in America* (1652) by Thomas Thorowgood (d. c. 1669). As Howard Hotson (2009) has argued, shared millennial expectations played a key role in Jewish–Christian cooperation. Despite this prophetic hope, and support from restorationist ministers such as Goodwin and John Owen (1616-1683) at Whitehall, Cromwell ended the conference in December without any clear resolution. While ben Israel left England disappointed, Cromwell quietly recognized a small Jewish community in London for the first time the following year.

From Revival to Revolution

Although millennial expectations are often thought to have dropped away at Charles II's return to the throne, recent studies have unearthed a rich tradition of continuing apocalyptic speculation into the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (e.g. Johnston 2011, Laborie 2015, Crome 2018). International events contributed to this. When pseudo-messiah Sabbatai Sevi (1626-1676) appeared as an important figure in European Jewry in the mid-1660s, promising to restore his co-religionists to Palestine, millenarian excitement flared again in Europe and North America. Henry Oldenberg (c. 1618-1677), secretary to the Royal Society, wrote to Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) in December 1665 urgently requesting information on Sabbatai. Rumours of the lost tribes attacking Mecca, or appearing in Morocco and central Africa, passed through personal correspondence, pamphlets, and newsbooks (Marriott 2015).

In New England, Sabbatai's story fired one Puritan figurehead to preach a series of influential sermons on Jewish restoration. Increase Mather's (1639–1723) *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* appeared in 1669. Preaching at the height of Sabbatian excitement, Mather argued that God would use Jews to overcome the Roman Church and Ottoman Empire. After this, the Jews would be promoted to earthly pre-eminence so that 'the land of their fathers will be of too little for them, such the multitude of their number be, and that therefore they must have other countreys adjoining for their possession' (Mather 1669, 57). Significantly, Mather concluded that the majority would return prior to their conversion, suggesting that polity could precede faith.

Restorationists had to contend with new challenges in this period. Preterist interpretations, which suggested that all biblical prophecy had been fulfilled by the end of the first century, were popularized by Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in the Netherlands and Henry Hammond (1605-1660) in England. This led to many embracing the view that all promises of Jewish conversion had been fulfilled in the Apostles' time.

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Richard Baxter (1615–91) was perhaps the most prominent exponent of this position in England, leading to a cordial yet feisty transatlantic debate with Mather. His argument rested on geopolitical as well as exegetical grounds, arguing that restorationists ignored the rights of the native population of Palestine in believing that the Jews would displace them. Meanwhile, the loose grouping dubbed the 'Cambridge School' of millennialism by Sarah Hutton (1994) represented the intellectual approach to the question. The philosopher Henry More (1614–87), the physicist Isaac Newton (1642–1727), and the latter's successor at Cambridge, William Whiston (1667–1752), all sought to defend millenarian exegesis. While More demurred on the question of Jewish restoration, Newton argued that Jews would enjoy earthly dominion from Palestine over all nations (Snobelen 2001). Whiston went further, claiming that they would restore not only their polity but also their temple and ceremonial worship, after initially returning to the Holy Land in unbelief (1709, 221–27).

The range of figures who held restorationist views suggests that Baxter was not exaggerating in his 1691 attack on the belief: 'I find it in many books of men, and I hear of it in the prayers and sermons of many men, so good, and of so good repute, that divers of my friends dissuade me from so much as giving my reasons against it' (1691, 56). Into the eighteenth century, these believers included philosophers such as John Locke (1632–1704), Thomas Burnet (c. 1635–1715), and David Hartley (1705–57). Locke argued that God would restore the Jews to 'be a flourishing nation again, professing Christianity in the Land of Promise' (1707, 111), while Burnet claimed that they 'have a just title to that land whoever actually possessed it' (1729, 5). In New England, Mather's 1709 *Dissertation Concerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation* reaffirmed the orthodoxy of restorationist views. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that restorationism was always contested. Mather's son Cotton, for example, shifted away from the belief towards preterism in the 1720s (Smith 2013, 132–33).

Restorationist opinions were not only current in the anglophone world but also found particular purchase in the Pietist tradition in Germany. In 1728, the Pietist leader Johann Callenberg (1694–1760) established the *Institutum Judaicum* in Halle. The institute aimed to train Christian missionaries to work among Jewish communities, educate the missionaries in Jewish languages, and provide conversionist literature for Jews. Yaakov Ariel has noted that hope for the restoration to Palestine and shared messianic expectations were often common points of interest for missionaries and potential converts. The institute provided the template for future Christian missions to the Jews (Ariel 2014).

Pietism also played a key role in the evangelical revivals that swept Britain and North America in the late 1730s and early 1740s. In their early days, the dramatic conversion experiences and intense emotionality of the revivals led many commentators to link them to postmillennial hopes. Most influentially, Massachusetts minister Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) speculated that the conversions were ushering in the millennial period. For Edwards, 'not only shall the spiritual state of the Jews be hereafter restored, but their external state as a nation in their own land' (1730, 1028). English evangelicals did not generally share this view. Neither John (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788), nor George Whitefield (1714-1770), focused on apocalyptic speculation or Jewish restoration to any great degree. Others expressed greater optimism. Edwards's friend and correspondent the Dundee minister John Willison (1680–1750), for example, expressed his belief in 1742 that the '*Jews* shall be gathered out of all the Countries where they are dispersed, and brought to their own land' (1793, 19).

Controversies about restoration came to a head in England in 1753, when the government passed an act to allow foreign-born Jews to naturalize. The 'Jew Bill' (as it was popularly known) caused arguments

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around prophecy to erupt among both supporters and detractors. Those who opposed the bill argued that it aimed to frustrate prophecy through incorporating Jews into the English masses, revealing a paradoxical fear of the nation incurring judgment through welcoming supposed ‘Christ-killers’ into the national community, and worries about Jews using England as a staging ground from which to reclaim Palestine. This latter fear of Jewish militarism was often satirical but its proponents displayed a keen knowledge of the intricacies of restorationist prophecy in the charges they made, combined with images of Jews as violent and dangerous (Crome 2018, 147–53). The bill’s supporters, meanwhile, argued that these fears were baseless, on the grounds that Jews looked only for their own nation in Palestine and had no interest in claiming anything in England other than exemption from prohibitive trading tariffs. Indeed, the legislation, it was argued, might precipitate their return: preacher Thomas Winstanley (1749–1823) argued that it would be the prelude to both Jewish conversion and restoration, while Prime Minister Henry Pelham (1694–1754) made the same point in Parliament.

The most influential Anglican prophetic commentator of the eighteenth century emerged in the aftermath of the furore around the ‘Jew Bill’. Thomas Newton (1704–82) was appalled by the anti-Semitic rhetoric around the bill. Bishop of Bristol from 1761, Newton published the first volume of his *Dissertations on the Prophecies* in 1754; a second, based on his Boyle lectures, followed four years later. Newton emphasized the ‘innumerable’ prophecies of physical restoration to Palestine. On conversion, Jews would ‘be restored to their native city and country’ (Newton 1789, 138). Newton was writing against the threat of deism, and the literal fulfilment of prophecy was central to his project. He remained one of the most cited commentators of the period.

Newton was not alone in the Church of England. Richard Hurd (1720–1808), future bishop of Worcester, argued for Jewish restoration in his *Introduction to the Prophecies* in 1772. Neither was a belief in restoration limited to a particular millennial position. While postmillennialism remained the most common view, notable commentators—such as the premillennialist Baptist theologian John Gill (1697–1771)—similarly argued that the Jews would return ‘to their own land and possess it, being assisted, as they will be, by Protestant princes’ (1769, 716). All of this shows that restorationist thought did not go into hibernation between the late 1650s and the French Revolution, as some commentators have implied (e.g. Vreté 1972). Instead, it remained an established part of Protestant discourse, albeit one that became particularly visible in the next century.

Controversy and Conservatism

The shocks of the American War of Independence (1775–83) and French Revolution (1789–99) led to increased prophetic speculation, as well as a number of prophets who drew on restorationist ideas to develop their unique positions. Of these, Richard Brothers (1757–1824) remains the best known and most controversial. A former naval officer, Brothers attracted notoriety in London in 1795 when he claimed to be king of the Hebrews and promised to restore the Jews to Palestine by 1798. His demand that George III surrender his crown, and his ability to attract prominent supporters, led to suspicions of treason and revolutionary intentions. A jumpy government consigned him to an asylum until 1811. Similar figures attracted comment in the United States with New Jersey Presbyterian minister David Austin’s (1759–1831) restorationism progressing from conventional prophetic sermons to beginning practical preparations to return Jews to Palestine in 1797.

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As colourful as these figures were, restorationist ideas remained in circulation among more mainstream interpreters. Samuel Horsley (1733–1806), bishop of Rochester and steadfast opponent of the French Revolution, was an influential promoter of the idea that Britain would be the nation to restore the Jews to Palestine, based on his reading of Isaiah 18. Popular conservative scriptural commentators, such as George Stanley Faber (1773–1854), advocated Jewish restoration to the Holy Land as a counterblow to the atheistic French. These writers were working at a time of high prophetic excitement, as Napoleon (1769–1821) issued a proclamation calling for Jews to return to their ancestral homeland in 1799. Significantly, the idea that Jews would return to Palestine prior to their conversion to Christianity continued to gain traction. British military involvement in the area during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–15) only added to prophetic expectation (Crome 2018, 216–18).

In the new United States, which had seen waves of apocalyptic hopes for the nation during and after the revolution (Bloch 1985), restorationism also found notable supporters. For example, George Duffield (1732-1790), chaplain to the Continental Congress, affirmed restoration in a thanksgiving sermon for victory delivered in 1783. Elias Boudinot (1740–1821), president of the Continental Congress, US congressman, and director of the US Mint, suggested that God might have ‘raised up these United States in these latter days, for the very purpose of accomplishing his will in bringing his beloved people to their own land’ (1816, 297). Boudinot followed Horsley’s position on a gentile nation restoring the Jews, but argued that it was the United States rather than Britain. His *A Star in the West* (1816) reiterated the belief that Native Americans were in reality the lost tribes of Israel. This view remained important, influencing the development of the Latter-Day Saints under Joseph Smith, who affirmed both an American Zion and a literal return of Jews to the Holy Land (Goldman 2018, 58–62).

At the start of the nineteenth century, a surge in new missionary organizations led to the formation of societies specifically focused on Jewish evangelism on both sides of the Atlantic. Founded in 1809, the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews (known popularly as the London Jews’ Society, or LJS) began life as a non-denominational organization through the endeavours of German Jewish convert Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey (1771–1850). Due to large debts and controversy over Frey’s methods and personal life, the LJS reconstituted in 1815 as an Anglican society, financed by the wealthy lawyer Lewis Way (1772–1840). Although the LJS subsequently denied any particular focus upon prophecy, examinations of their sermons, library collections, and published literature have suggested strong restorationist interests (Jarman 2016). Way himself travelled to meet Tsar Alexander I in Moscow in 1817 to discuss Jewish restoration, and was subsequently invited to speak on Jewish rights at the 1818 Aix-la-Chapelle conference of the Great Powers (Price and Price 2011, 38–71).

Influenced by the example of the LJS and revivalist enthusiasm that developed through the Second Great Awakening, mission societies also formed in the United States. The most influential of these was the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews (ASMCJ), founded in New York in 1820 with Boudinot as its first president and Frey as its star missionary. One hope expressed by the ASMCJ’s leaders (although not an official point of policy) was to encourage Jewish restoration to Palestine through conversion to Christianity and teaching Jewish immigrants the ways of American civilization and self-government. As Samuel Goldman has noted, this paternalism drew from abolitionist attempts to settle freed slaves in Africa, as promoted by the American Colonization Society from 1817 (2018, 74).

Although postmillennialism remained dominant to this point, a more pessimistic, premillennial eschatology gained ground. In England, Way and several other prominent LJS supporters were heavily involved in the

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Albury Park conferences from 1826 to 1830. The meetings helped to define the agenda of pessimistic prophecy in the 1820s and 1830s, predicting imminent judgment on Christian nations and the premillennial coming of Christ, along with the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. The gloomy outlook of Albury was translated into a series of Irish conferences at the Powerscourt estate near Dublin from 1831 to 1833, which gave birth to the eschatology that became premillennial dispensationalism under the influence of John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). Darby's theology emphasized a firm division in God's plans between his heavenly people (the church) and his earthly people (the Jews). God would end the Church Age by removing the church in 'the Rapture', with Israel resuming its primacy in God's plan and enjoying the land promises in the millennium after undergoing a seven-year tribulation. Despite this, and claims from both modern supporters and opponents that Darby was the chief originator of Christian Zionism (Wilkinson 2007), his theology argued against any political agitation for Jewish restoration. According to Darby, Christians should not be concerned about geopolitics, especially as the restoration to Palestine would not occur until after the Rapture. His theology was to become increasingly influential in later nineteenth-century evangelicalism, particularly in the United States.

Political Agitation

In contrast to Darby's aversion to worldly politics, restorationists became increasingly involved in practical projects to help achieve their aims. Although professing only to 'humbly watch the ways of Divine Providence' (*Jewish Intelligence* 1840, 351), the LJS engaged in prayer, lobbying, and writing in favour of restorationist projects. Excitement had been generated by the establishment of an English vice-consul at Jerusalem in 1838 (with a particular responsibility for protecting Jews), and by Sir Moses Montefiore's (1784–1885) attempts to purchase land in Palestine for Jewish settlement in 1839.

A key factor in their political engagement was the involvement of the evangelical politician and social reformer Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801–85), from 1851 seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, and LJS president from 1848. As a Member of Parliament, peer, and son-in-law of sometime foreign secretary and prime minister Lord Palmerston (1784–1865), Lord Ashley was well placed to bring his influence to bear. In 1839, he penned an article for the *Quarterly Review* arguing that Britain should establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The following year he met with Palmerston as foreign secretary and attempted to persuade him of the benefits of the government establishing a Jewish protectorate in the Holy Land. Palmerston was convinced, and (without informing the cabinet) ordered the British ambassador to the Ottomans to suggest it to the sultan, who did not view it favourably. In 1840, Ashley lamented in his diary that he had been forced to argue from worldly reasons, due to Palmerston's lack of interest in prophecy (Cooper, 1838-43, 26v–27v).

Although this plan ultimately failed to impress the Sultan, Ashley worked with Prussian diplomat Christian Karl Bunsen (1791–1860) and successfully promoted a joint Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem. Established in 1841 and funded partly through LJS donations, the bishopric was seen by the restorationists as a key witness to Jews, and as central in preparing them for conversion to Christianity. Former LJS missionary, professor of Hebrew, and Prussian Jewish convert Michael Solomon Alexander (1799–1845) served as the first bishop. Evangelicals viewed the choice as providential. Alexander's arrival in the Holy Land (on a British warship) served as the first fruits of the Jewish return, as restorationists imagined that the witness of a fellow Jew, the presence of a pure form of Anglican Protestantism, and Anglo-German

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state support would encourage Jews to become Christians.

Despite little practical effect from the Jerusalem bishopric (and Alexander's premature death in 1845), interest in Palestine within Britain remained high. A flood of travel publications combined with increasing ease of access to the Levant, perhaps best represented by Thomas Cook's (1808–92) organized tours from 1869 onwards. Figures such as colonial administrator Colonel George Gawler (1795–1869) wrote several works in favour of Jewish restoration and began to advocate for practical steps—such as the foundation of the short-lived Association for Promoting Jewish Settlement in Palestine in 1852. Ashley, now Earl of Shaftesbury, also remained active into the 1880s, although his political influence waned from the mid-1850s (Lewis 2010, 317–19). In 1865 he was one of the founders of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which developed both archaeological and cartographic understanding of the region (sometimes with military assistance) and in his view prepared the land for a Jewish return. In 1882, he was at the forefront of a movement to aid those fleeing the Russian pogroms, which involved the establishment of the Syrian Colonisation Fund. Shaftesbury also served as chief fundraiser for the sometime spy, Member of Parliament and mystic Laurence Oliphant's (1829–88) scheme to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Supported by both Disraeli and Lord Salisbury, the plan nonetheless fell apart following a disastrous face-to-face meeting with the sultan in 1879. Oliphant had admitted in a private letter that he believed Jewish settlement would be certain to raise money and support 'owing to the belief which people have that they would be fulfilling prophecy and bringing on the end of the world' (quoted in Moruzzi 2006, 64).

In the same period in the United States, there were also new moves towards political restorationism. Darby conducted seven preaching tours in the United States from 1862 to 1877, and his pessimistic views on prophecy grew in influence in the period of the American Civil War (1861–65) (Smith 2021, 237–45). Several key figures within the American evangelical establishment helped to extract Darby's dispensational prophecy from his ecclesiastical separatism. These included the influential St Louis minister James H. Brookes (1830–97), mentor to Cyrus I. Scofield (1843–1921), who would later produce the best-selling dispensational Scofield Reference Bible, and famed revivalist Dwight L. Moody (1837–99), who incorporated dispensational prophecy into his homespun preaching.

Brookes and Moody both played key roles in a series of prophecy conferences beginning in Chicago in 1875, including one especially influential conference in New York in 1878. Held at Niagara from 1883 until 1901, they offered a venue for dispensationalists to come together from across denominations in order to discuss both the minutiae of prophecy and strategy for spreading their message in whatever time remained before the Rapture. Moody was a regular speaker at the conferences, and in 1886 founded the lay missionary training institution in Chicago that would ultimately become the Moody Bible Institute. This provided a model for other dispensational organizations and also offered training in the key elements of dispensational premillennialism, including the promises to the Jews. Moody's involvement in the Student Volunteer Movement also helped to popularize dispensational beliefs among young evangelicals. These institutions helped to foster the sense that dispensationalists represented a 'church within the church' (Sandeen 1970, xv).

The influence of dispensationalism combined with both the rise of European nationalist movements and the effects of Russian pogroms to promote a new enthusiasm for Jewish resettlement in Palestine in the later nineteenth century. The Chicago evangelist William E. Blackstone (1841–1935) was the author of the best-selling dispensationalist work *Jesus Is Coming* (1878, second edition 1898), which was translated into over forty languages and still in print in 1932. Active among Chicago's Jewish community, in March 1891

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he personally presented a petition supporting Jewish claims to Palestine to US President Benjamin Harrison (1833–1901) and Secretary of State James G. Blaine (1830–93). The ‘Blackstone Memorial’ was signed by 413 Christian and Jewish leaders, including US Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller (1833–1910), several congressmen, mayors of cities such as New York and Philadelphia, the editors of ninety-three major newspapers, and John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937). As with Ashley’s approach to Palmerston, the memorial was couched in political language, complaining about Ottoman tax and trade restrictions, and appealing on the basis of national self-determination: ‘Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians [*sic*] now give Palestine back to the Jews?’. A personal letter from Blackstone to Harrison, presented with the petition, was clearer on his prophetic interests: ‘there seem to be many evidences to show that we have reached the period in the great roll of the centuries, when the ever living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is lifting up His hand to the Gentiles, (Isa. 49:22) to bring His sons and His daughters from far’ (Blackstone 1891, 1). While the memorial achieved little in the short term, it was symbolically important. Louis Brandeis (1856–1941), Blackstone’s friend and the first Jewish justice on the US Supreme Court, informed Blackstone in 1916 that he regarded him as ‘the Father of Zionism’ (quoted in Moorhead 2010, 796).

Perhaps the best-known restorationist of this later period was Reverend William Henry Hechler (1845–1931). Son of an LJS missionary, Hechler was a firm believer in prophecy who served as tutor to the family of the Grand Duke of Baden and wrote on Jewish restoration. As chaplain to the British embassy in Vienna, Hechler befriended the founder of the World Congress of Zionists, Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), in 1896 after discovering Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* (1896) in a local bookshop. Although Herzl viewed Hechler’s prophetic enthusiasm as eccentric, he valued both his friendship and his practical support. The Anglican obtained meetings for Herzl with the Grand Duke of Baden, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Otto von Bismarck. One of only three Christians present at the first Zionist Congress in 1897, Hechler played a key role in advancing the secular political aims of Herzl, all the while maintaining his own confidence in the prophecies.

Restorationism Assessed

Christian belief in, and agitation for, the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine was not something that emerged only with Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century. Instead, it had been present over the previous four hundred years. Nonetheless, it is clear that it took different forms and relied on varied theological justifications, prophetic interests, and approaches to the question of Jewish conversion at different times.

One important theme emphasized by this history is that although restorationism influenced the subsequent development of Christian Zionism, it is not synonymous with either premillennialism or dispensationalism. It significantly predates Darby’s innovations and was championed by postmillennialists well into the nineteenth century. Reading it solely in the light of contemporary prophetic movements risks misrepresentation.

A second important theme, recently emphasized by Donald Lewis (2010) and Robert O. Smith (2013), is the transnational nature of restorationism. While this was often Anglo-American, the important influence of German pietism has increasingly been recognized in recent years. The centrality of this in influencing both

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the LJS and the ASMCJ continued into the later period, with Hechler's own Anglo-German background neatly illustrating this link.

Perhaps most importantly, restorationism raises difficult questions about historical relationships between Jews and Christians. Political controversies surrounding contemporary Christian Zionism have meant that studies of earlier restorationism have often been written as polemics, arguing either for the philo-Semitic orthodoxy (e.g. Wilkinson 2007) or the anti-Semitic heterodoxy (e.g. Sizer 2004) of restorationist thought. Yet studies designed to either legitimate or attack a contemporary religious–political position do little to shed light on historically unique phenomena.

Restorationists had complex and sometimes problematic relationships with Jews. On the one hand, there are clear examples of Christians working with Jews in order to achieve mutually agreeable aims—whether ministers with Menasseh ben Israel at the Whitehall Conference or Brandeis's support of Blackstone. On the other hand, many of the earlier restorationists made assumptions about Jewish belief and practice with little or no awareness of actual Jewish communities. Restorationists often also rejected the idea of Jews becoming fully assimilated citizens, seeing this as a form of betrayal of their Jewish identity. Shaftesbury worried that allowing Jews to sit in Parliament would discourage their return to Palestine (Lewis 2010, 148), while Blackstone was confused and frustrated that Reformed Jews he met with in 1890 told him that as Americans they had no desire to return to Palestine (Ariel 2013, 85-6). Over all this, the vast majority of restorationists attempted to effect the conversion of Jews to Christianity. While by the nineteenth century this was often a type of 'Hebrew Christianity' in which certain Jewish identity markers remained post-conversion (Darby 2010), the call to abandon Jewish religious identity was often seen by Jews themselves as a form of both personal and corporate attack.

Rather than branding restorationism as either straight-forwardly anti- or philo-Semitic, it is perhaps better to characterize it as 'allo-Semitic', in which a highly ambiguous view of Jews as constant 'others' allows a range of views that can appear either positive or negative depending on their context (Bauman 1998). Restorationists were capable of adopting a 'teaching of esteem' (Lewis 2010, 64–66) towards Jews that valued them highly, but at other times affirming anti-Semitic stereotypes and ignoring Jewish calls for greater integration or an end to conversionist activities. Only by studying the details of restorationist thought at different periods, and how particular restorationists interacted with Jews, can we come to a fuller understanding of the complexity of the belief and its implications for historical relationships between Jews and Christians.

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