



This full portrait photograph of Brigham Young (1801–77) by Charles R. Savage was possibly taken during the Civil War. (C. R. Savage Photograph Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University)



CHAPTER 6

Richard E. Bennett

“WE KNOW NO NORTH, NO SOUTH, NO EAST, NO WEST”

MORMON INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR, 1861–65

While peace reigns in Utah, civil war, with all its horrors, prevails among those who earnestly desired to see the soil of these valleys crimsoned with the blood of the Saints, and, if we are not mistaken in the signs of the times, before the conflict between the North and the South shall have ended, all they unitedly desired to see meted out to the Mormons, will be poured out without measure upon those who have initiated the war of extermination, and are now carrying it on with all the energy they severally possess.¹

—Deseret News, May 18, 1861

So read the lead editorial in the Salt Lake *Deseret News* shortly after Confederate gun boats and shore batteries blasted Fort Sumter into submission and surrender at the April 1861 outbreak of the war between the North and the South.

The history of that great American conflict continues to attract discussion and debate. Books and articles continue to be written, battles and skirmishes are every year reenacted, and new views and interpretations abound in a field of study that remains riveted deeply in our history. Yet Mormon scholars have tended to leave it alone and far away, as if it were the other guys’ war—that conflict beyond the mountains to the east that America had brought upon itself.²

This short study attempts to somewhat redress that imbalance, not by reexamining what minor role Utah and the Mormons played militarily in the conflict in the territories but by proffering a preliminary analysis of public statements made by the leading authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the Civil War years of 1861 to 1865, comments that reveal their interpretations of the conflict and the causes of the nation’s discomfiture.

Let me emphasize at the outset the words *public* and *preliminary*. I have deliberately restricted my research to those statements made in public and also recorded in newspapers, magazines, and various compilations of sermons and discourses. A thorough



A few weeks before Fort Sumter was fired upon, Brigham Young (1801–77), second President of the LDS Church, said that “God has come out of his hiding place and has commenced to vex the nation that has rejected us.” (Utah State Historical Society)

manuscript study into letters, diaries, and the like will have to wait for another time. Furthermore, this is a preliminary probe into a very complicated field of study. Although hundreds of discourses and comments made by numerous Church leaders have been examined, any seasoned researcher knows that so much, even of that which is recorded, is hard to find. Likewise, what has been recorded is often incomplete, if not incorrect.

It is never easy to capture faithfully the tenor of a past time, the mood in the air, and in this case, the more rarified air of a Rocky Mountain Zion. The times seemed so black and white, North and South, a Mormon political kingdom and a nation apart. America, when it took the time, regarded Utah as an evil miscreant, a religion out of time and out of tune, harboring that other “relic of barbarism”—polygamy. On the other hand, from most Mormon pulpits and papers spilled forth a tirade of wrathful indignation

against those who had so badly treated them in the past. Somewhere in between, perhaps this side of moderation, lay the truth.

Whatever the case, the purpose of this paper is to try to answer the following four questions: (1) How did prominent Mormon leaders interpret the underlying cause of the American Civil War? (2) Did their feelings and attitudes change as the conflict deepened and degenerated into the worst spectacle of human suffering the country had ever experienced? (3) Were there recognizable differences in opinion and viewpoint among the most prominent leaders? (4) What effect, if any, did the war have on the leaders’ views of returning to their Missouri Zion?

“A DESOLATING SCOURGE”— PROPHECY FULFILLED

The cup of Mormon indignation was brimful long before 1861. Ever since the government sanctioned the expulsion of Mormons from their homes in Missouri in the 1830s, followed by the awful persecutions of Illinois, the martyrdom of their prophet-leaders, and later, President James Buchanan’s dispatching of an entire U.S. Army to Utah to put down and destroy an alleged religious dictatorship, Mormons had been hurt, hated, and hunted by an America bent on their religion’s reformation, if not its destruction.

There is ample evidence in Mormon scripture that the Saints themselves were responsible for many of their greatest troubles. “For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay” (D&C 84:59). Yet as the years passed, different interpretations came to predominate. In one of his earliest revelations, in 1829, Joseph Smith prophesied of “a desolating scourge [that] shall go forth among the inhabitants of

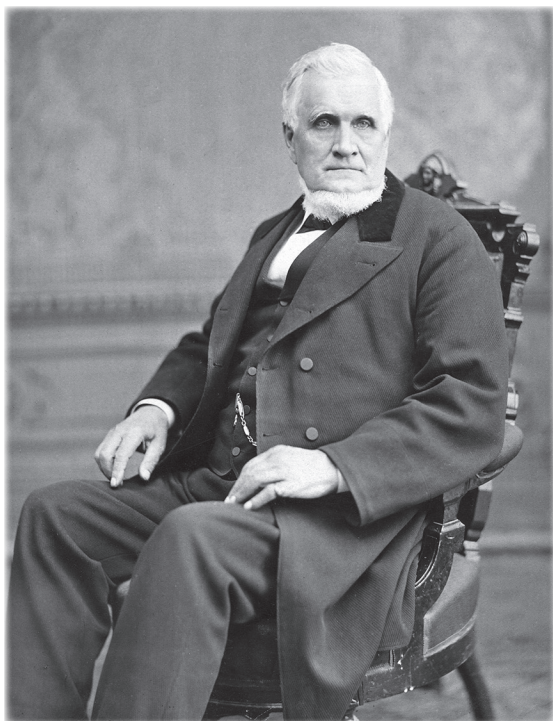
the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming” (D&C 5:19). By the time the Latter-day Saints were driven from Illinois seventeen years later, diary and sermon were replete with condemnations, warnings, and expectations of imminent premillennial judgment and wrath. To deny such is to deny their sense of history, justice, and prophecy. Prior to leaving Winter Quarters for the West in 1847, Brigham Young said, “The whisperings of the Spirit to us have invariably been of the same import, to depart, to go hence, to flee into the mountains, to retire to our strongholds that we may be secure in the visitation of the judgments that must pass upon this land, that is crimsoned with the blood of Martyrs; and that we may be hid, as it were, in the clefts of the rocks, and in the hollows of the land of the Great Jehova[h], while the guilty land of our fathers is purifying by the overwhelming scourge.”³ There simply had to be a price to pay, an inevitable meting out of justice, a balancing of the equation for the several injustices inflicted upon the Saints.

On the first point—that of prophecy—the evidence is overwhelming that to the Latter-day Saints, the Civil War was a fulfillment of prophecy. Said Brigham Young, just weeks before the outbreak of war, “I have heard Joseph say, ‘You will see the sorrows and misery that will be upon this land, until you will turn away and pray that your eyes may not be obliged to look upon it. . . . There are men in this Council that will live to see the affliction that will come upon this nation, until their hearts sink within them.’”⁴ Orson Hyde, on a later occasion, referred to the same prophecy when he said, “Joseph Smith once said, on

the stand in Nauvoo, Illinois, that if the Government of the United States did not redress the wrongs of the Mormon people inflicted upon them in the State of Missouri, the whole nation should be distracted by mobs from one end to the other; and that they should have mobs to the full and to their ‘hearts’ content.’ I heard the foregoing statement myself, as it fell from the lips of the Prophet in the presence of thousands of witnesses.”⁵

Besides his 1829 revelation already cited, Joseph Smith was best remembered for his 1832 prophecy about “the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls” (D&C 87:1). Given twelve years before his own death and twenty-nine years before the war itself broke out, Joseph Smith’s revelation gave several more details, ending with a statement of cause not overlooked by his followers and successors: “that the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up . . . to be avenged of their enemies” (D&C 87:7).

Wilford Woodruff, speaking in 1862, was but one of many who repeated the prophecy, arguing, “It is a hard dealing of the Almighty and we cannot help it.” He continued, “Every Elder in this Church who lives his religion knows that this which is now transpiring is according to the mind and foreshadowings of the Holy Spirit. . . . It is out of the power of man, excepting by the repentance of the whole nation, for they have shed the blood of the Prophets, driven this church and people from their midst, . . . [and] have turned those keys that will seal their condemnation.”⁶ And Brigham Young said on an earlier occasion, “I heard Joseph Smith say, nearly thirty years ago, ‘They shall have mobbing to their hearts’



Referring to the Civil War, John Taylor (1808–87), third Church President (from 1880 to 1887), made the statement on July 4, 1861, “They [the North and the South] have both . . . brought it upon themselves, and we have no hand in the matter.” (Private Collection of Norma Dawn Livingston Worthington)

content, if they do not redress the wrongs of the Latter-day Saints.’ Mobs will not decrease, but will increase until the whole Government becomes a mob, and eventually it will be State against State, city against city, neighbourhood against neighbourhood, Methodists against Methodists, and so on.”⁷ Brigham Young returned to this theme of prophecy fulfilled in 1864, nearer the war’s end, when he said, “Joseph said many and many a time to us—‘Never be anxious for the Lord to pour out his judgments upon the nation; many of you will see the distress and evils poured out upon this nation till you will weep like children.’”⁸

One last reference to the prophetic element is worth mentioning. John Taylor, just one week before the end of the war, argued against

those who believed the Latter-day Saints had lost faith in America because of such prophecies. “But did not Joseph Smith prophesy that there would be rebellion in the United States?” he countered. Continuing, he remarked:

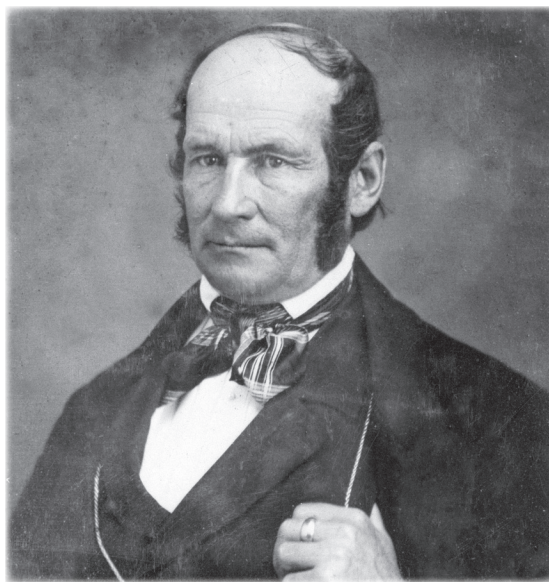
He did, and so have I scores and hundreds of times; And what of that? Could I help that? Could Joseph Smith help knowing that a rebellion would take place in the United States? Could he help knowing it would commence in South Carolina? You could not blame him for that. He was in his grave at that time it commenced. . . . If the Lord, we all talk about the Lord you know, Christians as well as “Mormons,” and about the providence of God, and the interposition of the Almighty, if the Lord has a design to accomplish, if there is a fate, if you like the word any better, and some infidels as well as Christians believe strongly in the doctrine of fate, if there is a fate in these things who ordered it? Who can change its course? Who can stop it? Who can alter it?⁹

“A REQUISITION UPON THE NATION”—RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

No less earnest to the Latter-day Saints than the fulfillment of prophecy was the urgent expectation, at least among most leaders, of retributive justice. “God has come out of his hiding place,” said Brigham Young, “and has commenced to vex the nation that has rejected us, and he will vex it with a sore vexation. It will not be patched up—it never can come together again—but it will be sifted with a sieve of vanity, and in a short time it will be like water spilled on the ground.”¹⁰

“I have never prayed for the destruction of this Government,” said Heber C. Kimball in April 1861, “but I know that dissolution, sorrow, weeping and distress are in store for the inhabitants of the United States, because of their conduct towards the people of God.”¹¹

More of a “hard liner,” perhaps, than most of his colleagues, Heber C. Kimball often expressed such strong feelings. Speaking just a few months later, he reminded his listeners, several of whom were recent convert-emigrants from England, of their paths of persecution. “Many of you are strangers to these things, both members and Elders because you were not baptized into the Church until afterwards,” he said. “But still you can see what the world has done to us; and everything in the shape of persecution or affliction which the world have brought upon us, will come back upon their heads ten-fold and this nation in particular will reap what they have sown and their troubles have already commenced; but I shall live to see them broken to pieces a great deal worse than they are now . . . the blood of retributive justice is on them . . . [and] the destruction of this nation is sealed, except they will repent, which is not very probable.”¹² In May of 1862, Kimball returned to the same theme. “The South and the North are at war with each other,” he said, and they “are slaying each other, and if they were not doing that they would be trying to slay us; this they do already in their hearts, and the sin is the same upon the nation as though they did it in reality; I am a martyr of God, and so is Brother Brigham and other men of God whose lives they have hunted. God will chastise them and all those who had a hand in seeking our destruction. . . . Let the Saints acknowledge the hand of God in it all.”¹³ Orson Hyde echoed Kimball’s



Heber C. Kimball (1801–68), a prominent and influential early Mormon leader, was a counselor to Brigham Young, missionary, polygamist with dozens of wives, and a successful land owner. Upon learning about the battle of Gettysburg, he announced that “When the trouble will be at an end, is not for me to say.” (Utah State Historical Society)

sentiments, at least early on in the war, when he said of the atrocities committed earlier against the Saints, “What can we expect other than that a righteous God, a faithful Sovereign would make just such a requisition upon the nation as he is now making. . . . Justice, though sometimes slow in its operations, is, nevertheless, sure to obtain its demands.”¹⁴

The specifics are not hard to find. The expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri, the extermination order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, the Haun’s Mill Massacre, and Martin Van Buren’s weakness and unwillingness to intervene federally, especially in light of President Buchanan’s 1857 decision to send an army of intervention to Utah—these were deep and long-festering wounds the Saints would not be allowed to forget. Brigham Young stated, “If Van Buren had said, ‘Be still, or I will chasten you and keep sacred the

oath of my office,' we should not have been mobbed, and the nation would not have been as it is to-day."¹⁵ And as to Johnston's Army, the following response portrays the overriding sentiment: "Who frustrated that army in their design?" asked Wilford Woodruff. "The Lord our God, and now the judgments that have come upon the nation in consequence of their treatment to this people are a sore vexation to them but it is the hard dealing of the Almighty and we cannot help it."¹⁶

Though these and other grievances received their space, it was Carthage Jail and June of 1844 that most galvanized Mormon attitudes. As per the lyrics "Wake up the world for the conflict of justice" in William W. Phelps's enduring poem, and later a hymn of praise, it was the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum that forever remained. Writer after writer, speaker after speaker, returned to Carthage, choosing to see it as the watershed of God's wrath. Brigham Young said of the persecutors of Joseph Smith, "They spurned from their presence the man who would acknowledge that God should reign King of Nations. . . . He was [like] a God to us, and is to the nations of the earth and will continue to be. . . . He was the Prophet of the Lord. . . . Were they aware of it at the seat of Government? I have no doubt they as well knew of the plans for destroying the Prophet as did those in Carthage or in Warsaw, Illinois. It was planned by some of the leading men of the nation."¹⁷ "In killing him, they killed their best earthly friend," wrote another, "the man who of all others was best able to save them from themselves—from that anarchy, misery, and destruction they would bring upon themselves."¹⁸

Perhaps this 1864 *Millennial Star* editorial, likely penned by George Q. Cannon while yet

president of the British Mission, expressed the sentiment best: "War! Dreadful and continued war! War and its concomitants, famine and pestilence, will purge and purify the earth of the ungodly. Already our boasted land of liberty, the asylum for the oppressed in the new world, is deluged with blood, and will continue to be so until it has atoned for rejecting the Gospel and refusing to avenge the wrongs of our people, and for passively sanctioning the murder of God's servants."¹⁹

The rock-bed sentiment is not always synonymous with the public rhetoric. To the contemporary ear, such Mormon statements may be as hard to accommodate as are the columns and cartoons in the same time period's eastern press of hate and prejudice against the Latter-day Saints. There can be no mistaking the division and the hard feelings. Yet the Latter-day Saints were expressing convictions, not seeking vengeance. Their belief that America would suffer was motivated less out of a desire to see that suffering and more out of their conviction in the Restoration and in the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. "For do ye suppose that ye can get rid of the justice of an offended God, who hath been trampled under feet of men?" (3 Nephi 28:35). As surely as ancient empires were destroyed for neglecting the prophets of old, so history must repeat itself, or, as George A. Smith put it in 1861, "By-and-by it will be like it was with the Jaredites and the Nephites."²⁰

Some other comments, particularly those made at the outset of the war, deserve attention. If some in the East were expecting a short conflict with a quick and glorious Union victory, no such interpretation came out of Utah. Even before the first shot was fired, the Mormon expectation was that the war would

be long and horrible. “Do any of you think this war is going to be over in a few days?” asked Heber C. Kimball in May 1861. “If you do, you are greatly mistaken.”²¹ “Will it be over in six months or three years?” followed Brigham Young just a few months later. “No, it will take years and years, and will never cease until the work is accomplished. There may be seasons that the fire will appear to be extinguished, and the first you know it will break out in another portion, and all is on fire again, and it will spread and continue until the land is emptied.”²²

As late as September 1864, some were predicting an almost never-ending conflict, or at least a season of many wars. “A very large proportion of the people . . . imagine that the nation is on the eve of peace and an entire settlement of the difficulties,” said George Q. Cannon. “But you and I, and all believers in God’s revelations know how cruelly they deceive themselves, or, rather, suffer the great enemy of their souls to deceive them upon this point.”²³

Running parallel to these dire predictions of an extended conflict were the repeated expressions of gratitude and appreciation that the Saints were now far removed from the arena of war. “If we were in Missouri, we should be obliged to take sides in the present lamentable strife of brother against brother,” said George A. Smith in March 1861. “If we were there, we should be in constant trouble.”²⁴ Later, on July 4 of that same year, he said, “Now, brethren, are we not thankful that, at least, we can see the providence of the Almighty in suffering us to be driven into these valleys, where we can enjoy the sweets of true liberty—where none dare molest or make afraid?”²⁵ Brigham Young followed suit: “Do we appreciate the blessings of this our



An Apostle and member of the Church's First Presidency, George A. Smith (1817–75) asked in 1861, “Now, brethren, are we not thankful that, at least, we can see the providence of the Almighty in suffering us to be driven into these valleys, where we can enjoy the sweets of true liberty—where none dare molest or make afraid?” (Utah State Historical Society)

mountain home, far removed from the war, blood, carnage and death that are laying low in the dust thousands of our fellow creatures in the very streets we have walked, and in the cities and towns where we have lived?”²⁶

Indeed, the Latter-day Saints as a people were not drawn into taking sides in the war. While it was true that Utah remained loyal to the Union and when called upon even equipped small regiments to defend government property during the war, the Mormon view was essentially one of neutrality. John Taylor’s famous comments given on July 4, 1861, early in the war are worth repeating in this regard:

It may now be proper to inquire what part shall we take in the present difficulties. . . . In regard to the present

strife, it is a warfare among brothers. We have neither inaugurated it, nor assisted in its inauguration. . . . We have been hunted like the deer on the mountains, our men have been whipped, banished, imprisoned and put to death. We have been driven from city to city, from state to state, for no just cause of complaint. . . . Shall we join the North to fight against the South? No! Shall we join the South against the North? As emphatically, No! Why? They have both . . . brought it upon themselves, and we have no hand in the matter. . . . We know no North, no South, no East, no West.²⁷

“MY HEART IS FILLED WITH PAIN”—A SOFTENING OF ATTITUDE?

But as the war intensified, was there a softening in Mormon attitude? As news of the slaughters at Shiloh, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg reached Utah almost instantaneously over the newly completed transcontinental telegraph lines, did such tragedies give the Saints pause to ponder and perhaps to recast their view of the war in a different hue? Did they see other, broader factors at work? Speaking at the Bowery in Salt Lake City the Sunday morning of August 31, 1862, President Young, after excoriating America once more for Carthage Jail, lamented the great destructions of human life and in a tone not yet heard before said, “My heart is filled with pain for the inhabitants of the earth. We desire with all our hearts to do them good. . . . It is our duty to pray for them and place before them the holy principles of the gospel by precept, and in the acts of our lives, rather than to hold prominently

forward their manifold corruptions. They are in the hands of God, and so are we.”²⁸ The most meaningful expression of sympathy they could express would be to proclaim the gospel to America and to perform a lasting work of redemption for both their living and the dead. “We expect to . . . build hundreds and thousands of cities and magnificent temples and officiate for our forefathers and relatives . . . and for those ignorant thousands who are killing each other in the present war, and we will give them a salvation.”²⁹

By the middle of 1863, Brigham Young was referring to the war less as a punishment and more as an “unnecessary war,” a “useless war” in which “more than a half million of the brave sons of our country now sleep in the dust.”³⁰ “I do not think I have a suitable name for them,” Brigham said later that year. “Shall we call them abolitionists, slaveholders, religious bigots, or political aspirants? Call them what you will, they are wasting away each other.” Not anxious to take sides over the divisive issue of slavery and Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, the Mormon leader said: “Will the present struggle free the slaves? No, but they are wasting away the black race by the thousands. Many of the blacks are treated worse then [sic] we treat our dumb brutes, and they will be called to judgment for the way they have treated the negro.”³¹

On receiving news of the bloodletting at Gettysburg, even Heber C. Kimball sounded less assured than he once had. “When the trouble will be at an end, is not for me to say. Now the Presbyterians of the North are preaching and praying against their Presbyterian brethren in the South; and this is precisely the condition of the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and Shakers and I am real sorry that this is the case. There are many honorable

and peaceable citizens who are moving west in consequence of the lamentable state of our once happy and peaceful country.”³² And from the *Millennial Star*, “We do not, however, allude to these events now, in a spirit of bitterness or revenge. Our hearts grieve over the sufferings of our misguided but obstinate brethren and sisters on the other side of the water. . . . How shall they be saved?”³³

By 1864, the talk had turned to an invitation to repentance as the only solution to the stalemate of human suffering. “Can the inhabitants of our once beautiful, delightful, and happy country avert the horrors and evils now upon them?” asked Brigham Young. “Only by turning from their wickedness and calling upon the Lord. If they will turn unto the Lord and seek after him, they will avert this terrible calamity.”³⁴

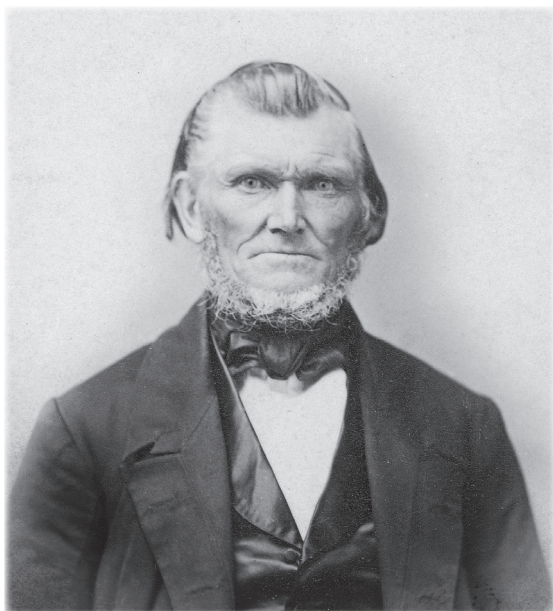
“DO WE REJOICE OVER THEM?”

It is tempting to argue that there was a softening in Mormon attitudes toward America as the war progressed. Yet, such is hard to prove conclusively, since for every note of conciliation there were still cries of indignation. If there was one Latter-day Saint spokesman, however, who ever sounded a more conciliatory note, a more global view, and who gave a broader interpretation of America’s present distress than the injustices of Carthage, it was the very man who was there with the Prophet when he died. Possibly because of his British and Canadian background and more global interests, John Taylor placed the causes of the war—of all wars—in the larger context of man’s inhumanity to man and his recurring disobedience to God. Rarely did he place Mormon sufferings in the center of the cauldron, opting instead to see far greater forces of cause and effect at work. “When we

think of the trouble that is likely to overtake this nation,” he said two weeks after the surrender of Fort Sumter,

as well as others, it is calculated to create a sympathetic feeling in the bosoms of all who reflect. For some weeks past I have been reviewing the events current in the nation, and I have felt a great deal of commiseration, and especially latterly. . . . If there is a cessation of open hostilities against us, it is not for want of a disposition, but owing to the peculiar situation in which they are placed relative to each other. . . . They are led captive by the Devil and are in a great measure controlled by him. This is truly a lamentable position, but the picture is not overdrawn. Do we rejoice over them? No, we do not; we have frequently offered to them the principles of life. . . . But who is this God of battles? Why, the Devil, the prince and power of the air. . . . What shall we do in the midst of these things that are now transpiring? Why, lean upon the Lord Our God, purify ourselves. . . . Let us also look at our position as Elders in Israel, clothed with the power of the Holy Priesthood, as men who hold the ministry of reconciliation. . . . This is the position we ought to occupy in relation to these matters.³⁵

In a later address, Taylor saw the war less as punishment and more as the result of a depraved character of men: “The world has been full of darkness and wickedness, and has not understood the things of God; but many of the past as well as the present generations have been full of blood-thirstiness, fraud and oppression without any correct principles,



In 1862, Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), later the fourth LDS Church President, declared that the Civil War was “a hard dealing of the Almighty and we cannot help it.” (Utah State Historical Society)

without the Spirit of the Lord to direct them. It is so now, and hence the wars and turmoils that at present exist in these United States.”³⁶

Elder Taylor also repeated his conviction that the war was but part of a rising tide of worldwide calamities and atrocities brought on by mankind because of their rejection of the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. “The Lord has begun to vex the nations,” he said midway through the Civil War, “beginning with our own nation, he is vexing it and will vex other nations, and his judgments will go forth, and all the wicked nations of the world will feel the avenging hand of God and He will continue to overthrow nation after nation until he whose right it is will take the government into his own hand.”³⁷

“THE LORD IS PREPARING THAT END OF THE ROUTE”— THE RETURN TO ZION

There remains one final topic to discuss, and if it is not central to Latter-day Saint views of the war, then certainly it is at least a fascinating corollary to it. What impact did the war have on the view of many that Zion—Missouri—must be reclaimed by the returning Latter-day Saints? The topic is complicated, but this study would be incomplete if it did not attempt to show, at least in part, that there was lively Mormon interest in what was happening in western Missouri, especially Jackson County, during the Civil War. Was the time ripening for a return to Zion? Was there another purpose to the war?

There is little question that Mormon attention fastened more on Jackson County than on any other arena of the Civil War during these years. What skirmishes and troubles did take place there the *Deseret News* was quick to report. The following is but one of several news stories carried on the topic:

The interest of the people of Utah in Jackson County, Missouri, prompts the publication of the following extracts: “Devastation in Jackson Co., Missouri.”

The depopulation of the counties in Jackson, Cass, Bates, and Vernon is thorough and complete. One may ride for hours without seeing a single inhabitant and deserted houses and farms are everywhere to be seen. The whole is a grand picture of desolation.³⁸

Heber C. Kimball saw the impending conflict as a possible means of fulfilling another prophecy. “The United States will suffer, for they will be afflicted with wars and with

trouble at home. While this is going on, the man who lives his religion and honours his calling will be prospered and go back to Jackson County, Missouri, with the faithful Elders, where they will receive their inheritances.”³⁹

Likewise, Brigham Young, at least in the early goings-on of the war, saw the possible return of his people and sounded the call of warning and preparation. “Just as soon as the Latter-day Saints are ready and prepared to return to Independence, Jackson County, in the state of Missouri,” he said, “just as soon will the voice of the Lord be heard, ‘arise now, Israel, and make your way to the center stake of Zion.’ . . . Do you believe that we, as Latter-day Saints, are preparing our own hearts—our own lives—to return to take possession of the center stake of Zion, as fast as the Lord is preparing [it]? . . . We must be pure to be prepared to build up Zion. To all appearance the Lord is preparing that end of the route faster than we are preparing ourselves to go.”⁴⁰ In 1862, Brigham Young returned to this same theme. Referring to the construction of the Salt Lake Temple, which was frustratingly slow for a host of reasons, he said, “I am afraid we shall not get it up until we have to go back to Jackson County which I expect will be in seven years. I do not want to quite finish this Temple for there will not be any temple finished until the one is finished in Jackson Co. [as] pointed out by Joseph

Smith. Keep this as a secret to yourselves, lest some may be discouraged.”⁴¹

Come the end of 1863, with the war at fever pitch, a watchful Wilford Woodruff had also come to the conclusion that this might be the long-awaited time. “The Lord is watching over the interests of Zion and sustains his Kingdom upon the earth and [is] preparing the way for the return of his saints to Jackson County, Missouri to build up the waste places of Zion. Jackson County has been entirely cleared of its inhabitants during the year 1863 which is one of the greatest miracles manifested in our day and those who have driven the Saints out and spoiled them are in their turn now driven out and spoiled.”⁴²

Of course, the Saints never did return to Missouri, and the topic remains for further study. At long last, America’s deadliest war ended at Appomattox in April 1865. With the waning of the war, Mormon statements about the conflict also lessened. The news of Lee’s surrender was happily received in Utah, although celebrations were muted, as perhaps elsewhere throughout the land, by the reflection on the destruction of the South, Sherman’s march through Georgia, and the horror and devastation of the past four years. Furthermore, the attention of Latter-day Saint leadership now began to shift to protect the institution of plural marriage the nation had already vowed to exterminate. That would be another war well worth watching.

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NOTES

This chapter is reprinted, with permission, from *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 51–63.

1. "Editorial," *Deseret News*, May 18, 1861.
2. Some of the few works dedicated to the Civil War from a Mormon history perspective are E. B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Gustive O. Larson, "Utah and the Civil War," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Winter 1965): 55–67; and Ray C. Colton, *The Civil War in the Western Territories: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959). See also Robert J. Stott, "Mormonism and War: An Interpretative Analysis of Selected Mormon Thought Regarding Seven American Wars" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974).
3. Brigham Young to the Saints at Mt. Pisgah and Garden Grove, Iowa Territory, January 25, 1847, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
4. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 8:325, February 10, 1861.
5. Orson Hyde to the editor of the (*St. Louis*) *Missouri Republican*, January 1, 1862, as found in the *Journal History of the Church*, January 1, 1862, Church History Library.
6. Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal History*, July 27, 1862.
7. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:5, April 6, 1861.
8. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, May 15, 1864.
9. John Taylor, in *Journal History*, March 5, 1865.
10. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:324, February 10, 1861.
11. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:55, April 14, 1861.
12. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal History*, July 4, 1861.
13. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal History*, May 4, 1862.
14. Orson Hyde, in *Journal History*, January 1, 1862.
15. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:4, April 6, 1861.
16. Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal History*, July 27, 1862. Albert Sidney Johnston, commander of the Utah expedition and later general in the Confederate Army, had only recently been killed in the Battle of Shiloh.
17. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:320–21, February 10, 1861.
18. "Emancipation of the Slaves—The Prophet Joseph Smith's Plan—Results of Its Rejection," *Millennial Star*, February 14, 1863, 101. The article was probably written by George Q. Cannon, editor of the *Millennial Star*.
19. George Q. Cannon, in *Journal History*, January 23, 1864.
20. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:69–70, March 10, 1861.
21. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:134, May 12, 1861.
22. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:143, July 28, 1861.
23. George Q. Cannon to Brigham Young Jr. and Daniel H. Wells, September 18, 1864, in *Journal History* for the same date. Cannon, like most Mormon commentators, was likely referring to the prophecy on war (D&C 87), which told not merely of the American conflict but of the many "wars" that would ensue thereafter.
24. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:69, March 10, 1861.
25. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:360, July 4, 1861.
26. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, January 26, 1862.
27. John Taylor, in *Journal History*, July 4, 1861.
28. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, August 31, 1862.
29. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, April 6, 1862. For a very modern twist on this earlier prediction, see the article "Civil War Relics Lead to Life of Research," by Therese Fisher, in the *Church News*, January 20, 1990, which details the account of a William Taylor submitting temple work on over twenty thousand Confederate soldiers killed during the war. According to remarks given by Thomas S. Monson in 1992, the numbers had increased to over one hundred thousand. See Thomas S. Monson, "The Priesthood in Action," *Ensign*, November 1992, 48.
30. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, May 31, 1863.
31. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, October 6, 1863.
32. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal History*, July 19, 1863.
33. "National Crimes and Their Consequences," *Millennial Star*, September 12, 1863, 580. The article was probably written by George Q. Cannon, editor of the *Millennial Star*.
34. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, May 15, 1864.
35. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:234, 236–37, April 28, 1861.
36. John Taylor, in *Journal History*, April 13, 1862.
37. John Taylor, in *Journal History*, February 22, 1863.

38. From the *St. Joseph (MO) Herald*, as reprinted in the *Deseret News*, October 18, 1863.
39. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:42, March 17, 1861.
40. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, July 28, 1861.
41. Brigham Young, in *Journal History*, August 22, 1862. See also *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983–84), 6:71.
42. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 6:147.