IMAGES OF THE APOCALYPSE IN AMERICAN THOUGHT

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America has historically been a land of progress and hope. Consequently, American society is future-oriented. Because of this, the myth of the apocalypse - especially visions of the end of the world - is fundamental to the American consciousness.[1] Just as history tells society where it has been, so the apocalypse tells society where it is going. From seventeenth-century visions of a glorious consummation of history to today's doomsday mentality, America has cultivated a rich and varied apocalyptic tradition.[2]

The images of the end of the world have been and still are primarily catastrophic. Envisioning the world's end is so appealing as subject matter because the theme itself brings to the forefront one's sense of place in a temporal world. The finiteness of individual life is transposed into the grand scheme of the world which also is finite. Just as the individual must die, so too must the earth reach its end. By viewing history as the progression of man, it is construed that mankind's creation was purposeful; therefore, man is purposeful. And the end of the world is the glorious culmination of human events. The vacuum of death becomes rebirth, for the individual and the earth. The end of human existence, then, becomes part of a divine plan, an escape from historical meaninglessness. And the apocalypse provides a coherent form and conclusion to the "plot" that was history. The Christian linear view of man provides assurance to its believers since humanity goes beyond material boundaries into infinity with God.

The apocalypse, with an emphasis on a catastrophic conclusion to

history, not only provides a magnificent exit to eternity, it provides a moral "I told you so" for humanity's tendency to veer away from societal standards. A catastrophic apocalypse is, therefore, a formidable threat. But viewed from this religious perspective, the catastrophic apocalypse is not such a gloomy prospect - at least for those who adhere to the moral code. The Puritan apocalypse is characterized by an emphasis on judgment, the immediacy of the end, and the cataclysm preceeding the end of time. And visions of catastrophe occur throughout the Apocalypse of John.

According to Revelation, the wrath of God descended upon humanity at the breaking of a seal, at the sound of a trumpet, at the pouring of a golden vial. The seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven golden vials were the prophecies of John that were to purge the world of the power of Satan. Also, Revelation forecast a series of afflictions that the church must undergo before salvation could be attained. The seventh seal produced the seven trumpets. The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets would be particularly woeful, thus they are also referred to as the first, second, and third woes or woe trumpets. God's wrath would manifest itself in many catastrophic forms such as earthquakes, locusts, and hail and fire mixed with blood. God's wrath also would unleash the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, which were the visions of the first four seals. These specters would bring to the earth war, famine, pestilence, and death. And the Antichrist would reign supreme, deceiving the peoples of the earth.

But the apocalypse is also a struggle between good and evil. The Puritans viewed themselves as God's chosen people, while the Antichrist was, for them, embodied in the Papacy. According to divine plan, the

Puritans would be pitted against the Antichrist in a struggle between the forces of light and darkness. God and the Puritans would of course prevail, banishing Satan and his cohorts to a fiery exile. Then, the earth would enter into the period of the millennium, a glorious transition wherein the saints would reign until the ultimate conflict with Satan, unleashed for the final time, and his army Gog and Magog.

The essence of this apocalyptic dualism is exemplified in the very nature of Puritanism. Puritans saw the struggle between good and evil on both a cosmic and personal level.[3] They had to contend with a degenerate and morally regressive society in England, a conflict that eventually led them to seek out a new frontier wherein a godly kingdom could exist. They viewed their mission as a spiritual quest ultimately fulfilling a divine plan which would expedite the coming of the end times.[4] The Puritan ministers clearly envisioned an excellent opportunity to establish a Puritan utopia in the wilderness of America where they could come as close to perfection as human nature allowed. The founding of New England as a divinely ideal society would serve as a model for all the world. Prior to arrival at Massachusetts Bay, John Winthrop proclaimed to the passengers onboard the Arbella, "we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill."[5] The Puritans were to establish a divine kingdom where actions were governed by humility and piety, and in accordance with Biblical guidelines. And the millennium, in due course, would follow.

The Puritans inherited a legacy of reason as well as a tradition of piety. For the Puritans, reason was a tool through which God operated to better enable them to understand the divine. However, reason and

religion did not always concur. Therefore, as in the Hebraic covenant, Puritans established a covenant with God, a contract wherein God could be made rational to the Puritans and reason and religion could be reconciled.

The Puritan covenant required the experience of conversion, a spiritual metamorphosis of the soul. By experiencing the process of conversion, a Puritan could know that he or she is truly a member of the "elect" and therefore destined for salvation at the end of the world or at death, depending on which came first. But Puritans bore the burden of never really knowing for certain if they had attained the necessary "saving grace" that would counteract original sin. Puritans feared death while at the same time clinging desperately to the common Christian belief that death freed the soul.[6] This "necessary fear" was requisite to salvation. Likewise, Puritans viewed the apocalypse with optimistic as well as fearful anticipation since God's "chosen" would be rewarded with salvation while utter destruction was the price for crimes against God. Ultimately, the salvation guaranteed to the member of the "elect" at the time of his or her death represented on a small scale the consummate salvation of the "elect" at the end of the world. Thus, New England millennialism was a peculiar combination of gloom and optimism.[7]

There was no doubt in the Puritan mind that the "end" was near; but they were less sure about exactly how the "end" would transpire. For Protestants who tended toward a pre-millennialist point of view, the millennium was yet to be inaugurated by the Second Coming of Christ. The Second Coming itself would mean an abrupt conclusion to history which would be followed by a glorious reign of Christ and his Chosen on a new earth. The post-millennialist interpretation viewed the millennium as

already in existence or to be realized soon. The end of time for the post-millennialist would coincide with or immediately follow the Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment after the millennial span.[8]

Typical of the apocalyptic tradition was the tendency to read closely the historical record in order to predict the fulfillment of prophecy. Interest in Protestant eschatology was revitalized in 1627, with the publication of Joseph Mede's The Key to Revelation. Mede attempted to elucidate the type and sequence of scriptural prophecies. According to Mede, the book bound by the seven seals which held the prophecies of the seals and the trumpets represented both the political and secular occurrences dating from the period of John to the end of time. For Mede, the first six seals dealt with Christ's judgments upon the Roman Empire. The visions of the trumpets were fulfilled in a chronology of invasions that gradually dissolved the Empire. And the first and second woe trumpets were realized by the Saracens, Arabs, and Turks.[9]

The prophecies set forth in the "little" book referred to in Revelation 10 were also included within the same time frame. However, these prophecies were essentially concerned with the conflicts between the Church and the Antichrist. For Mede, these conflicts would be realized by the pouring of the seven vials of wrath. He postulated that three vials had already been emptied and that the seventh vial would herald Christ's victory over Satan and the advent of the millennium. The "faithful servants" would remain on the new earth after the conflagration. Finally, the completion of the millennial reign would witness the conflict between the offspring of the faithful and Satan's last efforts - Gog and Magog.[10]

In a famous exchange of letters between William Twisse and Joseph Mede, Twisse proposed, in March 1635, that America would be the site of the New Jerusalem. This was a commonly held notion among New England Puritans insofar as they believed that "there never was a Generation that did so perfectly shake off the dust of Babylon, . . . as the first Generation of Christians, that came into this Land for the Gospels sake, where was there ever a place so like unto new Jerusalem as New-England hath been?"[11] Though Mede apparently convinced Twisse that America seemed better suited to foster the Satanic entities of Gog and Magog.[12] The Puritans, unsurprisingly, still adhered to their concept of New England as New Jerusalem.

The first generation's sense that time was quickly drawing to a close differed greatly from the second generation's sense of the end of time. For the first generation, America was the spiritual beacon in the midst of a morally decrepit world. Moreover, they could envision the culmination of history in the political and temporal events during their own lifetimes. They saw evidence of prophecy in the triumph of the sixteenth-century Reformation and the subsequent struggles of Protestantism. Further apocalyptic testimony could be seen in the machinations of the Tudor dynasty, the Gunpowder Plot, and more profoundly, in the events of the English Civil War. The succeeding generations were simply out of touch with the eschatological realizations of their ancestors.[13] The second and third generations needed evidence of prophetical fulfillment in their own time. Foremost in the efforts to awaken New England from its moral and spiritual lethargy in the second and third generations, as well as to reintroduce the cataclysmic expectations of the apocalypse,

were Increase Mather and his equally eminent son, Cotton Mather.

During the second and third generations, Winthrop's "city upon a hill" seemed destined for a fall. The rapid growth in commerce helped to create diversions from rigid Puritan social standards. Moreover, with church membership confined to families and the ascendency of commercialism over conversion, Puritan ministers observed with great distress the dwindling population of "visible saints." The goals of economic and social prosperity took precedence over salvation. The Puritans were indeed in dire straits. In 1662, the Puritans surrendered to expediency by agreeing to baptize the children of church members and admit them into partial fellowship without requiring proof of conversions. This Halfway Covenant did halt the decline in membership but it also abandoned a fundamental tenet of Puritan ideology. Increase concluded that the Halfway Covenant "would corrupt Churches, and ruin all in a little time. . . ."[14] Puritan values were questioned more often as ministers lamented the degeneration of the moral and spiritual earnestness that had been a chief characteristic of Puritanism.

Increase needed evidence of the spiritual decline in scriptural prophecy. In his sermon, The Mystery of Israel's Salvation (1667), he extracted a dual meaning of Israel from the scriptural passage, "All Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:25). According to Increase, this salvation would be conferred upon the spiritual Israel and the carnal or natural Israel. The spiritual Israel referred to the "elect" of God. This application was Mather's attempt to establish a relationship between scripture and the reality of colonial New England.[15] Perhaps by drawing a similarity between the failure of the Jews to uphold the covenant in

the Old Testament and the present morally deteriorating state of God's "elect" in New England, Mather could explain this regressive tendency and promote awareness of it in order to rectify this condition before the hour of reckoning was at hand. Increase told his congregation that "the reason why Jesus Christ doth not come immediately to judge the world, and to destroy the ungodly, is not because he is unmindful of his word, or in any way slow, (as some have sinfully imagined) in performing what he hath promised; . . . [but] he is not willing that our Nation should perish. . . ."[16] The carnal or natural Israel, which referred to the original Israel, prompted Mather's hypothesis of the salvation of the Jews as an inevitable and impending sign of the final things.

Because his beloved New England was becoming so infused with corruption, moral decay, and its declining adherence to the covenant of grace, Increase sought a return to millennialism as a means of reviving hope for the future. He also emphasized the imminent cataclysm which served as a threat against resistance. Salvation for the faithful Puritans and eternal punishment for the wicked must be reintroduced into the minds of his people. And it was up to Increase to prepare them for the inevitable Day of Judgment. Unlike his father Richard, whose sense of the "end" was rather prosaic, Increase had a flair for the dramatic. He employed vivid images to enlighten his parishoners about the coming apocalypse.[17] Concerning judgment, Increase proclaimed, "Thy soul is hanging over the mouth of hell by a rotten thread of a frail life: if that breaks, the devouring Gulf will swallow thee up forever."[18] It is possible that Increase reluctantly changed his stance to favor the institution of the Halfway Covenant because of his father's deathbed request, but he firmly

rejected any sense of halfway salvation for the unconverted. Increase not only assured parents and children who had yet to achieve conversion of their eternal damnation, he also vowed that on Judgment Day he would be there personally to accuse those who had failed.[19]

Although Increase, in his early years, was reluctant to assign a definite time for the return of Christ, in The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, he stated two infallible prerequisites for the beginning of the "end": the conversion of the Jews and the downfall of the Papacy. Two aspects involved in the salvation of Israel were the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, together with the reclamation of their ancestral land; and secondly, a "consummate" salvation of Israel which would be the "glorious condition" during the reign of the Lord in the new kingdom succeeding the destruction of Gog and Magog as described in Ezekeil. In his sermon, Increase described the apocalypse before the "consummate" salvation. The Pope together with the Ottoman Empire and the House of Austria, with Satan's power manifested in them, would combine forces against the Kingdom of Christ. The wrath of God will have descended upon the earth - overthrowing the great kingdoms and wasting nations. According to Increase, Four Monarchies must be destroyed before the establishment of the Jewish Kingdom could be realized. The downfall of the Turkish Empire was symbolized in the second woe trumpet and, as Increase explained, "The Turk must . . . be destroyed . . . For that Eastern Antichrist [has] the Land of Israel in his possession. . . ."[20]

In Increase's scheme, plagues will rage throughout the world and the effects of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse will be witnessed in all things. Increase concluded that the time was at hand since signs

foretelling the advent of destruction were apparent. The signs included the desire of material gains over spiritual matters, a prevalence of traitors, truce-breakers, and the characteristic of ingratitude.[21] (Increase often complained of insufficient compensation for his timely, important services to the community.)[22] He pointed to the fact that God would bring tribulations upon the saints in order to prepare them for the struggles yet to be faced, and he asked, "hath he not done so? Why have the Churches of Christ been put to the furnace of late?"[23] Christ would return twice to the earth; first, to inaugurate the millennium and defeat the forces of Antichrist, and second, to defeat the forces of Gog and Magog at the Day of Judgment. During this return, the Jews would have already been converted and the rapture of the saints in the air would commence.[24] However, Increase concluded "it is a vain thing for us to expect any general conversion of the Jews, until such time as we hear Rome is burnt with fire."[25]

But in accounting for how this destruction would be accomplished, Increase encountered certain problems. For the Puritans of New England, a rethinking of the operation of divine Providence was needed in the wake of Newtonian physics. It seemed the world existed in accordance with natural laws without constant intervention by the Hand of God. Thus, the final catastrophe and the burning of Rome would be caused by some natural occurrence.[26] Increase found a way, in light of the new physics, to include divine Providence in the earth's internal mechanisms. Comets, earthquakes, and fires were evidence of the wrath of God acting upon the earth by way of natural disaster.

Increase departed from literally interpreting the prophecy of the

darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars as scientifically inconceivable, "for how should the Stars fall upon the Earth, when one Star is greater than the earth?"[27] Increase suggested that, although the darkening of the sun may predict calamities, "it was in the manner of the Orient to describe the political by the natural world. . . ."[28] Therefore, Increase concluded that the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars portended the collapse of the great monarchies. And the collapse of the great monarchies were, conveniently enough, signs of the end of time.

God's vengeance visited New England in November 1681, in the form of a comet. This occurrence inspired Increase to compose Heavens Alarm to the World (1681). He surmised that, as a result of the comet, "great Persecutions" of the church were in the immediate future: "such Sights are Heavens Alarm to a Sinful World, to give Notice that God hath bent his Bow, and made his Arrows ready. . . ."[29] The tradition of assigning natural occurrences an apocalyptic meaning proved so useful that it was continued by Increase's son Cotton Mather.

Like his father, Cotton Mather had to deal with a society steeped in moral turpitude. Thus, Cotton Mather also wished to impress upon his congregation the imminence of the end of the world and the dire necessity of being prepared. Cotton told his congregation that "A watchful man would be able to say . . . Wherever I am, and whatever I do, methinks I hear the Sound of the Last Trumpet in my Ears. . . ."[30] Cotton's first eschatological sermon was entitled Things To Be Look'd For (1691). In this sermon to the Artillery Company of Massachusetts, Cotton foretold the coming "State of Peace." Furthermore, Cotton provided a scheme of apocalyptic events that had been fulfilled. For Cotton, the prophecies

of the seals, the trumpets, and the golden vials had been completed.[31] Therefore, the world was ready for the issuance of wrath in the seventh vial and the subsequent conclusion to history.

Cotton was constantly on the lookout for reports of devastating earthquakes that were forecast in Revelation as signals of the last events before the Second Coming of Christ. Cotton was "verily perswaded [that] we are now Entered into those Earthquakes which are to attend and assist The Resurrection of our Lords Witnesses."[32] Naturally, Cotton was overjoyed by the reports of earthquakes in Italy and Jamaica in 1692.[33]

Cotton estimated that the end of the world would come in 1697, when Jesus would

> become visible unto this lower World and make the Sky to rattle with his rapid Peals of Thunder, the Mountains to tremble before his Lightenings, and the Hills and Rocks to melt at the presence of his Majesty. . . . [Then], our Lord Jesus Christ will both dispossess the Divels of our Air, make of it a New Heaven, filled with the New Jerusalem of his Raised Saints; and also by a terrible Conflagration make a New Earth, whereon the Escaped Nations are to walk in the Light of that Holy City.[34]

When Christ didn't return in 1697, Cotton was unperturbed; he merely revised his calculations to 1716.[35] Cotton read and meditated on prophetical scriptures, sang an appropriate hymn, "Then, Prostrate in the Dust, . . . [he] poured out a prayer for Zion in the Dust, and for the Hastening of the Day of God."[36]

The current events in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century

also inspired Increase to believe that the times were ripe for the Second Coming of Christ. The first and second woes had passed and the earthquake that was to follow the second woe had been felt. Increase proclaimed, "Do we not hear of Wars and rumours of Wars, and of Nation rising up against Nation, . . . besides Famine and Pestilence; in one City . . . we hear that the Plague has in the Summer past swept away above Forty thousand, . . . also Fires and Earthquakes in diverse places."[37] Increase even suggested that the conversion of the Jews had commenced.[38]

However, both Increase Mather and Cotton Mather realized that New England had failed to uphold the covenant. In his sermon Faith and Fervancy (1710), Increase informed his congregation that, "we shall come far short of the New Jerusalem; Nevertheless, we should strive after a Conformity to it. . . ."[39] This attitude would not altogether diminish speculations concerning the New Jerusalem. Another version of New Jerusalem was offered by Samuel Sewall.

In his work Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica (1727), Sewall remained convinced that the millennium would dawn in America but that Mexico would be the seat of it.[40] Mexico as the New Jerusalem seemed more practical to Sewall than a city in the clouds.[41] Furthermore, Sewall disagreed with the Mathers' insistence on a general conflagration. Sewall might have placed the conflagration at the end of the millennial reign.[42] This action would have been in accordance with the increasing trend toward post-millennialism as evidenced in the theology of Jonathan Edwards.

In any case, the earthquake that rocked New England in October 1727, stirred Cotton Mather's expectations of the end of the world to a fever pitch. It also provoked an increase in church attendance as New Englanders

became humbled before the awesome power of God. Nearing death, Cotton believed that all the signs signalling the apocalypse had passed. The Jews would be converted after the Second Coming or they were already converted, since many Jews had been converted during the early phase of Christianity. He was convinced that the apocalypse was being fulfilled.[43] Cotton proclaimed, "it may Now, most awfully be said, His Wrath will Quickly Flame! - we Now know of nothing that remains to go before the Fulfillment of that Work, The Son of Man shall come in the Clouds of Heaven: At which there comes a tremendous Conflagration on a World horribly Ripened for it: and as Thoughtless of it!"[44]

Visions of a catastrophic conclusion to history seemed particularly suited to a society spiralling downward into dissoluteness. Curiously, Puritan doom remained intermingled with optimistic anticipation since catastrophe signalled the beginning of a future glorious existence. However, the combination of doom and optimism was felt on a personal level because the salvation given to the Puritans who experienced conversion was always coupled with doubt. Thus, the Puritans maintained a "necessary fear." In addition, the concept of New England as New Jerusalem was gradually fading as New Englanders became more concerned with commercialism than with the founder's sacred errand. A new approach to millennialism, in the eighteenth-century, was witnessed in the apocalyptic speculations of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards, in effect, provided a breath of fresh air from the former emphasis on conflagration. Edwards also had to contend with the more secular implications of the Enlightenment.

The era of the Enlightenment encouraged confidence in mankind's faculty of reason. During this time, there was a tendency to confine

religion within the bounds of rationality. Man's desire to know truth through reason led him to subject his surroundings and conceptions to methodical examination. Beliefs previously considered to be self-evident were called into question as man loosened himself from the shackles of orthodox superstitions. Consequently, religion was made "rational" and subjected to the same scrutiny and conformity to natural laws as scientific hypotheses.[45]

In the midst of the Enlightenment, Jonathan Edwards attempted to restore to consciousness the reality of damnation and the end of the world. The realm of the supernatural, which had been cast aside by enlightened thinkers as rationally unverifiable, was once again reasserted as divine truth coexisting with a logical world. But simply believing in the divine was not enough. Edwards, living in the Age of Reason, sought to analyze the meaning of divine purpose governing mankind.[46] Furthermore, Edwards cast a new light on the aspect of Puritan pre-millennial gloom by espousing a post-millennialist doctrine. For Edwards, the millennium would exist temporally, and the end of the world would commence at the Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment. Sudden catastrophe was not a necessary prelude to the millennium; rather the millennium would be realized gradually by natural causes.[47] Edwards placed primary emphasis on the prophecies of the future glorious times for the church rather than conflagration. In effect, Edwards endeavored to provide a more optimistic outlook in the pilgrimage toward redemption and eternity.

Like most apocalypticists, Edwards described the chain of events that pointed to the end of time. According to Edwards, the visions of the first six seals were accomplished during the persecutions of the

early Christians. The seventh seal began with the reign of Constantine and included the subsequent reign of Julian the Apostate, the Arians, and the division of the Empire. The visions of the trumpets heralded the destruction of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam.[48] The pouring of the seven vials of wrath was near to completion. For Edwards, the first vial was realized by Huss and Wycliffe, the second by the Reformation.[49] Edwards conjectured that the fifth vial would be poured in 1866. He later revised his theory of the vials in light of Moses Lowman's assertion that the fifth vial was poured during the time of the Reformation.[50] The sixth vial, therefore, would already be in progress or would soon commence.

The pouring of the sixth vial would mark the gradual deterioration of Antichrist's power. Edwards looked for evidence of the decline of Papal wealth and revenue. This evidence would fulfill the prophecy of the sixth vial since the river Euphrates would dry up, as foretold in Revelation.[51] Taking into account current events that Edwards outlined in his An Account of Events Probably Fulfilling the Sixth Vial (1747), he concluded that the pouring of the sixth vial had begun. Thus, all that remained was the pouring of the seventh vial - the final blow to Antichrist and the beginning of the millennium.

Edwards calculated that the reign of Antichrist had begun in 606. The Papist Antichrist would continue to reign until its overthrow, which in Edwards's estimate would come in the year 2000.[52] He reasoned that the "world is to enjoy a sabbath, after all this labor. . . . The first 6000 years are 6 days of labor, and the seventh is a sabbath of rest."[53] The advent of the seventh day, for Edwards, would attend the state of

peace and the reign of the saints.

Edwards also made a distinction between the two resurrections spoken of in Revelation. The resurrection coinciding with the millennium was a spiritual resurrection insofar as the state of spiritual devotion expressed by the early Christian martyrs would be transposed to the saints existing during the millennium. Edwards concluded "as there is a spiritual resurrection of particular believers, so there is coming a spiritual resurrection of the world in general. . . ."[54] The second resurrection would involve the actual bodily transference to the Kingdom of God.[55]

Edwards incorporated the recent scientific knowledge into his theology. For Edwards, the new heavens and the new earth where the blessed would eternally reign would not be on this earth. The "eternal abode of the blessed" would be far removed from this universe. The saints would exist in a sense heretofore unknown on the present plane of existence. Edwards stated, "I cannot imagine 'tis upon this individual globe of the earth which is manifestly a fleeting thing in its nature, as is the whole solar system, and must necessarily come to an end. However durable the earth in particular may be made, yet it must run to ruin with the rest of the system."[56] Edwards, thus applied the methods of "reason" to theological interpretation.

During the 1740's, a wave of revivalism surged through America and Europe. Rationality gave way to emotionalism and steadfast faith. Edwards was at the forefront of this widespread evangelicalism. For Edwards, this "Great Awakening" and the spirit of God that, he assumed, lay behind it represented the pouring of the sixth vial and seemed a prelude to the millennium.[57] Edwards proclaimed that "'Tis not unlikely

that this work of God's spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind."[58]

Edwards's optimistic tradition is most fully expressed in his deduction that the prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses had past. He reached this conclusion in his Humble Attempt (1747) as the zeal of the Great Awakening waned. In Revelation 11, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, which is interpreted as a state of affliction for the church. Following this, the witnesses are slain by Antichrist, thus the Antichrist is victorious over the church. The church is brought to its lowest point when the slain witnesses lie dead in the streets. Edwards realized this dismal time might effectually dampen the spirits of Christians. If the slaying of the witnesses had not yet come to pass, it would not be feasible to join in a "concert of prayer" to bring the prophecy about. Edwards concluded that if the slaying of the witnesses had already occurred, then the prophecy of the millennium and glorious days were in the future. He surmised that

> they [who] proceed on this hypothesis [prophecy of the witnesses is yet to come] . . . must at the same time that they pray for this glorious day [the millennium], naturally concluded within themselves, that they shall never live to see on the earth any dawning of it, but only to see the dismal time that shall precede it, in which the far greater part of God's people that shall live till then, shall die under the extreme cruelties of their persecutors.[59]

According to Edwards, the struggles of the Reformation fulfilled the prophecy of the witnesses.[60]

The importance of Jonathan Edwards in American apocalyptica was not simply his belief that the witnesses had risen, but that the dark days of the church were over, for the time being. Yet there remains the ultimate conflict at the conclusion of the millennial reign when "the most violent struggle of Satan and his adherents, in opposition to true religion, and the most general commotion that ever was in the world [takes place] . . . and many particular Christians, and some parts of the Church of Christ, may suffer hard things in this conflict; but in general Satan and Antichrist shall not get the victory . . . but on the contrary be entirely conquered."[61]

Another important contribution of Jonathan Edwards was his incorporation of America into the apocalyptic scheme. The concept of New England as the site for New Jerusalem certainly declined in intensity, but this concept was not to fade away entirely into apocalyptic oblivion. Rather, it was widened by Edwards to encompass America as a whole. The collapse of the Puritan church state forced Edwards, and other theologians of the period to expand the visions of a New Canaan into an American ideal. Puritan metaphors such as "God's elect," "city on a hill," "New Eden," and New England as the New Jerusalem were translated into "American" terminology.[62] This all-encompassing vision of America, as Sacvan Bercovitch observed, "facilitated the movement from visible saint to American patriot, sacred errand to manifest destiny, colony to republic to imperial power. . . ."[63] The process of secularized millennialism had begun.

Edwards was well versed in the Enlightenment literature, particularly Newton and Locke. But with a brief examination of his sermon Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God (1741), it is apparent that Edwards captured the quintessence of Puritan intimidation and cosmic uncertainty. Edwards chose fear as a means to spark the work of grace in an individual's soul. The most famous passage in Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God is vividly reminiscent of Increase Mathers' fear-inspiring technique: "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire. . . ."[64]

In the pulpit, Jonathan Edwards relayed the same terror of false convictions, the same juxtaposition of despair and faith in God's mercy that was so very fundamental to Puritan soul-saving. After all, the nature of the soul in theology is of the utmost importance. Yet, Edwards's primary reflections upon the future state of the church were infused with optimism. By placing the millennium within a workable frame of history and adding America as a necessary ingredient, Edwards's apocalypticism ushered in a sense of the immediacy of that glorious day, rather than an immediacy of doom. This optimistic trend would transfer into the nineteenth century, when apocalyptic ideas became secularized and when the Age of Reason was victorious over the Puritan vision of a church state. Edwards's theology played an important role in shaping the concept of America that would reach maturity in the next century.

From the exaggeration of Puritan metaphors emerged the concept of America as a nation of God's chosen. However, with the gradual

erosion of Puritan hegemony during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the end of the world seemed a remote and distant prospect. The triumphs of the Revolution intensified a trend of easy optimism that carried over into the nineteenth century. Science and human ingenuity seemed unstoppable, just as America seemed to offer unlimited potential and unlimited exploitation. As Perry Miller explained,

> The nineteenth century was completing the seventeenth's errand into the wilderness: the meaning was at last emerging, the meaning hidden from Winthrop and from Puritan pioneers. After all, it now appeared, they had been dispatched into the forests not to set up a holy city on some Old World model but to commence the gigantic industrial expansion which, launched upon a limitless prospect, would demonstrate the folly of anxieties about, or even a lust for, the end of this physical universe.[65]

But apocalyptic themes persevered in American culture despite the lack of Puritan initiative. And apocalyptic themes appeared most profoundly, not in sermons, but in the pages of nineteenth-century fiction.

Although many nineteenth-century apocalyptic novels reflected the prevailing optimism of the early decades, millennial images became less frequent. Visions of doom concerning America's fate occurred more often.[66] Removed from a purely religious context, American apocalypses took on new meanings. Most often, works described as apocalyptic are fraught with the conflict of extremes: good against evil, harmony versus chaos, the replacement of an old order with a new one.[67] Literary apocalypse can be a transformation of any condition - an expansion of previous boundaries.

Or apocalypse can be simply "the end." Whether that "end" is the death of an individual or of humanity, the connotation of "apocalypse" encompasses each. The word "apocalypse" has, to this day, been flung about rather loosely to mean catastrophe. And it is this catastrophic apocalypse that is so appealing for subject matter to such nineteenth-century writers as Poe, Melville, and Twain.

One such image of apocalyptic catastrophe is the vortex, an image frequently used by Edgar Allan Poe. The vortex in Poe's "A Descent into the Maelstrom" is, of course, the Maelstrom itself. Poe combines several apocalyptic themes in this work - such as the confrontation with the Maelstrom (or the sailor's impending death), the changes in the sailor's state of mind, and his subsequent redemption as a result of the mental transformation. In "A Descent into the Maelstrom," the sailor narrates his experience with the destructive forces of the Maelstrom. For Poe's hero, a seemingly peaceful day becomes suddenly disrupted by a violent storm that propels his boat nearer to the convulsions of the massive whirlpool. The sailor confronts the apocalyptic vision of destruction and relates that, "No one ever will know what my feelings were at that moment. I shook from head to foot as if I had had the most violent fit of the ague. . . . With the wind that now drove us on, we were bound for the whirl of the Strom, and nothing could save us!"[68]

The sailor's confrontation with death evokes an awareness of his own rising emotions - an internal maelstrom that the sailor must pass through and overcome. He is able to achieve this transformation through inward reflection. He goes beyond the terror surging within to find the calm of inner peace: "It may appear strange, but now, when we were

in the very jaws of the gulf, I feel more composed than when we were only approaching it. Having made up my mind to hope no more, I got rid of a great deal of that terror which unmanned me at first."[69]

The sailor's own calm amid the storm of emotions mirrors the calm at the center of the vortex.

> The rays of the moon seemed to search the very bottom of the profound gulf; but still I could make out nothing distinctly on account of a thick mist in which everything there was enveloped, and over which there hung a magnificent rainbow, like that narrow and tottering bridge which Musselmen say is the only pathway between Time and Eternity.[70]

The world is collapsed and restructured into the image of the rainbow, which suggests a transmutation of reality. The sense of inner peace allows the sailor to transcend the limits of time-space consciousness to meld with this higher level of perception. Poe's "thick mist" illustrates the blurring of distinctions between the physical existence of the sailor and the reality of the void. In harmony with the rhythm of the Maelstrom, the sailor is free to contemplate the mechanics of his destruction.

> I began to reflect how magnificent a thing it was to die in such a manner, and how foolish it was in me to think of so paltry a consideration as my own individual life, in view of so wonderful a manifestation of God's power. . . . After a little while I became possessed with the keenest curiosity about the whirl itself. I positively felt a wish to explore its depths, even at the sacrifice I was going to make; and my principal grief was that I should never be able to tell my old companions on shore about

the mysteries I should see.[71]

For Poe, the center of the vortex image is unity. As Douglas Robinson has observed, "what lies at the bottom of the vortex is no absence at all but unity with God in an apocalyptic unparticled state. Terror conquered, absence is revealed as presence."[72] The work concludes with the sailor's ability to rationalize a means of escape. Thus, he is redeemed by his mental transformation and lives to tell his story.

The whirlpool, as a vision of apocalyptic destruction, resurfaces in Melville's Moby-Dick. Like Poe in "A Descent into the Maelstrom," Melville also combines several apocalyptic themes - the conflict of extremes, self-destruction, and redemption - that eventually converge in the vortex image.

From the onset, an atmosphere of apocalyptic doom surrounds the Pequod and her crew. Then Melville takes the reader on a voyage of madness and self-destruction that ultimately spells annihilation for the entire crew save one. The crew, selected from all corners of the world, represents humanity, and the Pequod is their universe. Melville's pessimistic apocalypse in Moby-Dick is the destruction of humanity by the evil symbolized by Moby Dick, and the destruction of "the world" symbolized by the Pequod in the vortex created by Moby Dick. But it is Ishmael who is singularly redeemed from the apocalyptic whirlpool that purges the earth of Ahab's hatred and vengeance.

The object of Ahab's bloodlust is the white whale, Moby Dick. Ishmael ponders the depth and meaning of Moby Dick's whiteness, an enigma in itself.

> Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as an essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows - a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink?[73]

It is Moby Dick who, by his very nature and being, inspires such pervasive terror, such primordial fear that Ahab's quest for revenge transcends this simple human action and becomes the lashing out at what is inherently evil in the world. By this very act, though, Ahab is driven beyond human limitations and, in turn, apocalyptic tension is created in the character of Ahab. Ahab portrays both Christ and Antichrist, both victim and victimizer, and his Armaggedon is found in Moby Dick.[74] Judgment is swift when Ahab singlemindedly pursues the realization of his apocalypse. His fate seals the destiny of the crew. In the vortex created by Moby Dick, the world of the Pequod collapses.[75]

This compelling vision of the vortex takes on added dimensions in Poe's The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. The novel itself is an intense work that focuses on Pym's unconscious quest for self-destruction. He is catapulted, as a result of poor decisions, through a series of near misses that eventually contribute to his maturation.[76] The character of Pym is similar to Poe's sailor in "A Descent into the Maelstrom." In The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, as Edward H. Davidson points out,

"Poe broke through this discrete separation of his hero from the action and showed us, . . . not only the "afterward" of terror but the stages of passing through terror; for it would seem that terror is the way to a knowledge of the world's primal unity."[77] Pym achieves this "primal unity" by passing through the vortex beyond the polar veil.

Pym defies death many times, and each episode is more intense than the former. Pym escapes drowning when the Ariel is rammed by another vessel. At the very threshold of death, Pym is freed from his imprisonment in the hold of the Grampus on which he was a stow-a-way. After a particularly violent storm which nearly destroys the Grampus and her crew, Pym and his companions succumb to cannibalism in order to survive. Each near disaster that Pym faces becomes increasingly more catastrophic until the avalanche on the island of Tsalal that destroys the crew of the Jane Guy. During this catastrophe, Pym realized that "the whole foundations of the solid globe were suddenly rent asunder, and that the day of universal dissolution was at hand."[78]

Indeed, the "day of universal dissolution was at hand" when the natives destroyed the Jane Guy, and Pym and Peters were forced to flee in a canoe. Pym's journey southward becomes more than a simple escape from cannibals, however, as a dreamlike quality emerges in his narrative. They are enveloped in the whiteness of the vortex. Here again, Poe fuses the boundaries between reality and nothingness to create a sort of time-space distortion. Pym describes the sensation of the vortex,

> We were nearly overwhelmed by the white ashy shower which settled upon us and upon the canoe, but melted into the water as it fell. The summit of the cataract was utterly lost in the

> dimness and the distance. Yet we were evidently approaching it with a hideous velocity. At intervals there were visible in it wide, yawning, but momentary rents, and from out these rents, within which was a chaos of flitting and indistinct images, there came rushing and mighty, but soundless winds, tearing up the enkindled ocean in their course.[79]

The vortex vision is that of an omni-force that is drawing Pym toward the void. As Davidson observed, "At the end of this journey Pym is sailing toward that whiteness whose center lies beyond first things and whose nexus may be the creative impulse of the universe itself."[80] Poe never disclosed the ultimate fate of Pym beyond the vortex. Unlike Poe's sailor hero and Ishmael in Moby-Dick, Pym is not redeemed; he never returns. Instead, the narrative breaks off with Pym's final words:

> now we rushed into the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us. But there arose in our pathway a shrouded human figure, very larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow.[81]

The larger-than-life figure suggests a confrontation with a divine being, an angel perhaps, or even Christ himself signalling the end of the world. By passing through the hurricane of the vortex, Pym becomes interwoven in the divine scheme, returning to the basic form of creation. Certainly, Pym's demise is a mystery, the mystery of Poe's apocalyptic vortex.

Poe attempted to solve the mystery of the vortex and of creation itself in his cosmological prose poem Eureka. He blended the prevailing

scientific knowledge concerning the universe into his own poetic imagination and designed a universe which surged and then contracted into its original condition. Thus, the vortex image is projected on its grandest scale to collapse the entire universe. At the center of Poe's vortex, once again, is Unity.

In its simplest terms, Poe's universe originated from spirit in which all matter was divinely created. Matter consisting solely of the two forces, attraction or gravitation and repulsion or electricity, was then desseminated throughout to create the present known universe. Separated from its original Unity, original matter was reorganized and took form and shape.[82] In time, the diffusion process ceases, the creative impulse reverses, and the spiralling arms of the universal vortex draws matter back to its source. Poe vividly explained the collapse of the solar systems.

> While undergoing consolidation, the clusters themselves, with a speed prodigiously accumulative, have been rushing towards their own general centre - and now, with a thousand-fold electric velocity, commensurate only with their material grandeur and with the spiritual passion of their appetite for oneness, the majestic remnants of the tribe of Stars flash, at length, into a common embrace. The inevitable catastrophe is at hand.[83]

When all matter rushes towards the center of this black hole, and the process of unification is complete, matter is restored to its first condition. In February 1848, Poe explained this condensation effect in a letter to George W. Eveleth: "the final globe would be matter without

attraction & repulsion: - but these are matter: - then the final globe would be matter without matter: - i,e, no matter at all: - it must disappear. Thus Unity is Nothingness."[84] Poe's negation of physical existence was intended to make a definite impact on nineteenth-century society during the last year of his life. However, Poe's theory of the universe was for the most part immediately dismissed as "the last maudlin ruminations of a diseased Romantic mind."[85] This assessment was premature since Eureka dealt with issues that have been recently discussed in scientific theories such as the theory of the pulsating universe.[86]

With Eureka, the vortex image achieved its finest expression. Thus far, visions of destruction had included a near miss, the possible death of an individual, destruction of humanity and the world, and now the end of the physical universe. While this might appear to be the end of possibilities for "the end," Mark Twain in his novel The Mysterious Stranger offered yet another vision - the annihilation of reality.

Twain's strategy was to unleash Satan (nephew of the infamous One) upon the unsuspecting world as a redeemer figure. But Satan's mercy consists of death or madness in a world so visibly corrupted with the "Moral Sense." The novel takes place during the winter of 1590. The young Satan appears on earth in Eseldorf, Austria and befriends the central character, Theodor Fischer, and his friends through feats of magic that arouse their curiosity. Satan then creates some little people. When they begin to fight, he crushes them.[87] This episode reflects Twain's fundamental attitude towards the human race: human beings are hardly worthy of Satan's efforts to extinguish them. Satan's primary argument with the human race is their preoccupation with the ability

to know right from wrong - the "moral sense."[88]

He shows Theodor examples of the "moral sense" in action through mankind's injustices perpetrated upon mankind. Because of Satan's ability to see the future of any individual, his redemptive acts of death or madness are justified. Satan's acts of redemption inevitably lead to his revelation that Theodor's external world is in reality only an illusion of an overactive imagination. In the final chapter, Satan proclaims,

> It is true, that which I have revealed to you; there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream - a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And you are but a thought - a vagrant thought, a useless thought, a homeless thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities.[89]

While retaining an emphasis on catastrophe, Twain's apocalypse is in other respects divorced from the term's traditional meaning. Mankind is meaningless, the apocalypse is meaningless. The future of mankind is non-existence. And through this reasoning Twain was able to absolve humanity from sin. The fate of man described by Twain is a dark and fitting conclusion for the "thinking" animal. But the catastrophic apocalypse continued to fascinate Twain, and he offered another destructive vision of the end of the world.

As late nineteenth-century society became increasingly technological, so too did apocalyptic ideas. Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court is an example of this transition to a technological apocalypse, since the novel concludes with a vision of destruction wrought

by "modern" technology.

After a rather severe blow to the head, the central character, Hank Morgan, awakens to find himself transported back in time to King Arthur's Court. Taken as a prisoner and sentenced to die, Hank makes use of his Yankee ingenuity by effecting the most remarkable apocalyptic episode of the novel. He remembered that a total eclipse of the sun occurred on the same date of his scheduled execution. Playing upon the superstitions of the people, he sent word to King Arthur that he too was a magician and was "quietly arranging a little calamity here that will make the fur fly in these realms. . . ."[90] The sun was indeed blotted out and Hank's future success in the realm was secured.

Thereafter, Hank Morgan emerges as a particularly arrogant individual. Riding the wave of his new popularity he reflects, "Here I was, a giant among pigmies, a man among children, a master intelligence among intellectual moles. . . ."[91] Hank resolved to revolutionize the medieval society. Known as "The Boss" after blowing up Merlin's tower, Hank was free to create his "civilized" world. He brought nineteenth-century technology to the sixth century. Modern conveniences such as electricity, the telephone, steamboats, and railroads appeared throughout the kingdom. But the advances in his new world are finally overturned when a power struggle erupts between Arthur and his son Mordred that results in the death of Arthur and the reemergence of Church authority. Fearful of Church rule, Hank destroys his technological creations at the Battle of the Sand-Belt. "In that explosion all our noble civilization-factories went up in the air and disappeared from the earth."[92]

In this vision of destruction, Twain, unawares, prefigured the

twentieth-century apocalypse. After centuries of contemplating the apocalypse, man now has the capacity to bring it about by the use of nuclear weapons. Jonathan Schell, in his excellent book The Fate of the Earth, offers his vision of the twentieth-century apocalypse.

> In the first moments of a ten-thousand megaton attack . . . flashes of white light would suddenly illumine large areas of the country as thousands of suns, each one brighter than the sun itself, blossomed over cities, suburbs, and towns. In those same moments . . . the vast majority of the people in the regions first targeted would be irradiated, crushed, or burned to death. The thermal pulses could subject more than six hundred thousand square miles, . . . to a minimum level of forty calories per centimetre squared - a level of heat that chars human beings. . . . In the ten seconds or so after each bomb hit, as blast waves swept outward from thousands of ground zeros, the physical plant of the United States would be swept away like leaves in a gust of wind. . . . Then, as clouds of dust rose from the earth, and mushroom clouds spread overhead, often linking, to form vast canopies, day would turn to night.[93]

As this scene suggests, it is difficult to understand the import of our present nuclear predicament. The nuclear apocalypse is the extermination of all life on earth. This is extinction not only for the present generation, but for all future generations. As Schell points out, "Like the thought 'I do not exist' the thought 'Humanity is now extinct' is an impossible one for a rational person, because as soon as it is, we are not."[94]

Literature and films have been instrumental in forcing American society to consider the nuclear apocalypse. Recent movies such as The Day After and Testament vividly portray the catastrophic effects of global thermonuclear warfare. And in these films, those who survive the initial destruction die eventually from radioactive fallout.

The United States and Russia, at present, are negotiating settlements to dismantle medium range missiles and possibly some long range missiles. Theis is certainly a step in the right direction. However, there is another factor to consider in dealing with a nuclear holocaust, in light of the present political maneuverings to reduce the nuclear stockpile, and that is knowledge. We can ban nuclear weapons, but the knowledge of how to build them will still exist and so too will the emotions that enabled their creation.[95] Strangely, a nineteenth-century tale - "Earth's Holocaust" by Nathaniel Hawthorne - prophetically addressed the issue of knowledge which springs forth from the heart's inclination toward violence.

This work revolves around the efforts of a reform movement to purge humanity of its trappings, trifles, arts, and abominations in a vast bonfire. The leaders and followers of the movement, in a transport of millennial aspirations, seek to return the earth to its original innocence. By casting all of mankind's creations from war paraphernalia to the Bible into the flames, humanity is presumably enlightened. But there is an ironic twist to the newly purified world. A Satanic figure on the scene reassures those least sympathetic to the efforts of the reformers that the origin of the good and evil created by man cannot be consumed. The human heart will again regenerate all that the fire sought to purge.

As Hawthorne concludes,

> Man's age-long endeavor for perfection had served only to render him the mockery of the Evil Principle, from the fatal circumstance of an error at the very root of the matter! The Heart - the Heart - there was the little, yet boundless sphere, wherein existed the original wrong, of which the crime and misery of this outward world were merely types. Purify that inner sphere, and the many shapes of evil that haunt the outward, and which now seem almost our only realities, will turn to shadowy phantoms, and vanish of their own accord.[96]

As Hawthorne would have understood, the knowledge of how to build nuclear weapons will remain with us as long as mankind feels the need to dominate others and engage in warfare. A fundamental change must occur. Society must turn inward and eradicate violence from the depths of human consciousness in order to be entirely free from self-annihilation.[97]

In the face of our nuclear apocalypse, twentieth-century society has a parallel to its Puritan forefathers. Just as the Puritans maintained a "necessary fear" in order to achieve salvation, society today must likewise maintain a "necessary fear" through the doctrine of "mutually-assured destruction." Peace is predicated on the fact that each Superpower maintains a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying the other no matter who initiates the war. But Schell perceptively points out the contradictory flaw in this doctrine: "if we try to guarantee our safety by threatening ourselves with doom, then we have to mean the threat, - but if we mean it, then we are actually planning to do, . . . that which we categorically must never do and are supposedly trying to prevent - namely extinguish

ourselves."[98] Nevertheless, it is this "necessary fear" of annihilation that is the present basis for world peace.

The Puritans eagerly awaited the apocalypse because it would give way to a new, more glorious existence. The Puritans therefore had reason to be hopeful. The twentieth-century apocalypse is rooted in pessimism because there won't be a millennium. There won't be an earth left upon which a new existence can be based. With our own capacity for worldwide annihilation, the apocalypse becomes something not to look forward to, but to be cautioned against. The fundamental difference between the Puritan outlook and society today is that apocalypse is no longer an act of God, but rather, it is subject to our own devices. Man assumes the powers of God, but with this destruction the earth simply comes to the end of the historical timeline, without glory or eternity - a dismal conclusion to earth's most exalted creature. The apocalypse, stripped of its religious connotations, is only death by nuclear destruction. And the peoples of the earth become, like the dinosaurs, only another failed biological experiment.

Yet, according to contemporary evangelical convictions, Jesus Christ, at the precise moment, will intervene in mankind's path toward self-destruction.[99] Hal Lindsey, in his book The Late Great Planet Earth, goes to great lengths in applying Biblical prophecy to existing international conditions and forecasting the countdown to Armaggedon. Although dark days are still predicted before Christ's triumphant return, the creation and deployment of nuclear weapons are in accordance with Biblical prophecy. Increase Mather would undoubtedly have been overjoyed with the establishment of the state of Israel. And, according to Lindsey, who has become a sort

of twentieth-century descendant of Mather in this regard, Armaggedon will commence when Israel is invaded.[100] Russia as Gog, allied with the United Arab Republic, will initiate the hostilities. The United States will align itself with the Western forces, the leadership resting in the ten-nation Revived Roman Empire of Europe.[101] The entire war is orchestrated by Antichrist who now assumes the form of a dictator. Times are ripe, according to Lindsey, for absolute authority. Various cities will be targeted for nuclear destruction as foretold in Revelation, and one-third of the population will be wiped out.[102] Then, when mankind is on the verge of worldwide annihilation, Christ will return and the Day of Judgment will be at hand. Unlike the Puritan apocalypse, divine Providence is no longer restricted to natural causes. Technology has become the means through which apocalyptic destruction is to be achieved.

Throughout the history of American apocalyptic thought, images of the apocalypse have closely reflected societal trends. Gloom and doom prevail with the perceptions of a miasmatic society. But for the most part, versions of the American apocalypse have offered a glimmer of hope in the midst of tribulation. This hope was most fully expressed in the Edwardsian version of the apocalypse as a direct result of widespread evangelicalism. The decline of religious influence - witnessed in the seventeenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries - resulted in a return to emphasis on doom, a last ditch effort to recall the wayward back into the flock. Because of nuclear technology, present and future society will continue to be locked into the doom and gloom apocalyptic mentality. Perhaps it is for the best, since to forecast cataclysm is an effective means to avert it.[103] In any case, the appeal of catastrophic themes

witnessed in the nineteenth century continues today. And the apocalypse is the final statement on catastrophe. Thus, the significance of the apocalypse remains great.

NOTES

[1]Perry Miller's "End of the World," in Errand into the Wilderness, described the apocalypse in American thought during the atomic age. His work serves as a point of departure for my thesis.

[2]"Apocalypse" is derived from the Greek word "apokalupsis" which means "to reveal." The apocalypse is therefore a revelation of events preceeding the end of time.

[3]Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals,(London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 58.

[4]Ibid., p. 26.

[5]John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630), The Puritans in America, ed. Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 91.

[6]David E. Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death, (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 79.

[7]James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 79-80.

[8]Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers, pp. 23-24.

[9]Op. Cit., p. 51.

[10]Ibid., pp. 46, 52-54. I have relied on Davison's analysis of Mede's The Key to Revelation.

[11]Increase Mather, The Danger of Apostacy, (Boston: 1679) p. 56. This sermon is bound with A Call From Heaven (Boston: 1679).

[12]Joseph Mede, The Works of the Pious and Profoundly-Learned Joseph Mede, B.D. Sometime Fellow of Christ's College in Cambridge, 3rd ed. (London: 1672), p. 810.

[13]My interpretation is derived from Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers, p. 97.

[14]Increase Mather, The Danger of Apostacy, p. 84.

[15]Idem, The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, (London: 1669), pp. 6-7.

[16]Ibid., p. 104.

[17]Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers, p. 91.

[18]Increase Mather, The Mystery of Christ Opened and Applyed, quoted in Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers, p. 91.

[19]Increase Mather, Pray for the Rising Generation, (Boston: 1678), p. 22. Robert Middlekauff also discusses this in The Mathers, p. 93.

[20]Increase Mather, The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, p. 25.

[21]Ibid., p. 38.

[22]Kenneth Silverman, The Life and Times of Cotton Mather, (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 10.

[23]Op. Cit., p. 39.

[24]Ibid., p. 105.

[25]Ibid., p. 23.

[26]Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 222.

[27]Op. Cit., p. 29.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Increase Mather, Heavens Alarm to the World, (Boston: 1681), p. 9.

[30]Cotton Mather, A Midnight Cry, (Boston: 1692), p. 24.

[31]Idem, Things To Be Look'd For, (Cambridge: 1691), pp. 35-37, 40, 42-43.

[32]Op. Cit., p. 60.

[33]Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers, p. 340.

[34]Cotton Mather, A Midnight Cry, pp. 23-24.

[35]James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 15.

[36]Cotton Mather, The Diary of Cotton Mather for the Year 1712, ed. William R. Manierre III. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1964), p. 69.

[37]Increase Mather, A Discourse Concerning Faith and Fervancy in Prayer, (Boston: 1710), pp. 98-99.

[38]Ibid., p. 99.

[39]Ibid., p. 70.

[40]Samuel Sewall, Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica, (Boston: 1727), pp. 2-9.

[41]James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 70.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Kenneth Silverman, The Life and Times of Cotton Mather, p. 416.

[44]Cotton Mather, Christian Loyalty, quoted in Kenneth Silverman The Life and Times of Cotton Mather, p. 417. This sermon was preached in response to the news of the Palermo quake in August 1727.

[45]Donald H. Meyer, The Democratic Enlightenment in America, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), p. 8.

[46]Ibid., p. 21.

[47]Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, p. 235.

[48]Jonathan Edwards, "Notes on the Apocalypse," Apocalyptic Writings, vol. 5 of The Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. Stephen J. Stein. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 102-103.

[49]Ibid., p. 120.

[50]Jonathan Edwards, An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, in Apocalyptic Writings, p. 421.

[51]Op. Cit., pp. 184-185.

[52]Ibid., p. 129.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., p. 145.

[55]James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, p. 152.

[56]Op. Cit., p. 142.

[57]Jonathan Edwards, An Humble Attempt, p. 427.

[58]Idem, Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New-England, in The Great Awakening. vol. 4 of The Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. C.C. Goen. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 353.

[59]Op. Cit., p. 379.

[60]Ibid., p. 390.

[61]Ibid., p. 394.

[62]Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 92.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, in Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings, ed. Ola Elizabeth Winslow. (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 159.

[65]Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness, p. 236.

[66]Lois P. Zamora, ed. "The Myth of Apocalypse," The Apocalyptic Vision in America, (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982), p. 114.

[67]Ibid., p. 98.

[68]Edgar Allan Poe, "A Descent into the Maelstrom," Treasury of World Masterpieces: Edgar Allan Poe. (London: Octopus Books Limited, 1981), p. 236.

[69]Ibid., pp. 237-238.

[70]Ibid., p. 239.

[71]Ibid., p. 238.

[72]Douglas Robinson, American Apocalypses, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 141.

[73]Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 196.

[74]Lois P. Zamora, "The Myth of Apocalypse," The Apocalyptic Vision in America, p. 117.

[75]Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, p. 535.

[76]Edward H. Davison, Poe: A Critical Study, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 166.

[77]Ibid., p. 172.

[78]Edgar Allan Poe, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, in Treasury of World Masterpieces: Edgar Allan Poe, p. 713.

[79]Ibid., p. 731.

[80]Edward H. Davidson, Poe: A Critical Study, p. 175.

[81]Op. Cit.

[82]Edward H. Davidson gives an excellent explanation of this complex poem in Poe: A Critical Study, pp. 223-253.

[83]Edgar Allan Poe, Eureka: A Prose Poem, ed. Richard P. Benton. (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1973), p. 74.

[84]Idem, The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe, 2 vols. ed. John Ward Ostrom. vol. 2, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 361.

[85]Edward H. Davidson, Poe: A Critical Study, p. 223.

[86]David Ketterer, New Worlds for Old, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 61.

[87]Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922), p. 16.

[88]Ibid., pp. 52-53.

[89]Ibid., p. 140.

[90]Mark Twain, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, (New York: Legacy Press, 1966), p. 65.

[91]Ibid., p. 102.

[92]Ibid., p. 554.

[93]Jonathan Schell, The Fate of the Earth, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 56.

[94]Ibid., p. 140.

[95]Ibid., on knowledge p. 106, on violence pp. 185-208.

[96]Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Earth's Holocaust," Nathaniel Hawthorne: Tales and Sketches. (New York: The Library of America, 1982), p. 906.

[97]Op. Cit., p. 224.

[98]Ibid., p. 201.

[99]Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), p. 71.

[100]Ibid., p. 43.

[101]Ibid., p. 161.

[102]Ibid., p. 166.

[103]Douglas Robinson in American Apocalypses suggests the same value for apocalyptic thought when discussing the end of Moby Dick on p. 162.

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