

RICHARD T. HUGHES and C. LEONARD ALLEN. *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. xviii; 296 pp. \$29.95.

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The restoration perspective has been employed in American life both as an ideal to be followed and as a guide for judgment. *Illusions of Innocence* is an excellent study of the restoration perspective in that it not only considers the restoration movement among Puritans, Baptists, Mormons, and “Christians” (referring primarily to movements led by Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and Benjamin M. Palmer), but also attempts to help us better understand the relationships between these traditions and the American experience.

Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen challenge the popular thesis that restoration evangelists (and many others) were responding to a mounting sense of social disorder. Although Hughes and Allen do not reject the view that social disintegration can intensify a belief in the need to restore an ancient order, they challenge those who focus their interpretations on a chaos or social disintegration theory. Hughes and Allen argue that if major restoration movements resulted almost exclusively from such disorders, their restoration pulse would subside when order was restored. The nineteenth-century movements explored in this work do not follow such a pattern.

A major theme of this book is that the quest to recover pure beginnings has been a major preoccupation in Americana. The authors see this impulse as a legacy of the Protestant Reformation and view Americans as associating democracy and free enterprise with the Creator’s intentions in the beginning. Two terms are used interchangeably by these authors to describe this impulse of recovery, *primitivism* and *restoration*. Hughes and Allen observe that Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and many other early American religious reformers were searching for principles and practices described in the New Testament that other Protestants had failed to recover. Although involved in a quest of emulation, they disagreed on whether this recovery was a process or an achievable reality. Some taught that the restoration was a continual process but faltered as they attempted to define essentials. Others eventually taught that they had recovered the essentials of the New Testament church.

Throughout this work there are references to Mormonism. One chapter, “Soaring with the Gods: Early Mormons and the

Eclipse of Religious Pluralism,” concentrates on the rise of this movement. The authors aptly identify significant parallels and radical differences between Mormonism and other restoration movements. Hughes and Allen reason that Joseph Smith’s quest for truth was more in harmony, in some respects, with the views of Roger Williams than with those of Alexander Campbell. Both Joseph Smith and Roger Williams believed in the disruption and vanishing of the true apostolic church and in a recovery which required divine intervention. (The authors might have noted that Roger Williams dated this disruption as occurring in the fourth century while followers of Joseph Smith held that the apostasy occurred earlier.) Both also sought a restoration of authority by heavenly messengers.

Similarities between Joseph Smith, Roger Williams, and many other restorationists become less significant, however, as differences are considered. While Williams died a seeker, Hughes and Allen correctly recognize that Joseph Smith taught the reality of a restoration. They also recognize that Joseph Smith, unlike most reformers of his age, emphasized that the restoration in which he was involved was more than a recovery of beliefs and sacraments described in the New Testament. It was a restitution of all things, of all essentials (doctrine, ordinances, and authority) spoken by the mouth of all of God’s prophets since the world began.

Partly because practices described in the Book of Mormon were generally identified strictly with a post-Messianic church, Alexander Campbell condemned Mormonism for what he regarded as an amalgamation of beliefs and sacred rites from different ages. Prior to the birth of the Savior, Book of Mormon people believed in Christ, organized churches of Christ, ordained by the laying on of hands, and baptized with authority. Campbell viewed this combination as sheer confusion. Latter-day Saints, however, insisted that this blending was another evidence of the reality of the restoration of all things. As explained by Hughes and Allen,

to early Mormons . . . nothing . . . could be more consistent than to practice Christian baptism in a baptismal font resting on twelve oxen symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. Likewise, Mormons saw no inconsistency whatever in restoring at one and the same time the ancient Christian rite of baptism for the remission of sins and the patriarchal practice of polygamy; nor did they see inconsistency in their intention to worship in a restored “Jewish” temple built on the site of the Garden of Eden (146).

The authors draw extensively on the writings of Parley P. Pratt to describe early Mormon beliefs and compare them to those of the

Campbellites. Both Pratt and Sidney Rigdon were associated with the Campbellite restoration for some time, but there is an abundance of information from the pen of Pratt and little from Rigdon. The authors, therefore, compare Pratt's views, rather than Rigdon's, with Campbell's. They do, however, note one major difference in the views of Campbell and Rigdon—Rigdon's endorsement of communitarian living.

Although the chapter on Mormonism contains a proper reflection of many basic beliefs of early Latter-day Saints, there is an unusual emphasis on the doctrine of plurality of gods that might not be fully understood by some readers. Nevertheless, the doctrine is described as related by Joseph Smith in a sermon of 16 May 1843 (portions of which currently appear in Doctrine and Covenants Section 132). Commenting on this doctrine, Hughes and Allen conclude, "Restoration among Mormons, therefore, essentially meant soaring with the gods while others groveled on the earth" (149).

The authors demonstrate in this well-written work an exceptional understanding of many phases of the restoration movement. They have carefully examined major sources on the subjects they emphasize. While they attempt to be objective (and succeed in most instances), their bias in favor of the restoration movement as a process rather than a reality is evident throughout the work: they believe no organization can claim to have achieved an actual restoration. Nevertheless, they explore many controversial themes without writing in a negative, debunking tone.

This book is highly recommended for those interested in additional insights on the restoration movement. Hughes and Allen have made a significant contribution to a better understanding of the restoration theme in American history. They have also accurately and fairly represented Mormonism in relation to many other restoration movements of the early nineteenth century.