

# MODERN EPHRAIM & MANASSEH

## Condensed Edition

Church of God ministers guide congregations and counter misleading doctrines. This paper refutes skepticism from a minister claiming Church of God credentials, focusing on *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (USBP). Mass-published by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1954, this work links Ephraim and Manasseh's descendants to Britain and the United States. By examining Armstrong's teachings, this research educates longtime, new, and doubting members on USBP's origins and meaning. It shows Armstrong's prophetic insights and their connection to current events, societal changes, and technological advancements, ultimately strengthening faith and unity in the Church of God.

## Framework

Questions about modern Ephraim and Manasseh require a scholarly, respectful response. Our research led to the development of the *Opposition Expository Framework* to understand how USBP critics use rhetorical misdirection and selective argumentation to create skepticism. Rather than applying academic rigor, critics rely on data gaps, conflated themes, and personal attacks. For example, accusations that Herbert W. Armstrong plagiarized *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright* by John Harden Allen (1847–1930) are false due to a lack of empirical evidence. Critics also distort the USBP message through guilt by association and weak assumptions. This framework exposes these tactics and reaffirms the historical and scriptural truths of modern Ephraim and Manasseh's birthright blessings.

## Synopsis

In 2021, Jim Patterson (Managing Editor of the Shepherd's Voice Magazine) self-published a booklet titled *From Babylon to America: Exposing Anglo-Israelism and Nationalism in the Churches of God*. Anglo-Israelism (AI) is Patterson's term and acronym that will be used for naming convention in this paper. According to Patterson, AI literature often connects modern Western nations, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, with biblical Israel, a notion he finds repulsive.

## Assertions and Defense

*Please note:* Page numbers following each "CLAIM" refer to Patterson's 2021 booklet, *From Babylon to America*. Page numbers cited in each "RESPONSE" point to specific works cited by the authors of *Modern Ephraim & Manasseh*. We selected 21 claims to maintain a reasonable length for the research paper and ensure a well-structured presentation.

**1. CLAIM:** *“When its impact is fully realized and understood, Anglo-Israelism (AI) is one of the most offensive teachings that has intruded on the faith of many in the modern era”* (page vi.)

#### RESPONSE

- Imposing 21st-century constructs of nationalism and racial prejudice onto 19th-century British-Israel doctrine, result in the *anachronistic misrepresentation* of its ideologies.
- Scholars have attempted to debunk Anglo-Israel literature for over a century, but they often fail because, like Patterson, they tend to spiritualize Abraham's physical blessings, disregarding the literal promises made to his descendant nations from the 12 tribes of Israel.

**2. CLAIM:** *“The [U.S.] Constitution is the product of close to three millennia of increasing knowledge and learning as the Angel predicted, and also reflected in the Jews and constitutional rights of other nations.”* (page 96)

#### RESPONSE

- It is apparent that Patterson lacks specific, conclusive, peer-reviewed evidence linking Babylonian laws to American legal foundations. While the United States Constitution emerged from a rich blend of philosophical and legal influences, making a connection to Babylon remains a pure speculation and without credible historical support.
- Historians generally credit Enlightenment thinkers and British legal traditions as more prominent influences in the Constitution's development.

**3. CLAIM:** *“The essential point is that America, the British Commonwealth, and European nations are the latest precipitates in what the image and Daniel's interpretation (Dan 7:44) of it had predicted. Whether they exist or not at the time of Christ's return, they along with all that preceded them must come to an end to be replaced by the arrival of God's Kingdom”* (page 96)

#### RESPONSE

- Patterson implies that America, the British Commonwealth, and unnamed European nations crystallize or manifest aspects of the prophetic narrative as seen through Daniel's vision.
- What God showed Nebuchadnezzar in a dream is, in fact, a perfect outline of historical events. The statue's kingdoms—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome appeared in history and in sequence as revealed by Daniel. The future kingdom mentioned in Daniel 2:44 will surely happen. A group of kings linked to ancient Rome will form, and Christ will ultimately destroy this confederation.

**4. CLAIM:** *“They often gravitate toward alternative historical narratives by amateur, uncredentialed writers ... as authorities in historical and composite analysis. Dismissed are the scholarly works that contain essential interpretive analysis of Semitic and Greco-Roman texts”* (page 3)

#### RESPONSE

- For context, Steven M. Collins states in his website that he *“has authored five books documenting the migrations, kingdoms, and locations of the biblical ten tribes of Israel after their exile from the*

*Promised Land.*” Meanwhile, Darris McNeely is an ordained minister (*United Church of God*), instructor (*Ambassador Bible College*) and host (*Beyond Today Television Program*).

- Patterson accuses Collins and McNeely of being uncredentialed historians who use selective archaeological evidence. Yet, archaeological interpretation is inherently ambiguous, allowing scholars to draw different conclusions based on their professional frameworks and cultural perspectives.
- Collins and McNeely offer a coherent synthesis of theology and history that merits recognition, not dismissal based on vague standards and unsupported claims of neglecting scholastic rigor. While a doctorate provides essential skills and professional credentials for academic careers, history itself is a shared intellectual pursuit open to diverse perspectives.
- No one needs to be a credentialed historian, and the experts admit this. Great history is defined not by credentials but by the power to illuminate and connect with its readers.

**5. CLAIM:** *“The origins of America and its wealth traces itself back to Babylon, not to the promises made to Abraham as many try to claim.”* (page 96)

#### RESPONSE

- Without credible supporting evidence, Paterson's assertion that America's origins and wealth are rooted in Babylon, rather than the promises made to Abraham, appears unsupported and unsubstantiated.
- Michael George Mulhall (1836–1900), a *Fellow of the British Royal Statistical Society*, recorded his observations about the wealth of the United States in 1889. Consistent with Armstrong's 1940 article on the nation's material prosperity, Mulhall's findings acknowledged divine blessings rather than attributing them to Babylon.

**6. CLAIM:** *“They then take their audience down a migration story to include the Celts, sub-tribal identities, languages and other historical claims. Yet, through all of this, even the least astute of us all might detect the simple lingering question of identity. Did the Saxons keep their identity as sons of Isaac throughout the centuries to the point where many of them landed on the shores of what is now England, or not? Given they have already argued that that is the name God Himself said they would be called, then the answer must be yes. However, this question is avoided by AI literature as its adherents know full well that this is not the reality—the Saxons never carried that claim with them in their culture. There are no first-hand accounts ever saying they were descendants of Isaac or Jacob. The Saxons had no religious practices that would point to their roots as Israelites. Even most AI adherents admit to this.”* (page 25)

#### RESPONSE

- Patterson argues that the Saxons are not Israelites because they never explicitly claimed to be, they did not retain Israelite religious customs, and there is no cultural continuity linking them to the biblical sons of Isaac. His argument assumes that if Israelite descent were true, it would be historically traceable through recorded identity and religious continuity. However, this assumption is directly contradicted by the Bible itself, which prophesies that Israel would be scattered, lose its identity, and be regathered only by God in the end times. The Lost Tribes of Israel are still living

among us today, though their exact identities remain unknown using only pure human understanding. Any claim to identify or deny Israelite descent through secular evidence alone is fundamentally flawed.

- Additionally, genetics, while incapable of proving biblical lineage, can illustrate the broader migrations of Middle Eastern populations into Europe. Haplogroups such as J1 and J2, common in Semitic peoples, appear in scattered remnants throughout regions where Israelites were historically exiled. The movement of R1b and E1b1b from the Levant into Western Europe corresponds with known historical dispersions. However, *biblical Israelite identity is not confirmed by genetic markers* but by God's sovereign plan (Romans 9:6-8). A migration map can visually demonstrate historical movement, but it cannot override divine authority on Israel's identity.

**7. CLAIM:** *“No self-respecting Bible student would accept that Christian thought re-captures the return to the Mosaic Covenant where physical blessings and curses were promised, and yet this is what AI presentations would have their believers accept! It is in the subtle background of AI literature and is the thought that is always in play. This process is accomplished by presenting a very romantic and pious depiction of the early histories of the British Empire and the United States.”* (page 33)

## RESPONSE

- Herbert W. Armstrong did not advocate for reinstating the full system of Old Testament laws based on physical blessings and curses. Armstrong's doctrine, especially in the USBP, focused on prophetic fulfillment and the moral responsibility of modern descendants of Israel, but this did not involve a reversion to the rituals and sacrificial system of the Old Covenant.
- Armstrong distinguished between the moral laws that he believed were still binding on Christians and the broader ceremonial laws fulfilled through Christ's sacrifice. Therefore, Patterson's assertion that Armstrong's teachings subtly encourage believers to accept a return to the Mosaic Covenant is inaccurate. This distinction is critical.

**8. CLAIM:** *“AI writers do not often or at all discuss the prior fulfillments of the promises to the patriarchs as it would not help support their thesis, however we will do our best to compensate. These scriptural excerpts are provided for the reader to consider when confronted with attempts to persuade them of promises to the patriarchs were not sufficiently fulfilled until the times of the US and British Empire....”* (Page 40)

## RESPONSE

- Armstrong explained that the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were twofold: spiritual and physical (Armstrong, 1967, p. 56). The spiritual promises, tied to salvation, would be fulfilled through Jesus Christ and His role in the Church, while the physical promises included national blessings and material wealth for the descendants of Israel.
- Armstrong taught that while ancient Israel did inherit the land of Canaan, the birthright promises were not fully realized until modern times. He argued that the promises of national greatness were not limited to Canaan but would be fulfilled in the form of great nations and a company of nations, as represented by the U.S. and Britain (Armstrong, 1967, p. 68).

**9. CLAIM:** *“There are a few important elements of God’s oath here that are not to be overlooked, and not properly taken into consideration in AI theory. (see Leviticus 26:40-45).*

*The first is that the land is the integral part of the covenant that God will remember—it will not be separated from the covenant as a whole. There is no promised or implied restoration of the people that is outside the Promised Land where they would reunite as a nation or nations again. Moreover, the lands to which they are scattered will not be their own. This is ignored by AI teaching, which would have us believe despite their infidelities and non-repentance, they would become a great nation and company of nations. As clearly stated in God’s Words above, it is only when they confess their iniquities will God remember the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This has never happened in history with the United States and Great Britain.” (pages 43-44)*

## RESPONSE

- In contrast to the claim that repentance is required for the promises to be fulfilled, Armstrong pointed out that Leviticus 26 deals with blessings and curses under the Old Covenant, which was specific to ancient Israel. Armstrong believed that although the modern nations of Israel (the U.S. and Britain) were experiencing temporary blessings, their future downfall would be due to their lack of repentance. He explained that the physical blessings given to the descendants of Israel were not dependent on spiritual repentance but on God's promise to the patriarchs. However, if these nations turned away from God, they would face punishment and exile, fulfilling the later warnings of Leviticus (Armstrong, 1967, p. 88).

**10. CLAIM:** *“When Israel was destroyed Judah was, in effect the remnant of the House of Jacob.” (page 59)*

## RESPONSE

- Armstrong, in his seminal work "The United States and Britain in Prophecy" (1967), clarifies the distinction between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. He asserts that after the Assyrian captivity, the ten tribes known as the Kingdom of Israel migrated across Europe, eventually forming nations that realized the biblical prophecies of becoming a multitude of nations (Armstrong, 1967, p. 102).
- The teaching of Armstrong, supported by Sherrod and biblical texts like Jeremiah 50:20, offers a more comprehensive understanding of the Israelite tribes' destinies. This perspective challenges the notion that the promises to the patriarchs were fully realized in ancient Judah and instead portrays a dynamic fulfillment that spans continents and epochs, affirming the role of both the U.S. and Britain in this broader biblical narrative (Armstrong, 1954; Sherrod, 1997). Armstrong’s interpretation of the Ten Lost tribes underlines the prophetic continuity and relevance of the Abrahamic covenant in shaping the modern world.

**11. CLAIM:** *“In comments relating to I Kings 12:17 Bullinger acknowledges that Judah was representative of "all Israel."<sup>27</sup> The concept of Judah being the remnant that in effect represented the whole House of Israel is further supported by the fact that many people from the northern ten tribes had resettled in the cities of Judah because Jeroboam changed the format of worship in Israel.” (page 71)*

<sup>27</sup> Bullinger, E. W., *The Companion Bible, marginal notes*, (Michigan, Kregel Publications, 1990), 470

## RESPONSE

- While some Israelites—the nucleus of worshipers—from the northern tribes migrated to Judah for religious reasons, the northern ten tribes of Israel were never fully absorbed into or unified with Judah, maintaining their distinct identity despite these movements. The political and tribal separation between Israel and Judah remained intact.
- The occasional use of "Israel" in reference to figures like Jehoshaphat does not suggest that Judah superseded the northern kingdom of Israel or came to represent all of Israel, but rather reflects a scribal or textual convention. Bullinger's commentary affirms this, noting that "Judah" and "Israel" were sometimes used interchangeably due to historical or textual variations, without indicating a merger of the two kingdoms.

**12. CLAIM:** *“Great care has been taken in interpreting Genesis 49:1 by certain influential expositors in the Church of God, and of the whole chapter for that matter. As it was not, it has become the staple set of scriptures in support of AI in all literature and presentations that this author has seen. Even so, it's never too late to correct error if we are willing. We are fortunate to have some resources at our disposal that will help dispel Genesis 49 as any kind of clear evidence of Jacob having prophetic visions nations that exist in our modern era. Let us take an honest look at Jacob's words. ...What the scholars of the Lexicon point out is that the expression the end of days is indeed prophetic, but reaches the period of history so far as the speaker's perspective is concerned.”* (page 9).

*“In dealing with the predictive aspect of prophecy, we must remember that when God spoke to and through His servants, He did not give them unlimited vision. Instead, they were confined within a divinely limited perspective.”* (p.11) Footnote: 5 Mickelsen, Berkely, *Interpreting the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Wm.B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 294.

## RESPONSE

- Patterson argues that Genesis 49:1 is often misinterpreted by projecting modern nationalistic or prophetic meanings onto it, when it actually refers to the immediate future of Jacob's descendants rather than an apocalyptic end time.
- Not a single statement in the blessing of Genesis 49 specifies the capture of Canaan or directly references the time of Moses or Joshua. Instead, Jacob's vision presupposes not only the increase of his sons into powerful, populous tribes but also their eventual growth, prosperity, and interactions with surrounding nations, all culminating in a future under the peaceful reign of the one “from whom the Scepter of Judah shall never depart.” This perspective suggests that Jacob's prophecy anticipates a much broader timeline, encompassing the full historical unfolding of Israel's divine role, ultimately leading up to the Messianic age and the fulfillment of God's promises.

**13. CLAIM:** *“The Jewish Study Bible – Tanakh Translation is recommended for Bible students examining the Old Testament. The editors and commentators of this Bible are exceptional scholars and can provide the student guidance through these ancient texts with culturally balanced interpretation.”* (page 14)

## RESPONSE

- Patterson’s argument injects a subtle yet profound distortion. Based on text from *The Jewish Study Bible – Tanakh Translation* (ISBN 978-0-19-529754-6), Patterson’s characterization of Jacob’s prophecy as a poetic tool for interpreting identity reduces its theological depth, recasting a divine pronouncement into a mere cultural commentary. This selective use of scholarship subverts the narrative’s prophetic core, recasting what the biblical text presents as God-ordained revelation into a human-centric construct, thereby misguiding readers with a façade of scholarly rigor.

**14. CLAIM:** *“The promise that the throne of David was to be established forever and that David would never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel has clearly been fulfilled.*

*That throne was established and because most who sat on it failed to obey His commandments God eventually denied those of the royal line access to the throne until Christ.*

*As head of the Church He sits on that throne ruling Spiritual Israel - His church. There is no longer any need for a man to sit on the throne.”* (page 53)

## RESPONSE

- The claim that *"God eventually denied those of the royal line access to the throne until Christ"* contradicts God’s clear promise of the eternal nature of David’s throne. A gap in the royal line would imply a failure on God’s part, which is impossible. While scripture does not detail the throne’s continuity after Zedekiah’s death, historical evidence shows Zedekiah’s royal daughters escaped with Jeremiah to Tahpanhes. This suggests David’s royal line continued elsewhere, aligning with God’s promise. Any suggestion of a break relies on human assumptions, not divine truth.
- The royal daughters of Zedekiah were legitimate heirs to David’s throne, and by extension, their forebears to this present day. However, the Bible provides limited details regarding their whereabouts or why they are not openly ascendant to David’s throne as in the days of old. Where Scripture is seemingly silent, it is essential for all to avoid speculation and defer to God’s ultimate revelation in His timing.

**15. CLAIM:** *“Though the Constitution of the United States was a seminal event in the history of human liberty, the God of the Bible was not the central concern in its underpinning. Because of the experience the founding fathers had with religion, they opposed the institutionalization of religion and therefore kept the Constitution free of direct references to God, Christ or the Bible. When Benjamin Franklin proposed that the founders begin each day at the Constitutional Conference with a prayer to God for guidance his suggestion was defeated.*

*The original Pledge of Allegiance — meant as an expression of patriotism, not religious faith — also made no mention of God. It was not until the religious revival of the 1950s did the mention of God enter the pledge of allegiance. “In God we Trust” did not get on paper money until 1955.*

*Nevertheless, Christian thought had been a dominant cultural factor, and the belief in Divine favor developed early (and earlier in the British Empire). We can go to the mid-19th century for an example of the early traces dominant in Christian thought in the writings of Herman Melville in *White-Jacket*:*

*We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people — the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. God has given to us for a future inheritance, the broad domains of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark, without bloody hands being lifted. God has predestinated, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. Long enough have we been skeptics with regard to ourselves, and doubted whether, indeed, the political Messiah had come. But he has come in us, if we would but give utterance to his promptings. And let us always remember, that with ourselves — almost for the first time in the history of earth — national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we cannot do a good to America but we give alms to the world.”* (page 81)

## RESPONSE

- Herman Melville is a celebrated American short story writer who wrote the famous novel *Moby Dick* (1851). Patterson’s use of Melville’s older novel *White Jacket* (1850) to remotely exemplify British-Israelite literature misrepresents the author’s work, which is primarily a critique of naval practices (flogging) and a *satire of literary politics and publishing in 19th-century New York*. As Melville scholars attest, *White Jacket* operates on multiple levels, with its explicit focus on the hardships of sailors and its implicit commentary on the literary wars of the 1840s.
- Patterson’s interpretation, however, drags Melville’s work into a discussion of British-Israelism, a topic entirely unrelated to the themes and purposes of *White Jacket*. This misattribution not only distorts the original context of Melville’s satire but also diminishes its artistic and historical significance.

**16. CLAIM:** *“The developed world, America especially, is simply the product of the evolution of empires as prophesied in post-exilic scriptures. The Gentile world was released by God to develop for purposes both in executing His judgment on Israel, to bring judgment on themselves, and to bring the Gospel to the world. God’s judgement holds a supremacy to which we must humbly submit, and the terror of His judgment should also override any pride or loyalty we have.”* (page 84)

## RESPONSE

- Patterson’s statement that *“the developed world, America especially, is simply the product of the evolution of empires as prophesied in post-exilic scriptures”* is a sweeping generalization that borders on theological grandstanding. By attempting to attribute the trajectory of modern history, particularly America’s development, to his interpretation of scriptural prophecy, Patterson dismisses the complex mix of political, social, economic, and cultural forces that shaped the modern world. His reductionist argument not only oversimplifies history but also uses religious rhetoric to frame his view in a way that is both intellectually dishonest and dismissive of human agency.

**17. CLAIM:** *“America and the developed world are the beneficiaries of Alexander’s agenda, and the beneficiaries of military conquests and oppression throughout history. This less than comfortable reality is avoided by reinterpreting the past, and repackaging the present. The repackaged version would have us believe that our modern civilization, its wealth, wisdom and advancements have emerged primarily out of Christian ethics.”* (page 89)

## RESPONSE

- Patterson's claim that "*America and the developed world are the beneficiaries of Alexander's agenda, and the beneficiaries of military conquests and oppression throughout history,*" further asserting that modern civilization owes its wealth, wisdom, and advancements to Christian ethics, reflects an arrogant oversimplification of history and an alarming disregard for evidence. By cherry-picking convenient narratives while ignoring critical historical details, Patterson not only distorts the truth but also disregards the contributions of countless other civilizations, cultures, and ideas that shaped modern progress.
- Christian ethics *undoubtedly* influenced the development of the United States, particularly in its moral framework, social reforms, and political ideologies. Movements like the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movement drew heavily on Christian moral teachings, with leaders who understood the depth and complexity of these principles.

**18. CLAIM:** *"For the purpose of this book, AI is the theory in any form that the predominantly white races of Western Europe and North America are the descendants of the northern tribes of Israel, with focus on the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and that God is fulfilling promises to Abraham through their latter-day generations. This includes the teaching that belief in AI is needed to 'unlock' the recognition of the United States and the British Commonwealth in Bible prophecy. Movements arise out of commonly shared fears, particularly prejudices, racial, political leanings and worldviews that develop in wide social circles. Anglo-Israelism is a product of these and is a belief system that is not born out of the Bible and forgotten truths as its adherents would have us believe. It is a movement that, when it finds fertile soil will flourish, and regrettably has found such soil in the Churches of God."* (page 2)

## RESPONSE

- Herbert W. Armstrong's teachings offer a unique understanding that posits the modern nations of the United States and the United Kingdom as the physical descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, thereby fulfilling the promises made to Abraham and his descendants. According to Armstrong, this understanding aligns with biblical prophecies that were not solely spiritually fulfilled through the Church but also through these specific nations which he identifies as key players in God's plan (Armstrong, 1967, p. 50). This perspective challenges traditional views that see all biblical promises as fulfilled either through the Jewish people or purely spiritually through the Church.
- Armstrong emphasized that the blessings were *not just* about national wealth or power but also about playing a pivotal role in God's plan at the end times. He understood prophecies in the context of a modern resurgence of Israel through Ephraim and Manasseh, which he believed were instrumental in God's plan, thereby integrating the historical and prophetic roles of these nations into a broader theological framework (Armstrong, 1967, p. 140).

**19. CLAIM:** *Most commonly, 20th and 21st century Christians have looked to nations and well marketed self-assured Church organizations for added confidence. This need for external affirmation is a characteristic human liability we share with ancient Israelites when we look to worldly confidence and successes for added security and relevancy. When Israel was destroyed Judah was, in effect the remnant of the House of Jacob"* (page v.)

## RESPONSE

- Patterson’s view differs radically from Armstrong's perspective on Israel, Judah, and the modern-day nations he identified as fulfilling biblical prophecy. Armstrong argued that the United States and Britain are the modern descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, who were promised national greatness (Armstrong, 1967, p. 42). He did not teach that modern Christians needed external validation from nations or institutions; rather, he emphasized that these nations were fulfilling
- God's covenant promises to Israel, which were divinely ordained and not based on human efforts (Armstrong, 1967, pp. 78-79).

**20. CLAIM:** *“There are only a handful of independent researchers who have published material promoting AI. They are often cited as resources by religious groups as authorities on the subject. They are typically amateur historians who have spent many years without peer review on the subject of tracing the migration of peoples and their identities.”* (pp. 20-21)

The claim depicted above is merely a small extract. For a detailed and complete citation of this claim, please refer to the main research paper *Modern Ephraim and Manasseh*.

## RESPONSE

- Patterson’s emphasis on research, apparently in the manner of academia, elevates human inquiry above God’s revelation. A focus on humanistic critical thinking disregards the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers into truth (John 16:13), reducing spiritual discernment to mere intellectual effort.

**21. CLAIM:** In this last piece, we put into proper context Patterson’s characterization of Armstrong’s role that he *“popularized the theory [British-Israelism] more than his predecessors,”* including a charge that Armstrong committed *“significant plagiarism of J.H. Allen’s book, Judah’s Scepter and Joseph’s Birthright* (pp. 6-7)

## RESPONSE

- Patterson’s accusation that Armstrong committed significant plagiarism of Allen’s book lacks substantive credibility and relies on speculative arguments rather than verifiable quantitative analysis.
- Historical norms of originality and attribution differed significantly from contemporary standards. Patterson overlooks these historical norms and misrepresents Armstrong’s reliance on public domain scripture and shared theological interpretations. Armstrong’s attribution practices reflect the standards of his time rather than deliberate concealment.