

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

All Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

8-2015

Religious Outsiders and the Catholic Critique of Protestantism in America

Bradley Kime
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kime, Bradley, "Religious Outsiders and the Catholic Critique of Protestantism in America" (2015). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 4463.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/4463>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



RELIGIOUS OUTSIDERS AND THE CATHOLIC CRITIQUE OF
PROTESTANTISM IN AMERICA

by

Bradley Kime

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

History

Approved:

Philip L. Barlow
Major Professor

Kyle Bulthuis
Committee Member

Harrison Kleiner
Committee Member

Mark R. McLellan
Vice President for Research and
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2015

Copyright © Bradley William Kime 2015

All rights reserved.

ABSTRACT

Religious Outsiders and the Catholic Critique of Protestantism in America

by

Bradley William Kime, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 2015

Major Professor: Philip L. Barlow
Department: History

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, widespread Catholic commentary cast a congeries of prophets, millenarians, freethinkers, metaphysicians, and other (ir)religious outsiders as an indictment of Protestantism in America. To Catholics, Mormons and Millerites, atheists and agnostics, Spiritualists and Christian Scientists were the exegetical and educational products of Protestantism. And mainstream Protestant reactions to these groups exposed the contradictions of Protestant power and anti-Catholic discourse in America. Catholics argued that proliferating religious radicals ultimately belied Protestants' portrayals of their own exegetical, intellectual, and politico-religious freedom from Catholic oppression. Recovering Catholic commentary on religious outsiders and Protestantism in America helps correct the historiographical neglect of Catholic responses to anti-Catholicism, present oft-observed historical Catholic perspectives on American religious history, recover a polemical dialogue where historians have offered a Protestant monologue, and qualify the historical cogency of anti-Catholic discourse in America. Most importantly, this study reveals a rare instance in

which one marginalized religious group used other marginalized religious groups to interrogate and critique, rather than appeal to and deflect criticism from, a religious mainstream.

(76 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Religious Outsiders and the Catholic Critique of Protestantism in America

by

Bradley William Kime

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, numerous new religious and irreligious groups arose throughout the United States. These groups were often radical in their assertions of religious authority, their interpretations of scripture, their predictions about Christ's second coming, their practice of supernatural gifts, their rejection of traditional Christian doctrines, or their rejection of Christianity altogether. American Catholics watched and commented as these groups multiplied and gained momentum. Catholics believed that the growth of radical religious and irreligious groups was the fault of mainstream Protestantism. Over the centuries, Catholics had argued that the Pope's authority was necessary to provide spiritual security and scriptural interpretation and that Catholicism protected the proper relationship between faith and reason and promoted the proper relationship between the church and the state. Protestants, for their part, had defended the individual's right to privately interpret scripture, and depicted Catholicism as the greatest threat to Americans' intellectual, political, and religious freedoms. American Catholics used the rise of radical religious and irreligious groups to prove their points in these centuries-old arguments. Catholics argued that when Protestants were left without the Pope's authority, new prophets arose to replace that authority, and new movement interpreted the scriptures in unpredictable and dangerous ways. Catholics

argued that when Protestants were educated outside the Catholic Church's care, they became vulnerable to the persuasions of both religious fanatics and irreligious skeptics. And Catholics argued that when mainstream Protestants criticized and coerced groups outside the mainstream, they proved that they weren't truly committed to religious freedom. Thus, the rise of radical religious and irreligious groups in nineteenth and early twentieth-century America helped Catholics respond to anti-Catholic prejudice by critiquing mainstream Protestantism with concrete historical case studies.

Past scholars have studied Protestant anti-Catholicism much more extensively than they have studied Catholic responses to Protestant anti-Catholicism. In doing so, they have presented a lopsided picture of Protestant and Catholic interactions in American history. In that lopsided picture, Catholic perspectives on American religious history have often been invisible, and Catholics have come across as powerless against anti-Catholic prejudice. Thus this thesis helps recover historical Catholic voices, making one prominent piece of their perspectives on American religious history and their coordinated and cogent critique of American anti-Catholicism visible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks, first, to Phil Barlow for prodding me to ask better questions about myself and my historical subjects, for modeling charitable and rigorous scholarship, and for never severing life from the life of the mind. Thanks to Grant Underwood for opening my eyes to religious history. Thanks to Paul Kerry for setting me on my path and carrying me on his back for the first few miles. And thanks to Rachel Cope for her scholarship and comradery. I'm grateful to Spencer Fluhman for drenching my writing in red ink, for countless conversations, and for creative work that has catalyzed my own. I'm grateful to my parents for their boundless enthusiasm and endless love and support and to my unbelievable siblings who bought me a wardrobe so I could look like a scholar *and* a gentleman. Thanks to Kyle Bulthuis for teaching me priceless lessons and giving me priceless opportunities to teach. Many thanks to the *Western Historical Quarterly*, the History Department, and the Graduate School for funding my efforts, and to Phil Barlow, Kyle Bulthuis, and Harrison Kleiner for generously serving on my thesis committee.

Last and most, thanks to Chelsea Crowford. Thank you for our life and history together, punctuated by porch talks, street art, date nights, libraries, hospitals, and temples. I'm looking forward to many more years of relentlessly supporting each other in our professional callings.

Bradley Kime

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. PROTESTANT EXEGETICAL FREEDOM.....	17
3. PROTESTANT INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM.....	29
4. PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.....	38
5. CONCLUSION.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	57

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1901, John Alexander Dowie established a theocratic utopian community forty-two miles north of Chicago and named it Zion City. Dowie declared himself the third and final manifestation of the Old Testament prophet Elijah—Elijah the Restorer—and marked Zion City as the future centerplace of Christ’s millennial reign. In the summer of 1904, he stood before seven thousand followers in Shiloh Tabernacle and said, “I DECLARE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, THE CHRIST, IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, THAT I AM, IN THESE TIMES OF THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, THE FIRST APOSTLE OF THE LORD JESUS, THE CHRIST, IN THE CHRISTIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ZION.”¹ Dowie owned all of the city’s businesses. He claimed to have restored not only the structures but the power of the primitive Christian church. He made authoritative theological pronouncements, enacted elaborate rituals, and cured ailments of all kinds. But in 1904 the economic foundations of Zion City were already crumbling; in 1905 Dowie suffered a debilitating stroke, while suspicions of sexual improprieties swirled around him; and in 1907 he died with little fanfare from his former followers.

¹ Quoted in Grant Wacker, “Marching to Zion: Religion in a Modern Utopian Community,” *Church History* 54, no. 4 (1985): 503. On Dowie, see also Alden R. Heath, “‘Apostle in Zion,’” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 70 (1977): 98–113; Philip L. Cook, *Zion City, Illinois: Twentieth-Century Utopia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996); and Timothy E. W. Gloege, “Faith Healing, Medical Regulation, and Public Religion in Progressive Era Chicago,” *Religion and American Culture* 23, no. 2 (2013): 185–231.

At Dowie's death, the Protestant press eagerly assessed the meaning of his prophetic career. Commentators invariably tried to understand and explain why thousands of otherwise rational Americans had followed him. Many castigated the credulity of religious Americans, who had, as an earlier observer put it, "always shown a remarkable willingness to listen to the voice of the Lord, spoken through the lips of whatsoever prophet."² Lyman Abbott's *Outlook* magazine concluded that Dowie "found his little kingdom among a people who were restrained neither by tradition nor by critical powers."³ Many others, in contrast, expressed confidence in the common sense religiosity of the majority and pointed to ministerial deficiencies that had pushed Protestants in Dowie's direction. The editors of *Congregationalist and Christian World* attributed Dowie's following to "a just craving for guidance" unfulfilled by clergy who needed to redouble their efforts. Better leadership, they argued, would outshine "the ostentatious self-gratification" of the prairie prophet.⁴

Catholic commentators agreed with both assessments from the Protestant press. Deficiencies in the pulpits *and* the pews were driving Protestants into Dowie's arms. But more importantly, Catholics argued, Protestantism itself had produced Dowie in the first place, along with a century's worth of similar prophets, premillennialists, freethinkers, metaphysicians, and other radical religionists and irreligionists. The year Dowie died, tens of thousands of people were packing the recently completed Mother Church

² John Swain, "John Alexander Dowie: The Prophet and His Profits," *Century Illustrated Magazine* (October 1902): 933.

³ "The End of a Sect-Maker," *Outlook* (New York City), 16 March 1907, 593.

⁴ "The Phenomenon of Dowieism," *Congregationalist and Christian World* (Boston), 31 October 1903, 607.

extension in Boston to hear Mary Baker Eddy expound her anti-materialist metaphysics.⁵ Across the country, tens of thousands more were attesting to the healing power of her message.⁶ Meanwhile hundreds of thousands were continuing a golden age of American freethought launched by the late “Great Agnostic,” Robert Ingersoll, millions of American Spiritualists were communicating with the dead, and myriad Protestant premillennialists were calculating the hour of Christ’s return.⁷ And as illustrated by Protestant resistance to the placement of a Mormon hierarch in the U.S. Senate the same year of Dowie’s death, twentieth-century Americans continued to live with various legacies of the Second Great Awakening, wherein Joseph Smith and others had conversed with angels, claimed new revelations, and created new religious movements.⁸

Catholics were careful observers of this raucous religious scene that animated America’s nineteenth century and reached well into its twentieth. Many of them encountered the country’s Protestant mainstream, witnessed the long nineteenth century’s efflorescence of radical religious (and irreligious) groups, and used the latter to articulate a multi-faceted indictment of the former. To such Catholics, Mormons and Millerites, atheists and agnostics, Spiritualists and Christian Scientists were the exegetical and educational products of Protestantism. And, to such Catholics, Protestant reactions to these groups exposed the contradictions of Protestant power and anti-Catholicism in America.

⁵ Paul Eli Ivey, *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States, 1894–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 70–5.

⁶ Rennie B. Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial: Religious Healing in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁷ Sidney Warren, *American Freethought, 1860–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) and Robert S. Cox, *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

⁸ Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Catholics ultimately argued that these radical religious outsiders, as both products and provocateurs of mainstream American Protestantism, belied Protestant depictions of Catholic oppression vis-à-vis Protestant liberation.⁹ Where Protestants proclaimed exegetical liberation from papal authority and Catholic dogmas, Catholics pointed to spiritual deprivation that spawned Protestant fanaticism in two directions: spinning further away from the Catholic center or back toward it in hopeless imitation. Where Protestants proclaimed intellectual liberation, Catholics pointed to the educational deprivation of credulous Protestants who flocked to fanatical outsider groups and to the intellectual oppression of a Calvinist orthodoxy that fostered freethinkers and atheists. And where Protestants portrayed Catholicism as a foil for religious liberty, Catholics pointed to the intolerance, incoherence, and insufficiency of the Protestant “moral establishment’s” responses to the Reformation’s radical offspring.¹⁰

Within this triptych response to professed Protestant liberation, each religious outsider group provided unique rhetorical resources. Catholics could link Protestant divorce practices with Mormon polygamy, for example, or Protestants’ rejection of the

⁹ I use the term “religious outsider” in the same way R. Laurence Moore famously did: as a category religious groups constructed together and deployed selectively and strategically. The nod to Moore is doubly appropriate here, as the Catholics considered in this study recognized and subverted what “insiders” and “outsiders” to the Protestant mainstream hoped to accomplish with these categories. See Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). My use of the specific phrase “mainstream Protestantism” simply reflects what Catholics aimed their rhetorical cannons at: a supposed theological normativity linked with a recognized locus of political power in the Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations. Finally, the “religion” behind “religious outsider” reflects Kevin Schilbrack’s definition of the word, which includes only those socio-cultural phenomena that meet functional *and* substantive criteria of earlier definitions. Religion on this account is “forms of life predicated upon the reality of the superempirical.” Schilbrack, “What Isn’t Religion?,” *Journal of Religion* 93, no. 3 (2013): 313, 291–318. Certainly Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Mormonism, Christian Science, Spiritualism, etc. fit this definition. But I also use “religious outsiders” as a shorthand to encompass groups like atheists or Mesmerists who did not (always) fit this definition, but whose *outsider-ness* was *religious*, or relative to *religious-ness*. When speaking exclusively about such groups, I use “irreligious outsiders.”

¹⁰ “Protestant moral establishment” is David Sehat’s phrase. See *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Real Presence with Mary Baker Eddy's denial of matter. But from each outsider group's particular odium, Catholics mapped a straight road back to Wittenberg. Religious outsiders offered a panoply of uniquely rotten Protestant fruits, all rooted in the rejection of Catholic authority.

Among that panoply, none were more prominent and persistent in Catholic commentary than Mormons and freethinkers. This is unsurprising. As Leigh Eric Schmidt has noted, the two groups "shared an outsider status of particular severity in relation to Protestant America."¹¹ Moreover, Protestants' political and legal reactions to Mormons, and to a lesser extent, freethinkers, exceeded their reactions to any other white religious outsiders. This study re-presents the prominence Catholic commentary consequently gave to Mormons and freethinkers, without extracting the two groups from the discursive context in which Catholics placed them: that is, amidst a multitude of other similarly radical outsider groups, each with their own individual but overlapping oeuvres of theological, political, and practical heresies.

This is an important point for scholars of religious controversy, who sometimes forget that religious prejudices come in packages. Studies of *particular* prejudices—like anti-Mormonism—or even comparisons of particular prejudices—like anti-Catholicism and anti-Masonry—are vital, but they can easily miss the panoramic purviews of the historical persons who held those prejudices. What is often needed is analysis of various prejudices at their *convergences*. As did David Brion Davis in his classic essay on counter-subversion, scholars ought to capture the connected—but not coterminous—concerns that a constellation of contemporary "Others" presented to a particular

¹¹ Leigh Eric Schmidt, "Mormons, Freethinkers, and the Limits of Toleration," *Journal of Mormon History* 40, no. 2 (2014): 61.

worldview.¹² Thus this study aims to recover the Catholic view of the problems presented by a range of nineteenth and early twentieth-century religious and irreligious outsiders in America. Each outsider proclaimed distinctive heresies, but the typical Catholic commentator talked about them in the same breath—parsing their particular dangers while tracing all of them back to the same central Protestant principles.

Ultimately, Catholic commentators pressed their concerns about religious outsiders into the service of anti-Protestant polemics. Their aim was to critique a pervasive Protestant discourse on exegetical, intellectual, and religious freedom from Catholic oppression. This study is, therefore, first and foremost, a recovery of Catholic responses to their Protestant detractors, in which religious outsiders featured as rhetorical resources. What Protestants had to say about Catholicism and Catholic oppression has been carefully studied.¹³ Besides its sheer quantity, the literature on anti-Catholicism is laudably interdisciplinary, transnational, and comparative.¹⁴ American anti-Catholicism in particular has been well-represented by scholars¹⁵, especially American efforts to forge

¹² David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (1960): 205–24.

¹³ Helpful overviews include Kyle E. Haden, "Anti-Catholicism in U.S. History: A Proposal for a New Methodology," *American Catholic Studies* 124, no. 4 (2013): 27–45 and Marjule Anne Drury, "Anti-Catholicism in Germany, Britain, and the United States: A Review and Critique of Recent Scholarship," *Church History* 70, no. 1 (2001): 98–131.

¹⁴ Recent examples of methodological and disciplinary variety include Ryan K. Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses: Anti-Catholicism and American Church Designs in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and Elizabeth Fenton, *Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Recent transnational studies include Timothy Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Verhoeven, "Neither Male nor Female: Androgyny, Nativism and International Anti-Catholicism," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 1 (2005): 5–19; and Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For recent comparative work, see Yvonne Maria Werner and Jonas Harvard, eds., *European Anti-Catholicism in Comparative and Trans-National Perspective* (New York: Rodopi, 2013).

¹⁵ Influential studies include Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Macmillan, 1938); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955); Davis,

a religiously, intellectually, and politically enlightened/liberated identity against a Catholic foil.¹⁶ Catholics' critiques of their American Protestant critics have received less attention. Some exceptional studies have captured critical Catholic and Protestant voices in dialogue¹⁷ or creative Catholic responses to Protestant criticisms.¹⁸ But Catholic voices that went beyond dispelling anti-Catholic images or defending Catholic practices to directly critiquing Protestantism in America remain understudied. This historiographical imbalance tends to obscure historical Catholic perspectives on American religious history, reduce a polemical dialogue to a Protestant monologue, and exaggerate the cogency of American anti-Catholic discourse. As one initial corrective, this paper tracks a widespread Catholic strategy deployed during the long nineteenth century—the use of radical religious outsiders to critique Protestantism in America.

"Themes of Counter-Subversion"; Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965); and Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Notable recent studies include Marie Anne Pagliarini, "The Pure American Woman and the Wicked Catholic Priest: An Analysis of Anti-Catholic Literature in Antebellum America," *Religion and American Culture* 9, no. 1 (1999): 97–128 and Mark S. Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Crossroad, 2003).

¹⁶ Fenton, *Religious Liberties*. See also, Brandi H. Marchant, "Defined by what we are not: The Role of anti-Catholicism in the Formation of Early American Identity" (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2012) and Allison O'Mahen Malcom, "Anti-Catholicism and the Rise of Protestant Nationhood in North American, 1830-1871" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, Chicago, 2011).

¹⁷ Examples include, Jon Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Justin Nordstrom, *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: Norton, 2003).

¹⁸ For examples, Kathleen Sprows Cummings has shown how American Catholics in the early twentieth century used Bridget of Ireland and Elizabeth Ann Seton to counteract images of Catholics as un-American. And Thomas A. Tweed has shown how the Crypt Church at the National Shrine in Washington D.C. worked as an "architectural rejoinder" to Protestant criticisms of Marian devotion as a medieval invention. See Cummings, "American Saints: Gender and the Re-Imaging of U.S. Catholicism in the Early Twentieth Century," *Religion and American Culture* 22, no. 2 (2012): 203–31 and Tweed, *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123–56.

Giving voice to Catholic critiques of Protestantism in America is doubly important because of the central place of Americanization in Catholic historiography. A dominant approach has been to emphasize American Catholic assimilation.¹⁹ A less dominant strand of scholarship has emphasized Catholic opposition to American culture.²⁰ “Unrepentant Americanist” historians continue to spar—productively in my opinion—with historians who are more invested in Catholic uniqueness.²¹ Meanwhile, accumulating transnational studies dismiss such sparring as insular, stressing instead the international sources of Catholic distinctiveness and Catholic-Protestant conflict in America.²² And regional studies complement transnational studies by illuminating the local sources of Catholic-Protestant cooperation and Catholic affinities with American social structures.²³ Surfacing periodically are important studies that deconstruct narratives in which powerless American Catholics respond to “a stable culture made by others.”²⁴ Such studies assert, instead, Catholicism’s massive presence in the construction and contestation of American religious, intellectual, and political culture.²⁵ This study joins

¹⁹ I.e. from post-war historians John Tracy Ellis, Thomas T. McAvoy, and Robert D. Cross through works like Jay P. Dolan’s *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁰ Representative examples include Robert Emmett Curran, *Michael Augustine Corrigan and the Shaping of Conservative Catholicism in America, 1878–1902* (New York: Arno Press, 1978) and, more recently, Thomas E. Woods, *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectuals and the Progressive Era* (New York: Columbia University, 2004).

²¹ Patrick W. Carey, book review, “*The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectuals and the Progressive Era* by Thomas E. Woods,” *Journal of American History* 92, no. 2 (2005): 642.

²² Representative examples include D’Agostino, *Rome in America* and Deirdre M. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

²³ Representative examples include Andrew H. M. Stern, *Southern Crucifix, Southern Cross: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012) and Gerald McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

²⁴ David J. O’Brien, *The Renewal of American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 61.

²⁵ See especially Moore, *Religious Outsiders*, 48–71.

the fray as a complementary contrast to more Americanist-leaning studies; it confirms that in many ways American Catholics encountered an unstable Protestant melee and a culture up for grabs. Catholics' uses of religious outsiders to critique mainstream Protestant assumptions about American religious, intellectual, and political culture mark them as distinctive co-creators of that culture.

Americanization also frames the study of how religious outsiders, including Catholics, talked about each other. Outsider groups, scholars have often argued, maligned and distanced themselves from each other in order to prove their own Protestant-looking American-ness to mainstream Protestants. Thus, for examples, black Methodists might use Mormon polygamists as a foil for their own Victorian Protestant sensibilities; Mormons might embrace prevailing anti-Muslim sentiment to claim a "Christian genealogy"; or assimilating Catholics might attack Mormon theocracy to establish their own democratic bona fides.²⁶ The Catholics considered in this study constitute an important counterexample with broad significance for the study of American religion as they used other outsiders to challenge and critique—rather than appeal to—the Protestant center of America.

²⁶ James B. Bennett, "'Until This Curse of Polygamy is Wiped Out': Black Methodists, White Mormons, and Constructions of Racial Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Religion and American Culture* 21, no. 2 (2011): 167–94; Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 26; Arnold H. Green, "Mormonism and Islam: From Polemics to Mutual Respect and Cooperation," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001): 204; Timothy Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 186; and Matthew J. Grow, "The Whore of Babylon and the Abomination of Abominations: Nineteenth-Century Catholic and Mormon Mutual Perceptions and Religious Identity," *Church History* 73, no 1 (2004): 139–67. Grow's study shows that a few Catholics did denigrate Mormonism to deflect Protestant criticisms away from themselves. But they rarely did so explicitly; their motives in most instances must be inferred, based on the now contested assumption that concerns about Mormon political power and Mormon polygamy (in Protestant and Catholic rhetoric, respectively) can be separated and ranked. See Christine Talbot, *A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 107–9.

In chapter 2, I take up the Catholic critique of a pervasive Protestant discourse on Biblical interpretation. Simply put, *sola scriptura*, to Protestants, meant freedom from Catholic oppression, both for the Bible and its readers. Catholics countered that the Bible itself, severed from the Church, became an instrument of anarchy and oppression. Of course, that had been the Catholic position for centuries; the purpose of chapter one is to show how Catholics creatively utilized religious outsiders to rearticulate and leverage their position on the problem of exegetical authority in a new American context.

They did this in two ways. First they cast various outsider movements as the inevitable fanaticism unleashed by Protestant “private interpretation” of the Bible. “Private interpretation” was the principled rejection of ecclesiastical authority over scriptural interpretation. In a spectrum of forms, from Alexander Campbell’s rejection of even creedal constraints on biblical exegesis to the more moderate mainstream Bible reading of most Americans, private interpretation was, of course, at the heart of Protestant identity. Catholics, in contrast, argued that scripture unmoored from the Church could corroborate an endless variety of fanatical projects as easily as it corroborated more mainstream Protestantisms. *Sola scriptura*, in other words, turned on its Protestant proponents, and placed them at the mercy of the Bible-quoting religious outsiders the Protestant principle produced. Catholics claimed that the resulting theological chaos turned many exhausted and disillusioned Protestants toward Deist minimalism, agnosticism, or atheism. Fanatical outsiders—religious and irreligious—thus became fresh fodder for Catholics’ re-articulation of the problem of exegetical authority in America.

Second, Catholics cast radical religious outsiders as imitators of Catholic authority attempting to compensate for Protestant deficiencies. Amidst the exegetical and theological chaos spreading among American Christians, Protestant seekers, like Orestes Brownson, felt keenly the need for authoritative doctrine and scriptural interpretation. Brownson and thousands of others found those things in Catholic tradition and papal authority and were gladly received into the Roman Church. Others, blinded by anti-Catholic prejudice, tried instead to *recreate* the Church's authority and doctrines. Catholics argued that these outsider groups gathered perplexed Protestants, like Brownson's brother Oran, with their pale parodies of Catholicism.²⁷ Catholics used the emergence of such outsider groups among American Protestants to argue that Protestant exegetical "freedom" from Rome was really separation from the source of spiritual safety and satisfaction. Outsiders' imitations of Catholic authority and dogma suggested that mainstream Protestantism could not meet the soul's intrinsic needs.

In chapter 3, I recover Catholic responses to Protestant professions of intellectual liberation from Roman oppression. Protestants and Catholics, in their largely polemical histories of the Church, had long debated whether the Reformation had liberated civilization and the mind from the "dark ages" of Christendom. Radical religious outsiders in America provided unprecedented raw material for Catholic considerations of Christian history since the Reformation. This second chapter demonstrates how Catholics utilized religious outsiders in America to rearticulate and leverage their position that

²⁷ Matthew J. Grow, "'I Consider the Proper Authority Rests Among the Mormons': Oran Brownson to Orestes Brownson on Oran's Conversion to Mormonism," *Mormon Historical Studies* 4 (Fall 2013): 191–8.

Protestantism had not produced a morally enlightened or intellectually superior civilization.

Catholics came at Protestant professions of intellectual liberation from two directions. First they castigated Protestant credulity, evidenced by the endless streams of Protestant converts to Mormonism, Adventism, Spiritualism, and other religious outsider movements, and the corresponding lack of Catholic converts to those same groups. Second, they noted a Protestant tendency toward incredulity, both as an inherent proclivity of liberal Protestantism, and as a reaction among rising generations against oppressive orthodox Calvinism. Catholics ultimately considered Protestant credulity and incredulity to be mutually reinforcing intellectual consequences of the Reformation—cold skepticism provoking outbursts of compensatory supernaturalism; hot superstition pushing thoughtful Protestants toward atheistic rationalism in droves.

In chapter 4, I trace Catholic commentary on the relationship between Protestantism and religious freedom in America. While Protestants considered themselves purveyors and protectors of religious freedom, Catholics used mainstream Protestant reactions to religious outsiders to argue otherwise. First, Catholics linked their own mistreatment to a long and wide historical pattern of Protestant intolerance in order to undermine the supposed singular expediency of anti-Catholicism in America. Second, Catholics argued that Protestant legal and political responses to freethinkers and Mormons displayed an incoherent and disingenuous relationship between church and state. Third, those same legal and political responses, illustrated the insufficiency of any possible Protestant model of church and state to respond to the problems posed by religious outsiders. And fourth, Protestant complicity in the emergence of religious

outsiders robbed their responses to those outsiders and their concomitant defenses of religious liberty of any moral authority.

Chapter 5 considers, first, how Catholic commentary on religious outsiders and mainstream Protestantism during America's long nineteenth century constituted a unique chapter in a larger and longer Catholic tradition. At the same time, the conclusion also makes an explicit argument for the stasis of this Catholic commentary within the chronological confines of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rhetorical strategies analyzed in this study underwent remarkably little structural change for a full century. This is why I've chosen to organize my analysis by theme according to the instigating Protestant polemics or politics, rather than by period according to a chronological scheme of historical development. The Catholic critique of Protestantism in America that utilized religious outsiders as leverage looked largely the same in 1830 and 1920. I argue that the continuity of this Catholic commentary casts the unfolding of American religious history in stark relief, and propose that, collectively, these Catholic commentators constitute a historiographical counterpart to nineteenth-century Protestant historians like Robert Baird and Philip Schaff. The conclusion also revisits the driving questions behind this study. By what strategies do religious groups respond to prejudice? What resources do they reach for as they respond to their detractors? This study ultimately reveals another domain of responsive strategies available to religious groups at the margins: the use of other marginalized religious groups to lay bare the mechanics of their own marginalization.

Chronologically, this study begins with the radical Christian groups that arose from the Second Great Awakening and with the national Protestant moral establishment

that arose as institutional establishments at the state level dissolved. It triangulates the tensions between Catholics, other outsider groups, and the Protestant moral establishment well into the twentieth century. It ends with the decreasing relevance of those tensions as the Protestant moral establishment unraveled and as many outsider groups gained greater mainstream acceptance.²⁸ This period also corresponds to the rise of a robust American Catholic print culture. Reflecting, in part, the smaller Catholic population of the early American republic, American Catholic apologetics and anti-Protestant polemics largely depended on reprints of European works and an elite core of learned clergy up through the third decade of the nineteenth century.²⁹ But by the 1830s, a number of durable Catholic periodicals and publishing enterprises had been established in the U.S. and a wider circle of Catholic voices were in print—a trajectory that only continued throughout the nineteenth century.³⁰

Geographically, this study is mostly limited to Catholics in America. Such Catholics drew often from European Catholic sources and a broader international Catholic-Protestant conversation, but I am focused on the particular inflections of Catholic concerns and critiques in America, where federal, and eventually state,

²⁸ On the rise and fall of the Protestant moral establishment, see Sehat, *Myth of American Religious Freedom*. For a nice introduction to a notable example of an outsider group gaining greater acceptance in the early twentieth century, see Matthew Bowman's synthetic history of Mormonism, *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* (New York: Random House, 2012).

²⁹ Robert Gorman, *Catholic Apologetical Literature in the United States (1784–1858)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1939).

³⁰ A history of Catholic print culture is yet to be written, as Paul S. Boyer has noted, but two issues of *U.S. Catholic Historian* are relevant here: Summer 2003 on "Catholic Publishing" and Summer 2007 on "Editors and Their Newspapers." Paul S. Boyer, "From Tracts to Mass-Market Paperbacks: Spreading the Word via the Printed Page in America from the Early National Era to the Present," in *Religion and the Culture of Print in Modern America*, ed. Charles L. Cohen and Paul S. Boyer (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 33n1.

disestablishment led to a historically unprecedented nexus of Protestant cultural, political, and legal power constantly contested from the religious margins.³¹

Many Catholics, of course, wrangled over the proper relationship between the Church and the national culture, seeing varying degrees and contexts of compatibility between the two. In consideration of such differences in Catholic opinion on American culture, the sources for this study span the liberal-conservative spectrum. Liberal and conservative Catholics often took up different dimensions of the argument with different tones and temperaments, but both essentially agreed on what religious outsiders revealed about Protestantism in America, and its rejection of Papal authority. To highlight this point, I quote frequently and alternately from the Americanist-leaning *Catholic World* and the more conservative *American Catholic Quarterly Review* (both major Catholic periodicals aimed at broad Catholic and non-Catholic audiences), and the moderate-liberal *Intermountain Catholic* and the conservative *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger* (both important regional Catholic periodicals).

Appropriate to my argument, this study is focused on published materials and public debate. Though, of course, many Catholics attached different meanings to America's religious outsiders, this study draws from a nearly bottomless pool of articles and chapters in hundreds of periodicals, pamphlets, and books that offer similar Catholic interpretations of religious outsiders as an indictment of Protestantism in America. The extent to which this particular stratum of Catholic print culture circulated and re-

³¹ For European examples of the arguments presented in this study, see Thomas Albert Howard, *God and the Atlantic: America, Europe, and the Religious Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67–74 and Mark A. Noll, "A Jesuit Interpretation of Mid-Nineteenth-Century America: 'Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism,'" *BYU Studies* 45, no. 3 (2006): 39–74.

circulated the arguments presented here demonstrates their spread and significance as rhetorical currency.

CHAPTER 2

PROTESTANT EXEGETICAL FREEDOM

Joseph Smith recounted the story of his prophetic calling several times before his death in 1844. An 1838 account, now canonized, is one of the most detailed. The Latter-day Saints first published it in 1842 in their Nauvoo, Illinois newspaper, *Times and Seasons*. The story begins with religious revivals in Smith's native upstate New York in 1820. The problem framing the narrative is Protestant disunity—Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists all contending for converts to their particular systems: “So great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations,” Smith wrote, “that it was impossible for a person . . . to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.” The Bible could not solve Smith's problem because “the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.” Impressed by James's admonition to ask God for wisdom, Smith went to a grove of trees and asked God in prayer which church he should join.³² In the theophany that followed, Smith was told to join none of them.³³ His prophetic calling unfolded in the years following this first vision: Smith was to restore the primitive Christian Church as God's mouthpiece on earth. Often comparing himself to Moses, Paul, and other Biblical prophets and apostles, Smith claimed God had sent him to offer religious authority and authoritative religious truth to the Babel of Protestant sectarianism.

³² James 1:5.

³³ Joseph Smith, “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842, 727–8 and *Times and Seasons*, April 1, 1842, 748–9.

Many Catholics interpreted figures like Smith and phenomena like Mormonism in two ways—both of which contested Protestant notions of their own exegetical freedom. The first was to cast such movements as the inevitable fanaticism unleashed by Protestant “private interpretation” of the Bible. Nineteenth-century American Protestants prized their freedom to interpret scripture independent of Catholic authority. But Catholics believed that once scripture was unmoored from the Church it could corroborate an endless variety of fanatical projects as easily as it corroborated more mainstream Protestantisms. They argued that by trading Catholic authority for *sola scriptura*, Protestants surrendered any plausible authority to police exegetical boundaries among themselves, which put them at the mercy of the Bible-quoting religious outsiders Protestantism produced. Catholics claimed that the resulting theological chaos turned many exhausted and disillusioned Protestants toward Deist minimalism, agnosticism, or atheism. Fanatical outsiders—religious and irreligious—thus became fresh fodder for Catholics’ re-articulation of the problem of interpretive authority in a new American context.

Such Catholics traced an unbroken historical trajectory from Martin Luther to America’s nineteenth-century outsiders. “The Protestant principle is proclaimed,” wrote one Catholic priest in 1844, “and lo! . . . Numberless sects and the most contradictory opinions result from private interpretation. A Luther, . . . a Socinus, . . . a Wesley, . . . a Miller, . . . a Smith” all found the varieties of religious exegesis in the same scriptures.³⁴ Accordingly, Catholics identified new religious outsider groups with mainstream Protestantism by introducing them as products of “private interpretation.” Phrases like,

³⁴ John B. Byrne, “Protestantism—Its Tendencies and Results,” *United States Catholic Magazine*, April 1844, 241.

“this new class of Bible readers,” “this latest phase of Protestantism,” “the last form in which Protestantism shows itself to the world,” or “[this] striking example of . . . the Protestant principle of private interpretation” nearly always accompanied Catholic descriptions of Mormons, Millerites, Christian Scientists, and others.³⁵ In 1843, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli’s didactic conclusion to his first-hand description of the Nauvoo Mormons was already formulaic: “Let the Protestant, seeing the sad results and excesses into which the private interpretation of the Bible leads religious people, abandon the false system of the Reformation.”³⁶ An account of Ellen G. White’s activities two years later began similarly with “the following statement of the horrible excesses into which private interpretation of Scripture has led its unhappy followers, affords us another proof of the soundness of Catholic principles.”³⁷ The *Catholic Telegraph* made the same point more colorfully after assembling a patchwork parody of Protestantism’s supposed creed from the doctrines of Quakers, Shakers, Mormons, and other outsiders. The editor declared, “like a good Protestant, I believe every other article of Faith which the fancies of men or women have devised, . . . provided always that the said men or women may assert that they have found the same in King James’ Edition of the Holy Scriptures.”³⁸

In addition, some Catholics used the rejection of particular dogmas that followed from Protestant exegeses to explain the emergence of particular religious outsiders. The well-known Catholic author Robert Hugh Benson, for example, in his widely read A

³⁵ “Latter Day Saints,” *Jesuit; or Catholic Sentinel*, October 18, 1834, 331; M. A. C., “About the Utah Saints,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, July 1895, 490; *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, January 19, 1873, 2; and Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question-Box Answer. Replies to Question Received on Missions to Non-Catholics* (New York: Columbus Press, 1909), 209.

³⁶ Samuel Mazzuchelli, *The Memoirs of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, O. P.* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1967), 273.

³⁷ *Catholic Telegraph*, April 24, 1845, 127.

³⁸ “Beauties of Protestantism,” *Catholic Telegraph*, October 29, 1842, 350.

Book of Essays, included an essay on Christian Science—“Protestantism[’s] . . . latest development.” Benson argued that Mary Baker Eddy’s infamous denial of the reality of matter followed logically from Protestants’ rejection of the Eucharist. The Catholic “sacramental system” affirmed that fallen matter could be a divinely-enabled vessel of spirit. But once the Real Presence was denied, matter and spirit were severed and matter became an “enemy” to spirit. Outright disbelief in matter’s ontological existence was then only a few steps removed, and heresy had a gravitational pull on those untethered from the Catholic center. Despised Christian Science metaphysics, then, was a predictable theological endpoint that followed from Protestant private interpretation.³⁹

So too did countless other American theologies and theophanies, as Catholics saw it. Together they formed a cacophony of contradictory systems—all springing from Protestant exegeses—that confounded Protestant seekers. Catholics argued that such seekers often became Deists, atheists, and agnostics—*irreligious* outsiders in Catholic and Protestant minds—when they reached the dead ends of Protestant theological conflicts. In Catholic historical narratives, for example, Deism emerged in the wake of the Reformation as a kind of compromise—a less divisive because more minimal theology. Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid offered a classic formulation of the argument in the *North American Review*, concluding that “Before Protestantism had celebrated its first centennial, a refuge in Deism as a relief from unending disputes and uncertainties seemed the only alternative.”⁴⁰ Catholics argued further that Protestantism led to atheism and agnosticism because its countless contradictory interpretations of scripture destroyed

³⁹ Robert Hugh Benson, *A Book of Essays* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1916), 18.

⁴⁰ Bernard J. McQuaid, “The Decay of Protestantism,” *North American Review*, February 1, 1883, 137.

confidence in even the idea of religious truth. One exhausted Protestant, overwhelmed by competing sectarian voices, and baffled by outsider groups like the Quakers, remembered looking in vain for authoritative truth and concluding that he must “end either a believer in [Robert] Ingersoll's views or what I had most despised in all the world—a Catholic.”⁴¹ These Catholic voices described a spectrum of irreligious outsiders, from Deists to atheists, as the “natural offspring” of the chaos of conflicting theologies created by “the Protestant principle ‘read and judge for yourself.’”⁴²

When Protestants tried to “deny the paternity of their own offspring,” Catholics pushed back.⁴³ Protestants famously distanced themselves from Mormonism, for example, by describing polygamy as a “relic of barbarism.” This “rhetoric of alienation,” carefully analyzed by Spencer Fluhman, identified polygamous Mormons as a throwback to African and Asiatic tribes, and therefore as both historically and culturally *foreign*. Mormons were, in Protestant discourse, an obstacle to national destiny in the West, analogous to primitive heathens overseas.⁴⁴ Catholics carefully parsed this discourse. They agreed that Mormonism was a *culturally* alien hindrance to national destiny. But they rejected Protestants’ *historical* distancing of Mormonism. Polygamous Mormonism, they argued, “is not a ‘relic’ of anything in our institutions. It is a new development of private judgment in religious matters among us.”⁴⁵ Mormonism was indeed a stumbling

⁴¹ “The Way I Became a Catholic,” *Catholic World*, February 1893, 709.

⁴² *Jesuit; or, Catholic Sentinel*, July 23, 1831, 370.

⁴³ “American Rationalism,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1880, 259.

⁴⁴ J. Spencer Fluhman, “A Peculiar People”: *Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 103–25.

⁴⁵ “The Mormon Question and the United States Government,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1884, 274.

block to Christian civilization, but it was a stumbling block produced by modern Protestantism, not ancient barbarism.⁴⁶

When mainstream Protestants accused religious outsiders of imposture, many Catholics, again, saw an attempt to distance fanaticism from mainstream Protestantism. If outsiders were knowingly deceptive, Protestant hermeneutics could bear no blame for their existence. Many Catholics countered that radical outsiders interpreted the Bible as sincerely as mainstream Protestants—even outsiders as infamous as the theocrat John Alexander Dowie, who claimed to be the third incarnation of Elijah. As the *New York Freeman's Journal* put it: "If from his reading of the New Testament Dowie is convinced that he is Elijah III, whose mission is to found a new sect, why cannot he justify himself by appealing to the Protestant principle of private interpretation of the Bible?"⁴⁷ Other Catholics argued that even when outsiders were intentionally deceptive, Protestant Biblicism was still the fuel for their deceptions. Thus, though Dowie, Mary Baker Eddy, and others were "evident imposters," intentionally perverting the Bible's meaning "at every step," they were still also "a very striking example of that inevitable tendency . . . that characterizes the Protestant principle of private interpretation."⁴⁸ From both directions, Catholics resisted Protestant efforts to distance religious outsiders as imposters.

Ultimately, religious outsiders allowed Catholics to re-articulate the problem of authority in an American context: Liberated from Catholic oppression by locating

⁴⁶ James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers*. . . , rev. ed. (New York: John Murphy, 1905), 110–1, 467–77.

⁴⁷ Quoted in "Dowie Down," *Catholic Northwest Progress*, November 20, 1903, 4.

⁴⁸ *San Francisco Monitor* quoted in "Non-Catholic Queries, and Answers Thereto," *Intermountain Catholic*, November 28, 1903, 2.

religious authority in the Bible rather than the Pope, Protestants were at the mercy of every renegade exegete. Their freedom from Catholic authority actually tied their hands. In August 1832, the *United States Catholic Miscellany* reprinted a letter to an Evangelical periodical from concerned Presbyterian Nathan Fellows. Fellows's letter disparaged the "strange and delusive" doctrines of Mr. Joseph Smith Jr., the Mormon prophet. The editor of the *Catholic Miscellany* was equally dismissive of Smith, but instead of echoing Fellows's criticisms, he mocked Fellows's indignation: "The sleek and ghostly Presbyterian . . . declares" Mormonism "a 'new prodigy'—because forsooth it is somewhat later than his own." But "by what rule of Theological fencing," the Catholic editor asked, do "these holy men put such home thrusts on the poor Mormonites. . . . Have they not the same charter of Protestant principles? . . . to 'search the Scriptures'" and interpret them "in defiance of any external authority?" He concluded that "to question [the Mormons'] right—is to condemn the principle of the Reformation."⁴⁹ "By what species of logic" another Catholic asked, could Protestants "raise their voices against . . . the Millerites," who "like the others, have claimed this right of private judgment."⁵⁰ This Catholic strategy pitched Mormons, Millerites and others as products of private interpretation which no Protestant, however mainstream, possessed any authority to censure. "Only the Catholic [could] speak" to such groups "with authority."⁵¹

In Catholics' second interpretive schema, radical religious outsiders were Catholic "parod[ies]" posing as panaceas for Protestant deficiencies.⁵² Human beings had real

⁴⁹ "Amusing," *United States Catholic Miscellany*, August 25, 1832, 62.

⁵⁰ "The Tent of the Millerites," *Catholic Telegraph*, September 23, 1843, 302.

⁵¹ "Forty Years in the American Wilderness," *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, January 1890, 139.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 128.

spiritual needs for religious authority and authoritative religious truth. Papal authority and Catholic dogma filled those needs. But inbred anti-Catholic prejudice kept Protestants from turning to the Mother Church for nourishment. Religious outsiders consequently arose, seeking to replicate what Protestants had left behind in Rome. The frenetic growth of outsider groups amidst Protestants in America helped Catholics make their case that Protestants' spiritual "freedom" from Rome was really separation from the source of spiritual satisfaction. Outsiders' pale imitations of Catholic authority and dogma suggested that Protestantism could not meet the soul's intrinsic needs.

Joseph Smith's narrative, for example, addressed a Protestant audience; it offered a Biblical solution to what Catholics considered an exclusively Protestant problem—the ecclesiastical and theological fission fueled by private interpretation of the Bible. Catholics already had an authoritative arbiter of religious truth and they saw Smithian prophets as would-be compensators for the absence of such authority among Protestants. One of the most detailed articulations of this argument came from "the father of American Catholic Church historians," John Gilmary Shea, in a widely read 1885 article titled "Vagaries of Protestant Religious Belief."⁵³ Shea published the article in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, the premier Catholic periodical in the U.S.⁵⁴ "Unchecked by . . . ecclesiastical authority," Shea began, the right of private judgment among Protestants in America had produced "the most extraordinary theories" regarding religion. To Shea, "The moment [the Church's] teaching authority [was] denied, every

⁵³ J. Douglas Thomas, "A Century of American Catholic History," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 6, no. 1 (1987): 25 and John Gilmary Shea, "Vagaries of Protestant Religious Belief," *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, July 1885, 432–44.

⁵⁴ R. Scott Appleby, "American Catholic Quarterly Review," in *Religious Periodicals of the United States: Academic and Scholarly Journals*, ed. Charles H. Lippy (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 18–21.

religious idea [became] subjective.” Opportunistic prophets then stepped in to fill the “aching void” left by the rejection of papal authority.⁵⁵ Shea offered a historical catalogue of such prophets in America: Peter Rombert, Ann Lee, Joseph C. Dilks, Joseph Smith, Mathias, and Myra Mitta, among others. His analysis of their appeal to Americans closely echoed Smith’s language:

Prophets claiming to be recipients of special revelations from the Almighty have constantly appeared in this country, and never fail to obtain credulous followers. To the ordinary Protestant they say: You admit that the Catholic Church has fallen into error; but your ministers all disagree. There is no one to teach the people truth. Open your bibles. How did God act in such cases? Did he not raise up his prophets to announce his will to the people and lead them back to him? Even such am I.⁵⁶

Here the issue of authenticity—so crucial in Protestant discourse—once again faded into the background. “That [Smith] had some religious yearnings may be possible,” Shea mused, “and that he found in the systems around him nothing to satisfy any one, is no less probable.”⁵⁷ But regardless of sincerity or imposture, Shea argued, outsider prophets existed because spiritually deprived Protestants craved their re-packaged Catholic truths and simulated quasi-Catholic authority.

Another *Quarterly* article, from 1922, applied the same interpretive rubric to the metaphysical religions that flourished among late nineteenth-century American Protestants. Many marveled, the author noted, at the emergence of “such silly cults as Spiritism, Christian Science, New Thought, Theosophy, and others of their ilk. But let it be remembered that men in the pangs of hunger are not discriminating in their choice of food.” Protestants, “robbed” of religious authority and reliable dogmas, were “aimlessly groping for the food to satisfy their soul’s hunger and inborn craving” and “avidly

⁵⁵ Shea, “Vagaries,” 432–3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 438.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

grasping at anything that has the . . . semblance of such food.” Radical religious outsiders of the metaphysical variety were misguided attempts to satisfy starving Protestant souls with “grain[s]” of Catholic truth coated in religious “rubbish.”⁵⁸ Their emergence illuminated the spiritual poverty of Protestantism.

But Protestants’ intrinsic spiritual cravings need not be met by radical religionists, Catholics argued. When Protestants recognized that their spiritual needs were unmet, anti-Catholic prejudice kept them from looking to Catholicism (“They will believe in Mormonism, in phrenology, in spiritual rappings, . . . in any thing sooner than in Catholicity”), but the Mother Church had nonetheless already provided for Protestants’ spiritual needs.⁵⁹ An editorialist in the *Sacred Heart Review* wrote, “Deny men the miraculous and the supernatural, deny them the poverty-loving and wonder-working saints of God, and they will still seek clairvoyance and spiritism, Mrs. Eddy and Alexander Dowie.” Thus, clearly, “the craving for the supernatural and the invisible is inborn in man. Why not, then, be content with and thank God for the holily miraculous and supernatural as we find it in . . . the Church of God?”⁶⁰ Moreover, if Protestants did return to the Mother Church, America’s religious outsiders would no longer have any reason for being, because no need for imitators of Catholicism would exist. Arguing that radical outsiders tried to compensate for Protestantism’s lack of saints and sacred sites, for example, one *Intermountain Catholic* editorialist wrote that “If we in America had a Lourdes grotto we should be without Christian Science temples, and if we had a blessed

⁵⁸ J. S. Zybur, “The Psychology of Practical Godlessness,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1922, 17–8.

⁵⁹ “Article 6—Literary Notices and Criticisms,” *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, January 1, 1854, 130.

⁶⁰ “Studies in Saintship,” *Sacred Heart Review*, April 9, 1904, 232.

Bernadette we should be without a Mrs. Eddy and a blasphemous Dowie.”⁶¹ By its deficiencies then, mainstream Protestantism itself produced the radical religious outsiders that plagued it.

Portraying religious outsiders as parodies of Catholicism was particularly useful when Protestants tried to identify outsiders with Catholics. In 1844, the *Pittsburgh Catholic* recounted an episode that demonstrated the dynamics of such exchanges. The periodical had earlier tried to demonstrate that William Miller’s movement was an archetypal illustration of the problems and products of Protestant principles. The *Evangelist*, a Protestant periodical, had responded by “purporting to show a resemblance between Catholicism and Mormonism.” Instead of distancing themselves entirely from Mormons, as did most Protestants, the Catholic periodical unabashedly claimed all that was Catholic in Mormonism. And by portraying Mormonism as a Catholic parody, the periodical was able to embrace the Protestant polemic that identified Mormonism with Catholicism. Instead of debating whether Mormonism in fact looked like Catholicism, the Catholic editors granted the supposition and asked rhetorically what it proved, and then answered, “that in the wandering of errorists [*sic*], they have come back to some of the old paths.”⁶² Groping in the darkness of Protestantism, Mormons had grasped a few Catholic truths and gratefully imitated and incorporated them into their own religious system. In doing so they cast no shame on the Roman Church. Rather, they once again demonstrated the deficiencies of Protestantism. Mormonism parodied Catholicism

⁶¹ “Ritualists Look With Interest Upon the ‘Cult of the Virgin Mary,’” *Intermountain Catholic*, November 2, 1901, 1.

⁶² *Pittsburgh Catholic* quoted in *Catholic Telegraph*, June 8, 1844, 183.

because Protestantism could not provide the exegetical authority and authoritative theology spiritual seekers craved.

Pitching religious outsiders as products of Protestant principles and paucities played on a cultural consensus; similar to Islam, religious outsider groups could function as a polemical fulcrum because all sides agreed on their fanatical nature.⁶³ More importantly, this Catholic strategy aimed at the heart of Protestants' conceptions of themselves as exegetically and theologically liberated. Catholics saw that liberation as a spiritual deprivation that spawned imitators of Catholic authority on one hand and deniers of *any* external authority—including that of mainstream Protestants—on the other. In the minds of Catholics, mainstream Protestants, as willing converts or helpless onlookers, were captive to the outsider groups they helped produce.

⁶³ Thomas Kidd, "'Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil?' Early American Uses of Islam," *Church History* 72, no. 4 (2003): 766, 773.

CHAPTER 3

PROTESTANT INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Closely linked with exegetical liberation, intellectual liberation from Catholic authority was central to American Protestant self-conceptions. A representative mid-nineteenth-century Protestant asked, “What progress did [the mind] make for the many centuries before Luther proclaimed freedom of thought and the God-given, inalienable right of private judgment?”⁶⁴ Similar Protestant claims to intellectual liberation were ubiquitous during America’s long nineteenth century. Catholic commentary on religious outsiders in America aimed to counter such claims in two ways. First, Catholics mocked Protestant credulity. An unending stream of Protestant converts to religious outsiders groups, Catholics argued, belied the supposed enlightenment of Protestantism, and by extension, the supposedly superior morality of enlightened Protestant civilization. Protestant schools, moreover, compounded Protestants’ intellectual susceptibility to proselytizing religious radicals. And if such susceptibility was any indication, the Reformation could hardly be described—as it was by American Protestants—as the liberation of the mind from the “dark ages” of Christendom. Religious outsiders thus became a new American rhetorical fulcrum for old battles over Protestant historical narratives.

A favorite Catholic tactic was to note which European countries supplied Mormon converts. One commentator, responding to the 1883 Luther Jubilee, asserted that large percentages of “Mormon pilgrims” came “directly from northern Lutheran Europe” or “Lutheran Germany.”

⁶⁴ “The Romish Hierarchy,” *North American Review*, January 1856, 121.

“The Mormon seed finds no congenial soil in dark, benighted Italy, France, Spain or Ireland. It is only where Luther prepared his way that the Mormon evangelist finds willing ears to hear his message, willing feet to follow him to the happy Western land, where he will set them down safe from the galling restraints of Gospel morals.”⁶⁵

Such commentators kept careful tabs on Mormon immigrants as they arrived from Europe. The official journal of the Archdiocese of New Orleans reported in April 1869, that “one hundred and forty Swedish emigrants,” had “lately landed” and were “on their way to join the Mormons.” “As Sweden is a Protestant country, full of Bibles,” the editors remarked, “recruits for [Brigham] Young's moral kingdom are exclusively from among people who are ‘a law unto themselves.’”⁶⁶ Great Britain, a historically fruitful field for Mormon missionaries, received special attention. For example, as turn-of-the-century Anglican leaders vocally worked “to prevent Mormonism further strengthening its already strong grip on the Protestant rank and file,” one Catholic paper asked “Why should the campaign of this ‘soul-destroying creed’ be so successful in nations which ought, because of their Protestantism, to be veritable holies of holies of Christianity and morality?” And conversely, “Why do not ‘the polygamous conditions prevailing in Utah,’ . . . draw thousands of converts to Mormonism from the Catholic nations of Europe?”⁶⁷

As in the above cases, Catholic critiques often responded to Protestant depictions of the Reformation as an intellectual liberation that produced a morally superior civilization. In 1858, the future archbishop of Baltimore Martin John Spalding published a lengthy review of two publications on social, educational, and labor conditions in England for *Brownson's Quarterly*. He found the lower classes irreligious and oppressed

⁶⁵ “Martin Luther and His American Worshippers,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, July 1884, 552.

⁶⁶ *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, April 25, 1869, 8.

⁶⁷ “Where Does Mormonism Secure Its Recruits?” *Southern Guardian*, April 1, 1911, 8.

and the upper classes irreligious and oppressive. “With this startling picture of English morals before our eyes,” Spalding concluded, “can we wonder that Mormonism made so many recruits to its foul ranks in England and Wales? This thoroughly *reformed* and *enlightened* country, which has for three centuries been boasting its superior civilization, and sneering at its less fortunate, because ‘priest-ridden’ neighbors, constituted a fitting theatre for the zeal of the Mormon apostles.” In wry contrast, Spalding hyperbolically continued,

To the honor of Catholic Ireland, France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, be it said, that not one Catholic of any of these countries ever became converted to Mormonism! This striking fact is suggestive of much wholesome reflection. It presents an incontestable evidence of the superior moral tone of Catholic countries over those whose people are forever boasting their superior enlightenment, because of their having embraced the glorious Reformation. To the glory of Catholic nations be it said, that they are not yet sufficiently *enlightened* to turn Mormon.⁶⁸

Mormonism’s successes among Protestants suggested that the Reformation had neither enlightened the mind nor civilized morality.

Nor had it improved education. As Catholics and Protestants fought over “nonsectarian” education throughout much of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Catholics unsurprisingly connected religious outsiders’ successes with Protestant-controlled American schools.⁶⁹ Why were non-Catholic Americans so susceptible to religious outsiders? Because American education eliminated “from the training of the young all religious and moral instruction beyond a Protestant smattering,” Catholics answered.⁷⁰ A slightly more diplomatic proponent of the same argument, trying

⁶⁸ M. J. S., *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, April 1, 1858, 171.

⁶⁹ Steven K. Green, *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution: The Clash that Shaped Modern Church-State Doctrine* (New York: Oxford, 2012).

⁷⁰ “The Lesson of President Garfield’s Assassination,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, October 1881, 686.

to “account for the following which these various cults secure,” mused, “It may be that the system of education is defective in that it supplies nothing, and leaves our people in a state of mind that they are ready to accept anything so long as it is bolstered up with some selection from . . . the Bible.”⁷¹ To Catholics, whether the schools were Protestantized or, later, secularized because of Protestants, Catholicism’s exclusion from the public educational sphere left American minds unarmed against Bible-wielding religious outsider groups.

Such intellectual susceptibility ultimately gave Catholics new rhetorical ammunition against Protestant historiography. One Catholic commentator mocked Protestant histories of Christendom by noting that “multitudes” of Protestants had followed Mary Baker Eddy and John Alexander Dowie. “And yet,” he sneered, “we are told we have left the so-called dark ages.”⁷² Another offered the same critique by noting Protestant adherents of Adventism and Spiritism: “There must be, in spite of three centuries of ‘enlightenment,’ a vast amount of gross credulity and superstition among Protestants, when they are found giving serious attention and firm belief to such shallow miracle-mongers.”⁷³ Catholics’ frustrations at being the discursive foil for Protestant rationality often surfaced in such commentary. In 1846 a typical Protestant travelogue decried a group of Mexican Catholics who allegedly, at the imposition of their clergy, believed angels had constructed their cathedral. A Catholic editor reviewing the travelogue responded with a series of exasperated rhetorical questions.

“Has [the author] led so secluded a life as not to have heard of the doings of [William] Miller and his compeers? . . . Can [the Mexican Catholics] be charged

⁷¹ “New Thought,” *Intermountain Catholic*, October 16, 1909, 4.

⁷² “New Year’s Dawn,” *Intermountain Catholic*, December 28, 1907,

⁷³ “Miraculous Powers in the True Church,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1876, 339–

with the folly of watching whole nights in the agonizing expectation of the supreme Judge? Have they ever thought of supplying themselves with ascension robes, or of standing for hours in the attitude of pilgrims bound for heaven? . . . Did [the author] ever see a priest who had designated a certain day for the final judgment, and, after a first and second failure, as manifest as the noonday, still had the assurance to show himself in public?"

The reviewer concluded that all of this was "heard of in our own country," and advised the Protestant author "hereafter never to discourse on the credulity of Mexicans or the impositions of Catholic clergymen."⁷⁴ This kind of Catholic commentary asserted that proliferating radical, prophetic, and millenarian religious outsider groups fit oddly into American Protestant historical narratives of intellectual liberation and progress since the Reformation.

Just as often, Catholic critiques of Protestant claims to intellectual liberation pushed in the opposite direction. Incredulity, it seemed, was as much a product of Protestantism as credulity. Catholics broadly considered the Reformation the "nursing-mother of infidels," and targeted intellectual developments in Protestant sectors of Europe—British Deism, German Idealism, Straussian biblical criticism—as proof.⁷⁵ Here, what Catholics called "rationalism," "naturalism," "materialism," "atheism," or simply, "infidelity," were the natural modernizing tendencies of liberal Protestant thought unchecked by Catholic authority.⁷⁶ And as the "modernist impulse" began working its way out in American Protestantism during the final decades of the nineteenth century,

⁷⁴ "Critics on Mexico," *United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review*, October 1846, 528.

⁷⁵ "The New Protestant Criticism of Christianity," *Catholic World*, October 1878, 88.

⁷⁶ Francis Xavier Weninger, *Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity: An Appeal to Candid Americans*, 13th ed. (New York: Sadlier & Co., 1869) and "The Present and Future of the Catholic Church," *Religious Cabinet*, March 1842, 129.

Catholics in America increasingly offered similar explanations of diffuse disbelief closer to home.⁷⁷

Catholics were slightly more specific when they described incredulity in America as a reactionary (rather than dispositional) effect of orthodox (rather than liberal) Protestant thought. Here Catholics argued that the logic of Calvinist orthodoxy was so oppressive, and the “Puritanical training” from Calvinist divines so intransigent, that many raised under orthodoxy’s shadow recoiled from Christianity altogether.⁷⁸ This Catholic narrative took orthodox Calvinism as “the complete scientific statement of Protestantism,” total depravity as the center of that statement, and the denial of human reason as its practical effect. As Catholics saw it, “this leading dogma [total depravity] of Protestantism and its influence over men’s minds, has made . . . more inveterate infidels and bitterer enemies of the Christian religion than all other heresies combined”—none more notorious than the “Great Agnostic,” Robert Ingersoll.⁷⁹

Catholic commentators were eager to capitalize on Ingersoll’s infamy by tying his irreligion to his Presbyterian roots (his father was a Presbyterian minister).⁸⁰ The strategy was widespread enough that a standard Catholic narrative of Ingersoll’s life emerged—one whose historical accuracy Protestants often contested. Ingersoll was a representative “type,” Catholics asserted, “of a large class of Americans, the sons or pupils of old Calvinistic clergymen who held with John Calvin that human nature is ‘totally depraved’

⁷⁷ William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).

⁷⁸ P. J. Ryan, *Some of the Causes of Modern Religious Skepticism: A Lecture*. . . (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1885), 35.

⁷⁹ “The True and the False Friends of Reason,” *Catholic World*, June 1881, 290–1.

⁸⁰ A scholarly modern biography of Ingersoll is yet to be written but Susan Jacoby’s *The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) is useful.

since the fall,” and that human will was therefore nonexistent and human reason utterly corrupt. Part one of the classic Catholic take on Ingersoll’s life was that the intellectual oppressiveness of this hardline Calvinism soured Ingersoll to Christianity altogether. Calvinist divines like Ingersoll’s father were “hard, fanatical old fellows, like the early Puritans,” whose ideas about human nature, human will, and human reason, “helped make Ingersoll an infidel when he grew up.” Part two was the moral of the story: Ingersoll “might have been saved from agnosticism if he had been trained to use his intellect properly in a good Catholic college.”⁸¹ Catholics argued that their intellectual tradition wedded faith and reason in a way that saved thoughtful souls from the corrosive effects of modern skepticism. Their aim was to counter Protestant claims to intellectual liberation, and Ingersoll, as America’s most notorious irreligious outsider, gave Catholics a welcome rhetorical fulcrum for their efforts.

Beyond his personal history, Catholics argued, Ingersoll’s popularity in Protestant America pointed to a general culture of skepticism emanating from mainstream Protestantism: “It was prophesied long ago that Protestantism would end in Infidelity and Materialism. The history of our country presents a conclusive proof of this tendency. . . . The most pronounced atheists and scoffers of all revelation are as popular as any ‘preacher.’ Bob Ingersoll can ‘draw’ folly as well as Moody and Sankey.”⁸² Such comments seem to contradict Catholics’ constant mockery of Protestant credulity. But as Catholics saw it, Protestant skepticism and superstition went hand in hand. *Catholic World* editors in 1877, for example, argued that Protestantism fostered an environment of

⁸¹ Henry A. Brann, “Robert Ingersoll,” *Catholic World*, September 1899, 787–8.

⁸² “Why We Respect the Dead,” *Cleveland Universe* quoted in *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, October 13, 1878, 3.

unbelief, but that “the human mind can no more rest without belief in the supernatural than the human body can rest upon air.” Stifling unbelief consequently produced over-compensating “superstition”—“the offspring of infidelity.” Protestantism swayed “perpetually to and fro between a cold philosophical skepticism and the wildest extravagances of fanaticism and imposture.” Shakers, Mormons, Mesmerists, Spiritualists, and various prophets and visionaries were, the editors argued, examples of such extravagances—all reactions to the cold intellectual climate of the mainstream Protestantism from whence they came.⁸³

In 1843, the *Catholic Cabinet* used William Miller’s movement to make the same point: Protestantism fueled the fires of fanaticism and augured the ashes of atheism in a self-perpetuating cycle. “The confident announcement of the approaching end of the world, which forms a prominent feature of what is called ‘Millerism,’ excited no little attention during the last few months,” the editors began. “While the sober-minded part of the population—including all the Catholics—disregarded it as the result of fanaticism or imposture, it awakened very serious apprehensions in the minds even of many who cannot be considered as having adopted it; and those who have attached themselves to the new denomination, have a conviction of its truth, that has, in many instances, led to the most disastrous results.” The editors predictably saw in those results a “striking proof” of the necessity of “some certain authority to guide men in religion.” Ever since “the unhappy schism of the sixteenth century, mis-called ‘the Reformation,’” the editors continued, “zealots” and “enthusiasts” had mined mistaken theories from the pages of the Bible. “And yet,” past “mistakes and disappointments” had not “checked the growth of

⁸³ “The Two Prophets of Mormonism,” *Catholic World*, November 1877, 228.

seers among” Americans because “the principle [of private interpretation] from which all these various vagaries sprung is yet maintained; and according to the different temperament of those who act on it, will never fail to lead *either to incredulity of various degrees, or fanaticism of every conceivable or inconceivable description.*” This propulsion of both incredulity and credulity constituted the “history of the human mind under the influence of this principle [of private interpretation] . . . since the reformation.”⁸⁴

As with scripture and authority, faith and reason were territory Catholics and Protestants had fought over since the Reformation. Radical religious outsiders in America revamped this historical Catholic-Protestant contest. Utilizing America’s home-grown heretics and their successes on both sides of the pond, American Catholic commentary on the Protestant mind cast credulity and incredulity as mutually reinforcing dialectical consequences of the Reformation. Catholics believed both consequences called into question Protestant claims to intellectual freedom and Protestant histories of enlightenment progress, and that both consequences were most evident in America’s restless tide of religious and irreligious outsiders.

⁸⁴ “Fulfilment of Prophecy—The Church,” *Catholic Cabinet*, July 1843, 129.

CHAPTER 4

PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Like exegetical and intellectual freedom, U.S. liberalism's particular construction of religious freedom was central to American Protestant identity. As Elizabeth Fenton has recently written, U.S. liberalism posited religious pluralism and rights of private conscience as two of its central features, and the Roman Church operated as the spectral foil against which liberalism defined those features. In anti-Catholic discourse, Fenton argues, Protestantism portrayed itself as "a system that—unlike Catholicism—[could] accommodate a plurality of beliefs, *including Catholicism*, because of its commitment to liberal individualism."⁸⁵ But this, of course, entailed containing Catholic political power, because Americans couldn't trust Catholics to not constrict the religious freedom of others if given the opportunity. Anti-Catholicism, then, was a justifiable intolerance necessary for the preservation of religious tolerance generally.⁸⁶ Catholics often used religious outsiders to point out the apparent contradiction of this anti-Catholic liberalism. Noting the Protestant majority's seemingly special proscription of Catholic political participation in New Hampshire, for example, one commentator wrote that Catholics did not "enjoy equal liberties with the Free Lover, the Spiritualist, the Mormon or the Atheist. . . . And yet Protestantism impudently asserts its spirit of toleration; and yet

⁸⁵ Fenton, *Religious Liberties*, 4, 106, 144.

⁸⁶ Or, as Orestes Brownson put it: "From all quarters, from the press, the rostrum hall, and the Protestant pulpit, we hear it proclaimed, in every variety of tone, that the Church ought not to be tolerated in these united States, for she is anti-republican in her spirit and influence, and if once permitted to gain a foothold on our soil, she would destroy our free institutions, and deprive us of the inestimable advantages of self-government." "The Church and the Republic; or, the Church necessary to the Republic, and the Republic compatible with the Church," *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, July 1856, 274.

Protestantism hypocritically pretends that its very corner stone is the right of every man to judge and choose for himself in the matter of religion.”⁸⁷ As Catholics saw it, the logic of Protestant liberalism in America allowed even fanatical and immoral outsiders a degree of political participation that was denied to Catholics.

But Catholics’ protests against their particular mistreatment were most often superseded by their critiques of mainstream Protestantism’s general intolerance. In the summer of 1838, the vocal freethinker Abner Kneeland spent sixty days in a Boston jail after being indicted for blasphemy. He had printed the offending statements in his freethought journal, the *Boston Enquirer*, in 1833 and after four trials over the course of five years his appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Court was denied. The courts, as Roderick S. French has shown, were deeply concerned about Kneeland’s subversion of social order, but ultimately the charges centered on Kneeland’s statement of disbelief in God.⁸⁸ The blasphemy conviction incensed Catholics because it belied Protestant professions of religious tolerance. Catholics vocally criticized the Kneeland conviction as a clear-cut case of Protestant bigotry.⁸⁹

More importantly, rather than preserve the particularity of their own mistreatment by Protestants, Catholics connected anti-Catholic incidents, like the burning of the Charlestown Convent, to cases like Kneeland’s in order to prove a general Protestant pattern of intolerance.⁹⁰ That pattern stretched from Calvin’s Geneva to Puritan New

⁸⁷ “Intolerance and Impudence,” *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, March 25, 1877, 4.

⁸⁸ Roderick S. French, “Liberation from Man and God in Boston: Abner Kneeland’s Free-Thought Campaign, 1830–1839,” *American Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1980): 202–21 and Christopher Grasso, “Skepticism and American Faith: Infidels, Converts, and Religious Doubt in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 22 (Autumn 2002): 465–508.

⁸⁹ “Church and State,” *Catholic Telegraph*, July 11, 1834, 263.

⁹⁰ “Freedom of Opinion,” *Catholic Telegraph*, December 10, 1835, 14.

England to the newly disestablished Massachusetts that jailed Kneeland.⁹¹ And in later decades many Catholics approached Protestant responses to Mormonism in the same way: by connecting anti-Catholic incidents to anti-Mormon ones—like the widespread Protestant opposition to the seating of Senator-elect Reed Smoot.⁹² This was a significant response to the Protestant discourse analyzed by Fenton. If anti-Catholicism was part and parcel of Protestant reactions to other religious outsiders—from Quakers to freethinkers to Mormons—then it became less convincing to consider anti-Catholicism a defense of liberalism vis-à-vis Catholicism's peculiar threat to religious freedom. Religious outsiders and the Protestant reactions they provoked thus aided Catholics in their efforts to undercut one of the central rationales behind anti-Catholicism in America.

Those Protestant reactions to religious outsiders provoked substantial Catholic commentary on the relationship between church and state. While conservative and liberal Catholics in America diverged widely on what the ideal church-state model was, many shared a conviction that the prevailing Protestant model was both incoherent and insufficient, and religious outsiders helped them make their case. Mormons, more than any other white nineteenth-century religious outsider, provoked the federal government and provided ammunition for Catholic critiques. Catholics used Mormonism to argue that Protestants couldn't exercise legal power against religious outsiders without enshrining Christianity, Protestantism, or some *form* of Protestantism, as a *de facto* establishment. In December 1871, three months after Brigham Young was indicted for adultery on account of his plural marriages, editors of the *Morning Star* and *Catholic Messenger* laid out a

⁹¹ "Congregationalists American Church-Genealogy—Its Innate Cleaving To Church and State Union—And Effects Thereof," *Catholic Telegraph*, July 3, 1845, 202–4.

⁹² See, for example, *Intermountain Catholic*, June 6, 1903, 4.

common Catholic critique. They announced sardonically that “Gen. [President] Grant’s virtue boils over against the Mormons,” and that “he declares that Mormons shall not violate his ideas of decency under the cloak of religion.” The editors objected to “the assumption of power by a President to decide on the question whether a religion is genuine or a mere cloak.” “How it is possible,” the editors wrote, “for Congress itself to legislate against a polygamous religion, without recognizing Christianity as the religion of the country, we cannot see. But such a recognition would be, to a certain extent, the dreaded union of Church and State.” The editors concluded that as a Christian, Grant was “not going to tolerate people in being anything else, no matter what the Constitution may say. In the same way, he being a Methodist, those who are not Methodists may look out.”⁹³ The editors carefully clarified though, that their comments were not a defense of Mormonism; they firmly believed Mormonism ought to be constrained. Rather, the editors’ point was that Protestants were assuming a legal authority that their incoherent model of church and state steadfastly disclaimed. As Catholics saw it, Protestant reactions to Mormonism pushed the incoherence of that model into full view.

Other Catholics—conservative and liberal—emphasized the insufficiency of Protestant responses to Mormonism. Perhaps the most widely read and discussed example came from America’s “most prominent . . . Catholic intellectual”—Orestes Brownson.⁹⁴ Brownson’s move from Boston to New York in 1855 marked a turning point in his Catholic apologetics. Combativeness gave way somewhat to a “synthetic vision” of the compatibility of Catholicism and American institutions, which he would vocalize for

⁹³ “The Message,” *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, December 10, 1871, 4.

⁹⁴ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 43.

the next nine years.⁹⁵ On 13 February 1856, Brownson gave a lecture on “the Church and the Republic” to a packed New York Tabernacle. He printed an expanded version of the lecture in the July issue of his *Quarterly* and two follow-up elaborations in January and April 1857.⁹⁶ His argument was that Catholicism was not incompatible with American religious liberty as Protestants portrayed it; rather it was religious liberty’s only guarantor. The Church was “necessary as a mediating power between the individual and the state.”⁹⁷ With divine authority, independent of individuals and the state, the Church could check the power of both—keeping individuals’ judgments from throwing society into anarchy and state decisions from descending into despotism.

Brownson used the Mormon problem to demonstrate the insufficiency of the prevailing Protestant model of church and state for such a task. “What will you do with [the Mormons]?” he asked. “Suffer them to go on and live and act according to their individual reason and conscience? But that is incompatible with the safety of the state, the peace of society, and the morals of the community. Suppress them by the strong arm of power? But who gave the state authority to decide questions of conscience?”⁹⁸ In the disestablished United States, any ruling on the Mormon conscience usurped an authority Protestants ostensibly denied. Brownson argued that only the visible, organized, Catholic Church that claimed divine authority independent of the individual and the state could solve the Mormon problem.

⁹⁵ Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes Brownson: American Religious Weathervane* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 234–81.

⁹⁶ Brownson, “Church and the Republic; or the Church necessary to the Republic,” 274–308; “Brownson on the Church and the Republic,” *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, January 1857, 1–28; and “Article II—A Response to O. A. Brownson,” *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, July 1857, 327–349.

⁹⁷ “Article II,” 328.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 346.

Or, as the *Catholic World* put it in 1872, “The sort of security Protestantism gives to religious liberty may be seen in the proceedings of the general government against the Mormons. It does not interfere with their religion: it pretends it only enforces against them the laws of the Union—laws, by the way, made expressly against them.” Mainstream Protestants in America were analogous to Queen Elizabeth, who “held religious liberty sacred, and abhorred the very thought of persecuting Catholics. She only executed the laws against them.” The *World* had “no sympathy” for the Mormons, “but the principle on which the government proceeds against them would justify it, or any sect that could control it, in suppressing the church, and all Protestant sects even but itself.” Like Brownson, the *World* concluded that the “only possible security for liberty is in having a divinely instituted authority that is infallible in faith and morals, competent to tell the state as well as individuals how far it may go, and where it must stop.”⁹⁹ While Protestants saw themselves as purveyors and preservers of religious freedom, many Catholics believed that Protestant reactions to religious outsiders proved otherwise: Protestants’ only options were to let the outsider’s private conscience defy the state or use the state to usurp authority over private conscience. By provoking federal action on the national stage, Mormons in particular provided Catholics with a case study for contending that the Roman Church, independent of individuals and the state, could protect religious freedom where Protestantism could not.

But Protestants’ federal reactions to Mormonism were not only insufficient because they lacked coherent legal authority. Catholics also argued that these reactions

⁹⁹ “Popular Objections to Papal Infallibility,” *Catholic World*, February 1872, 602. For an example of a more conservative periodical making the same argument, see “The Mormon Decision,” *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, January 19, 1879, 4.

were ineffectual because Protestants lacked the necessary *moral* authority, *whether or not* they had any legal authority. Here Catholics linked Protestantism to Mormon polygamy in ways that made Protestants complicit in the Mormon Menace, thus contesting their moral authority to combat it. Their central strategy was to triangulate Protestantism, the legal laxity and prevalent practice of divorce in America, and Mormon polygamy. Sometimes Catholics focused on linking Protestantism directly to polygamy; sometimes they emphasized Protestantism's relationship to American divorce practices; and sometimes they explicitly traced a supposed historical progression from Protestantism, to lax divorce laws, to a weakened marriage culture and the resultant rise of Mormon polygamy in America. Cumulatively the effect was the same. In each of these rhetorical schemes, the Catholic punchline was that Protestantism could not stop Mormon polygamy; only Catholics, unwavering defenders of marriage, could respond to the problem with moral authority. Mormon polygamy was thus a new rhetorical resource for long-standing Catholic contentions about the sacramental nature of marriage and the social ills that followed from Protestant permissiveness toward divorce. But the marriage argument was inextricable from the larger argument—which Catholics rarely lost sight of—that the informal Protestant establishment was insufficient to protect religious liberty from the threat of Mormonism and Mormon polygamy.

When, on the sundry occasion of the dedication of a Luther monument in Washington DC, assembled Protestant clergymen hailed Luther as the father of their religious liberty, and declared that the “the existence of this great republic, with its freedom of religion and conscience. . . would have been impossible without the Reformation”—Catholics scoffed. As they saw it, Luther had hardly been an expositor or

proponent of religious liberty, let alone one worthy of commemoration at the nation's capital. "But are there no teachings of Luther that might be commemorated by a statue, no parts of our soil where its erection would be appropriate?" the *Quarterly Review* asked. "Let Luther have his due. . . . Let his statues grace the temples, courts and dwellings of Salt Lake City, and adorn the highways of Utah, where his theories are carried out to their full extent."¹⁰⁰ This was the direct route to linking Protestantism and polygamy, and Catholics traversed it frequently throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. In 1917, *America* magazine declared that "whether or not Luther rejected this doctrine in an isolate passage towards the end of his life, is of small concern. In word and practice he had defended polygamy as entirely 'Christian,' and lawful before God. Mormonism is nothing more than the consistent application of his words. Polygamy is inseparably connected with the name of Luther; we cannot loathe the one and extol the other."¹⁰¹ Such linkages of Protestantism and polygamy loomed large in Catholic critiques of Protestant responses to Mormon marriage practices. Their straightforward intent was to undermine any Protestant pretense to moral authority on the Mormon Question.

Toward the same end, Catholics also often linked Protestantism to the prevalence of divorce in America and compared polygamy favorably to Protestant divorce culture. Nowhere did they do so more frequently than during the national controversy over the seating of Mormon senator-elect Reed Smoot. As the *Literary Digest* noted in 1904, most of the "Roman Catholic papers [took] no part in the campaign" to block Smoot's seating.

¹⁰⁰ "Martin Luther and His American Worshippers," *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, July 1884, 553.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Husslein, "Luther and Woman," *America*, July 7, 1917, 320.

More often than not they enjoyed “scoffing at the whole crusade.”¹⁰² But for such Catholics, it wasn’t primarily the political proceedings that lacked credibility, it was the professed Protestant intolerance of polygamy that propelled those proceedings. As a Father Cronin of the *Catholic Union and Times* expressed, “It would not surprise us if many of the men and women who are raising the hue and cry against Mormon Smoot, were divorced people. And we all know how Blaine’s brilliant cousin, ‘Gail Hamilton’ (Abigail Dodge) described the difference between Mormonism and divorce. ‘The one drives wives abreast,’ she said; ‘the other drives them tandem.’”¹⁰³ Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Catholics frequently made similar snide remarks about the superficial differences between polygamy and divorce—always the jab was that marrying multiple women in succession was worse than marrying multiple women simultaneously; at least Mormons supported all of their wives financially. In almost every case, Catholics deployed such remarks in response to Protestant outrage over Mormon polygamy—pinning the widespread practice of divorce on Protestants in order to present themselves as the only moral authorities on the Mormon Question.

More often than not, however, Catholics went a step further. Protestantism, they claimed, by severing marriage from the sacramental system and then relaxing legal strictures against divorce, weakened America’s marriage culture and actually contributed to the emergence of Mormon polygamy. Catholics most often made their case for Protestantism’s consequent complicity in the Mormon problem with lengthy historical arguments. At times they were capable of concise statements. For example, one article asserted that “Luther . . . justified [bigamy], and our country, Protestant in its tone,

¹⁰² *Literary Digest*, February 6, 1904, 182.

¹⁰³ Cronin quoted in *Intermountain Catholic*, January 30, 1904, 4.

legalized it by its lavishly granted divorces, so relaxing the marriage tie that Mormonism, with polygamy as a doctrine, is firmly fastened on the land.”¹⁰⁴ But such succinct summaries needed no unpacking because Catholic commentators had so often expounded the argument elsewhere.

In one of the more thorough expositions, the *Quarterly Review* laid out a historical narrative of the rise of divorce in Protestant America and then laid Mormon polygamy at Protestants’ feet. “All sincere Protestants . . . know and admit that the Catholic Church is not responsible for raising the sluices of divorce, but that its possibility arises from the looseness of Protestant teaching and practice. They destroyed the sanctity of marriage when they denied its sacramental character.” As proof of their assertion, the editors strung together eminent historical examples of Protestant permissiveness, starting with Cranmer’s acquiescence to Henry VIII’s divorce and Luther and Melancthon’s nod to Philip of Hesse’s bigamy. Thus “laxity of opinion and teaching on the sacredness of the marriage bond and on the question of divorce, originated among the Protestants of Continental Europe in the sixteenth century.” Such laxity was soon embodied in continental European legislation, then in the laws of New England, and from thence to the legal codes of the entire United States, in disregard of “the Roman Pontiffs” who “loom[ed] up” throughout that same history as “the champions of [marriage’s] sanctity and indissolubility.”¹⁰⁵

Consequently, contemporary Protestant America was “notorious” for “the looseness of legislation” surrounding marriage and divorce, and such “loose laws” were the “chief champions” of Mormonism. In other words, Mormon polygamy flourished in

¹⁰⁴ “The Inquisition,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1876, 277.

¹⁰⁵ “The Catholic Doctrine of Marriage,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, July 1883, 385–9.

America because Protestants had loosened the marriage culture. “On the one hand, this organized sect assails the unity and sanctity of marriage by doctrinal and practical simultaneous polygamy; on the other, the frequency and facility of divorce among the people of the United States, by establishing a system of ‘consecutive’ polygamy, sap the foundation of the whole social order” creating a climate conducive to “Mormonism itself.” Polygamous Mormon society’s similarity to Protestant divorce culture acclimated the former to American soil. “The difference is slight between a man who has ten wives at the same time, in the same place, and him who has ten in the same or in different States of the Union, all living and all divorced but one.” Ultimately, the Catholic editors argued that, as a result, “the Protestant sects are inadequate to resist [Mormonism’s] onward progress” because “the United States, where so many Protestant ‘branches’ exist, and where being in the majority they control civil legislation on the subject, are now morally degraded on account of the facility with which divorces are granted.” The editors concluded that Protestants could only “stand wringing their hands in hopeless despair.”¹⁰⁶

Whether insufficient in moral authority because of divorce, or incoherent in legal authority because of disestablishment, or intolerant in actual practice despite professions of liberalism, mainstream Protestants were, in Catholic eyes, unable to muster a compelling response to America’s most menacing religious outsiders. Catholics argued that this failure mattered because *both* the menacing religious outsiders *and* mainstream Protestantism’s responses to them posed significant threats to sustainable religious freedom in America. Catholics had long clashed with Protestants over the proper ordering of church, state, society, and morality, but America’s nineteenth and early twentieth-

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

century religious outsiders and Protestants' tortured attempts to tame them gave Catholics rich new rhetorical resources in the ongoing debates.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Catholic critique of Protestantism in American analyzed in this study was not without precedents. Among the early republic's most prominent and published Catholics was the Irish-born apologist Mathew Carey. Beginning in the 1790s, Carey publicly, concertedly countered Protestant contentions that Catholicism was illiberal and intolerant of religious pluralism. One of his most salient strategies presaged the anti-Protestant polemics presented in chapter three. Nicholas Pellegrino has argued that Carey's primary tactic was to turn a deaf ear to the papacy's actual pronouncements and to turn the history of colonial Protestant establishments and contemporary state establishments against his accusers. Congregational establishments in New England, Carey argued, had long persecuted Quakers, Baptists, and Anglicans. Colonial Anglican establishment in the South had returned the favor by marginalizing Puritans and Presbyterians, among others. In Carey's day, despite disestablishment at the federal level, state establishments persisted, as did the persecutory tendencies of their Protestant proponents. With what warrant, then, could Protestants call Catholics illiberal, Carey often asked.¹⁰⁷ His critique of the *formal* Protestant establishments was an important predecessor to widespread Catholic deconstructions of the *informal* Protestant moral establishment that would rise, phoenix-like, from their ashes.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholas Pellegrino, "'Enlightened, Tolerant, and Liberal': Mathew Carey, Catholicism, and Religious Freedom in the New Republic," in *The Lively Experiment: Religious Toleration in America From Roger Williams to the Present*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2015): forthcoming.

While Carey and some of his comrades preceded the nineteenth and early twentieth-century Catholic critique of Protestantism in America, other American Catholics have followed in its footsteps. Readers of Brad Gregory's *Unintended Reformation*, for example, will recognize that many elements in his monumental analysis of the long-term consequences of sixteenth-century theological conflict have an American history, which this study has tried to recover in part.¹⁰⁸ For examples, Gregory sees longitudinal links from the current hostility of science toward religion, the explanatory power of atheism, the exclusion of absolute truth claims from the domains of meaning and morality, religious hyper-pluralism, the subordination of religion to state regimes, and contemporary American culture wars, among other post-modern ills of our secularized society; to the *sola scriptura* at the center of Luther's revolution. As a leading scholar in his field, Gregory writes in a professional rather than a polemical key, but his conclusions are, nonetheless, in the tradition of the Catholic commentary considered in this study.

In other words, from Mathew Carey to Orestes Brownson to Brad Gregory, American Catholic thinkers have unsurprisingly perceived devastating reverberations of the Reformation all around them. And publications tracing the fault-lines of fractured ages back to the religious revolution of the sixteenth century have marked American Catholic discourse for centuries. Catholic views on scripture and authority (chapter 2), faith and reason (chapter 3), and church and state (chapter 4), did not suddenly develop in the nineteenth century; but disestablishment, denominationalism, and their discontents *did*. During America's long nineteenth century, Catholics encountered a historically

¹⁰⁸ Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

unprecedented matrix of disestablished denominationalism, evangelical revivalism, prophetic excess, millenarian zeal, modern skepticism, Mormon polygamy, Protestant power, and anti-Catholic prejudice. Their use of religious outsiders to critique mainstream Protestantism tailored a traditional Catholic strategy to that historically-singular matrix of religious and political conditions. The dissolution of state establishments made the persistence of Protestant political and legal power more jarring than ever; the proliferation of radical (ir)religionists amidst a Protestant population gave Catholic predictions about the Reformation's inevitable consequences an unparalleled sense of immediacy; and an increasingly shrill and ubiquitous Protestant discourse denigrating the Roman threat to Americans' exegetical, intellectual, and religious freedom demanded a Catholic response. That response was embedded in a long tradition of Catholic commentary, but the nineteenth century nonetheless provided unprecedented provocation and unprecedented rhetorical resources for Catholic critiques of mainstream Protestantism in America.

Once it had emerged in the 1830s, however, this Catholic commentary on the proliferation of sectarians, seers, and skeptics in American religious history maintained a remarkable stability within the chronological confines of the succeeding century. When Orestes Brownson took on Transcendentalism in 1848, his attempt to turn its tenets back against mainstream Protestantism was standard Catholic procedure. He titled his essay, "Protestantism Ends in Transcendentalism." His argument was that, notwithstanding the protestations of Transcendentalists and mainstream Protestants alike, the former was no fringe group, no radical departure from fundamental Protestant principles, but the inescapable logical terminus of the Reformation project, the fulfillment of

Protestantism's purpose, the soul and center of Protestantism at its purest. The particulars of Brownson's argument circled around the principle of private interpretation, but his meta-argument was about the mainstream and the margins. Brownson would not allow Transcendentalists or their opponents to define Transcendentalism as Other. He resisted the mutually-constructive attempts of both insiders and outsiders to distance themselves from each other. Normative Protestantism, Brownson insisted, had to bear the shame of its progeny.¹⁰⁹

Brownson's essay on Transcendentalism is a signpost—a salient indicator of the continuity of Catholic commentary on American religion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout that period, Catholics tried to prove, like Brownson, that the margins were the mainstream and vice versa. Once in place, their rhetorical strategies for doing so remained set, even as the cast of characters on the American religious scene changed over time. Catholics talked about antebellum Millerites and turn-of-the-century Spiritualists—in the same terms—as products of private interpretation and Protestant education; Joseph Smith in 1830 and John Alexander Dowie in 1905 as Catholic parodies compensating for Protestant deficiencies; and Abner Kneeland's blasphemy and Reed Smoot's election to the U.S. Senate seventy years later as stumbling blocks to the indefensible informal Protestant establishment. Even into the 1920s and 1930s, Catholics were painting Protestant divorce culture with the brush of Mormon polygamy, portraying metaphysical religions as crass Catholic imitations, and decrying the rise of freethought as a reaction to Calvinist orthodoxy—all rhetorical strategies that had continued in essentially the same form since their first deployments during the previous century. For a

¹⁰⁹ Orestes Brownson, "Protestantism Ends in Transcendentalism," *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, July 1846, 369–99.

hundred years, Catholics persistently applied the same interpretive rubrics to religious and irreligious outsiders, ultimately attributing aberrations of every stripe to mainstream Protestantism. Despite the dizzying instability and historical development of American religion, Catholics approached emergent (ir)religious outsiders with a set of relatively stable rhetorical strategies that did not change or develop significantly for an entire century. Regarding the study of American religious history, David Holland has noted that “a discipline preoccupied with change over time tends not to be drawn to constants.”¹¹⁰ One of those constants, I contend, was the widespread American Catholic critique of Protestantism considered in this study.

I noted in the introduction that the discipline’s neglect of that Catholic critique has helped obscure historical Catholic perspectives on the discipline’s object of study: American religious history. This point bears some elaboration here. When (post-Sydney Ahlstrom) senior scholars in American religion narrate the history of their field, they almost invariably begin with major nineteenth-century Protestant surveyors—Robert Baird, Philip Schaff, Daniel Dorchester, and Leonard Woolsey Bacon—who envisioned some unifying (providential) principle—i.e. evangelicalism—propelling Protestant progress throughout American religious history. In doing so, these senior scholars assert that the field was dominated in its nascence by consensus models of American religious history.¹¹¹ The presupposition behind that assertion is that the modern field began as

¹¹⁰ David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford, 2011), 215.

¹¹¹ For examples, see Moore, *Religious Outsiders*, 3–21; Thomas Tweed, ed., *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–23; Catherine L. Albanese, *American Religious History: A Bibliographic Essay* (Washington, DC: United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2002); and Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, eds., *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1–23.

Protestant church history, before widening, Whig-like, into the history of American religions in the 1960s and 1970s. Rare exceptions, like Jon Butler and Philip Goff, have contested that presupposition. They argue that instead of viewing the beginnings of the field as a narrow stream (Protestant church history) that widened into an inclusive river (American religious history), we ought to view the field's genesis itself as plural: multiple insular streams (Protestant historiography, Catholic historiography, Jewish historiography)—all looking inward at their respective traditions—that eventually converged into the participatory and pluralistic foci of American religious history.¹¹²

Butler and Goff are right to revise the presupposition: the convergence of long-standing traditional historiographies—not merely the voluntary broadening of Protestant historiography—produced the contemporary field of American religious history. But the initial assertion needs revising too. Nineteenth-century surveys of American religion were not the exclusive purview of Protestant historians and their consensus models. Further, contra Goff, nineteenth-century Catholic historiography was not merely an inward-looking stream that would eventually flow into the modern field. Nineteenth-century Catholics surveyed American religious history as truly (and problematically) as did their oft-noted Protestant counterparts, with equally intense interest in a unifying (albeit not providential) principle behind it all. The commentators considered in this study could be seen as constituting, collectively, a historian of American religion on par with Baird or Bacon. What this collective Catholic surveyor of American religious history offered was a counterpart to the consensus models of Protestant historians—the

¹¹² Philip Goff, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Religion in America* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1–13.

consensus model turned *inside-out*, as it were, in which the unifying principle propelling American religious history was, ironically, Protestant fission.

Ultimately, for religious studies scholars, historical Catholic commentary on such Protestant fission is significant because it reveals a domain of responsive strategies relative to religious prejudice. What resources do religious Others reach for as they respond to their detractors? For nineteenth and early twentieth-century Catholics marginalized by mainstream American Protestantism, one such resource was other religious Others. These groups—marginalized as they were by the same Protestant mainstream—allowed Catholics to lay bare the mechanics of their own marginalization as they countered Protestant characterizations of Catholic oppression. This study thus illuminates a rare instance in which one marginalized religious group used other marginalized religious groups to interrogate and critique, rather than appeal to and deflect criticism from, a religious mainstream.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Periodicals

America

American Catholic Quarterly Review

Arkansas Catholic

Boston Pilot

Brownson's Quarterly Review

Catholic Cabinet

Catholic Northwest Progress

Catholic Telegraph

Catholic Union and Times

Catholic World

Century Illustrated Magazine

Congregationalist and Christian World

Forum

Intermountain Catholic

Jesuit; or, Catholic Sentinel

Literary Digest

Monitor

Morning Star and Catholic Messenger

North American Review

New York Daily Times

New York Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register

Outlook

Pilot

Pittsburgh Catholic

Sacred Heart Review

Southern Guardian

Tablet

Times and Seasons

Truth Teller

United States Catholic Magazine

United States Catholic Magazine and Monthly Review

United States Catholic Miscellany

Western Watchman

Other Primary Sources

Benson, Robert Hugh. *A Book of Essays*. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1916.

Brownson, Henry Francis, ed. *The Words of Orestes Brownson*. New York: AMS Press, 1966.

Conway, Bertrand L. *The Question-Box Answer. Replies to Question Received on Missions to Non-Catholics*. New York: Columbus Press, 1909.

Gibbons, James Cardinal. *The Faith of Our Fathers*. . . . Rev. Ed. New York: John Murphy, 1905.

Mazzuchelli, Samuel. *The Memoirs of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, O. P.* Chicago: Priory Press, 1967.

Ryan, P. J. *Some of the Causes of Modern Religious Skepticism: A Lecture*. . . . St. Louis: B. Herder, 1885, 35.

Weninger, Francis Xavier. *Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity: An Appeal to Candid Americans*. 13th Ed. New York: Sadlier & Co., 1869.

Secondary Sources

Albanese, Catherine L. *American Religious History: A Bibliographic Essay*. Washington, DC: United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2002.

Beneke, Chris and Christopher S. Grenda, eds. *The Lively Experiment: Religious Toleration in America From Roger Williams to the Present*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2015.

Bennett, James B., “‘Until This Curse of Polygamy Is Wiped Out’: Black Methodists, White Mormons, and Constructions of Racial Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century.” *Religion and American Culture* 21, no. 2 (2011): 167–194.

Billington, Ray Allen. *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*. New York: Macmillan, 1938.

Bowman, Matt. *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Brekus, Catherine A., and W. Clark Gilpin, editors. *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

- Carey, Patrick W. "The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectuals and the Progressive Era by Thomas E. Woods." *Journal of American History* 92, no. 2 (2005): 642.
- Carey, Patrick W. *Orestes Brownson: American Religious Weathervane*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Cohen, Charles L., and Paul Boyer, editors. *Religion and the Culture of Print in Modern America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- Cook, Philip L. *Zion City, Illinois: Twentieth-Century Utopia*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996.
- Cox, Robert S. *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003.
- Cross, Robert D. *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- Cummings, Kathleen Sprows. "American Saints: Gender and the Re-Imaging of U.S. Catholicism in the Early Twentieth Century." *Religion and American Culture* 22, no. 2 (2012): 203–31.
- Curran, Robert Emmett. *Michael Augustine Corrigan and the Shaping of Conservative Catholicism in America, 1878–1902*. New York: Arno Press, 1978.
- D'Agostino, Peter R. *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Davis, David Brion. "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205–24.

- Dolan, Jay P. *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- Dolan, Jay P. "Catholic Attitudes Towards Protestants." In *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn. New York: Crossroad, 1987.
- Dolan, Jay P. *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Drury, Marjule Anne. "Anti-Catholicism in Germany, Britain, and the United States: A Review and Critique of Recent Scholarship." *Church History* 70, no. 1 (2001): 98–131.
- Fenton, Elizabeth. *Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Flake, Kathleen. *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Fluhman, Spencer. "*A Peculiar People*": *Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Franchot, Jenny. *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

- French, Roderick S. "Liberation from Man and God in Boston: Abner Kneeland's Free-Thought Campaign, 1830–1839." *American Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1980): 202–21.
- Givens, Terryl L. *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Gjerde, Jon. *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Gloege, Timothy E. W., "Faith Healing, Medical Regulation, and Public Religion in Progressive Era Chicago." *Religion and American Culture* 23, no. 2 (2013): 185–231.
- Goff, Philip, editor. *The Blackwell Companion to Religion in America*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Gordon, Sarah Barringer. *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Gorman, Robert. *Catholic Apologetical Literature in the United States (1784–1858)*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1939.
- Grasso, Christopher. "Skepticism and American Faith: Infidels, Converts, and Religious Doubt in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Journal of the Early Republic* 22 (Autumn 2002): 465–508.
- Green, Arnold H. "Mormonism and Islam: From Polemics to Mutual Respect and Cooperation." *BYU Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001): 199–220.

- Green, Steven K. *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution: The Clash that Shaped Modern Church-State Doctrine*. New York: Oxford, 2012.
- Gregory, Brad. *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Griffin, Susan M. *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Grow, Matthew J. “‘I Consider the Proper Authority Rests Among the Mormons’: Oran Brownson to Orestes Brownson on Oran’s Conversion to Mormonism.” *Mormon Historical Studies* 4 (Fall 2013): 191–8.
- Grow, Matthew J. “The Whore of Babylon and the Abomination of Abominations: Nineteenth-Century Catholic and Mormon Mutual Perceptions and Religious Identity.” *Church History* 73, no. 1 (2004): 139–167.
- Haden, Kyle E. “Anti-Catholicism in U.S. History: A Proposal for a New Methodology.” *American Catholic Studies* 124, no. 4 (2013): 27–45.
- Heath, Alden R. “‘Apostle in Zion.’” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 70 (1977): 98–113.
- Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955.
- Hofstadter, Richard. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf, 1965.
- Holland, David F. *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*. New York: Oxford, 2011.

- Howard, Thomas Albert. *God and the Atlantic: America, Europe, and the Religious Divide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Hutchison, William R. *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Hutchison, William R. *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Hutchison-Jones, Christine. "Reviling and Revering the Mormons: Defining American Values, 1890-2008." PhD diss., Boston University, 2011.
- Ivey, Paul Eli, *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States, 1894–1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- Jacoby, Susan. *The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Kidd, Thomas S. *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Kidd, Thomas S. "'Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil?' Early American Uses of Islam." *Church History* 72, no. 4 (2003): 766–90.
- Lippy, Charles H., editor. *Religious Periodicals of the United States: Academic and Scholarly Journals*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986.
- Malcom, Allison O'Mahen. "Anti-Catholicism and the Rise of Protestant Nationhood in North American, 1830-1871." PhD diss., University of Illinois, Chicago, 2011.
- Marchant, Brandi H. "Defined by what we are not: The Role of anti-Catholicism in the Formation of Early American Identity." PhD diss., Liberty University, 2012.

- Marr, Timothy. *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Massa, Mark S. *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. New York: Crossroad, 2003.
- McGreevy, John T. *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*. New York: Norton, 2003.
- McKevitt, Gerald. *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Moloney, Deirdre M. *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Moore, R. Laurence. *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Noll, Mark A. “A Jesuit Interpretation of Mid-Nineteenth-Century America: ‘Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism.’” *BYU Studies* 45:3 (2006): 39–74.
- Noll, Mark A. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Nordstrom, Justin. *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- O’Brien, David J. *The Renewal of American Catholicism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

- Pagliarini, Marie Anne. "The Pure American Woman and the Wicked Catholic Priest: An Analysis of Anti-Catholic Literature in Antebellum America." *Religion and American Culture* 9, no. 1 (1999): 97–128.
- Pellegrino, Nicholas. "'Enlightened, Tolerant, and Liberal': Mathew Carey, Catholicism, and Religious Freedom in the New Republic." In *The Lively Experiment: Religious Toleration in America From Roger Williams to the Present*, edited by Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda, forthcoming. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2015.
- Schilbrack, Kevin. "What *Isn't* Religion?" *Journal of Religion* 93, no. 3 (2013): 291–318.
- Schmidt, Leigh Eric. "Mormons, Freethinkers, and the Limits of Toleration." *Journal of Mormon History* 40, no. 2 (2014): 61.
- Schoepflin, Rennie B. *Christian Science on Trial: Religious Healing in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Sehat, David. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Smith, Ryan K. *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses: Anti-Catholicism and American Church Designs in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Stern, Andrew H. M. *Southern Crucifix, Southern Cross: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Old South*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012.
- Talbot, Christine. *A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852–1890*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

- Thomas, J. Douglas. "A Century of American Catholic History." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 6, no. 1 (1987): 25–49.
- Tweed, Thomas A. *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Tweed, Thomas A. editor. *Retelling U.S. Religious History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Verhoeven, Timothy. *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.
- Verhoeven, Timothy. "Neither Male nor Female: Androgyny, Nativism and International Anti-Catholicism." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 1 (2005): 5–19.
- Wacker, Grant. "Marching to Zion: Religion in a Modern Utopian Community." *Church History* 54, no. 4 (1985): 496–511.
- Wallace, Les. *The Rhetoric of Anti-Catholicism: the American Protective Association, 1887-1911*. New York: Garland, 1990.
- Warren, Sidney. *American Freethought, 1860–1914*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966.
- Welter, Barbara. "From Maria Monk to Paul Blanshard: A Century of Protestant Anti-Catholicism." In *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn. New York: Crossroad, 1987.
- Werner, Yvonne Maria and Jonas Harvard, editors. *European Anti-Catholicism in Comparative and Trans-National Perspective*. New York: Rodopi, 2013.

Woods, Thomas E. *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholic Intellectuals and the Progressive Era*. New York: Columbia University, 2004.