ABSTRACT

Abram Ryan, Orestes Brownson, and American Catholics during the Civil War and Reconstruction

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This thesis explores how American Catholics reacted to the Civil War and Reconstruction and how those reactions influenced Protestant perceptions of Catholics. Orestes Brownson, a famous Northern convert, polemicist, and supporter of the Union, and Abram Ryan, a Southern poet, priest, and proponent of the Lost Cause, serve as case studies. Analyzing their writing and their reception among Protestant Americans, this thesis demonstrates how religious, racial, political, and even transatlantic developments fueled a Southern and Northern critique of Reconstruction of which Brownson and Ryan were an important part. At the same time, Catholic participation in shared national and sectional reunion and reconciliation also facilitated Catholics' integration into American society. This work focuses on Republican newspapers' praise for Northern Catholic loyalty and Abram Ryan's nationally successful promotion of the Lost Cause. Catholic Civil War Era ideas and actions were emblematic of and crucial to American debates over Catholicism's influence and future.

Orestes Brownson, Abram Ryan, and American Catholics' Response to Reconstruction

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of History

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Master of Arts

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the course of my undergraduate and brief graduate education, I have already incurred a number of academic debts. I will mention only a few of them here. At Hillsdale College, I credit my German, English, and history professors for teaching me to read closely and for instilling a love for the nineteenth century. And at Baylor University, my professors challenged me to broaden my academic horizons and pursue scholarly excellence. On this particular project, I have benefitted from the patience of librarians and archivists at the University of Texas and the University of Notre Dame who directed me to materials and guided a young historian learning his way around the archives.

I appreciate Dr. Julie Holcomb, Dr. Barry Hankins, and Dr. Michael Parrish for their willingness to serve as committee members. Dr. Hankins deserves particular thanks for directing the independent study where I discovered this topic. And thanks also to my advisor, Dr. Michael Parrish, whose editorial remarks and insight have continued to improve my writing and understanding of Southern history, and who has taught me that conversations about Catholicism and American freedom must always include African Americans.

And lastly, my fiancée, Simone, deserves more thanks than I can give, for her love and kind words inspired me to finish my thesis during the most difficult times of writing and encouraged me to pursue graduate study even in the midst of its difficulties.

DEDICATION

To Simone

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In New York's Riverside Park, on a late November day in 1910, several hundred Catholic schoolchildren, with miniature flags pinned to their shirts, sang "The Star Spangled Banner" under the direction of Fr. John Keane. Together with priests, the Knights of Columbus, and the crowd, they celebrated the unveiling of a bust of Orestes Brownson, the famous Northern Catholic convert and intellectual. After these opening ceremonies, the famous Catholic conservative Democratic U.S. W. Burcke Cockran delivered a keynote speech. Hearkening back to Brownson's political philosophy, Cockran pronounced that "if every man, woman and child in the United States were Catholic . . . not one word of the Constitution could be changed with advantage to the Catholic Church."[1] Like Brownson, Cockran believed that the founding generation, though personally antagonistic to the Catholic Church, had established effective government because the founders had set their eyes upon the natural law. Memory of Brownson served as a launching point for Cockran to argue for the compatibility of Catholic religious and American political traditions.

But Catholics were not the first to hallow the grounds of Riverside Park, for the area already housed the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument and New York's most famous monument at the time, Ulysses S. Grant's tomb. Both memorials not only preserved the

[1] "Plans a Riverside Like Roman Gallery," *New York Times*, November 25, 1910, 10. W. Burcke Cockran, qtd. in James McGurrin, *Bourke Cockran: A Free Lance in American Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 307.

memory of sectional conflict but also memorialized the values defended in the Civil War. And as the foremost popular Catholic proponent of Union, Brownson's legacy related to Grants' and the soldiers' legacies. M. Joseph Harson, the Chairman of the National Brownson Memorial Committee, made sure they did. He remarked that while the park's other monuments commemorated the "horrors of war," Brownson's civic memorial represented "the victory of peace."[2] Here, Harson, like Cockran, argued for the compatibility of Catholicism and American patriotism, but he looked to the Civil War rather than the political philosophy of the American founding. Connecting Brownson to Grant and the Union soldiers, Harson made an explicit argument about Catholics' importance to national history and progress. Catholic support for and loyalty to American government, actions imputed to Brownson, were central to the proceedings in Riverside Park.

While Harson understood the importance of relating Catholic experience to the Civil War and Civil War memory, Catholic historians have often passed over this period as a footnote in American Catholic history. While Civil War documentaries, military histories, and monographs are prolific, traditional narratives of American Catholicism spend little time investigating this era.[3] In large part, this omission occurs because

[2] These are words paraphrased by the writer of the article. Ibid. For a brief biography of Harson, see *Who's Who in New York City and State* (L.R. Hamersly Company, 1909), 1413.

[3] Surveying some popular narrative histories of American Catholicism reinforces this point. The well-known *American Catholicism* by John Tracy Ellis briefly discusses race relations, but primarily skips from 1865 to 1880. 100-103. Jay Dolan's *In Search of an American Catholicism* has no index entry for the "Civil War," much less "Reconstruction." Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). John McGreevy's magisterial survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American Catholicism spends a few pages discussing Reconstruction, but half of these pages discuss the school question. John McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 108, 111-113. His most recent book, *American Jesuits and the World* makes a similar temporal jump when he discusses Catholics' political views, moving from the end of the Civil War to the end of the century. John McGreevy, *American Jesuits and the World: How an Embattled Religious Order*

American Catholic historiography revolves around the Americanist controversy of the 1890s.[4] Unfortunately, though, all this attention on the public school controversy and the papal encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae* has minimized focus on the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Including the Civil War and Reconstruction within Catholic narratives promises to deepen American Catholic historiography. Studies on Reconstruction and Civil War memory, for instance, have highlighted that what Americans remember—or forget—has had ramifications in racial relations, sectional reconciliation, and definitions of national identity.[5] Charting how American Catholics reacted to and remembered the war, emancipation, and Reconstruction provides insight into how Catholics related to the nation and, moreover, connects the discourse of Catholics' Americanization to broader trends in American society.[6] And placing more emphasis on Reconstruction indicates

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Made Modern Catholicism Global (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 63-141. James Hennessey is certainly in the minority including a chapter on the period in *American Catholics*. James J. Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 158-171.

[4] To be fair, some of this emphasis is because the second wave of Catholic immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe created numerous communities touched only indirectly by the conflict. But enough Catholics and Catholic institutions experienced the war and Reconstruction that this alone is not reason for this omission.

[5] Examples include, to name a few, Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885-1915," *Southern Cultures* 1, no. 1 (1993): 5–45; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005); Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Michael G. Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

[6] There are relatively few monographs on Catholics during the Civil War. The first of these is Benjamin J. Blied, *Catholics and the Civil War* (Milwaukee, WI, 1945). Some more recent important contributions include David T. Gleeson, "'No Disruption of Union': The Catholic Church in the South and Reconstruction," in *Vale of Tears: New Essays on Religion and Reconstruction*, ed. Edward Blum and Poole W. Scott (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 164–86; David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, Civil War America. (Chapel Hill: University of

how this period reinforced patterns of paternalism that had far-reaching consequences for the church's relationship with African Americans and African American Catholics.[7] Efforts to relate Catholicism to the broader political, racial, and social developments of this era, then, remain an important yet undeveloped area to deepen understanding of American Catholics specifically and American society generally.

The writing and reception of Orestes Brownson and Abram Ryan demonstrate the significance of wartime and postwar experiences for Northern and Southern Catholics. At first, the differences between the two figures are most apparent. Ryan was a priest and a cradle Catholic while Brownson was a layman and a convert. Ryan was a first-generation Irish American while Brownson's supposed paternal ancestor immigrated in 1635 or 1636.[8] During the Civil War, Brownson implored Catholics to support the Union cause and disavow secession, whereas Abram Ryan moved from Illinois to Tennessee and supported the Confederate cause. Despite these differences, their political positions were surprisingly similar during Reconstruction. Both became increasingly disenchanted with American political, racial, and religious affairs, and both framed the perceived nadir of their country within a larger transatlantic context of waning Roman Catholic influence in

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North Carolina Press, 2013); William B. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015); Randall Miller, "Catholic Religion, Irish Ethnicity, and the Civil War," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Randall Miller, Charles Reagan Wilson, and Harry Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 261–96. These contributions, however, rarely find their way into larger narratives about American Catholicism.

[7] For the most part, historians of Catholic racial attitudes are the primary authors within Catholic historiography interested in Reconstruction. Though useful, these works are hardly synthetic or far reaching in their scope. See, for instance, Stephen J. Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1993); Morris J. MacGregor, *The Emergence of a Black Catholic Community: St. Augustine's in Washington* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

[8] Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson: American Religious Weathervane*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2004), 1.

European affairs. United by their Catholic religion and Democratic political sensibilities, Brownson and Ryan crafted a critique of American government during Reconstruction.

Brownson and Ryan provide an important lens to examine American Catholic Civil War Era ideas and actions. Though two Anglophone Catholics hardly represent the ethnic diversity of American Catholics, these figures were perhaps the two most famous popular Catholic figures of their era. Nationally known as a polemicist and convert, Brownson received attention from Protestants and Catholics alike. Suggestive of Brownson's reputation, John Henry Newman, the famous English Catholic convert and leader in the Oxford Movement, reportedly remarked that Brownson was "by far the greatest thinker America has ever produced."[9] Likewise, Abram Ryan's widely read Lost Cause poems such as "The Conquered Banner" won him renown throughout the country. These two figures thoughts and actions therefore point to broader patterns among American Catholics and highlights the significance of the Civil War Era for Catholics. How American Protestants and Catholics perceived these figures and appropriated their legacy, moreover, indicates the importance of the Civil War and Reconstruction for ameliorating Catholic-Protestant relations.

The first chapter analyzes the life of Orestes Brownson after the Civil War. During the final year of the Civil War, Brownson viewed America's political future with great anticipation. The conclusion of the sectional conflict, he believed, was one of the next steps for the country to take on its God-ordained path to spread democracy. Comparing this optimism with his articles during 1866–1875, however, reveals a dramatic shift in tone as he despaired for the United States in his later corpus. Typically,

[9] Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 78.

historians have avoided his late-life bitter conservatism and ultramontanism—unswerving loyalty to the political and religious proclamations of Rome often characterized by practice of nineteenth-century European Catholic devotions—as aberrant from his thought or as the effects of old age and personal tragedy. But this chapter traces the roots of this despair to myriad factors: Radical legislation, enfranchisement of black voters, growing industrial capitalism, continued Protestant dominance, and European events. Attributing Brownson's intellectual turn to discernable historical factors suggests the significance of these factors for American Catholics, even if they remain unexplored by many historians.

Going from the Northerner Brownson to the Southerner Abram Ryan, the second chapter highlights how Southern Catholics infused their version of the Lost Cause with particularly Catholic symbols and meaning. This section evaluates not only Ryan's poetry and essays, but also his editorial career. During his editorial work for the *Banner of the South* and *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, Ryan played a key part in the life of Southern Catholic ideas.[10] Within his articles, and those he selected for publication, Southerners tried to interpret their involvement in the conflict and their defeat. While these articles touched upon common themes of the Lost Cause—defenses of Southern slavery, valorization of Confederate honor, and justification of secession—they also did so in particularly Catholic ways. Ultramontane views of suffering and selective use of Catholic tradition, among other themes, lent force to Southern Catholics' anti-Northern

[10] In many ways, gauging Ryan's thought through the *Morning Star* editorial page is difficult because of his distance from the publication—he lived in Mobile, Alabama—and his frequent leaves of absence. And sometimes it is difficult to attribute unnamed editorials to Ryan. For a few of these unnamed columns, I have assumed Ryan's authorship when they were the first editorial, resembled his writing, and written during his time in America. Ryan's sometimes sporadic articles, when paired with the other editorials, give an impression of Southern Catholic attitudes. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause: A Life of Father Ryan* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 170.

and anti-Reconstruction rhetoric. And Ryan's later move to compare Southern defeat with Catholic losses during German and Italian unification suggests, moreover, how Southern Catholics could frame the Lost Cause within a more expansive antimodern polemic.

Moving to Protestant perceptions of Catholics, the third chapter explores how patriotic Northern Catholics including Orestes Brownson could assuage Protestant fears about Romanism. In the Union, few groups received such harsh treatment as did the Copperheads, the Democrats who advocated peace rather than war. In light of traditional animus towards Catholics, Catholic support of Democratic politicians, and Catholic participation in dissent, this religious minority might seem like a target for the label of Copperhead. This chapter, however, illustrates that Republican newspapers tended to exonerate Catholics of any connection to the Peace Democrats and lauded them for support of the Union cause. For these Republican editors and writers, the pro-Union words and deeds of Brownson, the clergy, and countless Catholic soldiers offset the sins against country other Catholics committed. Participation in a shared national community, then, could work to minimize suspicions toward Catholics.

The final chapter examines how the Lost Cause could bring together Catholics and Protestants in addition to Northerners and Southerners. While the second and third chapters highlight how Reconstruction could disenchant Catholics, this final chapter explores how Civil War memory could be unitive. As one of the country's most famous poets, the Poet-Priest of the Confederacy enshrined Southern honor and martial deeds in his compositions. Although Father Ryan's religious identity could hardly be missed, Protestants, both Northerner and Southerner, found solace in his memorialization of the

Confederate dead. Catholics too praised the musings of the Poet-Priest and drew upon his legacy to envision themselves as Americans. Thus, Ryan's contributions to the Lost Cause provided space for Catholics and Protestants to participate in a shared national community and weakened prejudices against Catholics.

The legacy of American Catholics and the Civil War resists easy categorization. For Brownson and Ryan, two figures invested in the success of American culture, Reconstruction undermined their faith in their country's political and religious progress. The racial, political, and religious developments during the era influenced these Catholic figures' disaffection with United States politics and society. Even if Reconstruction could disenchant some, shared wartime experiences could also bring Catholics and Protestants together, both during and after the war. Ultimately, Brownson's and Ryan's words and deeds, together with their and Catholics' national reception, demonstrate the significance of the Civil War and Reconstruction for American Catholics' discourses about freedom and their future in the nation.

CHAPTER TWO

Orestes Brownson and Reconstruction

"In Americanizing, we Protestantize," proclaimed Orestes Brownson. "Our *political* Catholics do not usually act in reference to a higher standard than do Protestants . . . . Their standard of political morality is popular opinion; and it would seem that they agree with their Protestant neighbors that *vox populi est vox Dei.*"[1] Contrary to academic stereotypes, this author was not a recalcitrant German immigrant unwilling to conform to American standards. He was Orestes Brownson bemoaning the political and religious tendencies of Reconstruction in 1874. Such a sentiment diverges from his earlier contention in the 1856 essay, "Mission of America," claiming that "never since her going forth from that 'upper room' in Jerusalem, has the church found a national character so well fitted to give to true civilization its highest and noblest expression."[2] Although most remembered endorsements of American democracy such as this, his later association of Americanization with Protestantization complicates common narratives about this patriotic and polemical convert.

Scholarship on Brownson and American Catholicism, however, gives little account of his Reconstruction-era essays. Besides an older dissertation turned monograph

[1] Orestes Brownson, "On Some Popular Errors concerning Politics and Religion," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 4 (1874): 560.

[2] Orestes Brownson, "Mission of America," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 10 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 559.

on Brownson and the Civil War and Patrick Carey's latest biography, almost all works mention his final ten years only in passing.[3] Conservative and liberal scholars alike have latched onto his "Americanist" essays such as "The Mission of America" and "Native Americanism," eliding or downplaying his later cynicism. For both groups, Brownson served as the nineteenth-century example *par excellence* of America's surprising synchronicity with Catholicism.

And on the surface, this position corresponds with much of Brownson's oeuvre.[4] Before and during the Civil War, Brownson did champion the American government and Constitution as mankind's best attempt to preserve order and liberty. In these essays, he argued for the affinity between American politics and Catholic theology and ecclesiology, for the assimilation of immigrants, and for America's election as a chosen nation. And when fulfillment of Northern victory seemed eminent in the final months of the Civil War, Brownson penned his political panegyric for the United States, *The American Republic.* Filled with wartime fervor and the optimism of victory, he foresaw the inevitable conversion of the nation to Catholicism and the reification of perfect ordered liberty within society.

But by highlighting and contextualizing his late-life disillusionment with politics, this chapter pushes back against this simple rendering of Brownson as an unequivocal proponent of American liberalism. While the previous chapter focused on how the Civil

[3] Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*; Hugh Marshall, "Orestes Brownson and the American Civil War" (PhD Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1962); Hugh Marshall, *Orestes Brownson and the American Republic: An Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1971).

[4] Although Brownson seems optimistic about the compatibility of Catholicism and Americanism here, this should not necessarily be understood as isomorphic with the goals of twentieth- and twenty-first-century liberalism. This will be covered later in the chapter.

War could facilitate Catholic entrance into the Union, this chapter explores the alienating effects of Reconstruction on Orestes Brownson. During this era, his articles in the *New York Tablet* and the revived *Brownson's Quarterly Review* illustrate how political, racial, and religious developments all contributed to his rejection of American democracy and his embrace of an increasingly irascible conservatism. For a man who railed against banks and paper currency, feared the enfranchisement of African Americans, and expected national conversion to Catholicism, 1865–1875 was a decade of failure. To make matters worse, the prospects of European Catholicism appeared dim as European nations seemed more antagonistic to Rome. Fearing the rise of democratic despotism, Brownson's swan song mourned a failed American experiment. His increasingly antimodernist and anti-Americanist attitude indicates how the experience of how the political, racial, and religious developments during Reconstruction could strain Catholics' relationship with their country.

Studying Brownson, though, first requires biographical information on one of the most eclectic and original antebellum thinkers, whether Protestant or Catholic. Born in 1803 in Stockbridge, Vermont, Brownson grew upon in a Calvinist home, but his early religious life was never constant. Over several decades, he experimented with Universalism, Unitarianism, and Transcendentalism. During this journey, he served as a Unitarian minister, corresponded with famous figures such as William Ellery Channing, and carved his niche into the publishing world with *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, through which he garnered a national reputation as a polemicist in politics, philosophy, and religion. After these intellectual peregrinations, however, Brownson converted to Catholicism in 1844. According to Brownson's biographer Patrick Carey, his religious

and philosophical conversion occurred because of dissatisfaction with Universalist and Transcendentalist views, his own personal encounter with God, and his encounter with Pierre Leroux's idea of "life by communion." Abandoning naturalism, Brownson increasingly accepted an "incarnational supernaturalism — the belief that God communicated the divine life in and through humanity and human forms."[5] For Brownson, the Catholic Church most fit the criteria of a mediating institution between God and the world, and he and his family converted in 1844. Thereafter he became an apologist for the synchronicity of Catholicism with American politics, and apart from a brief spell where he considered some more liberal theological views in the early 1860s, his religious positions remained conservative throughout his life.[6]

After his conversion, Orestes Brownson crafted a political philosophy that championed American government as the divine model of ordered Catholic liberty. All nations, he believed, possessed unwritten constitutions outlined by God, and it was their duty to fulfill this mission.[7] But he also argued that "Providence intervenes through the medium of an elect people" to enact His will on earth.[8] In that particular era, God had chosen America for this particular mission, a nation whose "manifest destiny . . . is something far higher, nobler, and more spiritual,—the realization, we should say, of the

[5] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 99-101.

[6] For more on the theological and intellectual development of Brownson in the 1860s, see ibid., 234-335.

[7] Stanley J. Parry, "The Premises of Brownson's Political Theory," *The Review of Politics* 16, no. 2 (April 1954): 202–201.

[8] Orestes Brownson, "The Philosophy of History," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 4 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1883), 406.

Christian ideal of society for both the Old World and the New."[9] Building on the Greco-Roman political traditions, America would establish the divine ideal of government.[10] Despite the nation's Protestant origin, Brownson contended that the founding generation "builded better than they knew" because they wrote the Constitution with an eye towards the natural law.[11] In so doing, they had charted the United States' course and made possible the fulfillment of her divine mission.

For Brownson, this entailed preserving the dialectical relationship between authority and freedom. As he wrote in *The American Republic*, the end of society, and the point towards which it was progressing, was the "realization of liberty as the realization of the true idea of the state, which secures at once the authority of the public and the freedom of the individual."[12] Government existed, then, to curb unfettered individualism and preserve the natural bonds between a people. And the genius of the Constitution was to establish a system of checks and balances, both within the various branches and the different powers of the federal and state governments.[13] This was the critical resonance

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[9] Brownson, "Mission of America," 567.

[10] Armand Maurer, "Orestes Brownson: Philosopher of Freedom," in *No Divided Allegiance: Essays Orestes Brownson's Thought*, ed. Leonard Gilhooley (New York: Fordham University Press, 1980), 88. For an excellent argument comparing Brownson's conception of American exceptionalism to Protestant conceptions, see Mark Burrows, "The Catholic Revision of an American Myth: The Eschatology of Orestes Brownson as an Apology of American Catholicism," *Catholic Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (January 1990): 18–43.

[11] Brownson, "Mission of America," 569.

[12] Orestes Brownson, *The American Republic: Its Constitution, Tendencies and Destiny* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003), 3. For interpretations of his understanding of dialectic, see Patrick W. Carey, "Orestes Brownson and the Civil War," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 31, no. 1 (2013): 4; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 238–39; Clemens Spahr, "Transcendentalist Class Struggle: Orestes Brownson's Early Writings," *Nineteenth Century Prose* 36, no. 2 (2009): 31.

[13] Brownson, *The American Republic*, 257.

between the United States and the Catholic Church: American constitutional government and Catholic hierarchy maintained a system of ordered liberty. Just as the Catholic Church upheld true spiritual freedom, the American republic maintained true temporal freedom. To Brownson, the relationship between the division of power between the states and the national government fostered freedom and curbed centralization of power.[14]

In addition, the proper separation of church and state, mandated in the First Amendment of the Constitution, played an essential role in preserving liberty. He believed that the close connections between worldly and spiritual powers had allowed European monarchs to impinge upon the sovereignty of the papacy.[15] In America, however, the churches enjoyed autonomy because of their independence from a political sovereign. More importantly, though, Brownson championed religious liberty because "the great end with all men in their religious, their political, and their individual actions, is freedom."[16] Christ's law was a law of liberty, and since man had been freed in Christ, it was important that the government allow all men to assent to the tenants of Catholicism rather than force them to enter the Catholic Church. But for Brownson, where there was liberty, there must also be authority. If not, license would ensue. While the church and the state existed and functioned in two different spheres—the spiritual and the temporal

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[14] Ibid., 5-6.

[15] Orestes Brownson, "The Spiritual Not for the Temporal," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 11 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 50-51. See his other essays, "Temporal and Spiritual" and "The Spiritual Order Supreme," which make a series with this essay. Orestes Brownson, "Temporal and Spiritual," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 11 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 1-35; Orestes Brownson, "The Spiritual Order Supreme," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 11 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 62-94.

[16] Orestes Brownson, "Democracy and Liberty," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 15 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 406.

spheres respectively—he also believed that the church had a level of jurisdiction over the temporal. Since the temporal realm has its end in the spiritual order, he argued that the temporal order "is subjected to the spiritual, and consequently every question that does or can arise in the temporal order is indirectly a spiritual question."[17] If, so his logic ran, the deposit of the faith contained universal moral truths, then the true state ought to submit itself to the tenants of Catholic morality. Thus, the Catholic Church, and the pope in particular, played an evaluative role in discerning whether the laws of secular order are just or unjust. While the Church might not wield a sword of temporal power, through "spiritual censures" the papacy could curb the secular tendencies of government.[18] He believed, moreover, that anyone "who denies that religion should govern his politics . . . denies morality, denies the divine law, and asserts political atheism."[19] Thus while Brownson extolled the virtues of religious freedom, he did so not because he endorsed religious pluralism but because he believed religious freedom was a necessary condition for Catholic flourishing and growing influence.

These endorsements of the United States give a sense of his confidence in the rightness of the American political system, as well as his optimism in the continued progress of the nation. At times, these positions caused heated controversy between Brownson and other Catholic immigrants. His charge in "Native Americanism" that Catholics ought to assimilate more readily incensed Irish Catholic immigrants not so

[17] Brownson, "Temporal and Spiritual," 22.

[18] Brownson, "The Spiritual Not for The Temporal," 61.

[19] Orestes Brownson, "The Church and the Republic," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson,* ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 12 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 2.

willing to abandon the old world.[20] Despite some resistance, Brownson continued his praise of American government, which reached its apogee at the end of the Civil War.

His only systematic work of political philosophy, *The American Republic*, underscored the almost millennial expectations Brownson had for his country's future. Begun in the middle of 1864 and completed in October of 1865, the work waxed poetic about the American system, and particularly its future development after Southern and Northern reunification. Although a staunch Democratic supporter, Brownson rejected the premises of secession as inconsistent with national sovereignty. The states possessed sovereignty severally, not individually, and thus could not secede, he argued.[21] Essentially, secession was a manifestation of radical individualism seeking to sunder its duties to a larger community. Secession, moreover, threatened the God-ordained demographic and geographic composition of the nation, two features at the heart of flourishing governments. But rather than focus upon the wounds to the nation during war, Brownson espoused his own unique vision of constitutionalism and turned to the opportunities that would face the nation after the impending Southern surrender. It would be a time to affirm that America's "mission is to bring out in its life the dialectic union of authority and liberty, of the natural rights of man and those of society."[22] Restoration of the South, which prized individual liberty and states' rights, to the North, which prized

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[20] Jay Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 63.

[21] For more on Brownson's view of sovereignty, see Richard M. Leliaert, "The Religious Significance of Democracy in the Thought of Orestes A. Brownson," *The Review of Politics* 38, no. 1 (January 1976): 3–26.

[22] Brownson, *The American Republic*, 3. See also Carey, "Orestes Brownson and the Civil War," 20.

authority and national sovereignty, would restore the dialectical whole of the nation. Before the war, these possibilities were more potential than actual, but sacrificing for her in war, he believed, was "sure to give it the seriousness, the gravity, the dignity, the manliness it has heretofore lacked."[23] Reckoning with the nature of Union had awakened the country to her divine calling.[24]

Of course, Reconstruction and the Civil War posed challenges to realizing this political goal. Regarding the tendencies of his fellow Americans, Brownson admitted that Americans were "far more familiar with party tactics than with constitutional law."[25] It remained possible, then, that Americans would fall back into their old system of party politics that sought personal advancement rather than national progress. Along these lines, he also worried that the Republican Party might continue centralizing national power and minimizing states' rights. This would usher in a "socialistic form of democracy" tending towards despotism.[26] Brownson also feared that the re-enfranchisement of Southerners would be a point of difficulty. Restoring the rebel states to the Union, for Brownson, meant eventually re-enfranchising all who could vote before the war. In that body, sovereignty had been expressed, and in that body, it must remain, he argued. But if these citizens could not be trusted, then the conquered Confederacy must be held as territories. Only when they had shown loyalty could they be re-

[23] Brownson, *The American Republic,* 2.

[24] Ibid., 4-7.

[25] Ibid., 197.

[26] Ibid., 246.

enfranchised.[27] Related to this point, he fretted over the African American enfranchisement because he believed that blacks' lack of education prevented them from deserving full equality. Politically active freedmen, he feared, would soon be manipulated by Southern politicians, hurting the entire nation. [28]

Despite these reservations, Brownson all but predicted the fulfillment of America's national Catholic destiny by the book's end. Northern bravery had assured him that Americans possessed an "outspoken confidence in their destiny as a Providential people" and that "there is nothing in their present state or in their past history to render their failure probable."[29] Indeed, the American nation now realized that "to them is reserved the hegemony of the world."[30] Thus, he concluded *The American Republic* with the prognostication that the United States "will gradually see the whole continent coming under their system, forming one grand nation, a really catholic nation, great, glorious, and free."[31] To Brownson, it seemed as if the country were realizing its goal of establishing true harmony between liberty and authority, a truly Catholic state. And with this proper relationship, all Americans would come to possess true spiritual and temporal liberty. This even extended to African Americans, for he claimed that "negro suffrage will, no doubt, come in time, as soon as the freedmen are prepared for it, and the danger is that it

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[27] Ibid., 216-217.

[28] Ibid., 218.

[29] Ibid., 271, 273.

[30] Ibid., 273. While he did admit the possibility of failure, this seems more a concession to free will than a profound sense of God's inscrutable providence.

[31] Ibid., 275. Though lowercased, catholic here did mean Catholic since "in a state organized in accordance with catholic principles . . . [sects] are powerless against the national destiny. And must soon wither and die as branches severed from the vine." Ibid., 267.

will be attempted too soon."[32] In this idyllic vision for society, all would possess freedom, in time. To be sure, Brownson wrote much of the book in 1864 and 1865, when the prospects of Union victory seemed likely, and the expectations of victory certainly augmented his enthusiasm. But this optimism was by no means a new phenomenon and follows his earlier corpus's generally positive disposition.

Certainly this is the Orestes Brownson remembered today, both in scholarship and popular memory. On the one hand, liberal Catholic academics who have discussed Brownson have interpreted him as an intellectual forerunner of the Second Vatican Council and liberal Catholicism. Jay Dolan, for instance, wrote, "An American to the core, Brownson supported separation of church and state and regarded religious liberty as a human right. But he went further and advocated a progressive concept of religion and church which would establish harmony between religion and society, church and state."[33] Seeking the democratic roots in American Catholicism, these scholars have latched onto "Native Americanism" and the "Mission of the Church in America" in their construction of a liberal Catholic tradition. For these scholars, Brownson's advocacy of religious freedom, his belief in American democracy, and his encouragement of lay activism established his proto-Vatican II credentials.[34]

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[32] Ibid., 218.

[33] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 307.

[34] Likewise, Joseph Chinnici argued that Brownson wanted "the fulfillment of American values in and through the church" whereas the hierarchy "promoted areas of compatibility and adjustment. Meaning, Brownson descried the truths within America and charged the church with embracing democracy. Joseph P. Chinnici, *Living Stones: The History and Structure of Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 93–94." And the noted Catholic sociologist Andrew Greeley claimed that Brownson was a man who "prefigured many of the great reforms of the middle of the twentieth century." Andrew M. Greeley, *The Catholic Experience: An Interpretation of the History of American Catholicism* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967), 129.

On the other hand, right-leaning thinkers have looked to Brownson as they have constructed an American conservative tradition. Along these lines, Peter Lawler wrote that "with Brownson and [John Courtney] Murray, we can say that there is an American tradition of Thomistic realism that opposes itself to the dominant American tradition of contractualism and pragmatism, while also resolutely affirming the achievement of American constitutionalism."[35] Likewise, Gerald Russello contended that Brownson "provides a powerful intellectual argument for the complementarity of our democratic experiment with Catholic thought."[36] These writers understood Brownson as an intellectual forefather who espoused a conservative vision compatible with American society.[37] The title of Gregory Butler's *Crisis Magazine* post, "Orestes Brownson's Legacy: Why Catholicism Is as American as Apple Pie," proves the point.[38] Although liberal and conservative scholars have interpreted Brownson differently, both sides employ Brownson's Americanist writings to affirm their positions.

One consequence of this tendency is to focus more on Brownson's essays praising the United States. Although some other scholars have pointed out his late-life irascibility,

[35] Peter Lawler, "Orestes Brownson and the Truth about America," *First Things*, December 2002, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/12/orestes-brownson-and-the-truth-about-america. See also Peter Lawler and Richard M. Reinsch, "Orestes Brownson and the Unwritten Foundation of American Constitutionalism," *Modern Age* 58, no. 2 (2016): 31–41.

[36] Gerald Russello, "Seeking the Truth with Orestes Brownson," *Crisis Magazine*, October 19, 2016, http://www.crisismagazine.com/2016/seeking-truth-orestes-brownson.

[37] See also Richard M. Reinsch, "Orestes Brownson's American Search for the Truth," in *Seeking the Truth* (Washington, D. C: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 1–36.

[38] Gregory Butler, "Orestes Brownson's Legacy: Why Catholicism Is as American as Apple Pie," *Crisis Magazine*, March 1, 1992, http://www.crisismagazine.com/1992/orestes-brownsons-legacy-why-catholicism-is-as-american-as-apple-pie.

they hardly provide satisfying accounts that might correct this narrative.[39] And though Patrick Carey's treatment does give a good account of this period, most biographers have tended to focus on other periods of his life.[40] Unsurprisingly, then, narratives about Brownson revolve around his patriotic essays and optimism about the United States. [41] Suggestive of this particular legacy, internet sites such as Wikipedia and Catholic.com both identify Brownson as a proponent of American patriotism and Catholic piety.[42]

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[39]In some instances, these authors have noticed the antimodernism at times latent, at times explicit, in Brownson's corpus, what made him, in the estimation of Robert Cross, an "American intransigent." Robert D. Cross, *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 29, 55; James J. Hennesey, *American Catholics,* 197. Others have mentioned his conservative turn in his later years. Patrick Allitt, Philip Gleason, and David O'Brien all note how, in O'Brien's words, Brownson wanted "to be fully Catholic, and he wanted to remain fully American, and it was becoming more and more difficult to do both." These historians give explanations such as the bitterness of old age and family tragedy, which were certainly operative but by no means the sole reason for his reactionary turn. David J. O'Brien, *Public Catholicism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 60; Margaret Mary Reher, *Catholic Intellectual Life in America: A Historical Study of Persons and Movements* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 42; Allitt, *Catholic Converts*, 99.

[40] Arthur Schlesinger's biography primarily covers his life during his political activity in the 1830s and 1840s. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Orestes A. Brownson: A Pilgrim's Progress* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939). Per Sveino's work is an intellectual biography interested in the compatibility on the unity of Brownson's religious and theological development and thus focuses primarily on the period up to his conversion. Per Sveino, *Orestes A. Brownson's Road to Catholicism*. Thomas Ryan's tome provides many details about Brownson's life, but focuses more on his attack of liberalism at the end of his life and not his disaffection from politics. Thomas Ryan, *Orestes A. Brownson: A Definitive Biography* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 696–97. In many ways, this chapter combines the works of Marshall and Carey. Marshall focuses more on Brownson's criticism of American politics while Carey focuses more on theological and philosophical issues debated in a broader transatlantic arena. But more than simply combine their arguments, this chapter also expands their biographical scope by examining Brownson's reception in the historiography and suggesting an insufficient treatment of Reconstruction in American Catholic historiography. Marshall, "Orestes Brownson and the American Republic," 267–301; Marshall, *Orestes Brownson and the American Republic;*, 220–88; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 282–379.

[41] Other treatments that see Brownson as synthesizing Catholicism and America include Colman Barry, "German Catholics and the Nationality Controversy," in *Catholicism in America*, ed. Philip Gleason (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 66; Dorothy Dohen, *Nationalism and American Catholicism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 98; Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 296–97, 306–7; James Terence Fisher, *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73; R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 51–57.

[42] "Orestes Brownson," *Wikipedia*, last modified May 12, 2016. On this point, John Reidy of Catholic.com wrote, "he was saying that the Church in America should be American and America should be Catholic." John Reidy, "Orestes Brownson: Nineteenth-Century American Apologist," *Catholic.com*,

Contrasting the optimistic Brownson of historical memory with his resignation and despondency during Reconstruction complicates this narrative.

Indeed, analyzing his response to Protestant anti-Catholicism illustrates how significantly Brownson's evaluation of American culture and politics evolved in the last decade of his life. In the famous 1856 essay "Native Americanism," Brownson defended American Catholics from the charges of the Know-Nothings, particularly the familiar salvo that loyalty to the pope precluded loyalty to country. In fact, Catholic fealty "[bound] him to be a peaceful and obedient subject of the state, a faithful and conscientious citizen."[43] Thus Catholics were loyal to America while Know-Nothings, or Native Americanists, betrayed her values. In the article, Brownson waxed poetic about the importance of assimilation and the superiority of American values. The polemical aspects of the article aside, Brownson had assumed an affinity between the Catholic Church and the United States. Twenty years later, Brownson answered the charges of disloyalty among Catholics, but this time, he sounded a different note. Responding to an exchange between the *Methodist Quarterly* and the *New York Tablet*, Brownson composed "In the Controversy between Catholics and Protestants" to address the perennial question in Protestant-Catholic dialogue in the United States: Is Catholicism consonant with American democracy? To answer, he insinuated that the question revolved around, first, whether the Catholic Church was the true church of Jesus Christ. Since that was true, he believed, and since the spiritual realm was higher than that of the

April 4, 2016, https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/orestes-brownson-nineteenth-century-american-apologist.

[43] Orestes Brownson, "Native Americanism," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 10 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 27.

temporal, "'ultramontane principles' may be a valid reason why a Catholic cannot hold Americanism, but it is no reason at all why one may not and ought not to be a Catholic."[44] Importantly, he seemed to have shifted from assuming the compatibility of Americanism and Catholicism.

Here, perhaps the differences noted in the earlier quotes are semantical and perhaps actually express parallel sentiments. Elsewhere, in the essay "Luther and the Reformation," he also makes a statement that seems to admit the same sentiment as "In the Controversy between Catholics and Protestants": "if a Know-Nothing nationalism takes umbrage at this, and persecutes us for not being national in our religion, it may do so, we cannot help it. Our religion is older and broader than Americanism.[45] But even then, Brownson still wrote, with pride, "we are Americans indeed."[46] For Brownson, the nativism of the Know-Nothings was not proper patriotism. In his later assessment of Catholicism's relationship with American culture, he wrote that "the so-called American idea, or American system, is showing in its practical developments that it is absolutely unable to sustain Christian ethics."[47] "Pagan Rome in its worst days," he concluded, "was not more corrupt or immoral than is Berlin, London, Boston, New York, or Philadelphia."[48]

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[44] Orestes Brownson, "In the Controversy between Catholics and Protestants," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 4 (1874): 483.

[45] Orestes Brownson, "Native Americanism," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, ed. Henry Brownson, vol. 10 (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 487.

[46] Ibid., 486.

[47] Brownson, "In the Controversy between Catholics and Protestants," 479.

[48] Ibid., 481.

Witnessing continued Republican political dominance and the fall of Catholic political power in Europe, Brownson soured on the prospects of developing a robustly American Catholicism. In particular, this rejection of the American experiment, what Hugh Marshall accurately characterizes as "despair," occurred as Brownson realized that the political, racial, economic, and religious developments of Reconstruction would not bring about the national changes needed to establish his vision of the American Republic.[49] Examining his salvos against Reconstruction in the *New York Dial* and *Brownson's Quarterly Review* highlights how the political course of Reconstruction contributed significantly to his disillusionment.[50]

In particular, continued Republican Party hegemony and its political program rankled Brownson. To him, Radicals pursued a fanatical agenda of consolidating power in the federal government rather than respecting the rights of the states. This move towards "statolatry" offended his small-government Democratic sensibilities.[51] Attitudes towards the South, in his mind, only exacerbated this dilemma. Under his political framework, North and South represented two essential sides in the dialectical life of the nation. Besides restoring the Union's proper borders, reunification brought with it political advantage as well. Namely, Brownson believed, "We want [Southern]

[49] Marshall, *Orestes Brownson and the American Republic*, 278–86.

[50] Unfortunately, the articles in the *Tablet*'s editorial pages are anonymous. According to Patrick Carey, however, Brownson contributed four to six articles a week. The articles cited in the following pages seem to be written by Brownson, though it is not certain. They also don't seem to be included by his son in the twenty volumes of essays collated and published by his son Henry F. Brownson. Brownson had suspended publication of his journal in 1864, but he revived it in 1872 to prove to his Catholic peers, once and for all, his orthodoxy. Carey, *Orestes Brownson*, 285.

[51] Brownson, "On Some Popular Errors Concerning Religion and Politics," 561.

representatives in Congress, as a check upon the growing tendency to consolidation, to assist us in our war against humanitarian fanaticism . . . and to resist the grasping avarice of the protectionists and the moralists.[52]" Only by restoring political equality to the South could the perilous tendencies of the North be held in check. While he had advocated for patience with the reintroduction of the states into the nation, he now desired "speedy and discriminating relief" that would best "bind up the wounds and efface the marks of the late unhappy struggle."[53] Because Northern consolidation proceeded at so rapid a pace, the reintegration of the South had become a matter of utmost importance.

Although Brownson had high hopes for Ulysses S. Grant's presidency, he soon rejected the Republican chief executive. Writing in the *New York Tablet*, he initially predicted that Grant's victory promised an end to Radical legislation and "the triumph of the honest Conservatism of the country."[54] And while Grant's cabinet choices hampered the effectiveness of his administration, Brownson anticipated reasonable and balanced rule.[55] Before the end of Grant's first term, though, Brownson's optimism had dissipated, and he proclaimed that "we have done hoping anything from the present Administration, or from the present majority in Congress."[56] In fact, Brownson seemed to have forgotten his high hopes altogether, claiming "we have never much admired President Grant."[57]

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[52] Orestes Brownson, "The Military Government Law," *New York Tablet,* March 16, 1867.

[53] Orestes Brownson, "Southern Relief Commission," *New York Tablet,* February 9, 1867.

[54] Orestes Brownson, "The Recent Elections," *The New York Tablet*, November 11, 1868.

[55] Orestes Brownson, "The New Administration," *The New York Tablet*, March 27, 1869.

[56] Orestes Brownson, "Cabinet Changes," *The New York Tablet,* February 18, 1871.

[57] Orestes Brownson, "The Next Phase of Civil Progress," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 3, no. 2 (1875): 179.

The president's corrupt cabinet, ties to Methodist ministers, and "surrender to the politicians" had helped bring the country closer to ruin.[58] But by this point, Brownson seems to have resigned himself to the turpitude of his country and its moral trajectory. At the prospect of Grant running a third term, Brownson concluded that the president's victory was almost a guarantee as he was a "fair representative of the degenerate American people."[59] The ill-mannered and morally loose Westerner, a hero of the common man, had become for Brownson the symbol of America's fall into unfettered democracy. Again Brownson seems to have given up any hope for the American system.

Throughout Brownson's diatribes against Reconstruction, the question of African American suffrage contributed significantly to his shifting political perspectives. "Under the specious pretence of securing equal rights," he charged, the radicals courted black votes to maintain their power.[60] Enfranchising blacks and disfranchising former rebels ensured the success of the carpetbagger governments. This brought about the worst sort of democracy, as greedy Republicans and "ignorant and half-savage" blacks ruled the country.[61] He asserted, moreover, that "no graver injury can be done the Union than the Africanizing [of] the States that seceded."[62] And he repeated this claim more than five years later:

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[58] For corruption in the Grant administration, see ibid. Orestes Brownson, ""Home Politics," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 3, no. 4 (1875): 539. For his fears about Methodists gaining political power, see Orestes Brownson, "Politics at Home and Abroad," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 2 (1874): 137. For the quote, see Orestes Brownson, "The Executive Power of the United States," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 3 (1974): 384.

[59] Ibid., 562.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Brownson, "On Some Popular Errors concerning Politics and Religion," 557-558.

[62] Orestes Brownson, "Radical Reconstruction," *New York Tablet*, November 19, 1867.

> The greatest injury done to the country, has been in the negro policy of Congress and supported by the administration, and the instituting and sustaining by the Federal forces of the infamous carpet-bagger and freed-negro governments in the States that seceded, and which have proved a greater calamity than the civil war itself.[63]

Thus Brownson understood that the alliance of blacks and Republicans rent the national fabric of republicanism in a way that not even the Civil War had. But Brownson's derision of freedmen's suffrage stemmed from more than opposition to Republican power.

Brownson framed his attack on African American enfranchisement by questioning the constitutionality of the Reconstruction Amendments. Along these lines, he claimed that it was "not solely or chiefly on the ground of their complexion, but mainly on the ground that Congress has not constitutional power to enfranchise them, and on the ground that they have had no political training."[64] According to Brownson, the states themselves, not the federal government, decided who could vote. Neither congressional mandate nor constitutional amendment were constitutional means of enacting changes to voting laws. Brownson did not understand disfranchisement as a denial of rights, and in fact, he believed that the false "doctrine" of universal suffrage had poisoned the wells of American political discourse. For Brownson, it was a natural thing for there to be ruler and ruled. This was the basis of order in society. Voting, then, was a "civil trust" held by those chosen to rule, not a right extended to all men. From these premises, he claimed that a "freedman has, as a man, all the rights that any man has by virtue of his manhood, and we hold ourselves bound to treat him fairly, honestly, justly,

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[63] Brownson, "The Industrial and Political State of the Country," 96.

[64] Brownson, "Reconstruction—Negro Suffrage."

as we should be were his complexion that of our own race."[65] But denial of blacks and the lower classes the vote did not infringe upon any inalienable right to vote since there existed no such right.

Although Brownson remained politically consistent by rejecting the methods to ratify the Reconstruction amendments, his own racial biases critically informed his attack on Reconstruction. He claimed that, because of their black bodies, the obvious mark of their "moral and intellectual deterioration," African Americans could not share total political equality with whites.[66] Importantly, Brownson broke with his earlier prediction in *The American Republic* about the inevitability of African American enfranchisement. Abandoning his view that freedmen only lacked the proper education for freedom, he later assumed their total inferiority. In fact, he predicted that enfranchisement would be the "death-warrant of the negro race" and would cause them to "be swept away as chaff of the summer threshing floor before the wind."[67] Only if the South returned to the rule of former Confederate leaders, the "*sanior pars,*" could blacks be saved.[68] While freedmen supported Radical legislation, he believed that only the more "intelligent" whites, Southern elites, could restore order to the section ravaged by the recent war and Republican rule.[69] This group represented the sovereignty of the South and elites' defense

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[65] Orestes Brownson, "Reconstruction—Negro Suffrage," *New York Tablet,* November 9, 1867.

[66] Orestes Brownson, "Universal Suffrage," *New York Tablet,* June 22, 1867.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Orestes Brownson, "The Political and Industrial State of the Country," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1873): 106.

[69] Brownson, "The Military Government Law," *New York Tablet,* March 16, 1867; Orestes Brownson, "The Release of Jeff Davis," *New York* Tablet, June 1, 1867.

of states' rights would balance Northern despotic tendencies. Thus he predicted that white aristocracy "will prove to be the best friend of the negro and, in future, of the Union."[70] Brownson's growing paranoia about African American enfranchisement clarifies how Reconstruction undermined his vision of American freedom and contributed to his growing despair about the nation.[71]

Economic conditions seem to have affected Brownson's changed outlook on America's destiny as well. Throughout his career he remained interested in industrialism and capitalism. While today often remembered for his defense of small government, Brownson certainly broke from conservatives regarding economic policy. Eight years before the publication of *The Communist Manifesto,* for instance, his essay "The Laboring Classes" attacked businesses that owned the means of production and allied with the banks to oppress the *proletarii*. He even went so far as to suggest that hereditary property was an anomaly of the true American system.[72] These beliefs, in large part, made the Democrats' war-time alliance with the party of free labor an uneasy one.[73]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] In a distinctly Brownsonian way, this pattern resembles that identified by Edward Blum in *Reforging the White Republic*. Blum argues that "national reconciliation did not only entail the forgiveness of southern whites. Forgetting and abandoning commitments to racial justice were essential to the remaking of the white republic." For Brownson, the reintegration of Southern whites had become essential to preserving America's national mission and the dialectical relationship between North and South. Since freedmen had become, in his estimation, a primary opponent of this mission, he seems to have dropped his hopes for African American's eventual political empowerment and advocated their inferiority. Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2015), 15.

[72] See Orestes Brownson, "The Laboring Classes, July 1840," in *The Early Works of Orestes Brownson*, ed. Patrick Carey, vol. 5, *The Transcendentalist Years* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 298-327.

[73] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), xvi–xvii; Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Not long after the Civil War, Brownson voiced his concerns about the Republican Party's support for big business. In particular, he argued that the banks controlled the country and that specie needed to become the only form of payment and legal tender banned as a form of currency.[74] Dredging up his old anti-capitalist attitudes, Brownson vituperated against the viability of a just society in which free markets reigned supreme. In the free market, which many Americans understood as the best system to preserve democracy, Brownson believed that "the honest man stands no chance with the dishonest. The baker who feels bound to furnish thirty-two ounces in his two-pound loaf, cannot compete with him who has no scruple in charging the full price of a two-pound loaf for eighteen ounces."[75] Though perhaps a simplistic understanding of competition, the ultimate problem arose from the incentives created in a free market system, for in the free market, "We tempt men to get rich . . . by the contempt in which we hold poverty, and the honor which we pay wealth.[76]" Unsurprisingly, then, Brownson and the Republican Party, the party of free labor and free soil had come to loggerheads. And as the system of free labor continued to spread throughout the country, Brownson could only watch as competition exacerbated income inequality and favored the rich.

In addition, the victories of European liberal governments and the continued dominance of American Protestants dimmed his hopes for the Catholic future and conversion of the country. During Reconstruction, Bismarck began Kulturkampf and

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[74] Orestes Brownson, "The Political and Industrial State of the Country," 96.

[75] Orestes Brownson, "Democracy Favors Inequality," *Brownson Quarterly Review* 1, no. 2 (April 1873): 249.

[76] Ibid.

Italian nationalists conquered Rome, the nexus of Catholic hierarchy. Evolutionary science and rationalistic philosophy were on the rise as well. Abroad, the outlook for Catholic growth globally, to Brownson, seemed in jeopardy during the 1870s.[77] Within America, the situation seemed little different. Never a friend of Protestantism after his conversion, Brownson seems to have become even less ecumenical in his later years. He became particularly opposed to the Methodists, whose "civil despotism" ranked with Bismark's and who allied themselves with President Grant, the representative of "the anti-Catholic or Methodist feeling.[78]" They were, in his estimation, "the most lawless, greedy, grasping, unprincipled, and fanatical of all the sects that curse the country."[79] In one diatribe, he attacked "the Young Men Christian's Associations spread all over the country, the Evangelical Alliances, Christian Unions, and the 'thousand and one' other associations" for their fanatical spirit and their "almost the complete control of the American people."[80] These statements are valuable for revealing Brownson's fear that the country would not accept Catholicism.

The failure of the country to convert to Catholicism represented a central failure in the American mission. The separation of church and state, freedom of religion and conscience, did not exist for the creation of a pluralistic society, in the estimation of Brownson. Instead, they existed so that governments might not infringe upon the spiritual

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[77] On the connection of European Catholicism to American Catholicism, see John McGreevy's *Catholicism and American Freedom* and Peter D'Agostino's *Rome in America*. John McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*; Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[78] Brownson, "The Next Phase of Civil Progress," 174. Brownson, "At Home and Abroad," 535.

[79] Brownson, "The Political and Industrial State of the Country," 96.

[80] Ibid., 100.

sovereignty of the church, that all men could accept the tenets of the church freely. Protestantism, however, could never encourage this growth, because its rejection of the Catholic Church's spiritual authority. Fulfillment of the American national mission, then, required the conversion of the country to Catholicism. Thus, the failure of Americans to embrace Catholicism added to the list of racial and political issues plaguing the country.

Clearly Brownson's early understanding of American exceptionalism had shifted when the political, racial, and religious developments of the 1860s and 1870s offended his sensibilities. As he approached the end of his life, however, Brownson believed that America seemed more similar to than different from Otto von Bismark's Germany or King Victor Emmanuel's Italy.[81] Now, Brownson seemed to view the church as having more of a salvific role in an American society that had lost her way. No longer was this the easy synchronization between the church and state that he had predicted in the *American Republic.* Because Brownson still believed that the divine-ordained constitution of the country was sound—he claimed that "we seek not to change the political constitution of our country, but to make the American people sincere, earnest, and intelligent Catholics"—he now believed the path to be a torturous one, and perhaps one that Americans could never realize. [82]

[81] For this comparison of American and European liberalism, see Brownson, "The Controversy between Catholics and Protestants," 469. Brownson, "Democracy Favors Inequality," 241, 255. At other times, he still maintained the differences between European and American liberalism, suggesting he was not completely hopeless of the American cause. See "The Syllabus for the People," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 3, no. 3 (July 1875): 418; Orestes Brownson, "On Some Popular Errors concerning Politics and Religion," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 2, no. 4 (Oct. 1874): 548. Though not the focus of this chapter, transatlantic intellectual debates are well covered in Patrick Carey's biography. Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 282–335.

[82] Orestes Brownson, "In the Controversy between Catholics and Protestants," 483.

Understood in terms of national religious, political, economic, and racial developments, Orestes Brownson's disillusionment conveys his conclusion that the American democratic experiment had failed, or was on the verge of failure. For him, it had always been an experiment directed towards the flowering of Catholic freedom. While the Civil War had seemed full of promise, Reconstruction brought with it change antithetical to his vision for society. At the onset of Reconstruction, he confided to Isaac Hecker that he was "almost beginning to despair of the success of the American [e]xperiment."[83] Certainly he had sunk to this despair by the end of his life.

Recovering Brownson's Reconstruction Era thought challenges historians of American Catholicism to pay closer attention to this period. All too often, narratives of American Catholicism move from the Civil War to the school controversy to the Americanist controversy of the 1890s. Although historians have tended to remember Brownson's endorsement of American politics, the political climate fueling his polemic against American government suggests how this period could strain American Catholics' relationship with the nation.[84] Historians of American Catholicism, then, ought to take a cue from Brownson, arguably the most important Catholic layman in the American Catholic Church, and investigate the period.

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[83] Orestes Brownson to Isaac Hecker, March 10, 1868 in *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence,* ed. Joseph Gower (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 242.

[84] In the insightful essay "U.S. Catholics: Between Memory and Modernity," Robert Orsi illustrates how historical memory and amnesia have played important roles in the Americanization of Catholics. Becoming American, he argues, has included attempts at forgetting the tensions between their "sacred memory" and modernity and trying to create a patriotic "civic memory." Robert Orsi, "U.S. Catholics between Memory and Modernity: How Catholics Are American," in *Catholics in the American Century: Recasting Narratives of U.S. History*, ed. R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 11–42.

CHAPTER THREE

Abram Ryan, Catholics, and the Lost Cause

In 1872, in one of his first columns as an editor for the *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, a New Orleans Catholic weekly, Abram Ryan claimed, "Politics we have nothing to do with except in so far as they may infringe the truth of our Creed or the Rights of Our Country. Our Creed is Roman Catholicism. Our Country is the South. To labor for the interests of both will be our high honor."[1] Here, the Poet Priest of the Confederacy made his objectives clear: the defense of Southern society and Catholicism. And with an understanding that Confederate defeat and Radical Reconstruction constituted a threat to the political and religious spheres, Ryan primarily devoted the editorial page to political and religious issues. While Ryan's most famous contributions to Southern memory of the Civil War have been his Lost Cause poems, he also helped shape public discourse as an editor for the *Banner of the South* and the *Morning Star*. Hymning the virtues of creed and "country" in both publications, he curated an image of Catholicism at ease in Dixie.

Although Ryan, in historian Charles Reagan Wilson's estimation, "best captured the mood of the South in this period," scholarly treatment of Ryan's faith, and Catholics more broadly, along with the Lost Cause remains rare.[2] Readers of Wilson's *Baptized in*

[1] Abram Ryan, "Salutatory," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, February 25, 1872.

[2] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 58.

Blood, for instance, might not realize that Father Ryan was a Catholic and not an Episcopalian priest. A few factors account for this omission. First, religion is often of peripheral interest to scholars despite the centrality of ministers to Wilson's field-defining work. Historians have instead tended to analyze race, class, and gender in the making of this myth.[3] Second, most Catholics fought for the Union, perhaps as many as 90 percent.[4] As a result, earlier generations of Catholic historians generally studied Northeastern and Midwestern Catholics while non-Catholic historians generally dismissed the group as a footnote to the larger American story. Historiographical trends and demographics, then, account for the minimal scholarship on Southern Catholicism.[5]

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[3] Segregation and questions of race emerge in any discussion of the Lost Cause. See especially, David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 255–99. While Edward Blum's book *Reforging the White Republic* discusses whiteness and religion, combining religion with other historiographical approaches is rare. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*. Another article on religion makes the exaggerated claim that the Lost Cause functioned as a religion for Southerners. Lloyd Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 185–218. For sources on gender, particularly how many women helped preserve racial and gender norms, see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Elizabeth Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115–39; Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*, New Perspectives on the History of the South (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Grace Elizabeth Hale, "'Some Women Have Never Been Reconstructed': Mildred Lewis Rutherford, Lucy M. Stanton, and the Racial Politics of White Southern Womanhood, 1900-1930," in *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865-1950*, ed. John Inscoe (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 173–201; Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Rebecca Montgomery, "Lost Cause Mythology in New South Reform: Gender, Class, Race, and the Politics of Patriotic Citizenship in Georgia, 1890-925," in *Negotiating Boundaries of Southern Womanhood: Dealing with the Powers That Be*, ed. Janet L. Coryell (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 174–98. For sources on class, see Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the 'Lost Cause': Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 507–33; Bishir, "Landmarks of Power."

[4] Given the lack of data and accurate sources, precision is impossible. William Kurtz estimates that 90 percent of Catholics fought for the North because 90 percent of priests and parishes remained in Union territory. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 172.

[5] David Gleeson and Arthur Remillard are two of the few historians have attempted to chart Catholic involvement in the Lost Cause. See Gleeson, "'No Disruption of Union'"; Gleeson, *The Green*

But it is in part this minority status that makes this group more worthy of consideration. Tracing how Catholic attitudes towards the Civil War, the Lost Cause, and race developed provide an important point of comparison for studies in Southern history and American Catholicism. Speaking to both of these points, this chapter examines the relationship between Catholicism and the Lost Cause. Here, Ryan serves as a vehicle not only to gauge individual opinions but also survey broader Southern views. Although Ryan's popularity suggests a resonance of his attitudes with his audience, these primary sources are supplemented by the many columns in *Banner of the South* and *Catholic Messenger* to indicate these more extensive tendencies.

For Ryan, and for Southern Catholics generally, religious symbols and language shaped their relationship with their region. Catholics' tradition, theology, and devotion differed from the American Protestant mainstream, but in spite of their creedal distinctiveness, Catholics interacted with Southern culture much like Protestants. Both railed against alleged carpetbagger and Radical rule. Both viewed African Americans as economic and political threats. Both contributed to sectional myths about benevolent slavery and an idyllic antebellum heritage. Importantly, however, Southern Catholics often framed these positions within a uniquely Catholic context, drawing upon their community's ritual and tradition. Ryan and other Catholics reckoned with white Southern suffering as a part of their ultramontane piety, and they employed church tradition and teaching to defend Southern political leanings and sanitize their endorsement of slavery. Framing the Civil War and Reconstruction in a Catholic context, moreover, also invited a minority with numerous connections to Europe to contextualize their experience within a

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and the Gray, 164–86. Arthur Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions : Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction Era* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 26–30.

more expansive transatlantic world. While initially Abram Ryan and Southern Catholics interpreted defeat within a more local context, they soon began to understand their defeat as having global ramifications. After the waning of Catholic political power in an increasingly nationalist Europe, Ryan began to interpret Southern defeat within a narrative of international declension, especially the defeat of the church by the forces of secular modernity. Thus, Abram Ryan and fellow Southern Catholics crafted a Lost Cause mythology within the symbolic and historical content of their faith as they defended their section and imagined themselves as Southerners.

After Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Abram Ryan crafted a public image as a priest of Catholicism and proponent of the Lost Cause. A first-generation Irish American, Ryan grew up in Missouri and attended seminary at St. Mary of the Barrens in St. Louis and Our Lady of Angels Seminary in Niagara, New York.[6] During the first half of the Civil War, Ryan had worked as a parish priest at St. Mary of the Barrens in St. Louis, Missouri, and St. Mary's in Peoria, Illinois. Eventually, he moved to Knoxville and served as a priest there in the final years of the conflict.[7] While working in these places, Ryan mysteriously disappeared, sometimes for weeks at a time. After the war, rumors spread that he had served as an itinerant Confederate chaplain on both the Western and

[6] Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 21-29.

[7] Fears that Ryan might have been a Confederate spy seem to have accounted for his brief arrest by Union forces. David O'Connell argues that pro-Union parishioners attempted to discredit Ryan by concocting the story. David O'Connell, *Furl That Banner: The Life of Abram J. Ryan, Poet-Priest of the South* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 47. Douglas Slawson, however, hypothesizes that perhaps infidelity accounted for Ryan's peregrinations and disappearances, though he admits that the evidence is not definitive. Douglas J. Slawson, "The Ordeal of Abram J. Ryan, 1860-63," *Catholic Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 2010): 678. Since the primary sources available are only political newspapers, there is no consensus about Ryan's guilt and little evidence as to where he did travel.

the Eastern fronts. Ryan, unfortunately, seems to have had little desire to dispel these speculations and rarely confirmed or denied the tales. While historians have had difficulty ascertaining the nature of Ryan's peregrinations, it seems likely that he occasionally served as a chaplain, even if many reported sightings of Ryan were chimerical.[8] Regardless his mysterious wartime activities, the Poet Priest rose to prominence after the publication of "The Conquered Banner," which described folding the Confederate flag after defeat and encouraged Southerners to remember the bravery of the fallen.

From the beginning, Ryan's poetry and prose exalting the South appealed to both Catholic and Protestant audiences. Poems like the "The Conquered Banner" and the "Sword of Robert Lee" salved the psychological wounds of war, calling for Southerners to remember their honorable defeat. While much of Ryan's corpus discussed uniquely Catholic elements such as the rosary, priesthood, and veneration of Mary, his patriotic poems were accessible to Protestant readers with little allusion to explicitly Catholic content. *The Banner of the South* functioned in much the same way. Although a diocesan weekly with numerous articles on Catholicism, the publication appealed to Southerners

[8] Both soldiers and newspapers reported sightings of Ryan, and these rumors occasionally spread and lasted. Some of the more mythical biographies of Ryan include H. J. Heagney, *Chaplain in Gray: Abram Ryan* (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1958); Bernadette Greenwood Oldemoppen, *Abram J. Ryan: Priest, Patriot, Poet* (Mobile, AL: Southeastern Press, 1992). David O'Connell, for instance, pushes back against these hagiographies exaggerating Ryan's wartime service and placing him at battlefields on the Eastern and Western fronts. Indeed, much of his book attempts to scale back these grand narratives about Ryan's Confederate participation. O'Connell, *Furl That Banner*. In their recent biography of Ryan, though, Donald Beagle and Bryan Giemza illustrate that O'Connell too quickly dismisses sightings of Ryan. Working with primary sources not always consulted by O'Connell, they do believe that Ryan was more mobile than O'Connell claimed, and they suggest that Ryan might have actually been at Lookout Mountain, a claim dismissed by O'Connell. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost* Cause, 87. And in his most recent research on Ryan, Douglas Slawson presents the admittedly speculative thesis that perhaps infidelity and secret relationships account for Ryan's mysterious absences. Douglas J. Slawson, "The Ordeal of Abram J. Ryan, 1860-63."

still reeling from defeat. With a circulation of six thousand, the paper boasted wide popularity for the war-ravaged postbellum South. Not long after the *Banner of the South*'s founding, Ryan devoted the last page of the weekly to Confederate memory, aptly titling the section "Lost Cause."[9] One page could hardly cover Southern politics, however, so the editorial page also included the polemical screeds against Republicanism and the carpetbagger-freedmen alliance. Even after leaving Augusta and the *Banner* and relocating to Mobile, Alabama, Ryan continued to attack Reconstruction.[10] After an invitation from Bishop Perche of New Orleans, he served as an editor for the *Morning Star*, discharging broadsides against Yankee rule in New Orleans remotely from his Mobile residence.[11] Still dedicated to the truths of the Catholic Church and Southern society, Ryan's editorial page published numerous attacks on Republican rule in the Crescent City. And aside from these editorial stints, Ryan lectured across the country throughout his career, reciting his poetry and defending his principles.[12]

Always featuring vituperations against Reconstruction or justifications of secession, Ryan's publications encouraged his readers to hold firm to their principles in the face of Yankee rule. Southerners alone stood in the way of "the minions of Fanaticism who are striving to tear down the temple of liberty."[13] With almost

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[9] For information on the national circulation and influence of the paper, see Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 135–37.

[10] Ibid., 155–58.

[11] Ibid., 169–78.

[12] For his late life travels and lecturing, see ibid., 159–243; O'Connell, *Furl That Banner*, 154–204.

[13] "Republican Form of Government," *Banner of the* South, April 3, 1869.

metronomic regularity, Southern authors attacked Northern turpitude. Once bested on the field of battle, the only honorable path for Southerners was ideological resistance. As the article "Principle before Policy" reminded readers, if the South stood upon "the Rock of Right," then they would weather the storm of oppression.[14] The article, "Compromise," defiantly claimed about the chains of defeat that "it is better to wear them and keep our honor."[15] This connection of honor and principle was a common one as the publications encouraged ideological resistance. In another essay entitled "Compromise," the author charged the readers that, "*nunc et in articulo mortis*," Southerners must resist the rule of blacks, that the only options were "either to cry *Peccavi* and throw down the strong weapon of your Consent; or to stand up against this great wrong now and forever as becomes the blood of noble gentlemen."[16] Mixing the language of ecclesiastical Latin and Southern honor, the author appealed to manhood and religious conviction to indicate that a Southern *Confiteor* would undermine the foundation of their principled society.[17] Thus, the tenets of Catholicism provided religious ballast for the Southern cause.

While Southern Catholics primarily responded to the same defeat and policies as did Southern Protestants, they understood the post-Civil War world within the context of Catholic community and ritual. On the one hand, Southern Catholics' political

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[14] "Principle before Policy," *Banner of the* South, May 15, 1869.

[15] This article sounds like Abram Ryan and is the first article of the editorial page, but it is not clear if it is him. "Compromise," *Banner of the South*, August 14, 1869.

[16] "Compromise," *Banner of the South*, April 24, 1869.

[17] "Nunc et in articulo mortis" ["now and at the hour of our death"] is the the last line of the rosary. *Peccavi* means "I have sinned" in Latin. This is from the Confiteor when the priest recites, "quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa" ["because I have sinned greatly by thought, word, and deed. My fault, my fault, my greatest fault"].

grievances, to a certain extent, mirrored other Southerners'. Articles attacked the tyranny of the Yankee, whose retaliation to secession was unwarranted and threatened to destroy the Constitution. The familiar cast of Lost Cause villains walked the stage: radicals, freedmen, Northern denominations, and carpetbaggers.[18] On the other hand, the religious content of these weeklies and Ryan's own poetry reveal the importance of religion to this community. Although most known for staunch Southern patriotism, the *Banner of the South* was a diocesan weekly with updates about Catholic Europe, articles on devotion, and updates on the First Vatican Council.[19] Even on Ryan's editorial page of the *Catholic Messenger*, debates over the papacy received greater prominence than attacks on Republicans. The paper, in fact, underwent a more than year-long exchange with the *Southwestern Presbyterian* over papal infallibility.[20]And Ryan, for his part, published far more devotional poems than patriotic ones.

[18] For articles on Republican Party activity, see "Republican Form of Government," *Banner of the South*, April, 3 1869; "Was the Confederate Government a De Facto Government," *Banner of South*, March 20, 1869; "Davis and Lee," *Banner of the South*, April 24, 1869; "The Disgrace of Government," *Banner of the South*, July 17, 1869; "The Situation," *Banner of the South*, January 8, 1869; "No Constitution," *Banner of the South*, March 12 1870; "Politics in the School," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, May 5, 1872; "Politics and Business," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 6, 1872. For attacks on freedmen's political and economic activity, see "Compromise," *Banner of the South*, April 24, 1869; "Can Negroes Hold Office in Georgia," *Banner of the South*, September 25, 1869; "The Reconstruction of Georgia," *Banner of the South*, December 18, 1869; "Let Us Reason Together," *Banner of the South*, January 8, 1869; "Black Government," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 9, 1874. For attacks on the idea of universal suffrage, see "Suffrage," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 18. 1872; "Baltimore Convention," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, July 7, 1872. For attacks on the greed of Northern businesses and religious denominations, see "Methodist-Episcopal Church North," *Banner of the South*, May 22, 1869; "Methodist-Advocate—North—of Atlanta," *Banner of the South*, June 12, 1869; "Politics and Business," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 2, 1872.

[19] "The Catholic Church and Liberty," *Banner of the South*, April 24, 1869. "Archbishop Manning on the Council," *Banner of the South*, December 18, 1869.

[20] The first of these articles is "The Papal International," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, March 24, 1872.

For Ryan, patriotism and religion were not discrete categories, but intimately connected, both informing and shaping the other. After the Montgomery Episcopalian publication, the *Church Register*, accused the *Banner of the South* of sycophancy to increase Southern readership, an anonymous author who sounds like Ryan replied, "Patriotism is a part of Religion. It is more than feeling—it is duty." Love of place and patriotism were natural sentiments, this column, and indeed, the *Banner of the South,* refrained. He continued, "Its front, our Paper bears the motto, to which it has always clung, "Religion and Country." We love both; we honor both; we defend the interests of both; and we would die, if need be, for either."[21] Sometimes, though, contributors could become carried away in enthusiasm for their region, as did the writer of "Religio and Patria," who exclaimed, "the Cross, the emblem of the Christian's faith; the Cross, remembered of the days of yore, our country's battle flag. The Cross of our saviour; the Cross of our sunny South. *Religio et Patria!* Two, and yet so essentially one."[22] Given the great attention to both creed and country, Catholicism and Southern pride were woven together for Ryan and, it seems, for much of his audience as well. As Catholics, they thereby developed a variation of the primarily Protestant Lost Cause.

For instance, Ryan, along with his fellow Lost Cause Catholics, drew upon a theology of suffering and sanctification to reckon with the reality of defeat. Nineteenth-century Catholic devotion emphasized and sacralized pain and sorrow. As John McGreevy writes, "the Catholic Jesus of the mid-nineteenth century was a suffering

[21] Abram Ryan, "The Church Record," *Banner of the South*, May 22, 1869.

[22] Anonyme, "Religio et Patria," *Banner of the South*, June 12, 1869.

Jesus."[23] With the Irish Famine, rise of European liberal nationalism, and Pius IX's self-imposed imprisonment in the Vatican, this religious practice found favor among European Catholics.[24] Unsurprisingly, Southern Catholics seem to have found solace in yoking their suffering with that of Christ. They had remained connected to their European and religious heritage, after all, and they faced social and political uncertainty as their European Catholic peers did.

Throughout his life Ryan's devotional, less patriotic verse, resounded these bitter notes. One of his more popular poems, "The Song of the Mystic," contemplated how

> In the world each Ideal,
> That shines like a star on life's wave;
> Is wrecked on the shores of the Real
> And sleeps like a dream in the grave.

However great man "pine[d] for the Perfect," he remained consigned to an imperfect world filled with pain and confusion. Despite these burdens, Ryan urged his readers to seek out the "Valley of Silence" lying between "the dark mount of Sorrow" and "the bright mountain of Prayer."[25] Communion with God, the only comfort for men in this world of shattered ideals, could only be found between sorrow and prayer, suggesting the intimate connection between the two and a relationship with God. "The Rosary of My Tears," another meditative poem, blended this concept of suffering with one of the most popular symbols of ultramontane piety, the rosary. The metaphorical beads seem only to

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[23] McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 28.

[24] Patricia Byrne, "American Ultramontanism," *Theological Studies* 56, no. 2 (June 1995): 301–27; D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 32.

[25] Abram Ryan, "Song of the Mystic," in *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 35-37.

remind the praying poet of burdens, to allow them to reflect upon his life "from a cross—to a cross." Nonetheless, the poem ends with a hopeful note, as he contemplated that man "reaches the haven through tears."[26] Ryan's popularity, and especially the popularity of his devotional poetry, indicate the ultramontane leanings of his fellow American Catholics.

This view of the world lent itself particularly well to Confederate surrender, preparing Ryan to interpret and fashion defeat within a Southern Catholic theology of suffering. Eulogizing the memory of his fallen brother, the poet mourned how

> the blood of his young heart was shed
> On his country's hallowed altar.[27]

Likewise, the poem "In Memoriam" drew upon the same imagery with the lines:

> Baptismal-blood was laving
> All that field of death and slaughter.[28]

In both instances, Ryan imagined Southern soldiers as martyrs sanctifying the South with their sacrificial blood. But the Poet Priest offered verses for more than simply venerating the dead and linked Dixie's defeat to Christ's crucifixion as well. Evincing this point, his poem "Prayer for the South" functions as an extended comparison of Southern defeat and Reconstruction with the last days of Christ. Here, the poet, reflects how he and the Southern people "forgot Thee, Father, long and oft," but he still reminds his readers that "sorrow leads me, Father, back to thee." Defeat was not the end of Southern life, but a

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[26] Abram Ryan, "The Rosary of My Tears," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 153.

[27] Abram Ryan, "In Memory of My Brother," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 71.

[28] Abram Ryan, "In Memoriam," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 139.

means of sanctification. This was to be no ordinary suffering, but his section's own crucifixion. He thus pleaded

> And while they climb their Calvary with their cross,
> Oh! Help them, Father, to endure its weight.[29]"

Ryan's verses, then, suggest how Catholic devotional practice primed Southern Catholics to understand their section's defeat in theological terms.

In linking his creed and country, Ryan argued that the Old South had championed a vision of liberty compatible with Catholicism. Indeed, Ryan understood his poetic vocation as chronicling the glories of the South for future generations. Inspired by their great sacrifice, determined to preserve the liberties they had defended with their lives, Ryan, as the poet, sought to

> grasp[] his pen
> And in gleaming letters of living light
> Transmit[] the Truth to men.[30]

This same theme of glorifying Southern bravery emerges again in "A Land without Ruins," where he claims that he would rather have ruins and heritage than an ill-gotten victory. And he augurs that

> the graves of the dead with the grass overgrown
> May yet form the footstool of liberty's throne.[31]

As poet, he thus helped preserve, or create, postbellum Southern memory. But by using Catholic imagery and ultramontane images to describe the Southern cause, Ryan also

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[29] Abram Ryan, "Prayer of the South," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 96.

[30] Abram Ryan, "Sentinel Songs," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 173.

[31] Abram Ryan, "A Land without Ruins," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 90.

urged his fellow Catholics to understand the deep affinity between the South and Catholicism. While the popularity of his devotional and patriotic compositions among Catholics and Protestants suggest a more widespread acceptance of these views, by themselves, they only imply that other Catholics understood the poems in the same manner.

That other Catholics writing for Ryan's publications imagined Southern Catholics within the tradition of saints and martyrs further indicates a broader application of church tradition and teaching to Southern defeat. Working for Catholic weeklies, Ryan furnished an important space for Southerners to air their grievances against Reconstruction. Here, the Poet Priest's role as editor and his process of selection reveal his own suppositions and a broader swathe of the Southern Catholic population.[32] Drawing on early church fathers, one priest discussed the life of Tertullian. At first, the contributor lauded this towering intellectual who could "attack [pagan philosophers] upon their own principles and refute their different systems which had become engrafted in the national belief." Few Southerners could miss that Tertullian represented the South and that the pagan philosophers represented the abolitionists and Radicals. In this rendering, he could easily be compared with James Henley Thornwell or Robert Lewis Dabney.[33] But the Carthaginian's case proved particularly important for recalcitrant Southerners unwilling to abandon "Right" after defeat.[34] The author therefore warned how Tertullian's theological views drifted into the waters of heterodoxy later in life. Thus, "his primitive

[32] While it may be assumed that Ryan did not agree with every point or nuance in each article, it may be safely assumed that he would not have published articles whose argument he disagreed with.

[33] David Moyes, "Tertullian," *Banner of the South*, August 14, 1869.

[34] "Devotion to Right," *Banner of the South*, November 20, 1869.

integrity was a model, while his tragic end is a warning." Tertullian's life showed the importance of defending principle until the last days. Tertullian's legacy served as a cautionary tale to Southerners, encouraging them to remain steadfast under Northern occupation.

Examining the serialized story, The Last Days of Carthage, provides further evidence of this connection between the Old South, Confederate defeat, and Catholic tradition. An anonymous author retold the well-known martyrdom of the Christian slave Felicity and the noblewoman Perpetua, whom the rulers of the Roman province Carthage executed around 200 AD. While the story preserved the basic narrative of conversion and martyrdom, the author filled in many of the gaps in the story to create a detailed and speculative retelling. Although framed within the familiar context of Catholic hagiography, the tale spoke as much to the political circumstances of Reconstruction as to devotional practice.

On one level, the story was an argument for the compatibility of Catholics and American institutions. Although the author used the term "Christian," their veneration of the pope, elevation of chastity and monasticism, and belief in the Eucharist signaled that these Christians are Catholics. The minority status of Christians in Carthage, moreover, hearkened up a parallel between the Catholic minority in a Protestant America. Even the pagans' attacks on celibacy and asceticism, and their calumniation of a bishop for alleged infidelity, resemble the anti-Catholic invectives commonly hurled by nineteenth century American Protestants.[35] Despite the intolerance of pagans, the Christians improved their lot in society. The character Hanno, for instance, warmed to the new sect "as they were

[35] "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, April 10, 1869.

regular in the payment in their imposts, as they entered the army and more than once proved themselves valiant soldie[r]s, as they exercised professions useful to society, and had always shown themselves loyal to the state.[36]" Here, the author reminded his Protestant readers that Catholics, like the Carthaginian Christians, have fought for America and remained faithful to her institutions.

At the same time, however, the relationship between Christians and the ruling authorities also resembled the relationship between the North and the South. In the story, the Carthaginians discriminated against Christians, though only mildly at first. But the wicked pagan high priest Olympian conspired to have all the Christians imprisoned or murdered. Manipulating Jubal, a nobleman whose advances are spurned by the Christian catechumen Perpetua, Olympian brought about persecution of the Christians.[37] Here, the plot paralleled Southern narratives about Northern animosity towards the Confederacy: fanatical and heretical abolitionists corrupted Northerners and convinced them to spurn slavery and the South.[38] Thus, Olympian represents the abolitionists, Jubal, the

[36] "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, March 27, 1869.

[37] "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, May 5, 1869.

[38] Further evidence that Jubal represents Northern politicians is found later in the story. After plotting with Olympian, Jubal promises freedom and gold to his slave Afer as a reward for assassinating Perpetua's husband, Jarbus. But after Afer completes his mission, Jubal reneges on his promise and only pays him money. This turn of events hearkens the common Southern charge that Northerners preached a gospel of emancipation, but in fact wished to use the slaves to solidify Republican hegemony and did not care if the slaves were ready for freedom. "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South,* May 5, 1869. And another villain, Sylvain, also seems to be associated with the abolitionists. Later in the story, he becomes key in fomenting hatred towards the Christians. The chapter when he and Afer conspire to kill the Christian commander Jarbus is entitled "Pagan Fanaticism," and later the narrator comments that "the ravings of fanaticism lent strength to the arm and madness to the courage." His association with "fanaticism," a common epithet of the abolitionists, indicates his connection to this Northern faction. "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South,* April 24, 1869. "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, May 1, 1869.

Republicans. Even the government officials seem to represent Radical Republicans and carpetbaggers. Describing those in power, the narrator laments:

> No sacrifice was deemed too great, no display of servility too dishonorable when there was a question of some important place to be occupied, or some dignity to be conferred. These were the kind of men that the Emperor wanted. Treason and assassination had been the means of raising them to the throne and they accordingly required partisans without principle and without independence, to retain them in their elevated position.[39]

If this quote were taken out of context and the word "Emperor" were replaced with "Johnson," "Grant," or "Republican," this would resemble the often-repeated invectives against carpetbaggers' and freedmen's reputed sycophancy, rejection of principle and honor, and consolidation of power. Therefore the persecution of Christians could be interpreted in two distinct ways: a parallel of Protestant persecution of Catholics or of Northern persecution of Southerners.

"Last Days of Carthage" also illustrates how Southern Catholics could employ their tradition to rationalize and sanitize the "peculiar institution." Indeed, Perpetua's Christian slave, Rufina, bemoaned having lost "the precious boon of liberty" and lameneted her separation from her brother after her enslavement.[40] Here, the author acknowledged the temporal suffering of slaves, inviting readers to sympathize with Rufina. And when the narrator provided background on Perpetua's family, he related how her father, Hanno, "had the prejudices of his nation in reference to their slaves." While the author seemed to regret the system of chattel slavery, he continued, "still, if [the slaves] performed their tasks and behaved respectfully, they had no reason to

[39] "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, May 15, 1869.

[40] "The Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South*, March 27, 1869.

complain."[41] While the writer admitted the injustices of slavery, they framed slavery as a tolerable institution. But more important than their obedience to an earthly master was their obedience to their heavenly master.

By insinuating that the bondage of temporal slavery did not preclude the higher good of spiritual freedom, "Last Days of Carthage" minimized the realities of chattel slavery. In particular, the story of Afer, Jubal's slave, reinforces this point. After plotting with Olympian, Jubal commissioned his Afer to kill Jarbus, Perpetua's husband, promising him financial compensation and, more significantly, freedom. In a moment of guilt, however, Afer questions his master's orders to murder the innocent Jarbus: "I have cherished hopes that were vain, deceitful, and absurd. Liberty! Gold! What would be the use of all the liberty he could give me, if I were laden with chains and condemned to die the death of an assassin." Southern readers could hardly miss the blatant analogues between the characters and the Civil War. As Afer's emancipation could not justify murder, the freedom for slaves could not justify unconstitutional immediate emancipation.[42] Afer's eventual treachery stands in stark contrast to the loyalty and holiness of the Christian slaves. Indeed, Revocatus and Felicity receive the "glory of martyrdom" along with the noblewoman Perpetua.[43] Rather than pursue worldly freedom, the Christian slaves accept their worldly lot and focus instead on the promise of heaven.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] It is important to note that, after the assassination, Jubal refuses to free Afer, suggesting that Northerners emancipated blacks, but did not really provide them with the means to find freedom afterwards. "The Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the South,* May 5, 1869.

[43] "Last Days of Carthage," *Banner of the* South, May 29, 1869.

Imagining the Southern past and present within the familiar frame of hagiography suggests the malleability and potency of a Lost Cause mythology infused with Catholic heritage. To compare chattel slavery to the life of Saint Felicity, and to compare the Carthaginian martyrs to the South was to sanctify the Old South and its institutions. Southern society, the comparison suggested, provided opportunities for black and white alike to pursue their vocation to holiness. The narrative reflects how Southern Catholics could imaginatively employ church tradition to justify the racial hierarchies of the Old South and remember the master-slave relationship as one of benevolent paternalism. But for Catholics, this story served a dual purpose, as its comparison of Christians to the South also implied the deep resonance between Catholicism and Southern culture. Thus, "The Last Days of Carthage" illustrates how creative uses of tradition could promote a Lost Cause vision imagining Catholicism within the Southern community.

Even ultramontane loyalty to the pope could be framed within a secessionist political framework. Throughout Ryan's public career, he endorsed papal infallibility and provided commentary on the First Vatican Council in the *Banner of the South*. To modern readers, belief in infallibility and belief in secession might seem inconsistent, for Catholic respect for authority, perhaps, might have facilitated a stronger understanding of national union. [44] Southern Catholics, however, by and large, followed their region after Lincoln's election. But the *Morning Star's* heated exchange with the *Southwestern*

[44] The biographers Alan Giemza and Donald Beagle come to this conclusion in their work: "He maintained the right to political dissent and to have the several rights of states preserved unto the point of bloodshed. Yet he now proclaimed the absolute authority of church leadership and would, at the exact same time, exalt the church as an innately democratic institution!" Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 155.

Presbyterian suggests how Southern Catholics might have synchronized their belief in papal infallibility with states' rights politics.

The inception of this debate, like so many other Catholic-Protestant arguments, was the contention of the *Southwestern Presbyterian* that Catholics try to "subordinate their country and pledge themselves to undying hostility to its independence and its free institutions."[45] Following the all-to-familiar script, the *Morning Star* fired back that the New Orleans Protestant publication had misunderstood the scope of *ex cathedra* pronouncements. In fact, they echoed the common Catholic argument that American Catholics were actually the most faithful citizens. But the author added to these familiar defenses of American Catholic patriotism when he expanded his argument in the next week's paper.[46] Trying to prove the faithfulness of Catholic citizens, the author took an unusual approach. Catholics were the "most faithful citizens or subjects in all countries," he argued, precisely because of their belief in the pope's infallibility. While the *Southwestern Presbyterian* had cited Robert Bellarmine to suggest the impossibility of Catholic citizenship, the *Morning Star* proudly included Bellarmine's contention that the pope possessed "the right to absolve subjects from their oath and to divest kings of their dignity and authority." This argument, the author concluded, primed Catholics to rebel against unjust rule. Calling up the ghosts of the recent war, the author charged the *Presbyterian*, "Will the *Presbyterian* deny this? Will it say that a man must violate his conscience to obey wicked laws? Will it say that the usurpation and inhuman cruelty of a

[45] "The Papal International," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*. This author is a laymen though, as revealed in the article "Infallibility," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 4, 1872.

[46] "The Papal International," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, March 24, 1872.

monster on the throne can never justify good people in deposing him?"[47] Southerners, either Protestant or Catholic, could hardly miss the connection. The writer claimed that belief in papal infallibility coincided with Southern positions on states' rights, nullification, and secession. Rather than force Catholics to submit to arbitrary rule, papal infallibility awakened in men resistance to "usurpation and inhuman cruelty of a monster on the throne."[48] While Catholics framed their relationship to Southern society and their memory of the Civil War primarily on American affairs, their connections to the Old World informed the creation of their narrative. Anything from ultramontane piety to second-century martyrdom could sanction Southern norms. Thus the theological and devotional resources of Catholicism could be employed in unique ways to lend credence to sectional narratives.

But because this version of the Lost Cause derived from Catholicism, it also reflected broader international Catholic concerns. Initially, however, the *Banner of the South* seem to have framed Appomattox and its aftermath as an anomaly within modern development. The first article on the December 4th editorial page, for instance, pronounced, "Science is progressing. Art is progressing. Knowledge of all kinds is progressing. In fact, 'the world moves,' and everything in it is progressing, except one thing, and that one thing is government." Inspired by technological advances represented by the completion of the Suez Canal, the author contrasted these scientific developments with the supposedly retrograde state of political science in the United States. But, hoping

[47] "The Presbyterian and Catholic Citizens," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, March 31, 1872.

[48] Ibid.

that his nation would "reach the Port of Constitutional Liberty ere long," the author boasted that the United States would chart her course anew and participate in the progress of the age.[49] This same note was sounded in "The Spirit of the Age." Here, the author mocked Northerners who believed that they were participating in the *zeitgeist*, claiming "the Spirit of the Age indeed? When all Europe is ringing with sneers at that blackguard despotism which sits enthroned at Washington?[50]" Anticipation of progress extended to Catholicism as well, for the author of "The Papacy" boasted that "Rome, as of yore, still moves the world,—still stirs human society from end to end of earth." Caught up in enthusiasm, he continued, "What a glorious sunset will close upon his Pontificate! How nobly he stands in the front of the army of Catholicity, under the banner of the Cross."[51] Although editorials frequently lambasted Radical Reconstruction, and the section entitled Lost Cause—the last page of each issue—lamented Southern defeat, the *Banner of the South* seems to have seen Southern surrender as an aberration in global affairs. [52]

But examining Ryan's and other contributor's editorials in the *Morning Star* indicate a development in the Lost Cause rhetoric of the *Banner*, for authors began to interpret Dixie's defeat as one of freedom's many defeats in the broader Atlantic world. Rather than bring good tidings in his first column as editor, Ryan waxed poetic on the dangers of the day: "If ever the world needed strong true thoughts and brave words—it is

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[49] "The Progress of Events," *Banner of the South*, December 4, 1869.

[50] "The Spirit of the Age," *Banner of the South*, April 17, 1869.

[51] "The Papacy," *The Banner of the South*, March 12, 1870.

[52] It should be noted that this did not mean that Ryan did not himself pursue an antimodern strain during his *Banner of the South* years. Rather, these articles suggests a degree of optimism about global affairs. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 155.

now. Errors of all kinds are sweeping the world—and sweeping men and nations on to shipwreck."[53] And he returns to this metaphor in later articles when he asked, "Whither are the nations drifting? We say *drifting*, advisedly, for there are neither pilots nor stars to direct their course."[54] While several *Banner* articles framed the American political situation as an anomaly in a larger narrative of progress. Another article echoed this despairing refrain: "the Human Governments of this world to the last one, stand to-day in hostility against the Church which is the Divine Government" and "the Prince of this world of darkness rules today."[55] When paired with fulminations against freedmen, Radicals, and carpetbaggers, these columns framed Reconstruction as once incident within a larger pattern. For Southern Catholics, this was not a simple narrative of Southern defeat, but a more expansive story of growing global despotism. Thus expanding beyond a provincial outlook, Ryan directed his readers' attention to transatlantic political, intellectual, and religious developments.

In particular, European events such as Italian unification and the German Kulturkampf sent shock waves throughout Roman Catholicism internationally and forced Catholics to re-evaluate their understanding of church and state. Much recent scholarship has underscored the significance of European affairs upon American Catholicism, particularly the importance of nationalism in the Old World.[56] Not yet had Bismarck

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[53] Abram Ryan, "Salutatory." His biographers, Allen and Giemza, also note the sadness and lack of "idealism" that characterized his *Banner of the South* days. Ibid., 169–70.

[54] Abram Ryan, "An Outlook," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 1, 1873.

[55] Abram Ryan, "Untitled," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 3, 1873.

[56] Of particular importance are John McGreevy's *Catholicism and American Freedom* and Peter D'Agostino's *Rome in America*. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*; D'Agostino, *Rome in America*.

started Kulturkampf or King Victor Emmanuel II captured Rome during Ryan's tenure at the *Banner of the South*. But these events soon shaped the imaginations of American Catholics, furthering nineteenth-century Catholics along the track of antimodern polemic.[57]

Indeed, loyalty to the pope and outcries against modern nationalism filled the pages of the *Morning Star* more so than the *Banner of the South.* One article, for instance, noted that "there is not on earth to-day one single Catholic Government. The Governments of the world have broken away from eternal principles and their spirit is to-day anti-catholic and will, to-morrow, be anti-christian.[58] " In another passage needling the despotic governments of Europe and "glory of corruption" in the United States, Ryan mourned that "there is a Pontiff King an uncrowned prisoner waiting for death and God."[59] And in perhaps his most dramatic seafaring metaphor, Abram Ryan mourned, "the Church is still in the storm. The bark of Peter,—its helm in the aged but steady hand of Pius, is rocking on the waves. And the waves are wild,—the sky is dark,—the sea is wrathful. Jesus Christ is still asleep."[60] Surely this was not the "glorious sunset" closing Pius IX's papacy that one contributor had predicted for the *Banner of the South.*[61]

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[57] Ryan himself became intimately familiar with this state of affairs, for he traveled to Rome in 1872, a year after Victor Emmanuel captured the property of the Roman College. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 171.

[58] Sounds like Ryan again. "Shadow of Days that Were: Sign of Things to Be," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, September 1, 1872.

[59] Abram Ryan, "An Outlook," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 1, 1873.

[60] Abram Ryan, "Untitled," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 3, 1873.

[61] "The Papacy," *The Banner of the South*, March 12, 1870.

Clearly the Poet Priest saw a connection between a corrupt liberal Europe and a corrupt liberal America. In his estimation, "Human Governments of this world to the last one, stand to-day in hostility against the Church which is the Divine Government."[62] This was no small thing, for in rejecting the Divine Government, the powers of the world rejected the authority of the Catholic Church and the freedom found within a properly ordered society. And with the real and perceived failures of Reconstruction, unsurprisingly Ryan linked American regression to broader global regression. Returning to the often-employed metaphor, Ryan lamented that our "politicians are at sea,—stormy sea, at that, and are flinging away all the old-fashioned compasses and charts, that used to guide them in other days as altogether useless in the present dense fog."[63] American politicians, or better yet, Republicans, had rejected their heritage and thrown out their religious and political traditions as had European governments.

As with Orestes Brownson, Ryan also attended to intellectual and religious developments in his critique of Reconstruction. His article series, "Give God His Place," amounted to a full-scale assault on scientific rationalism. This should not be interpreted as merely a screed against the scientific method, for Ryan claimed that "every atom is a star to light the pat of reason up to God.[64]" Indeed, he believed, "every phenomenon which science investigates is a link in the chain of logic which binds the effect to the cause, the created to the uncreated, and leads reason back to God." In his estimation, the problem with contemporary science was the assumption that God did not exist, not

[62] Abram Ryan, "Untitled," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, August 3, 1873.

[63] Abram Ryan, "Political Confusion," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 23, 1872.

[64] Abram Ryan, "Give God His Place" *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, June 23, 1872.

necessarily its methods. And like Brownson, articles in the *Morning Star* pointed the blame of this growing laxity and despotism to the continued dominance of Protestantism. In the words of one author, "we attribute the universal corruption in this country to the paramount sway of Protestantism"[65] But Ryan was also not hesitant to point out the weaknesses in the American Catholic church.

Indeed, Ryan's addressed the failures of postwar Catholics in his article series for *Donahoe's Magazine*, "Some of Our Weak Points." In these articles, which he wrote from 1883 to 1884, he questioned the vivacity of the American Catholic Church. First addressing the subject, Ryan cautioned that priests had started to value the pulpit more than the altar. This had occurred because "Catholics breathing an atmosphere impregnated with Protestantism catch the contagion of giving to the merely *human* more than its real moral value in our holy church." Surrounded by Protestants who overvalued the preachers' sermon had weakened Catholics focus on the more important sacrifice of the mass.[66] In the next installment, Ryan bemoaned the fact that Catholics pursued "Catholic self-glorification." Given the state of Catholic education, poverty of parishes, and the lack of "uniformity" among Southern and Northern Catholics, he maintained that the American Catholic Church had little of which to boast.[67] Although Ryan concluded with the reminder that the Church's "energy [] may sometimes seem to flag, but can

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[65] "The Democratic Principle," *Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, May 18, 1873.

[66] Abram Ryan, "Some More of Our Weak Points," *Donahoe's Magazine* 7, no. 1 (January 1882): 22.

[67] Abram Ryan, "Some More of Our Weak Points," *Donahoe's Magazine* 7, no. 2 (February 1882): 99.

never be destroyed," his expectations to rectify the financial status of dioceses seemed dim.[68]

Two months later, Ryan expounded upon these weakness with a broad critique of American exceptionalism. He began his article "Some More of Our Weak Points" attacking assumptions about Catholicism's compatibility with America: "'this is the best Government the world ever saw,'—a fine political phrase, but false. 'The Catholic Church is better off in these United States than anywhere else,'—a fine ecclesiastical phrase, but somehow meaningless."[69] After already discussing the shortcomings of parochial education and the tendency to place too much emphasis on homilies, Ryan turned to the more expansive subject of Catholicism's compatibility with America. Although he believed that he had penned something "very disagreeable to write," he believed it important to attack assumptions that Catholics could flourish within the United States. The fact that "there is political persecution masked, in every political party, against our persons and our beliefs," he believed, challenged the traditional assumption about American freedom's compatibility with Catholicism. [70] The "secular" nature of Protestantism, moreover, threated to corrupt the "spiritual" nature of Catholicism. In both Catholic and Protestant churches, he believed that "sermons [] jingle with the sounds of money, and the doors of some churches are guarded by the moneychangers."[71]

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[68] Ibid., 101.

[69] Abram Ryan, "Some More of Our Weak Points," Donahoe's Magazine 7, no. 4 (April 1882): 291.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Abram Ryan, "Some More of Our Weak Points," *Donahoe's Magazine* 7, no. 4 (April 1882): 291-292.

Opposition to an increasingly secular world thus lent an increasingly antimodernist cast to Ryan's attack on Reconstruction. Not limiting his broadsides to critiques of politics, he charged the nation with political, economic, and spiritual decay and linked this to a retrograde modernity. Like Orestes Brownson, Reconstruction created tension between Southern Catholics and the American nation. But as Poet Priest of the Confederacy, Ryan framed Catholicism as compatible with the Old South, drawing upon the traditions and vocabulary of his faith to craft a Roman-tinged Lost Cause mythology. But this did not mean that religion was served an epiphenomenal role in the construction of the Lost Cause, a means of reinforcing Southern hierarchies. All the attention to transatlantic religious affairs reflects how Southerners' attacks on Reconstruction and Southern memory developed in tandem with their critiques of a world increasingly hostile to traditional models of Catholic government.

The Lost Cause of Southern Catholics was at once shared and distinct from that of Southern Protestants. Many historians, however, have emphasized the heavily Protestant origins of the Lost Cause. But Ryan and his cadre of Catholic contributors underscore that religious traditions outside the Protestant mainstream also buttressed this social and political vision. Including their voices, by no means insignificant as Ryan and the *Banner of the South*'s fame suggest, highlights the expansive nature of the Lost Cause. This mythology united Protestant and Catholic in their telling of a shared regional narrative, even if they plied different rhetorical tools in constructing Southern history. And perhaps this speaks to the power of the Lost Cause as a sectional myth, its malleability and adaptability within different religious communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Republicans' Assessments of Catholic Copperhead Activity in the Civil War

"To all adopted citizens. I am a democrat and a Catholic, but I am bound to support the government, therefore I cannot vote the democratic ticket. God save the Union."[1] These words, jotted on a ticket stub from an 1863 election in Boston, certainly pleased Republicans who had hoped that Catholics would lay aside partisanship and support President Abraham Lincoln. Over the previous few decades American Protestants had worried over Catholic immigration, fearing that loyalty to an autocratic Roman hierarchy precluded loyalty to democratic and republican institutions. The Civil War thus presented an opportunity for Northern Catholics to prove their allegiances to their new country by becoming Republicans. But in practice, most Catholics failed to live up to these expectations, and they remained a reliable voting bloc for the Democratic Party throughout the conflict.[2] Several prominent Catholic newspapers from New York to Wisconsin, for instance, excoriated the administration's war policies. Moreover, Catholic opposition to conscription arose throughout the North, evident in draft dodging and, more violently, the Port Washington and New York draft riots. Worse, this dissent paralleled, and in some instances stemmed from, the activities of the Copperheads, Peace

[1] "An Election Incident," *Lowell (MA) Daily Citizen and News*, November 4, 1863.

[2] During Lincoln's reelection, for instance, Irish Catholics were some of McClellan's most ardent supporters. John French, "Irish-American Identity, Memory, and Americanism during the Eras of the Civil War and First World War" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 2012), 141-142.

Democrats who opposed the war effort and were suspected of Confederate sympathies. Building upon earlier antebellum antipathies, moments of Catholic resistance to the war effort raised questions about this large religious community's commitment to the Union.[3]

To what degree Northerners attacked Catholic loyalty, and to what degree the Civil War facilitated Catholic assimilation, remains disputed among historians. Some have argued that the sacrifices of Catholic men on the battlefield and nuns in the hospitals ameliorated anti-Catholicism.[4] Others contend that a nascent civil religion unified opposing creeds under a common Union banner.[5] Some recent scholarship, however, has pushed back against this narrative. Both Susannah Ural and William Kurtz have argued that Catholics did receive warm treatment in the early stages of the war, but the familiar anti-Catholic- and anti-Irish slurs by white Protestants resurfaced in the last half of the conflict.[6] These investigations of Catholic-Protestant relations are of more than antiquarian interest. As Jon Gjerde and John McGreevy have demonstrated, interactions

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[3] This paper will interchangeably use the terms Copperhead and Peace Democrat to describe opponents of the war effort and the Lincoln administration.

[4] Sean Fabun, "Catholic Chaplains in the Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (October 2013): 675–702; Miller, "Catholic Religion, Irish Ethnicity, and the Civil War," 261–96; Randall Miller, "Religion and the Civil War," in *The Cambridge History of Religions in America*, ed. Stephen Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 216; Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 103–33.

[5] Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006), 94; Conrad Cherry, "Introduction," in *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, ed. Conrad Cherry (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 11.

[6] Ural and Kurtz both argue that Northerners revived this religious antagonism after detecting the waning Catholic support for the war effort and identifying Irish Catholics with the New York Draft Riots. Susannah Ural, "Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble: Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861-1865," in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 125. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 4–5. For another examination of Catholic-Protestant tension in Civil War Missouri, see John McGreevy, *American Jesuits and the World*, 63–103.

between these two groups help historians understand the evolution of liberalism, disestablishment, and freedom in American society.[7] Catholics may have been cultural outsiders, but they remain a valuable lens through which to examine the Civil War era.

Tracking discussions of Catholics and Copperheads in Republican newspapers provides an important way to evaluate Northern attitudes towards Catholics. As vocal opponents of wartime measures and the draft, many Catholics participated in, or seemed to participate in, many of the Copperhead networks of dissent. Given the proliferation of anti-Catholic animus in the 1850s, Catholics' connections to the "traitorous" Peace Democrats could have incited greater prejudice among the Grand Old Party. But anti-Catholic sentiments occurred rarely in Republican newspapers' discussions of the Copperheads.[8] Though a few Republican publications railed against a Catholic-Copperhead coalition plotting to undermine the Union, most editors and writers constructed a narrative of Catholic patriotism. When Republican newspapers mentioned both Copperheads and Catholics, they tended to contrast the actions of dissenters with the actions of loyal clerics and laymen such as Orestes Brownson and Archbishop John Purcell. These publications thus implied that proper practice of the Catholic faith entailed support of the Northern cause. Even many articles that did describe Catholics' occasional unfaithfulness to the Union often exculpated these uneducated immigrants because of their ignorance and instead blamed the corrupt coterie of Democratic politicians and clergymen for their manipulation of the masses. This distinction between Catholic and

[7] Jon Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. S. Deborah Kang (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); John McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

[8] Many of these newspapers are from the Midwest and New York, the hotbeds of Copperhead activity during the Civil War.

Copperhead reveals that Confederates and their Copperhead compatriots replaced Catholics as the nemeses of American liberty. Ultimately, denominational divisions blurred as support for the Union supplanted a common Protestant heritage as the standard for entry into the national fold.

Other than racism, few other prejudices dominated the imagination of American Protestants in the antebellum era more than prejudice against popery. As wave after wave of German and Irish immigrants swept into the United States, animosity towards Catholics grew.[9] Though often hysterical, Northerners' aspersions developed from perceived threats that Catholics presented to American society. Nineteenth-century Catholicism, with its denunciation of popular liberalism and elevation of hierarchy, impinged upon democratic and republican institutions.[10] Republicans, for instance, decried Catholics for their support of slavery. While some of this polemical language was no doubt a political maneuver to win over nativist American Party "Know-Nothing" voters, this rhetoric also spoke to a deeper concern: Catholicism allegedly opposed the

[9] From the Revolutionary War to the Civil War, the Catholic population exploded from about 25,000 to 3.5 million, much of this growth occurring after the 1820s. Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 56–59.

[10] A number of historians have examined the nature of anti-Catholic antipathies in the antebellum era. Though dated, the first monograph on the subject is still a valuable resource: Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964). For two exceptional studies of the tension between Catholic and American Protestant conceptions of freedom, see McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*; Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*. Some scholars have interpreted Catholic-Protestant tension in the light of Protestant anxiety. Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), xvii; Thomas Haddox, *Fears and Fascinations: Representing Catholicism in the American South* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 5–8. Still, others have contended that the origins of anti-Catholicism stem from Protestants' fears that Catholics threatened Victorian gender norms. The best of these studies is Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

free labor system.[11] But however great the problem of Romanism appeared before the Civil War, the outbreak of violence reframed debates about American loyalty.

During the war, the small contingent of Democrats who opposed the conflict, the Copperheads, became the greatest political threat within the North. Although Democrats generally had reservations about emancipation, most were War Democrats. The Peace Democrats, however, opposed the war. They decried the policies of the Lincoln administration, claiming that the suspension of habeas corpus, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the imposition of the draft were unconstitutional abuses of executive power. But for all their hostility to the conflict, they still desired to reknit the ties between the North and South, believing perhaps naively that negotiation rather than military confrontation would best preserve the bonds of union.[12] While the nexus of Copperhead

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[11] Historians of the Republican Party have demonstrated that Republicans employed anti-Catholic rhetoric and legislation to draw voters from the Know-Nothing Party. Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 250–78; Michael Holt, *Forging a Majority; the Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh, 1848-1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 175–219; Michael Holt, "Making and Mobilizing the Republican Party, 1854-1860," in *The Birth of the Grand Old Party: The Republicans' First Generation*, ed. Robert Francis Engs and Randall M. Miller (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 40. Eric Foner has argued that, while cultural impulses of anti-Catholicism still might have existed among Republicans, many leaders believed that nativism and anti-Catholicism distracted from the key issue of slavery. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 229–59. William Gienapp shows, however, that many Republicans "direct[ed] nativist felling into an anti-Catholic rather than anti-foreign channel." While Republicans at times employed an anti-Catholic polemic to garner political support, they also attacked Catholics because they upheld the institution of slavery and, in so doing, prevented systems of free labor. William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 424–26.

[12] For general discussions of the Peace Democrats and their political views, see Frank Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a treatment of how their location within the tradition of Jacksonian democracy influenced their opposition to the war, see Richard Curry, "The Union As It Was: A Critique of Recent Interpretations of the 'Copperheads,'" *Civil War History* 13, no. 1 (March 1967): 25–39; Richard Curry, "Copperheadism and Continuity: The Anatomy of a Stereotype," *The Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 1 (January 1972): 29–36; Thomas Rodgers, "Liberty, Will, and Violence: The Political Ideology of the Democrats of West-Central Indiana during the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History* 92, no. 2 (June 1996): 133–59; Thomas Rodgers, "Copperheads or a Respectable Minority: Current Approaches to the Study of Civil War-Era Democrats," *Indiana Magazine of History* 109, no. 2 (June 2013): 114–46.

activity was in the Midwest, dissent against Republican policies arose in other states including New York, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and even Connecticut.[13] Decrying this perceived treachery, Republican newspapers lambasted the Peace Democrats for supporting the Confederacy.[14] During the war, especially before the elections of 1863 and 1864, Republican publications circulated rumors about subversive secret societies such as the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Order of American Knights. These alleged fifth columnists supposedly encouraged draft dodging, plotted to liberate and arm Confederate prisoners, and, ultimately, planned to incite insurrection throughout the North.[15] Both soldiers and citizens back on the home front hated the Peace Democrats.[16] Indicative of such hostility, one minister urged his listeners, "while those at the front kill rattlesnakes,

[13] Joanna D. Cowden, "The Politics of Dissent: Civil War Democrats in Connecticut," *New England Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (December 1983): 538–554; Richard Curry, *A House Divided; a Study of Statehood Politics and the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964); John Niven, *Connecticut for the Union: The Role of the State in the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 293–317; Arnold M. Shankman, *The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement, 1861-1865* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980), 218; Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[14] In the North, individual communities played a large role in identifying seditious speech and policing this behavior, which accounts for the seriousness and prominence of discussions of Copperheads within Northern newspapers. William Blair, *With Malice toward Some: Treason and Loyalty in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 60–65.

[15] Responding to earlier narratives about Copperhead treachery, Frank Klement argued that charges of treason and attempts to incite Midwestern revolt were mostly the chimerical machinations of Republican newspapers hoping to discredit Democrats and win local and state elections. Frank Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West*. Jennifer Weber revises the scholarship of Klement. Although she agrees that Republicans did exaggerate the prominence of dissent, she also demonstrates that more fifth columnists plotted against the Union than Klement identified. Weber, *Copperheads*, 192.

[16] Soldiers' believed that Copperheads opposed soldiers as well as the war, stoking their hatred for Peace Democrats. Jonathan White, *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 25–37.

we at home must kill copperheads."[17] Opposition to the war effort, then, amounted to sympathy with traitors.

In this environment of political suspicion and hostility, Catholics who opposed the war garnered growing infamy. Northern publications covered Catholic actions on the front line and back at home, which meant that the words and deeds of this religious minority remained visible. Attentive Northerners, howver, noticed a division among the denomination over participation in the war. Thousands of Irish and German immigrants served in the Union army and prominent figures like Archbishop Purcell and Orestes Brownson championed the Northern cause. But almost all Catholics supported the Democratic Party and some went further and endorsed the Copperheads. Among the most vociferous opponents of the Republican Party were James McMaster, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, and John Mullaly, editor of the *Metropolitan Record*. [18] Over time, almost all Catholic publications and their support of the war effort flagged.[19] At other times, opposition flared in more destructive ways. Irish immigrants opposed to

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[17] *Central Christian Advocate* (St. Louis, MO), October 15, 1863 quoted in Ralph E. Morrow, "Methodists and 'Butternuts' in the Old Northwest," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 49, no. 1 (April 1956): 38–39. Sean Scott has demonstrated that antipathy towards Copperheads caused tension in and divided religious communities. Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 128–30.

[18] For more information on this background, particularly the involvement of Catholics in dissent, see French, Irish-American identity, memory, and Americanism during the eras of the Civil War and First World War, 108-154. Joseph George, "'A Catholic Family Newspaper' Views the Lincoln Administration: John Mullaly's Copperhead Weekly," *Civil War History* 24, no. 2 (June 1978): 112–32; Joseph M. Hernon Jr., "Irish Religious Opinion on the American Civil War," *The Catholic Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (January 1964): 508–23; Frank Klement, "Catholics as Copperheads during the Civil War," *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (January 1994): 36–57; McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 68–71; Kenneth Zanca, "The Lion Who Did Not Roar . . . Yet: The Editorials of James A. McMaster–May 1860 to May 1861," *American Catholic Studies* 122, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 1–29.

[19] Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 121.

conscription composed most of the mob responsible for the violence of the New York Draft Riots.[20] And Peter Deuster's German-Catholic newspaper the *See-Bote* stoked anti-war sentiments and riots in Port Washington, Wisconsin.[21] In Pennsylvania, a group of mostly Irish-Catholic coal miners stopped a train filled with newly recruited soldiers and disbanded only after Bishop James Wood begged for their cooperation. [22] The counties with the highest incidents of draft dodging, moreover, were counties with high percentages of immigrants and Catholics.[23]

Nativist antebellum prejudices, combined with Catholic participation in dissent, constituted real grounds for Republicans to doubt the patriotism of Catholics. If virtually all Catholics voted for Democrats who were threatening the Republican political hegemony, how could Catholics fully embrace patriotism and Union? [24] If the Irish composed the mobs of the New York Draft Riots, how could they be seen as ready to sacrifice for the nation? Republicans asked themselves these questions throughout the course of the conflict. As one article in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* cautioned:

> If the followers of Rome and its priesthood here will insist on playing into the hands of the Copperheads of the North and the rebels of the South, they will have

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[20] For more on the draft riots and their significance, see Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*.

[21] Frank Klement, *Wisconsin and the Civil War: The Home Front and the Battle Front, 1861-1865* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1963), 48.

[22] Shankman, *The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement, 1861-1865*, 147–48.

[23] Peter Levine, "Draft Evasion in the North during the Civil War, 1863-1865," *The Journal of American History* 67, no. 4 (March 1981): 822–28. It should be noted, however, that many Northerners who were not Catholic avoided conscription as well. Joan Cashin, "Deserters, Civilians, and Draft Resistance in the North," in *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*, ed. Joan Cashin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 262–85.

[24] On the importance of the union for Northerners, see Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1–6. On the aggressive anti-Democrat rhetoric of Republicans, see Mark Neely Jr., *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 171–78.

> nobody but themselves to blame if they should succeed in rousing the Protestant community . . . against them. [25]

While this particular moment offered Catholics a unique chance to prove their patriotism, missteps might bolster traditional fears about their alleged loyalty to Rome.

In the eyes of some Republicans, Catholics' dissent affirmed that they threatened freedom. The *Evansville Daily Journal*, in a lengthy two-page article, claimed that Catholics "seem to have nothing else to do but to exercise their jesuitical arts in the interests of the Copperhead party and the Society of Jesuits."[26] For authors steeped in the anti-Catholicism of earlier decades, these were easy, and even natural, parallels to draw. Prelates and politicians both allegedly plotted in secret and manipulated the ignorant masses to subvert American institutions. The *Chicago Tribune*, for instance, blamed the narrowness of Lincoln's victory in 1864 upon the Catholic clergy, "of whom at least 98 in every 100 support the Copperhead party."[27] These complaints of Catholic voting patterns indicate how some Northerners interpreted Catholic political affiliation as evidence of disloyalty. In their minds, Catholicism and Copperheadism had joined forces to sap the foundations of American liberty and Union.

After the outbreak of the New York Draft Riots in 1863, several publications voiced their concerns about Catholicism and the actions of its hierarchy. Some newspapers targeted the clergy in particular for allowing sentiments of dissent to grow within their parishes. John Hughes, the Archbishop of New York, became the primary

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[25] "More of National Antipathies and Sympathies—Race and Religion," *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 4, 1865.

[26] *Evansville (IN) Daily Journal*, June 7, 1864.

[27] "Copperhead Attacks on Protestant Clergy," *Chicago Tribune,* November 23, 1864, 2.

target. Though he had supposedly helped dispel the mob, some authors railed against him. They noted that he had addressed the rioters as fellow Irishmen and even "gentlemen."[28] This tone of amicability rang hollow to some Northerners. According to the *Cleveland Morning Leader*, it sounded like "a wishy-washy, Irish-blarney sort of an affair."[29] An article in the *New York Times* lambasted the Bishop:

> If the mob had burned the Catholic Orphan Asylum next door to the Bishop's Cathedral, somebody beside 'the papers' would probably have called them 'rioters:'—that Archbishop Hughes could regard the term as less applicable to the men who burned the Colored Orphan Asylum seems to us incredible.[30]

On occasion, this antipathy towards Archbishop Hughes and Catholic leaders was even more expansive, however. Some articles blamed the clergy for failing to cultivate a spirit of peace among the Irishmen. As the *Evansville Daily Journal* claimed, if he could end the hostilities with a speech, then he could have prevented them in the first place. [31]

At its most critical level, this rhetoric yoked Catholic and Copperhead forces in New York. A week after the riots, the *New York Times* labelled Archbishop Hughes the "apologist of the Confederate-Mozart revolt" and decried the Irish Young Men Catholic Association for its favorable discussions of the Confederate Constitution.[32] Other papers suspected that the pope might have been involved in the affair.[33] These charges against

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[28] "The Riot in New York-Cessation of the Troubles," *New York World*, July 17, 1863.

[29] "Seymour on Mobs," *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 17, 1863.

[30] *New York Times,* July 18, 1863.

[31] *Evansville (IN) Daily Journal*, June 7, 1864.

[32] "The Copperhead Insurrection A Miscreant Mob," *New York Times*, July 23, 1863.

[33] *Daily Ohio Statesman (Columbus)*, October 10, 1863.

Hughes and other priests seemed plausible because they tapped into anti-clericalism and deep seated fears about the Roman hierarchy. The treacherous tendencies of Catholics had surfaced again. Now, for some Northerners, the connections between Catholics and Copperheads were too obvious and too dangerous to ignore. But, in the words of the *Chicago Tribune*, "this did not provoke the Republican press into attacking the Catholic clergy and laity, because Republicans freely concede the right of every man to choose for himself his party and sectarian affinities."[34]

Indeed, Republican newspapers more frequently emphasized how patriotic clergymen and laymen opposed the Copperheads. Though maligned by some Northern papers for his handling of the New York Draft Riots, Archbishop Hughes received favorable press as well. Republicans, for instance, applauded his rejection of the *Metropolitan Record* because he could not "stand [its] treason any longer."[35] John Purcell, the renowned Archbishop of Cincinnati, received even greater support than didHughes. He and his brother, Edward Purcell, wrote for the *Cincinnati Telegraph,* and this Catholic paper decried the seditious activities of the Peace Democrats and supported the policies of the Lincoln administration, even its more contentious positions on conscription and emancipation. Archbishop Purcell's public opposition to Clement Vallandigham, an arch-Copperhead in Ohio, circulated throughout the country, and Republicans lauded Purcell as the ideal Catholic who was politically active for the

[34] While perhaps an overestimation of Republican's inclusivity, this quote nonetheless captures a tendency within Northern print culture. "Copperhead Attacks on Protestant Clergy," *Chicago Tribune,* November, 23, 1864, 2.

[35] *Fremont (OH) Journal*, March 27, 1863. *Burlington (IA) Weekly Hawkeye*, March 28, 1863.

perseverance of the union.[36] Republicans also cheered Bishop Timothy Smith of Dubuque, Iowa, for proudly raising an American flag over his church and threatening to excommunicate any member of his diocese who participated in Copperhead secret societies.[37] And of course the military service of Catholic officers and soldiers added further proof that the church supported the Northern cause.[38] By supporting the legislative and military goals of the Republican Party, Catholics could and did ally themselves with the majority of their Northern peers.

Even in the wake of the New York Draft Riots, many Republican publications were quick to contrast the heroic actions of priests with the angry mob. One writer even visited the parishes throughout the city to demonstrate that priests delivered homilies and decried the violence.[39] And many other papers highlighted the heroism of a priest who defended Colonel Henry O'Brian in the street from the rioters.[40] By contrasting the actions of the clergy with the Irish mob, these writers implied that religious loyalties were

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[36] His staunch support of the Republican Party received local as well as national attention from Northern publications. *Cleveland Morning Leader*, October 23, 1863; *Western Reserve Chronicle (Warren, OH)*, November 23, 1864; *Tiffin (OH) Weekly Tribune*, November 6, 1863; "The Copperhead Press on Bishops Purcell and Potter," *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, November 9, 1863; *Wellsboro (PA) Gazette*, May 27, 1863.

[37] This article was originally from the Dubuque Times and was printed in papers across the country. "No Catholics Wanted in the Church," *Lewisburg (PA) Chronicle*, May 19, 1863; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, May 23, 1863; "A Catholic Bishop Threatens Disloyalists with Excommunication," *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 12, 1863; "A Disloyal Organization Exposed at the Cathedral by Bishop Smyth," *Grant County Herald (Lancaster, WI)*, May 12, 1863; *New-York Daily Tribune*, May 13, 1863.

[38] *Tiffin (OH) Weekly Tribune*, November 6, 1863; "Rosencrans and the Copperheads," *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin (Milwaukee)*, March 20, 1863; *Belmont (OH) Chronicle*, March 31, 1864.

[39] "Roman Catholic Clergy on the Riots," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 20 July, 1863, 2.

[40] *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, March 28, 1863; "The Death of Colonel O'Brian," *Janesville (WI) Weekly Gazette*, July 24, 1863; *Burlington (IA) Weekly Free Press*, July 24, 1863; *Union County Star and Lewisburg (PA) Chronicle*, July 17, 1863; Stedman, "New York Correspondence," *Christian Era* (Boston, MA), July 24, 1863, 2.

not the reason for the violence. Other articles more explicitly attempted to exonerate the Irish's Catholic faith. The *New-York Daily Tribune*, for instance, claimed, "we personally know many Irish Catholics who are as loyal, as law-abiding and as hostile to all manner of riot and outrage, as any men on earth." The inebriated and ignorant, not the "industrial, sober, intelligent," made up the ranks of the mobs.[41] The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* made a similar attempt to counter attacks on Irish Catholics when it argued, "It is due to the Irish race that while we look on a record that it is for their interest to have forgotten to remember another that no true American will ever forget. The soil of Virginia has drained the life blood of thousands of men of the Irish race.[42] Thus, the sacrifices of Irish and Germans Catholics on the battlefield indicated that a particular faith had little to do with the outbreak of the violence.

And Catholic intellectual Orestes Brownson's defense of Catholics after the riots, moreover, found traction among Protestants as well. In his magazine, *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, he contended that few, if any, "respectable Irishmen" or "better class of Catholics" were among the agitators. "The riot was not a Catholic riot" and did not prove that "the Church is disloyal, or incompatible with republican freedom, or national unity and independence."[43] He charged, instead, that the Copperheads orchestrated this act of violence:

> These things they did not as Catholics or Irishmen, but as adherents of the Democratic Party, as partisans of Horatio Seymour, Fernando Wood, James Brooks, Clement L. Vallandigham, and others, who, by their incendiary speeches

[41] "The Irish," *New-York Daily Tribune*, July, 1863, 4.

[42] *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 20, 1863.

[43] Orestes Brownson, "Catholics and the July Riots," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* 4, no. 4 (1863): 387.

> and by leading articles in the Democratic journals . . . had worked them up to uncontrollable fury.[44]

By blaming the Protestant Copperheads, Brownson disassociated the Catholic Church from dissidence.[45] Importantly, several newspapers favorably cited Brownson to show that Catholics could remain loyal to the Union. Though a few still expressed some doubts about Catholics, they nonetheless conceded that Brownson was a true patriot who put aside his Democratic Party sensibilities to support the Lincoln administration during the crisis.[46]

Citing the defenses of Brownson, together with the actions of loyal clergymen, these Republicans associated true Catholicism with true patriotism. Indeed, the construction of Catholic loyalty in opposition to Copperhead disloyalty indicates how Northerners became more willing to accept Catholics during the Civil War. By holding up such exemplary American citizens, these newspapers created a Catholic foil to the dissenting Peace Democrats. In doing so, Northern Republicans implicitly argued that Catholicism and Copperheadism were not symbiont and that Catholicism, properly practiced, precluded seditious behavior. Through their support for the Union cause, Catholics proved to Republicans that they could adopt and protect the civil and political institutions of the United States. It was for this very reason that the *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* claimed that Copperheads hated loyal Catholics. The Peace Democrats

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 402.

[46] "Brownson on the Loyalty of the Catholic Church," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1863; "Brownson and Democracy," *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, October 17, 1863. *New York Times*, October 15, 1863. *Morning Oregonia*n *(Portland, OR)*, December 25, 1863. "Dr. Brownson on the New York Riots," *Raftsman's Journal (Clearfield, PA)*, November 4, 1863.

despised the Catholic General William S. Rosencrans, for example, because his "political faith and god-fearing character, give him strong elements of popularity among the masses of the people, and especially among our adopted citizens."[47] Such a tone of inclusivity was a departure from the harsher cadences heard only a few years earlier. Devotion to the Union, the new profession of "political faith," had earned this commander and his fellow Catholics the label of "adopted citizens." Thus, the decrees of prelates against the Copperheads and the concerted efforts of parish priests to quell the New York Draft Riots won the favor of these Republican newspapers. Simply put, the actions of Catholics indicated that loyalty to Rome and loyalty to America could coexist. But the activity of brazen Catholic Copperheads, draft dodgers, and rioters did pose problems for this narrative of faithfulness.

To address that problem, several Republican papers blamed dissent on the ignorance of the Catholics and the guile of Copperheads. According to the rumors and narratives circulated by Republican Party organs, Peace Democrats sought to undermine the North by electing pacifist politicians. The opponents of the war, after failures to convert those on the front lines, had turned to immigrants and Catholics on the home front.[48] This tactic, what one paper called trying their "hand on our 'Irish,' 'German,' and 'Catholic' voters," meant the manipulation of the ignorant masses of immigrants.[49] The

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[47] "Rosencrans and the Copperheads," *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin*, March 20, 1863.

[48] As Jonathan White argues, however, voting patterns and tendencies of soldiers were often more complicated than the traditional narrative that all soldiers endorsed the Republican Party. While many soldiers voted for Lincoln in the national election, some had soured on the administration and did support McClellan. White, *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln*, 98–111.

[49] "Tries Its Hand at Our Naturalized and Catholic Citizens," *Fremont (OH) Journal*, July 21, 1865.

corrupt Democrats allegedly duped the throngs of "poor ignorant, drunken Catholics" and maintained their hold over them by "political slanders."[50] That is, through calumniation of loyal Northerners and the concealment of their own insidious political agenda, the Copperheads had seduced unknowing acolytes, strengthening their networks of sedition throughout the nation. This attribution of seemingly subversive Catholic behavior to ignorance occurred again and again. One paper, for instance, claimed that the German and Irish voters went blind "because this pair of pills are sugar-coated with the phrase 'democracy.'"[51] Carl Benson, a writer for the *New York Times*, accused Copperheads of taking advantage of the Irish's inferior mental state to gain political control in New York and incite the draft riots of 1863.[52] Even their partisanship, according to the Republicans, reflected Catholic witlessness. Indeed, some papers noted that Catholics supported Peace Democrats who were former Know-Nothings. Continued support of those nativists reaffirmed Catholics' mental shortcomings.[53]

Ultimately, this differentiation of the practitioners of Catholicism and the proponents of sedition signaled a shift from earlier attitudes towards Catholicism. A more ecumenical, though somewhat condescending attitude, appeared in these discussions. After the draft riots, Carl Benson, who had blamed the Peace Democrats and clergymen

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[50] "Letter to the Editor," *Belmont (OH) Chronicle*, July 13, 1865.

[51] "Untitled," *Bedford (PA) Inquirer*, October 6, 1865. "The Coal-Fields of Pennsylvania," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 5 December, 1863.

[52] "The Poor and the Rich: The Views of 'Carl Benson,'" *New York Times*, November 15, 1863, 5.

[53] *Daily National Republican* (Washington D.C.), October 20, 1864. "The Archbishop and the Demagogues," *The Lancaster (OH) Gazette*, November 19, 1863. *Fremont (OH) Journal*, September 15, 1865. *Daily Intelligencer (Wheeling, WV)*, September 11, 1863.

for inciting the violence, maintained that, with a proper education, these immigrants could elevate their social position and meaningfully contribute to American society and politics.[54] If, as one author claimed, they understood the real meaning of emancipation and the policies of the Lincoln administration, they could "yet repair much of the harm they have done, and prove themselves alike true friends of their country, and champions of freedom."[55] As these lines make clear, motives set apart Catholics from Copperheads. Rather than accuse Catholics of treachery because of their theological beliefs, Republicans forgave this religious minority because of their social condition. The innocence of ignorance absolved Catholics of treachery. These illiterates knew no better. But the Peace Democrats had no such excuse. Corrupted by their lust for political gain, these traitors committed their sins with full knowledge and wicked intent.

All of this differentiation between Catholics and Copperheads suggests that many Republicans began to include this once marginalized group within the fold of the American community during the Civil War. The patriotic actions of Archbishop Purcell and others presented a powerful case for the possibility of Catholic patriotism. One wartime poem praising Brownson makes this clear. In the "Catholic Cathedral," T. Hulbert Underwood wrote that Catholicism had first proclaimed that "Slavery is truth, and God is a lie." Now, however, they defended Union, faith, and freedom, and among them

[54] Interestingly, Benson and many others partially blame the hierarchy for keeping the Irish in ignorance. This fear of the clergy, a traditional fear of antebellum Protestants, remains, but Benson and these others seem to believe that it is more the corruption of these individuals rather than their Catholicism which is to blame for the events. Indeed, that he and others suggest the possibility of the education of Irish Catholics suggests as much. Carl Benson, "The Lessons of the Riot," *New York Times*, July 25, 1863; "The Poor and the Rich."

[55] *Daily Evansville (IN) Journal*, July 29, 1863. *Cleveland Morning Leader*, April 11, 1863.

boldly Brownson stands;
His lips are eloquent, his pleading hands
Are upward raised, imploring Heaven to aid,
In sending Treason to its native shade.

Catholic opposition to Copperheads and participation in the conflict convinced many Northerners of this minority's compatibility with American freedom. There was, in addition, ample evidence of Protestant disloyalty. The Protestants did compose the political leadership of the Copperheads, as Brownson had noted. And Catholics were not alone in avoiding the draft rolls. They were, in fact, only some among the North's many draft dodgers and deserters.[56] Other pragmatic considerations, such as the significance of the Catholic voting bloc and especially the thousands of Catholic soldiers in the Union Army, disincentivized the marginalization of this group so important to the war effort. But other factors influenced Northerners' actions.

Despite Catholic dissent and witlessness, Northerners increasingly viewed Catholics as their countrymen during the war. The *Smoky Hill and Republican Union*, for instance, proclaimed that "a citizen, whether Jew or Gentile, Quaker or Catholic, be he what he may be, cannot perform a higher duty than to go to the field and fight his country's battles for the preservation of human liberty."[57] For this publication, loyalty to nation, not one's creed, determined true citizenship. The *New-York Daily Tribune* echoed such sentiments when it defined the religion of the Peace Democrats as a "kind of composite or eclectic faith, which shall contain elegant extracts from a variety of creeds and embrace whatever is tenderly savage, sweetly barbarous, deliciously cruel and

[56] Cashin, "Deserters, Civilians, and Draft Resistance in the North," 262–85.

[57] *Smoky Hill and Republican Union (Junction City, KS)*, February 6, 1864.

virtuously brutal in all religions ancient and modern."[58] Only a few years earlier, Northerners made similar charges of syncretism and paganism, but against Catholics, not Protestant Democrats. The *Marshall County Republican*'s praise for Orestes Brownson underscored this shift.

> Brownson is not a Republican, but he is a true and loyal citizen, who is most manfully and with tremendous power wielding his sturdy logic in the defence of his country. Let us honor the profound Nestor of the Catholic faith, though he deal our Protestantism severe blows, for he is loyal without conditions, and strikes without fear of consequences.[59]

Here, the author minimized the religious and even political distinctions between Brownson and the typical Northern Republican. As he implied, these gradations simply did not matter when one possessed loyalty "without conditions." Rather than assume an inherent tension between Catholicism and American freedom, as many did in the antebellum years, the author envisioned Democrats and Republicans alike, Catholics and Protestants, as members of American democracy, all united in their love of country.

Ultimately, these patterns within Northern newspapers point to a reimagination of Catholics within a more broadly understood national community. Hesitancy to label Catholics as Copperheads, and a willingness to defend them from the charge, challenges the narrative of scholars Susannah Ural and William Kurtz that anti-Irish Catholic language returned to antebellum levels by the end of the war. While the discussions of Irish ignorance do support Ural's argument that ethnic slurs resurfaced as the war continued, they appear to have a more anti-Irish than anti-Catholic edge. And an unwillingness to label Catholics as Copperheads belies Kurtz's claim that Northerners

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[58] "Copperhead Christianity," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 31 December, 1863.

[59] *Marshall County Republican*, August 6, 1863.

excommunicated Catholics from the Union. While religious division and tension did reemerge after the war, the more tangible wartime threats of Copperheads and rebels overshadowed former concerns about Catholics. [60] In the minds of these Republicans, the link between loyalty to Rome and disloyalty to the Union diminished. With the crucible of the war came a more all-encompassing civil religion which carved out a space for Catholics in the nation.[61] For a brief moment, support of the Union became the national creed for a clear majority of Northerners, Republicans and Democrats, Protestants and Catholics alike.

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[60] Despite this moment of greater toleration, this antipathy towards Rome reemerged in the years after the war, especially near the end of the century. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 91–126; Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 129–43.

[61] While Stout notes that Catholics and Jews were received into both the North and the South during the war, he does indicate that there were limits to this toleration. Spiritualists and Mormons, for instance, were still attacked by the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* as heretical. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, 94, 199–200.

CHAPTER FIVE

Abram Ryan's Reception and a Shared Protestant-Catholic Lost Cause

Shortly before Christmas of 1880, the Poet-Priest of the Confederacy, Abram Ryan, addressed a packed house at Baltimore's Academy of Music, where Reverend Edwards McGurk, the president of Loyola College, hoped to establish a medal in honor of Ryan's poetry. Although Ferdinand Latrobe, the Baltimore mayor, had attended, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes, two more distinguished invitees, were absent. Both had sent their regrets, however, and these letters were read before Ryan's address. Longfellow wrote, "Of course, you will hardly expect me to sympathize with all the 'verses connected with the war.' Yet, in some of them, I recognize a profound pathos and the infinite pity of it all." While Longfellow's muted praise perhaps reflects reservations about Ryan's Lost Cause verse, Holmes lauded the Southern poet: "I feel sure that the songs which he will read you will awaken lively echoes in your hearts, and leave with you a Christmas gift of noble thoughts, broad patriotism and human sympathies, blind only to the geographical boundaries on the maps of our common country."[1] These sentiments underscore the power of Ryan's poetry, at least in Holmes' estimation, especially its call to a deeper love of common country. Although Holmes had fought for the North, he still approved of Ryan's project of Confederate memorialization because it gestured towards sectional reconciliation. And it seems likely that Ryan's conduct at the event would have deepened Holmes'

[1] "Father Ryan," *Catholic Mirror,* December 25, 1880.

appreciation. While he admitted that "it is too late for me to be reconstructed," he also praised how, during the yellow-fever outbreak, the "North came down with sandals of mercy on her feet to the poor fever-stricken South and met her in the sanctuary of her deepest woe."[2]

Underneath this patriotic rhetoric also run interesting questions about Catholic-Protestant relations in postbellum America. Indeed, Ryan's poetry seems capable of crossing traditional sectional and religious boundaries. Here, in the Border State of Maryland, Ryan's Lost Cause poetry could bring together Northerners and Southerners, Catholics and Protestants together—and, in Holmes' case, a skeptic—around shared memories of the Civil War. While the second and third chapters highlighted how Reconstruction could be an alienating experience for Catholics as well as Protestants, this chapter argues that Abram Ryan's contributions to Civil War memory promoted sectional reconciliation between North and South and improved relationships between Catholic and Protestant.

Northerners and southerners found solace in the supposed tones of reconciliation and comfort in the devotional meditations of the poet, especially in the years before the First World War.[3] In effect, his verses helped salve the wounds of the Civil War. Although Protestants recognized that Ryan was Catholic, they still upheld him as an exemplar of piety and patriotism. While much has been written about the Lost Cause's tendency to unite white men and women of distinct social classes against blacks, this

[2] Ibid.

[3] This essay will limit its scope to the period before the First World War, primarily. Articles on Ryan tapered off after the war, and the Lost Cause itself changed during this period as the war further facilitated the reunion of North and South.

regional myth also appears, to an extent, to have united traditionally opposed religious groups. When American Protestants appropriated his legacy to encourage and defend American mores and when they shared the same public space with Catholics at Ryan's lectures, they signaled that Catholics could enter the national fold. And Catholics found not only hope for reunion in their priest's words but also justification of their American patriotism.[4] Ultimately, the favorable reception of his devotional and patriotic verse, and the perception of Ryan as a paradigm of civic and creative leadership, illustrate how Civil War memory could facilitate Catholic entry into the national community.

Ryan's poetry appealed to Southerners in large part because it glorified Southern valor. Poems such as "The Sword of Robert Lee" and "March of the Deathless Dead" preserved the memories of martyred rebels "with sentinels of song."[5] In particular, "The Conquered Banner" appealed to hearts of Southern readers, winding its way into the liturgies of the Lost Cause for decades to come. Recitations became standard fare at Confederate reunions and United Daughters of the Confederacy [UDC] events, sometimes serving as the climax of the ceremonies.[6] Further suggesting the poem's popularity, Mary Fenollosa claimed that most houses had a battle flag, oval portraits of

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[4]Attributing subtle shifts in early prejudice to Ryan, famous though he was, of course exaggerates his significance. To be sure, Ryan did contribute to the amelioration of religious tensions, but Protestants' favorable reception of Ryan's patriotic stances and devotional poetry also suggests developments larger than Ryan. Although the poet-priest did not cause this development in Protestant-Catholic relations, he did contribute to it.

[5] Abram Ryan, "Sentinel Songs," in *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 171.

[6] See, for instance, *Austin Weekly Statesman,* May 6, 1886. *The Galveston Daily News,* June 8, 1877. "Lone Star Maiden Captures Cavalrymen Who Won Fame," *Brownsville (TX) Daily Herald,* May 21, 1906. "General Fitzhugh Lee's Memorial Speech in Baltimore on Thursday," *(Richmond) Daily Dispatch,* May 25, 1878.

Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, and then a picture of Ryan with a framed copy of "The Conquered Banner."[7] The *Galveston Daily News* also posited that "there is hardly a ten-year-old child in the South but recognizes in the above extract . . . the beautiful and touching lines by the Poet Priest, Father Ryan."[8] His other patriotic poems eased the psychological wounds inflicted on Southerners grappling with theodicy. "The Conquered Banner," for instance, reminded the readers that, while they must forever furl their flag, their deeds, as suggested through the metonymy:

> 'twill live in song and story
> Though its folds are in the dust."[9]

Perhaps Southern justification could not be found in this world, his poetry refrained. Thus, he depicted a world full of gloom and dissatisfaction where succor could only be found in God, certainly appealing to the mood of the region.[10] As a muse of the Lost Cause, he would be remembered, according to one newspaper, "as long as the starry banner of the Confederacy illumines the pages of history."[11]

But rather than simply revel in the glories of old, Southerners also interpreted Ryan as a symbol for re-entry into the national fold. While a few unrepentant rebels took umbrage at the suggestion that they furl the flag, most Southerners seemed to agree with

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[7] This article was reprinted from *Southern Women's Magazine.* Mary Fenollosa, "The Town of the Five Flags," *Palatka (FL) News and Advertiser,* September 29, 1916.

[8] *Galveston Daily News,* June 8, 1877.

[9] Abram Ryan, "The Conquered Banner," *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), 233.

[10] Abram Ryan, "Song of the Mystic," 35-37.

[11] *Times Dispatch (Richmond)*, 16 November 1910.

Ryan's assessment of defeat.[12] They should honor the dead, not resurrect hostilities. A few amateur authors, for instance, wrote verses of reconciliation, dedicated to Ryan, in local newspapers. "We Have Furled It," which appeared in Clarksville, Texas's *The Standard*, remembered halcyon antebellum days was "hopeful for the by-and-by."[13] Fred Campbell's "Let the Conquered Banner Wave" urged readers to

> unfurl that banner; don't lay it away.
> There is one country—it's both blue and gray—
> Just one united land for us all.[14]

While he might have missed Ryan's point that a furled banner could still be a remembered banner, Campbell still saw the conquered but proudly displayed banner as a symbol of national unity. Another particularly telling example occurred in 1902 at a Texas Catholic high school, where, during commencement exercises, six girls carried American flags and six girls carried Confederate flags, taking turns to recite "The Conquered Banner."[15] In another newspaper story, an abandoned cannon told a tale of reconciliation between both sides. According to the old piece of artillery, "Not less courageous were the men in gray who fought under what is now the conquered banner," but "Thank God that is all past now and the old flag well beloved north and south floats in love and protection." This narrative suggested how the furled flag became a symbol of

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[12] John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006), 46.

[13] "We Have Furled It," *Standard (Clarksville, TX)*, July 23, 1880.

[14] "Let the Conquered Banner Wave," *Confederate Veteran* 19, no. 3 (1911): 103. The article with the poem claimed that the author was Colonel Anderson. A later article attributed the poem to Fred Campbell. *Confederate Veteran* 19, no. 4 (1911): 152.

[15] *Sunday Gazetteer (Denison, TX),* June 22, 1902.

bravery and defeat that gave way to a unified blue and grey in love for the newly United States. Thus the phrase "the conquered banner" became a symbol of gracious Southern defeat and sectional reunion, and both flags became symbols of patriotism. As one Oklahoma paper noted, "In that 'land of pure delight' beyond the stars, if there shall be any reminders of human courage and human faith, we shall see floating proudly side by side 'the conquered banner' and 'old glory.'"[16] Thus, Ryan's poetry helped Southerners and Southern sympathizers come to grips with defeat and imagine themselves in a community of former Rebels and Yankees. In "[pronouncing] the benediction over a restored Union and a reunited people," to borrow from the well-known UDC historian Mildred Rutherford, his poetry helped Southerners re-enter the United States.[17]

Ryan's stanzas found favor with Northern audiences as well. He traveled extensively throughout the North in the last years of his life, often raising money for various charitable causes.[18] Thus, he rose to national, not simply Southern prominence. Mary Nixon, one of his correspondents, claimed that "publishers tell us his books sell better at the North than in 'his own country.'"[19] That the *New York Times* recommended the collection for holiday gifts indicates the widespread reach of Ryan's message.[20] But

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[16] "An Address by W.A. Thompson," *Cherokee County Democrat (Tahlequah, OK)*, February 16, 1916.

[17] Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *The South in History and Literature: A Hand-Book of Southern Authors from the Settlement of Jamestown, 1607, to Living Writers* (Athens, GA: The Franklin-Turner Company, 1907), 466.

[18] Both of the scholarly biographies of Ryan provide good coverage of his travels throughout the North and the South. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 159–244; O'Connell, *Furl That Banner*, 113–204.

[19] Of course, this is just hearsay, but it does nonetheless point to his national popularity. Mary Nixon, "The Poet-Priest of the South," *The Catholic Reading Circle* 6 (1895): 211.

[20] "Holiday Books," *New York Times*, December 5, 1880.

what accounts for the popularity of Ryan, who wrote incendiary lines such as "The Blue is Blue, but Gray is Gray/ Wrong never accords with Right"?[21]

Although these particular lines might have rankled some Northern readers, the defeated tone pulsing throughout his poetry and his supposed overtures at reconciliation assuaged them that hostilities had ended. Certainly Ryan's call to "Furl it, hide it,—let it rest" signaled to a Northern audience the totality of Southern surrender. These verses could not be read as a call to insurrection. But Northerners also detected notes of harmonious reunion within his verses. *The American Bookseller*, for instance, relayed that his "appeal to the sentiment of a reunion based on love and kindly offices" distinguished his collection of poetry.[22] His gestures towards friendship also appeared in the poem "Reunited." Although he did not actually write the poem, it was not credited to another author and many readers assumed that Ryan wrote it.[23] They believed, correctly, that "Reunited" was written after Northern aid to the South during a yellow fever outbreak, and they appreciated the rapprochement between the "Northland—Bride of snow," and "Southland—bright sun's fair bride."[24] The *Blue and Gray* also favorably

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[21] Abram Ryan, "Sentinel Songs, 182." It should be noted that Ryan's poetry, unsurprisingly, had less currency in the North in the twentieth century than it did in the South. While Southern literary collections continued to list Ryan, Brander Matthew's textbook written for Southern high schools omitted any discussion of Ryan. Brander Matthews, *An Introduction to the Study of American Literature* (New York: American Book Company, 1896). Likewise, Ryan is also omitted in Barrett Wendell, *A Literary History of America* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1901), 480–99.

[22] "Poetry," *The American Bookseller: A Semi-Monthly Journal* 11, no. 5 (1881): 132.

[23] The story is that one of Ryan's students, Margaret Ellen "Nellie" Henry, entered the poem into a competition that Ryan was judging. He insisted that one of his students should not win the prize, so as a consolation the poem was included in his collection, with Henry requesting that her name not be attached to the poem. While Ryan admitted the need to include more reconciliatory gestures, he allegedly claimed that he would not be able to do so. Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 185.

[24] Edward Blum stresses the importance of reunion between the North and the South. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*, 146–73. For mentions of the yellow fever epidemic and Ryan's change of

cited Ryan expressing words of friendship, "I think the best interests of the Southern people will be found in acting in good faith as Americans."[25]

One of the clearest associations of Ryan with reconciliation is found in the short biographical essay prefacing an 1888 edition of *Father Ryan's Poems.* In this "Memoir," John Moran praised Ryan for ascending to the mount of the muses and relating their wisdom to all Americans. While some of Ryan's poetry took on a distinctly Southern cast, Moran concluded that "no section owns him, since he belongs to the common country." In the minds of all Americans, he believed that "'The Lost Cause,' and the song "The Conquered Banner," will mingle harmoniously with the soft, earnest words and sweet, placid tones of his peaceful "Reunited.'"[26] These lines illustrated how Ryan's verses transcended sectional division and helped to heal lingering sectional wounds. Understood as literature of reconciliation, Ryan's national renown makes sense.[27] By appealing to both sections' desires for reunion, Ryan became an example of patriotism for countless southerners and northerners.[28]

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heart, see *Selections from the Writings of John Boyle O'Reilly and Reverend Abram J. Ryan; Ed. with an Introduction and Notes and Questions*, (Chicago: Ainsworth & Company, 1904), 58; John Moran, "Memoir," in *Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous,* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1888), xxv; "Personal Memories of Father Ryan, The Southern Poet-Priest," *The Literary Digest* 18, no. 3 (1899): 70–71. Importantly, one of the hagiographies of Ryan also indicate that Northern aid during the epidemic was a turning point for Ryan's reconciliation with the North. That these stories point to this event suggest that this tale received a good deal of coverage among the press. Heagney, *Chaplain in Gray*, 168–82.

[25] Eugene Didier, "Some Southern War-Songs and Their Authors," *Blue and Gray: The Patriotic American Magazine* 2, no. 6 (1893): 466.

[26]Moran, "Memoir," xxix, xxxiii.

[27] For more on how literature and romance could facilitate reunion, see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 2–6.

[28] Within the historiography of national reunion, scholars have disputed to what degree the North and the South reunited or reconciled. Reunion carried with it connotations of becoming a nation again,

Surveying Catholic publications' memory of Ryan reinforces this argument about his conciliatory role. Of course, many Catholics read Ryan's poetry for its devotional qualities. "My Bead" and "Upon Visiting Pope Pius IX" resonated with the ultramontane piety. Thus the reviewer for the *Catholic World* concluded that "The Song of the Mystic," not one of his patriotic compositions, was his best work. Ryan's Catholic witness also seems to have won the respect of his fellow believers.[29] But surveying Catholic newspapers in the months after Ryan's death reveals parallel patterns in Catholic and Protestant thought.[30] His passing attracted significant attention from the Catholic press, with even a few German publications remarking on the passing of the "Dichterpriest des Südens."[31] The *Boston Pilot,* perhaps the most prominent American Catholic publication, claimed that "he has let the songs of evanescent hope and triumph die with the cause they celebrated, and preserves in his published volume only the lament of defeat."[32] Catholic publications also seem to have understood Ryan as merely enshrining the memory of the brave but defeated Southern soldier. Buffalo's *Catholic and Union Times* wrote, "Surely

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restoring the traditional territorial boundaries. Reconciliation, however, connoted a deeper sentiment of friendship and companionship among the North and the South. Ryan was so powerful a symbol because he could appeal to all Americans, those who still had hostilities towards the other section, and those who longed for full communion with their former opponent. For more on this distinction, see Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 311.

[29]Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier and Co., 1879), 465. See also, "Death of Reverend A. J. Ryan," *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, May 1, 1886; Mary Nixon, "The Poet-Priest of the South," *The Catholic Reading Circle* 6, (1895): 211.

[30] The publications cited here are primarily from Border States or Northern states because few Southern Catholic papers existed in the 1880s.

[31] "Inländische kirchli. Berichte," *Katholische Volkszeitung (Baltimore)*, May 1, 1886; "Aus Louisville," *Wahrheitsfreund (Cincinnati)*, 28 April 1886' "Father Ryan," *Katholischer Glaubensbote (Louisville),* April 25, 1886.

[32] "Father Ryan Dead," *Boston Pilot*, May 1, 1886.

there can be no great harm in recalling on such an occasion, the heroic struggle and sufferings of those who wore the Gray."[33] Likewise, the *Michigan Catholic* voiced, "His patriotic pieces exhibit that fire which as soldier was his and, by him, that of the sympathetic Southerners." [34] Like Protestant articles, Catholic articles established that Ryan's poetry was a poetry of defeat

And so too did Catholics stress the conciliatory contributions of their Poet-Priest. The *Michigan Catholic* stressed that Ryan's numerous Northern tours represented "a fitting illustration of the fraternal peace that now solidifies the Northern and Southern States which once rung with the cry of the dead and dying on the blood-burdened soil." [35] Illinois's *Church Progress* similarly claimed that "this country will lament the death of this noble priest of God, who by his voice and pen contributed so much to the honor of God and the glory of his country."[36] The *Catholic Monitor* came to the same conclusion: "May the soul of this priestly sweet-singer of the Southern States prove to be as pure and as beautiful in the eyes of his heavenly Judge as are the pious ejaculations and the patriotic aspirations of his brilliant genius."[37] Ryan's patriotism applied not only to his section, these author argued, but to the entire country. William Kelly penned a poem in memoriam for Ryan in the *Boston Pilot*. Considering how Ryan helped effect "the new song of love" between North and South, Kelly speculated that, in heaven, Ryan "hymns

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[33] *(Buffalo) Catholic Union and Times*, May 6, 1886.

[34] "A Broken Chord," *Michigan Catholic,* May 6, 1866.

[35] "A Broken Chord," *Michigan Catholic,* May 6, 1866.

[36] *Church Progress (Marshall, IL)*, May, 1, 1886.

[37] "Father Abram J. Ryan Dead," *Catholic Monitor,* April 28, 1886.

the new song of love forevermore."[38] While Northern Catholics found in Ryan a fellow Catholic, they also saw a fellow patriot. Indeed, Ryan's love for his creed and his country, lent support that Southerners and Catholics desired to be and could be a part of the American nation.[39] In praising Ryan's role in reunion, Catholics viewed themselves as important participants in the joining together of North and South. Praising the Poet Priest for his patriotic contributions, Catholics not only advanced an agenda of reunion, they also suggested the compatibility between American Catholicism and the again-United States.

With patriotic credentials accepted in North and South, Ryan's Lost Cause contributions could serve as a vehicle to shift traditional Protestant suspicions of Catholics. While the phrase "the conquered banner" became so commonplace that it might have lost direct connection to Ryan, he did succeed in impressing upon his readers that he was a Catholic. Leafing through the pages would have alerted readers to familiar Catholic subjects about the priesthood and the Virgin Mary. Mystical and devotional poetry comprised most of his collected works, after all. The *New York Times* for example, noted that he was "as warm a defender of the Lost Cause as he is a supporter of the Church to which he belongs."[40] "His character as priest," wrote the *Southern Magazine*, "is so inseparably linked with that of the poet."[41] He was Father Ryan, "poet-priest." While Ryan's faith was clear to many readers, articles avoided denigrating his beliefs.

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[38] William Kelly, "Rev. Abram J. Ryan," *Boston Pilot,* May 1, 1886.

[39] For a spirited defense of Catholic and American compatibility using Ryan as a model, see Nixon, "The Poet-Priest of the South"

[40] "New Books," *New York Times*, January 19, 1880.

[41] Henry Norton, "Father Ryan, Poet Priest," *The Southern Magazine* 1, no. 6 (1899): 361.

Attacking Ryan's Catholicism would have undermined his credibility and called into question their patriotic sentiments. Because his poetry appealed to the political motives of Northerners and Southerners, the popular Northern weekly *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine* wrote, "A Roman Catholic, he was honored by Protestants; an Irishman, he was loved and admired by native Americans."[42] Rather than attacking his Irish ancestry or Catholic faith, the publication indicated how Ryan's religious and ethnic minority status had not prevented his popularity. Proving his love of country, Ryan demonstrated that Catholics could love and support the United States as deeply as did Protestants. The patriotic appeal of his verses, moreover, served as an entry point into the life and legacy of a Catholic priest.

While praising Ryan for his patriotism signals a departure from earlier attitudes about Catholics, the religious appeal of Ryan's poetry denotes greater tolerance to Catholic piety. The devotional themes, despite their ultramontane cast, seem to have extended the collection's popularity. Unsurprisingly, Catholics throughout the country found comfort in Ryan's meditations on familiar spiritual themes, and Irish-Americans' pride swelled after reading "Erin's Flag."[43] But several articles and book reviews suggest that a wider Christian audience found wisdom in his more contemplative compositions. The Southern Lutheran F. V. N. Painter, for instance, admired that "from beginning to end Father Ryan's poetry is a transparent casket, into which he has poured the richest

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[42] "Abram Ryan, The Poet-Priest of the South," *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine* 20 (1886): 87.

[43] Mary Nixon, "The Poet-Priest of the South," *The Catholic Reading Circle* 6, (1895): 199-212. Charles O'Donnell, "On Poet-Priests," *Ecclesiastical Review* 48, no. 4 (1913): 448-451. Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier and Co., 1879), 465. "Father Ryan's Poems," *Catholic World* 30, no. 180 (1880): 860. John Smith, "Father Ryan's Poems," *The Catholic Reading Circle Review* 4, (1894): 193-198.

treasures of a deeply sorrowing but noble Christian spirit."[44] The editors of one textbook made it clear that the poems "have raised the hearts of men in adoration and benediction to the great Father of all."[45] *Werner's Magazine*, which sold one edition of the book, recommended the poems for "their absolute purity, lofty sentiment and genuine poetic principle" and suggested that readers recite them "in chant form or responsive, or in prayer form."[46] Even Mildred Rutherford decided the religious elements in Ryan's poetry warranted great attention. She praised him as much for his piety as his patriotism in his biographical entry, lauding his "offerings to the twin altars of Religion and Patriotism."[47] Despite his Catholic faith, his spiritual exhortations appear to have found favor among Protestants as well.

The more critical reviews of Ryan's poetry furnish further evidence of its broad devotional appeal.[48] The Southern academic Franklin Painter claimed in 1903, "it can hardly be said that Father Ryan ever reaches far poetic heights. Neither in thought nor

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[44] F. V. N. Painter, *Poets of the South: A Series of Biographical and Critical Studies with Typical Poems* (New York: American Book Company, 1903), 115. For biographical information on Painter and his academic interests, see Richard Hudnall, "Franklin Verzelius Newton Painter," in *Library of Southern Literature: Biography*, ed. Edwin Anderson Alderman et al. (Atlanta: Martin and Hoyt Company, 1909), 3889–93.

[45] *Selections from the Writings of John Boyle O'Reilly and Reverend Abram J. Ryan* (Chicago: Ainsworth and Company, 1904), 6.

[46] H. L. Piner, "An Evening with Father Ryan, Poet-Priest," *Werner's Magazine* 26, no. 1 (1901): 64.

[47] Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *The South in History and Literature: A Hand-Book of Southern Authors from the Settlement of Jamestown, 1607, to Living Writers* (Athens, GA: The Franklin-Turner Company, 1907), 469.

[48] By 1929, there had been more than forty reprintings of Ryan's collection. O'Connell, *Furl That Banner*, 140.

expression does he often rise above cultured commonplace.[49] The Notre Dame professor John Smith also lamented that Ryan failed to cultivate his poetic genius and prophetic vision. Ryan might have ascended Olympus to dwell with the muses, Smith noted, if not for impatience and an unwillingness to train himself in prosody.[50] If metrical inconsistencies, abuse of anaphora, and uninspired rhyme schemes plagued Ryan's poetry, what, negative reviewers asked, accounted for its popularity? While critics understood that Ryan's memorialization of the Old South won him renown below the Mason-Dixon Line, they believed that Ryan's appeal had deeper roots. Most critics agreed that the sing-song nature of his corpus appealed to the American audience. These "emotional strains reach[ed] a larger audience than that which more studied verse is wont to gain."[51] That is, untrained American ears delighted in inferior verse. The other major source of popularity, they believed, originated in the religious character of the American people. This was, for Father John Smith, the primary appeal of Ryan's songs.[52] The "moral sense of the American people [was] strong," Painter likewise argued in 1903. The primary themes in Ryan's poetry, "the truths of religion, the vicissitudes of human destiny, and the tragedy of death," thus spoke clearly to most Americans.[53] Not all

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[49] Painter, *Poets of the South: A Series of Biographical and Critical Studies with Typical Poems*, 113.

[50] John Smith, "Father Ryan's Poems," in *The Catholic Reading Circle Review* 4, no. 4 (1894): 198.

[51] Edmund Clarence Stedman, *Poets of America* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), 467.

[52] Smith claimed that "Religious feeling is the first" reason for his popularity. John Smith, "Father Ryan's Poems," 197.

[53] Painter, *Poets of the South: A Series of Biographical and Critical Studies with Typical Poems*, 116–17.

literary critics attributed his popularity to piety, but the tendency of publications to focus on the mystical aspects of Ryan's work indicates that more than patriotism accounted for his national recognition.[54] That a collection of poetry with compositions about the rosary and the saints suggests a greater tolerance among Protestants. To be sure, it is likely that they found inspiration in poems with more general spiritual meditations, like "Song of the Mystic," and not explicitly Catholic poems, like "My Beads." Nonetheless, this does indicate a tendency of some Americans to find common ground with Catholics and not dismiss their beliefs outright.

That Southerners also appropriated Ryan's legacy to defend antebellum gender norms also hints at shifts in traditional Protestant-Catholic discourse. Scholarship has shown that anti-Catholicism can address fears about sexuality and domesticity. The celibacy of priests, the greater autonomy of Catholic nuns, and the more communal nature of the family threatened the pillars of "republican motherhood."[55] By imputing

[54] Edwin Mims, for instance, wrote, "that which made him a contemporary influence in Southern life and has caused him to remain the most popular poet of the South was the note of sentiment and melancholy that centered about the overthrow of Southern hopes." Edwin Mims, *Southern Poetry Since the War of Secession*, ed. Julian Carroll, vol. 7, The South in the Building of the Nation (Richmond, VA: Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), 37. In fact, the Lost Cause magazine *The Southern Bivouac*'s obituary of Ryan made hardly any mention of the poet's patriotism and instead discussed his death at a Louisville parish and his religious qualities. Young Allison "How Father Ryan Died," *Southern Bivouac* 2, no. 1 (1886): 167-171.

[55] For scholarship on Protestants' perception that Catholics subverted the "cult of domesticity," see Sandra Frink, "Women, the Family, and the Fate of the Nation in American Anti-Catholic Narratives, 1830-1860," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 2 (May 2009): 239–44; Susan M. Griffin, "Awful Disclosures: Women's Evidence in the Escaped Nun's Tale," *PMLA* 111, no. 1 (January 1996): 103–4; Joseph G. Mannard, "Maternity... of the Spirit: Nuns and Domesticity in Antebellum America," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 5, no. 3/4 (1986): 306; 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: A Journal of Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (December 1999): 98; Timothy Verhoeven, "Neither Male Nor Female: Androgyny, Nativism, and International Anti-Catholicism," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 1 (July 2005): 10–12. For more on the differences between Catholics' more communal families , see Gjerde and Kang, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, 176–219.

sexual deviance to Catholics, antebellum Protestants could target sexual and domestic transgressions. Thus escaped convent novels and other tales of Catholic lechery functioned as a foil to Protestant gender norms, a deviant model that encouraged and engrained proper practice within their own communities. Using the legacy of Ryan to affirm these hierarchies, then, broke from earlier traditions of attacking Catholics' aberrant domestic model.

Before the Civil War, Ryan appeared a threat to his Northern and Southern audiences. Physically, the young priest fit the anti-Catholic trope of the effeminate priest. His pale complexion, long, stringy hair, sickly nature, and long black cassock cut a rather weak figure. Although accusations of priestly lasciviousness still occurred in the 1890s, Lost Cause authors tended to remember Ryan as a symbol of "sterling manhood devoted to duty, Christian charity, and those other qualities which redeem our nature."[56] Rather than perceiving a feeble frame, La Salle Pickett, General George Pickett's third wife, wrote "My impression of Father Ryan was of being in the presence of a great power."[57] Others accounted for his physique differently. *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine*, for instance, claimed that "his expression was at the same time delicate and virile."[58] Though

[56] *Proceedings of the Ceremony of Unveiling of the Monument Erected by the People of Mobile and of the South to the Memory of the Rev. Father Abram J. Ryan* (Mobile, AL: W. B. Delchamps Printing Co., 1913), 9.

[57] La Salle Corbell Pickett, *Literary Hearthstones of Dixie* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1912), 203.

[58] "Abram Ryan, The Poet-Priest of the South," *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine* 20 (1886): 87. See also "Father Ryan, The Poet-Priest," *Elgin (IL) Daily Courier,* May 6, 1886. "Father Ryan, The Poet-Priest." *Van Wert (OH) Times,* May 7, 1886.

he might have seemed weak, an article in the *Southern Bivouac* suggested that in reality he possessed a "sturdy frame and stout heart" worn down by the muse.[59]

But Ryan appealed to women more so than men. In part, this stemmed from his poetry's connection to the memorial efforts of ex-Confederate women. Poems such as "C.S.A.," "A Land without Ruins," and especially "The Conquered Banner" exhorted the South to preserve the memory of valorous soldiers and bygone heroes, to build "the graves of the dead" that "may yet form the footstool of liberty's throne."[60] About the "The March of the Deathless Dead," the Lost Cause newspaper *Our Living and Our Dead* wrote that the lines "contain an exquisite argument and appeal in behalf of the holy cause to which our ladies have consecrated their energies."[61] Because women's organizations such as the UDC became the primary activists for reburial and memorial projects, Ryan's poetry became especially connected to the Southern women curating the Lost Cause. The words of the poet-priest resonated with Confederate women, who maintained the memory of the South.[62] As Ryan guarded the dead soldier's grave "with sentinels of song," so too did Southern women preserve these men in marble.[63]

Taking advantage of these connections between the poet-priest and women, the architects of the Lost Cause seem to have also appropriated Ryan's legacy to reaffirm traditional gender norms. As Drew Gilpin Faust and LeeAnn Whites have argued, the

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[59] Young Allison, "How Father Ryan Died," *Southern Bivouac* 2, no. 3 (August 1886): 167.

[60] Abram Ryan, "A Land without Ruins," 90.

[61] *Our Living and Our Dead (New Bern, NC)* February 18, 1874.

[62] "Memorial Address at Winchester, KY," *Confederate Veteran* 8, no. 7 (1900): 312.

[63] Ryan, "Sentinel Songs.

Civil War disrupted traditional domestic roles and burdened men with a legacy of defeat, resulting in a "crisis in gender."[64] Although women's involvement in memorial movements afforded them greater opportunities to participate in the public sphere, the developers of this myth, both men and women, sought to reinforce the mores of the antebellum South.[65] Tales about Ryan that touched on gender reinforced traditional norms in the same way that Lost Cause stories of female self-abnegation and male heroism did. A number of publications, for instance, traced Ryan's piety and patriotism to the benevolent influence of his mother, implying that women's roles as mothers preserved society.[66]

Most attempts to employ Ryan's legacy in this manner, though, were a means of discouraging women from unfettered involvement in the public square. Perhaps the most

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[64] LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 8; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 247.

[65] For arguments about the Lost Cause preserving the honor of defeated Southern soldiers, see Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 252–53; Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, 200. For women earning new opportunities while preserving power structures at the same time, see Hale, "'Some Women Have Never Been Reconstructed': Mildred Lewis Rutherford, Lucy M. Stanton, and the Racial Politics of White Southern Womanhood, 1900-1930"; Montgomery, "Lost Cause Mythology in New South Reform: Gender, Class, Race, and the Politics of Patriotic Citizenship in Georgia, 1890-925"; Antoinette G. van Zelm, "Virginia Women as Public Citizens: Emancipation Day Celebrations and Lost Cause Commemorations,1863-1890," in *Negotiating Boundaries of Southern Womanhood: Dealing with the Powers That Be*, ed. Janet L. Coryell, Southern Women (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 71–88. For how Lost Cause monuments depicted women as submissive and nurturing, see Elise L. Smith, "Belle Kinney and the Confederate Women's Monument," *Southern Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 27. Women, as William Blair has argued, fulfilled political roles that men could not in the years after Reconstruction. William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 77–105. Caroline Janney argues somewhat differently that while these women's movements did protect the old ways, they nonetheless politicized women's involvement more than the benevolent societies of the antebellum South ever could. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, 5–7.

[66] "The Origin of 'The Conquered Banner,'" *Confederate Veteran* 5, no. 8 (1897): 437; "Professor Kennedy on His Writings," *Kentucky Irish American (Louisville)* May 5, 1900; Rutherford, *The South in Southern History*, 464; "The Conquered Banner," *Breckenridge News (Cloverport, KY)*, March 17, 1897.

powerful example is found in the false origin story of "The Conquered Banner" that placed a woman at the center of the poem's publication. According to the tale, Ryan penned the verses on a piece of wrapping paper only to throw them away, thinking them worthless. But before throwing the composition into the fire, the maid chanced across the lines. In a moment of genius, she preserved the poem and sent it into a local newspaper. Thus, "it was through a woman's thoughtfulness that the great Southern epic was given to the world."[67] Here, women become central to the construction of the Lost Cause, not through intellectual achievement or battlefield valor but through their unmeasured feminine and moral devotion to the Southern past. This suggests that the narrative could also denote the boundaries of female activism.

Thus this origin story, and others like it, reinforced notions about women's role in the domestic sphere. According to the *Confederate Veteran*, the unnamed chamber maid performs her vocation as "the medium of [the poem's] publication" in the same way that the UDC is the medium for the preservation of memorials.[68] That is to say, she remains unnamed and serves as a conduit, not the source, of inspiration. Women participate in the Lost Cause, but not to a degree that might corrupt them in the public sphere. An issue of the *Confederate Veteran* in 1897 demonstrates this point. Here, the origin story of "The Conquered Banner" starred Ryan himself, who addressed a young girl. After he had finishes, she responded, "When I get to be a woman . . . I am going to write that story." He warns her, however:

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[67] "The Conquered Banner," *Breckenridge News (Cloverport, KY),* March 17, 1897. See also, "The Conquered Banner," *Richmond Dispatch,* March 25, 1898.

[68] "The Origin of 'The Conquered Banner,'" *Confederate Veteran* 5, no. 8 (1897), 436.

> Ah! It is dangerous to be a writer, especially for women; but if you are determined, let me give you a name.' And he wrote on a piece of paper 'Zona.' It is an Indian name,' he said in explanation, "and it means a snowbird—to keep your white wings unsullied. A woman should always be pure, and every mother should teach her boys to look upon a woman as they would upon an altar.[69]

Capitalizing on Ryan's legacy, the author cautions against women participating directly in the public sphere. While this was not a complete proscription on female activity, Ryan "protects" the girl with the pseudonym "Zona," thereby preserving her anonymity and her "white wings" from the contamination of exposure. In appropriating Catholic priests as exemplars of gender roles, these Lost Cause Southerners weakened a traditional anti-Catholic trope.

But Ryan served as more than a symbol of Catholic loyalty, for he also brought Catholics and Protestants into the same public space. As a frequent lecturer throughout the North and the South, Ryan raised funds for charitable causes and delivered poems honoring the dead.[70] Held in Catholic churches and other buildings, Protestants and Catholics alike attended to hear Father Ryan deliver a homily or a speech.[71] Advertising one of Ryan's visits, the *Richmond Dispatch* encouraged readers to attend an event raising money for the St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum.[72] Here, Ryan's popularity not only encouraged Catholics and Protestants to gather together but also perhaps encouraged Protestants to donate to Catholic causes.

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[69] Ibid, 436-437.

[70] Beagle and Giemza, *Poet of the Lost Cause*, 159–244; O'Connell, *Furl That Banner*, 113–204.

[71] Ryan's funeral also included a mix of Protestant and Catholic. "Father Ryan's Funeral," *Catholic Mirror,* May 8, 1886.

[72] *Richmond Dispatch,* December 25, 1880.

The 1913 unveiling of a statue of Abram Ryan best illustrates that honoring him could help unify Catholics and Protestants around common civic beliefs. In the heat of mid-summer Mobile, Alabama, thousands of spectators awaited the drawing of the Union and Confederate flags covering the statue. The ceremonies began with the removal of the curtains and then salutations from the City Commissioner Pat Lyons, who, unsurprisingly, quoted a few lines from "The Conquered Banner." He then added, "his works are graven deeply in the hearts of an admiring people."[73] After readings of "The Song of the Mystic" and "Nocturne," Judge Saffold Berney praised Ryan for his devotion to the Cause through his chaplaincy and creative output. Then the Jesuit Father E. C. de la Moriniere delivered an hour-long address touching upon Ryan's poetic genius, care for orphans, and service during the yellow fever epidemic. Most of all, de la Moriniere established that Ryan was "from core to fibre, every inch a priest," motivating his mission to his fellow men. [74] To conclude, the Catholic Bishop of Mobile Edward Allen offered a benediction.

The synthesis of Lost Cause, Protestant, and Catholic symbolism throughout the ceremonies illustrates how Ryan helped bring these religious groups together. While the presence of Northern and Southern flags points to the sectional healing well under way before 1913, the inclusion of Irish banners also indicates that Ryan brought together Irishmen and Southerners, in addition to Yankees and former Rebels.[75] That the

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[73] *Proceedings of the Ceremony of Unveiling of the Monument Erected by the People of Mobile and of the South to the Memory of the Rev. Father Abram J. Ryan*, 9.

[74] Ibid., 17.

[75] Ibid., 4.

ceremonies included a speech from a Jesuit and a benediction from Bishop Allen further underscores the joint participation of Catholics and Protestants as they remembered "the man whose name . . . is treasured in every home of our Southland."[76] Even the statue, dedicated to "the people of Mobile and of the South," seemed to speak to the amicability among Catholics and Protestants. Garbed in "the costume of a priest," Ryan's gentle gaze and open arms give a sense of warmness and welcome in the viewer.[77] But the Jesuit de la Moriniere's comments near the end of his address best illustrate the unitive characteristics of the Lost Cause:

> There breathed not the man who loved his country more than Abram Ryan loved the South. The priest championed the cause of his God, the patriot of his country, the cause of the Confederacy, and these two devotions so mingled in him, were so woven into the texture and fibre of his being as to form the two channels into which flowed his peerless lyrics.[78]

Ryan not only demonstrated his piety and patriotism to his fellow Southerners but also brought these divergent traditions into the same shared space and helped develop rapport among them.

This tendency among Americans to hold up Ryan as an ardent patriot, a pious cleric, and a defender of women reveals how not only the Civil War but also the Lost Cause created opportunities for Catholic assimilation into the American mainstream. During the antebellum years, popular fiction painted priests as the greatest enemies of women and Catholics as a subversive group plotting to overthrow the Union. As the first chapter argues, the Civil War shook up these categories of heroes and villains. Northern

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[76] Ibid., 13.

[77] Ibid., 5.

[78] Ibid., 25.

Republicans identified Southerners more so than Catholics as the nemeses of freedom. In the same way could sectional reconciliation trump fears of Catholic subversion. Certainly Ryan alone cannot account for these shifts within the religious landscape, but his popularity hints at the reasons for this trend. In promoting sectional reunion, the glories of the Old South, and religious sentiment, Ryan assured his Northern and Southern colleagues of his loyalty to the United States' institutions. As his poetry constructed shared memories of the war, Ryan helped Northerners and Southerners, Protestants and Catholics, participate in a national community.[79] And by becoming a Catholic symbol of patriotism and piety, the poet-priest served as proof that Catholics could contribute to American society.[80] The Civil War, however, should not be interpreted as a watershed in Protestant-Catholic relations. The public school controversies, the rise of the American Protective Association, and the virulent nativism of the Progressive Era suggest as much.[81] But this does not undermine the contention that desire for reunion brought Protestants and Catholics together. Instead, it suggests how the exigencies of war and sectional crisis could overshadow traditional religious prejudices.

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[79] Michael Kammen argues that shared memory has played an important role in defining America's national vision. Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory*, 7.

[80] David Gleeson has studied the activism of Reconstruction-era priests and organizations to argue that Irish Catholics assimilated in part through their contributions to the Lost Cause. Gleeson, "'No Disruption of Union'"; Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray*, 164–86. And Arthur Remillard's case study of Catholic Senator Charles W. Jones explores how opposition to Reconstruction could lessen anti-Catholic animus among Southern Protestants. Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions*, 26–30.

[81] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963). As Justin Nordstrom illustrates, some of the nexuses of anti-Catholic publishing in the Progressive Era were in the South or the Border South. Justin Nordstrom, *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 56.. John McGreevy also suggests that popular anti-Catholicism increased during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century even as some intellectuals established greater rapport with Catholics. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 124.

"Religion," Charles Reagan Wilson writes of the Lost Cause, "was as the heart of this dream. It was a Southern civil religion, which tied together Christian churches and Southern culture."[82] But this Southern civil religion proved a unitive force in ways than Wilson identified in *Baptized in Blood.* Ryan's patriotic verse, for instance, indicates how this mythology could bridge the gap between not only Northerners and Southerners but also Catholics and Protestants.[83] To some who had feared Catholic plotting to overthrow the government, Ryan indicated that a priest could be a patriot, and a patriot a priest. And to Catholics interested in assimilation, Ryan's contributions to the Lost Cause became a point of pride and evidenced the compatibility of Catholicism and American patriotism. Popular reception of Ryan's Lost Cause project thus reveals how Catholic participation in shared national experiences and memory could facilitate their inclusion into the country.

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[82] Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 1.

[83] For more on this tendency in the South, see Gleeson, "'No Disruption of Union'"; Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray*, 164–86.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

In 1937, almost thirty years after the ceremony unveiling a bust of Brownson in Riverside Park, local law enforcement investigated its vandalism. Covering the event, the *New York Times* reported, "bust of heavily bearded man . . . baffles police." The authorities could not identify who the bust honored, however, and the police were not the only confused party. The paper's investigation revealed that "a casual canvass of local historians, literary minds, and young men fresh from study at college showed that Brownson was unknown to modern minds." While an encyclopedia and another book revealed some brief biographical information about the "well-known patriot," Brownson had simply become a reminder of the "instability of fame."[1] This story illustrates how much of Brownson's legacy has been forgotten among the national audience. The same holds true for Abram Ryan, and the writings of American Catholics during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

But this thesis has illustrated how the Civil War and Reconstruction affected the lives of Catholics in myriad ways. Ryan's and Brownson's writing illustrates how not only the Civil War but also Reconstruction were central concerns for American Catholics, laity and clergy, Northern and Southern. Indeed, the frequency that these authors expressed their concerns about American society and its trajectory further indicates the importance of these events for American Catholics in the 1860s and 1870s.

[1] "Riverside Statue Stumps Historians," *New York Times,* July 1, 1937.

And the fact that Ryan's and Brownson's political outlooks more often converged than diverged during Reconstruction, moreover, highlights how politically conservative Catholics across the country could unite in opposition to Republican government.

Although Ryan and Brownson identified the era's developments as hostile to Catholics' growth in the United States, American Catholics' participation in a shared national community could also ease traditional tensions among Catholics and other Americas. The Republican newspaper editors' praise of American Catholic patriotism and the country's later appreciation for Abram Ryan underscores this point. By helping preserve and reknit the fabric of Union, Catholics could prove to fellow Americans their loyalty to civic values of democracy and individual freedom. Thus the Civil War Era, for some American Catholics, was a time of inclusion in and disillusion with the American experiment.

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Burlington (IA) Weekly Hawkeye
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Catholic Monitor
Catholic World
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Chicago Tribune
Christian Era
Church Progress (Marshall, IL)
Cleveland Morning Leader
Confederate Veteran
Daily Dispatch (Richmond)
Daily Intelligencer (Wheeling, WV)
Daily Ohio Statesman (Columbus)
Donahoe's Magazine
Ecclesiastical Review
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