

BUT THEY DID NOT BUILD THIS HOUSE:
THE ATTITUDE OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM
TOWARDS IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

1800-1924

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State of New Jersey
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in History

Written under the direction of
Professor James Livingston

And approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

January, 2010

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation will examine the attitude of American Evangelical Protestantism towards immigration to the United States from its inception until the Immigration Act of 1924. It will also take into consideration the effect that the Roman Catholic Church had upon the evangelist's thinking on the subject of immigration. The examination will include the formation of the evangelist's ideas during the American antebellum period when evangelism became a primary part of the Protestant ethos.

The dissertation's chapters will outline the effect that this basically non-Protestant immigration had on American: cities, politics, and education. It will also deal with the evangelist's chief adversary, the Irish and their control of the American Catholic Church as well as their control of politics in the large urban areas of the Northeast. Chapter four will take the reader through one of the evangelist's primary organizations for recognizing and combating its problems, the Evangelical Alliance. A chapter also treats with an evangelical success; the enactment of a law against alcohol, a problem that the evangelists believed was primarily fostered by the Irish and German immigrants. Finally, the conclusion, which is split into two parts, one giving the necessity for immigration restriction from the viewpoint of the nativist, and the other from the

viewpoint of the evangelist, a necessity which has been proven by the words of the evangelists themselves in their writings, speeches, and sermons.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation traces the formation of the evangelical Protestant attitude towards non-Protestant immigration into the United States culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924. Much has been written about the conflicts between the immigrants and the American Protestants during the nineteenth century, most notably, Ray Allen Billington's *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860* and on nineteenth century immigration itself, the volumes of John Higham, but very little work has been done on the beliefs of the Evangelical Protestants towards the non-Protestant immigrants and their eventual support of a legal solution to the problems that they believed that this immigration brought, for which they could not supply a religious solution. Most of the proof in support of this attitude was supplied by the evangelicals themselves, in the form of: pamphlets letters, speeches, sermons, tracts, journal articles, and newspapers. The background of this attitude stems from the interaction of Protestants and Catholics in England and Ireland, but most pointedly the enmity between the two sects stems from their encounters in America. In the 1730s, Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of the American Calvinist theologians, feared that Catholics from Canada would overwhelm New England. Two decades later, the decidedly anti-Calvinist Jonathan Mayhew lectured at Harvard College that the Pope was not only an idolater and an idol, and the prime historical corrupter of Christian faith, but also plotted the destruction of British and American liberty and the restoration of the hated medieval Christendom. The conviction was intensified among Puritans by their dread of any church leadership, Anglican or Roman, which threatened the autonomy of the local Christian congregation.¹ A point that

¹ Everett H. Emerson, John Cotton (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965) p.54

I will stress in this paper is that Anti-Catholicism was never purely a religious matter for American Protestants; it was from the onset a political fear as well.

It was not simply a Catholic vs. Protestant however, but more specifically a situation in the United States in which the Catholic immigrant faced a group of Protestants known as evangelicals. The word evangelical itself had a long history going back to the “good news” of the Gospels and revived in Luther’s *evangelische Kirche* (or the German evangelical church). By the middle of the nineteenth century, America had become a stronghold of evangelical Protestantism, accomplished through revivals. Thousands of itinerant preachers – Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Disciples, and others – went to the people, warning of damnation and holding out the promise of salvation.

The revivals induced a theological confrontation that lasted throughout the century. The evangelicals abandoned the predestination doctrines of orthodox Calvinism and rejected the conservative, established Anglican (Episcopal in the United States), Catholic, and Lutheran dogmatism. Disputes over revivals broke out in every denomination, aligning the faithful into prorevival, or evangelical, and antirevival or liturgical camps. While this conflict was not the only divisive force in American religion, it was the most intense and long standing until the end of the century.²

The evangelists flatly rejected ritualism (or liturgicalism). They showed little regard for elaborate ceremonies, vestments, saints, devotions, or even organ music. Theologically the key to evangelicalism was Arminianism, the idea that all men can be saved by a direct confrontation with Christ (*not* with the church) through the conversion

² Robert Cross, The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America (Cambridge: Crown Publishing Group, 1972) p. 52-53

experience. The revival was the basis of growth – the preaching of hellfire, damnation, and Christ’s love and the “anxious bench” for remorseful sinners, the moment of light wherein a man joyously gained faith and was saved forever.³

The evangelicals cooperated in numerous voluntary societies; they banded together to distribute Bibles, Christianize the world, abolish slavery, and enforce total abstinence. By the 1860s, the Methodists, Congregationalists, Disciples, United Brethren, and the Quakers were predominately evangelical. The Episcopalians and Catholics were predominately liturgical. The Presbyterians were fragmented with liturgicals in control of the Old School and evangelicals in control of the New School. The Baptists had no central authority to provide theological unity, but probably most were evangelistic. Lutherans were divided into three camps: the German Lutherans were liturgical, the old-stock Lutherans were evangelical, and their General Council attempted to steer a middle course.

The bridge linking theology and politics was the demand by evangelicals that the government remove the major obstacle to the purification of society through revivalistic Christianity. Specifically, the evangelicals demanded Sunday blue laws, the abolition of saloons, and in the prewar era, a check on the growth of slavery, or even its abolition. Many evangelicals, identifying the heavy influx of Catholic immigrants (especially the Irish) as the chief source of the corruption of politics and the decay of the cities, and ultimately as a barrier to the success of the revival movement, also supported nativist movements. The liturgicals opposed Sunday laws and prohibition, denounced

³ William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism* (New York: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005) p. 34

abolitionists, and avoided nativist movements. The church, they insisted, should attend to morality, not the government.⁴

The liturgicals' fears were well founded. Beginning in the 1820s and 1830s, the evangelicals established a grass-roots network of reform societies that demanded governmental action against slavery and saloons. In the late 1830s, the evangelicals renounced the concept that moderation in drinking was an acceptable social standard; they demanded total abstinence and total legal prohibition of the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer. After 1855, the evangelicals largely abandoned temperance movements to concentrate on slavery

It seems reasonable to hypothesize that when party lines reformed in the 1850s, the great majority of evangelicals entered the Republican Party while the great majority of liturgicals became Democrats. This Republican-evangelical and Democratic-liturgical pattern was also reinforced by postwar political issues, mainly the fact that after Reconstruction, the primary goal of the evangelicals had become the moral reform of society, beginning with the extirpation of the root of corruption, the saloon. Where not long ago slavery had constituted an imminent threat to the existence of a free progressive, Christian society, now demon rum was the remaining obstacle to the advance of civilization. While virtually no denominations were either entirely evangelical or entirely liturgical, by the 1880s the term "evangelical" as a designation for Anglo-American Protestants had taken on a distinct though broad meaning. It did not refer to a specific new tradition or single denomination, but rather the majority of the Congregationalists (formerly Puritans), Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. In addition to describing most of the members of those groups, it included Low Church Episcopalians, who were

⁴ Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture (New York: Free Press, 1970) p. 71

gathering strength in Virginia and other parts of the South, and the Americanizing followers of Samuel S. Schmucker among Lutherans in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Various German-speaking sects and movements of frontier provenance, such as Alexander Campbell's "restorationists," also came under this umbrella.

All of these sorts and conditions of Protestants did not share a formal theology. What they did share was a set of three emphases. First was a commitment to the Bible as the sole source of revelation and religious authority – the legacy of the Reformation. Second was an insistence on personal, emotional conversion as the hallmark of salvation – the fruit of the Great Awakening. Third was the "missionary imperative," the inexorable internal demand on the converted not to hide their lights under proverbial bushels but to go out and share the good news with others who had not yet experienced its power. This could take the form of revival preaching, missionary work, personal witness, or participating in any number of benevolent societies founded to spread the Christian message and, beyond that, to reshape society according to that message.⁵

Evangelism's links to American values are numerous. For instance, Protestants moved away from established churches exercising their authority by inherited right to voluntary churches exercising authority through individual leadership at the same time that they embraced the new principles of American democracy. Similarly, the shift from reliance on the Bible as interpreted by learned, properly educated authorities to reliance on the Bible as interpreted by individuals exercising their democratic rights coincided with the spread of American notions of self-reliance.

⁵ Peter W. Williams, America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998) p. 182

These changes in Protestantism led to two important results: First, evangelicalism emerged as the overwhelming dominant form of religion in the national period. Second, Protestantism, because of its adaptation to the new American values grew like wildfire. In fact, the United States possessed no alternative ideology that came anywhere close to the influence of evangelical Protestantism from the early years of the nineteenth century through the Civil War.⁶

This influence was carried forward by high profile evangelicals: such as, the reformer Lyman Beecher, the preacher Henry Ward, and the best selling author Harriet Beecher Stowe. These evangelists, mainly Congregationalists and Presbyterians with some Episcopalians and Reformed were concentrated in Northern cities and towns. They were natural allies of the Federalist, Whig, and Republican parties. From their numbers came many leading abolitionists as well as most of the public voices for moderation on the questions of slavery and states rights.

Additionally, evangelicals like Charles Grandison Finney became convinced that through cooperative endeavor, they could transform the social order for the betterment of not only Protestants, but also those of other faiths. Before the Civil War the denominations devoted a great deal of their energy to home missions. In part this was a natural response to the challenge of a highly mobile society, moving westward into areas untouched by civilization. Two groups who journeyed West demanded attention – Protestants from New England who moved West in search of better farming conditions and needed their faith continuously strengthened and Catholics looking for new lands that they could peacefully settle in, and who could possibly become new members of a

⁶ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972)

Protestant denomination. Groups such as the American Bible Society, the American Anti-Slavery Society, and the American Tract Society, and others (these groups will be covered in the dissertation) targeted specific social issues and needs and sought to remedy problems largely through an individualistic approach. Laymen propelled these and other “voluntary societies,” although control remained in the hands of the clergy. The hope was that as the evangelical message transformed people in the way they carried themselves in society, that they, by living as Christians, would in turn redirect the social order. This is what the religious historian Robert T. Handy called the “Protestant Quest for a Christian America.”⁷In the 1830s, the hopes for molding an evangelical culture received a major boost in the movement for public or common schools. Already, evangelical denominations had begun establishing colleges and seminaries that would remain a fixture of higher education for generations. The public schools, then confined primarily to the urban areas of the North and Midwest, became institutions for planting an evangelical view of the world on the mind of the nation’s children. Curricular materials simply assumed a Protestant evangelical consciousness. The values implicit in the most widely used primers for teaching reading, for example echoed what was preached in the churches.⁸

Evangelical Protestants shared a common faith in public education that remained throughout the nineteenth century. With few exceptions, major Protestants leaders urged the churches to accept state control over education; only a tiny percentage of Protestants built competing parochial systems. In setting the tone for so much of the moral, political,

⁷ Robert T. Handy, “The Protestant Quest for a Christian America, 1830-1930,” *Church History* 22:1 (March 1952): 8-20

⁸ John H. Westerhoff, McGuffey and His Readers: Piety, Morality, and Education in Nineteenth Century America (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978) p. 45

and social life of the nation, evangelical Protestants soon equated their values with American values.⁹ This is the situation that created the parochial schools, especially Catholic, that would increase the animosity between the evangelicals and Catholics. A chapter in the dissertation deals with this issue.

By 1850, Catholicism became the largest single religion in the United States, spurring evangelicals to step up their efforts to give society a Christian cast. However, since there were virtually no points of concord, the result was a strident anti-Catholicism. Evangelicals tended to regard Catholics as superstitious people who could not be trusted because of their devotion to a foreign prince, the pope. Some, such as Lyman Beecher, suspected a Catholic plot to overthrow the American democratic government by encouraging Catholics to settle in the western regions and use that area as a power base for revolution.¹⁰ The evangelicals also became involved with the Whig and Republican parties. In the words of Richard Carwardine: “During the climax of the campaigns of 1856 and 1860, Protestant ministers officiated with equal enthusiasm at revival meetings and at Republican rallies. It was clear that religion and politics had fused more completely than ever before in the American republic.”¹¹

Along with political agreement, the evangelicals were also unanimous in their opinions of wages and labor. Prevailing doctrines of academic economics squared exactly with the popular American belief in hard work and competition. There was one fundamental answer with which all discussions of the subject could be ended:

⁹ Timothy L. Smith, “Protestant Schooling and American Nationally, 1800-1850,” *Journal of American History* 59 (March 1967), p.687

¹⁰ Lyman Beecher, *A Plea For the West* (1835; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977)

¹¹ Richard Carwardine, *Evangelical and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) p. 322

Labor is a commodity, and like all other commodities, its condition is governed by the imperishable laws of supply and demand. It is all right to talk and declaim about the dignity of labor...But when all has been said of it, what is labor but a matter of barter and sale?¹²

The *Congregationalist* was so certain of its ground on this topic that it insisted it was to everybody's interest to lower the cost of labor to "the lowest attainable point."¹³

Interference with the workings of economic laws in order to raise wages was, according to religious editors, particularly unnecessary in America. The *Congregationalist* stated the following belief later to be codified and debated as part of the 'frontier theory.'

...one thing is certain, that so long as thousands upon thousands of acres of magnificent soil can be secured beyond the Mississippi at a merely nominal price, no man who is blessed with health and willingness to work, be his family large or small, need come to the poorhouse.¹⁴

The ill organized, sporadic, idealistic labor movement of the post-bellum period ran into head-on conflict with the beliefs of articulate religious leaders. Labor organizations were simply destructive of traditions dear to Evangelical Protestant America. Over and over spokesmen of all sects lamented that unionism would drag the energetic, ambitious, hardworking laborers who were America's pride down to the level of the lazy and the shiftless. Eventually labor organizations would, according to the evangelical sects, give rise to the rigid class lines that had caused the decadence of Europe.¹⁵

There were however one group of laborers that the evangelicals favored, even though they were immigrants and non-Protestant – the Chinese. *The Congregationalist*

¹² *Watchman and Reflector*, June 4, 1874, p. 6

¹³ *Congregationalist*, July 21, 1870, p. 228

¹⁴ *Ibid*, March 17, 1870

¹⁵ *Christian Union*, January 23, 1870

described them as “youthful, pliable, faithful, quiet, and neat to a degree” and praised them for their ability to exist on wages “considerably less than those for which the Anglo-Saxons, or the Celts, whom they have displaced, have refused to work.”¹⁶ And on the subject of unions and the Chinese, the *Christian Advocate* stated its case against unions:

The demand for labor is all the time in excess of the supply, and the result of this state of things has been to render the laboring classes capricious and despotic, and in many cases, improvident... This arrogance and inefficiency have at length produced their natural results, and employers of labor are looking about them for a better class of laborers, and, because the Chinaman seems likely to respond to this demand, the monopolists of labor raise an outcry against him.¹⁷

Another nationality, the Irish, was not in good stead with the evangelicals. Although not the largest immigrant group, they had become the most influential ethnic element in American society during the decades following the Civil War. Familiarity with the language and style of Anglo-Saxon civilization had eased the Irishman’s penetration of American culture. His position midway between nativist and immigrant America enabled him to play a strategic role in organizing the emerging urban society. The Irish are covered in this dissertation because their leadership became pervasive and powerful in the Catholic Church and in organized labor. By the turn of the century, Irish politicians were converting the immigrant presence into political power, commanded many of the local political machines in the East and Midwest, and provided an urban backbone for the Democratic Party. Because of these accomplishments and because Evangelical Protestant society had embraced the ideal of cultural pluralism, the Irishman would be a major factor in the Evangelical Protestant opinion of the European immigrant.

¹⁶ *The Congregationalist*, June 30, 1870, p. 204

¹⁷ *The Christian Advocate*, July 14, 1870, p. 220

The Irish have also gained a new notoriety because of the “whiteness” studies that became an academic vogue in the 1990s. Two books were especially popular; David Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness*, a psycho-cultural investigation of the development of “white” identity among European-American workers in the North during the antebellum period. And, *How the Irish Became White* by Noel Ignatiev who, in his book proposes that Irish-Catholics used their familiarity with the English language and their white complexions to their advantage – distancing themselves from other European ethnic groups and attacking blacks, while hoping to win acceptance of the Anglo-Americans community.

These books, which made as their subject the process by which European immigrants to the United States and their children achieved the status of white people, all work from an understanding that white people have race too. To refer to race does not exclude from consideration those with pale skin. Also the “whiteness” writers work off the assumption that these nineteenth century European immigrants were not white, but had to earn their whiteness. Their whitening should not be considered natural, automatic, or assumed and it did not have to happen because the immigrants and their descendents’ place in American society was defined by the white, Protestant, native-born elite.

None of the historical works that treat the whitening process have factored in the reality that in America, a land that elevated Protestantism to its unofficial state religion, Catholic immigrants, the Irish in particular suffered their most vigorous attacks not on the basis race or proximity to blacks, but due to matters of faith. From the 18th century into the early 20th century, America had little good to say about Catholicism and Catholics. The Know Nothing Party, one of the country’s most successful third parties, derived its

political strength and drew its rhetorical arsenal not from the perceived racial otherness of the Irish, but from the fact that they adhered to a religious system that many Americans found obnoxious and incomparable with American ideas of liberty and individualism.¹⁸

Furthermore, the whiteness scholarship has stripped immigrants of any kind of agency. To answer the question of how the Irish became accepted and became white, *Wages of Whiteness* states – “Coming into American society at or near the bottom, the Catholic Irish sorely needed allies, even protectors. They quickly found them in two organizations that did not question their whiteness: the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party.”¹⁹ As far as the Irish and the Catholic Church are concerned, the connection that the two had in Ireland both from a religious viewpoint and as a union against the British, precluded any association between the immigrant Irish and any other religion in America, whiteness was not a factor. Similarly, whiteness had nothing to do with the Irish immigrant’s use of the Democratic Party. Roediger quotes the historian of the Democratic Party, Jean Baker on this topic, “The Democratic Party reinvented whiteness in a manner that ‘refurbished their party’s traditional links to the People and offered political democracy and an inclusive patriotism to white male Americans.’ This sense of white unity and white entitlement – of ‘white’ blood served to bind together the Democratic slaveholders and the masses of nonslaveholding whites in the South. It further connected the Southern and northern wings of the Democracy. But less noticed by scholars has been the way in which an emphasis on a common whiteness smoothed over divisions in the Democratic ranks within mainly Northern cities by emphasizing that immigrants from Europe, and particularly from Ireland, were white and thus

¹⁸ Hasia Diner, “The World of Whiteness”, *Historically Speaking*, September/October 2007, p. 20-22

¹⁹ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (New York: Verso, 1991) p. 140

unequivocally entitled to equal rights.”²⁰ But consider the reality of the political situation facing the Irish immigrant to America. They were one of the few immigrant groups that could speak English and because of their dealings with the British who had subjugated their native land, they had also learned how to act politically, and that they were good at it. Their choices of a vehicle to apply these advantages were to join the Federalist-Whig-No Nothing-Republican continuum that was controlled by the elite and the evangelical Protestants or the Democratic Party. The decision to join the Democrats was symbiotic – the Democrats gained numbers and the Irish gained power, which they used to attain political office.

That some, maybe many, white middle –class native born Evangelical Protestant Americans considered the various immigrants to be of inferior “stock,” and that they maybe, constituted a variety of separate races, had little impact upon the Europeans who sought out America. The vigor of the flow to the United States bore witness not to the ways in which Americans stigmatized with native racial imagery, but to the fact that enough of the immigrants fulfilled enough of their aspirations that they encouraged their friends and family to join them. That they could with relative ease achieve citizenship did not play an incidental role in furthering their quest to come to the United States.²¹

For much of the nineteenth century, especially the first sixty years, evangelicalism was the dominant cultural influence. To separate evangelicalism from nineteenth-century culture would be as difficult as unscrambling a mixed omelet, argues William McLoughlin. “The story of American Evangelicalism is the story of America itself in the years 1800 to 1900...To understand it is to understand the whole temper of American life in the nineteenth-century.”²²

The decades between the Civil War and World War 1 mark the heaviest immigration to the United States. Because the overwhelming majority came from

²⁰ Ibid, p.140

²¹ Hasia Diner, “The World of Whiteness”, p. 21-22

²² William G. McLoughlin The American Evangelicals, 1800 1900 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968) p.4

southern, central, and Eastern Europe, they brought greater ethnic diversity than existed when northern and western European styles dominated. Most were Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Jewish. The presence of millions of non-Protestants, not just non-evangelicals altered the religious landscape permanently, challenging and ultimately destroying visions for an evangelical culture. Immigration, urbanization, and industrialization spawned a host of new cultural situations. Poor and unsafe working conditions generated labor unrest and contributed to the formation of labor unions. The millions pouring into the cities confronted inadequate housing and poor sanitation facilities that created the slum and the ghetto. Schools were unprepared to deal with thousands of new students who could not speak English. Then too, the nation was moving westward. By 1890, the frontier of myth vanished as the population increased from coast to coast. At the same time, some regions began to develop distinctive identities, sometimes because of relative isolation (Appalachia) and sometimes because of historical circumstances (the Old South). The United States in 1924 was a very different place than the United States of the antebellum period when evangelical hopes ran high and European immigration was at a manageable level.

An evangelical response to the changing culture of the late nineteenth century that will be covered in this dissertation was the Evangelical Alliance, particularly the work and writings of Congregationalist Josiah Strong, its long time executive secretary. Strong brought a sociological perspective to his interpretations of challenges to the evangelical vision in *Our Country*, his most well known work.²³ Convinced that individual salvation offered the only alternative to both personal salvation and the collapse of American

²³ Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, edited by Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge, Mass. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963

society, Strong called for efforts to convert immigrants to Protestantism through city mission work and the institutional church. Strong was convinced that the benefits of technology as represented by industrialization and urbanization strengthened the mandate to mold American society into the kingdom of God on earth. Doing so however involved turning everyone into an evangelical Protestant.²⁴

Dwight L. Moody, the pre-eminent revivalist of the post-Civil war period, noting the same increasing difficulties of American society as Josiah Strong – the dominance of the big cities, the problems of unassimilated Roman Catholic immigrants, the rise of socialist labor agitators, the widespread corruption in business and government, increasing immorality among the idle rich, increasing drunkenness and wickedness among the poor, was less optimistic than Strong, and perhaps presaged the diminution of the power of evangelicalism, “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel, “ he said. “God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, ‘Moody save all you can.’ “²⁵

The evangelicals however continued the fight, using church political power to defend the interests of morality and religion. This continued to cover a wide ground. Retaining the use of the Bible in the schools and yet fighting the Catholic parochial system was a difficult and important objective. The dissertation will cover the evangelical concerns over what they perceived as threats to the common school system, threats that had been ongoing since Bishop Hughes did battle with the Protestant churches in New York city in the early 1850s. This battle was still joined as the century came to a close, “a conflict between the advocates of denominational schools and the friends of the purely secular schools is forever pending, and ...glaze over it as we will, this conflict must

²⁴ Theodore Abel, Protestant Missions to Catholic Immigrants (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933).

²⁵ William G. McLoughlin, The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900, p. 24

someday be fought without gloves and fought to a finish.²⁶ This opinion was well founded; the editors of a New York Baptist journal characterized the intensifying church-state controversy as an irrepressible conflict between Catholicism and the evangelical Protestants. The villains in this drama, according to John Jay, a leading New York anti-Catholic were “the Roman hierarchy, with whose widely organized and relentless hostility to American schools and American principles our people, whatever their past credulity or indifference, are fast becoming familiar.”²⁷ Concern for the Sabbath increased with immigration and the temperance movement went into a new and more militant phase. Vice and violence, especially the abomination of Mormon polygamy and the shame of the brutality toward Indians, made the Far West an important field for church political efforts. Also questions of about government and civil service reform in the immigrant dominated eastern cities could easily be related to Christian morality.

Some endeavors to mold the larger society according to evangelical mores meant moving outside of evangelical religions. One example is the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) founded in 1873 by Frances Willard, who later became an advocate of both woman’s suffrage and the ordination of women. The WCTU became not only the largest women’s organization of its day, but a major voice for social reform. Joined with the Anti-Saloon League, begun in 1893 and evangelical controlled, both organizations led the movement that brought about the national experiment with prohibition after World War I. These organizations saw themselves as protecting the American family from destruction because of alcoholism. Although consumption of alcoholic beverages was frequently part of the immigrants’ cultures, evangelicals

²⁶ *New York Herald*, Oct. 12, 1890

²⁷ “A New Phase of the School Question,” *Baptist Quarterly Review*, XIV (1892), p. 104

emphasized its connection to urban poverty and slum life. Even though the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League in time called for the government to enact and enforce Prohibition, their thrust as it was with the revival meetings, was primarily individualistic. That is, individuals were urged one by one to sign pledges promising to abstain from alcoholic beverages.

By 1889, just before the second great wave of immigration into the United States from southern and Eastern Europe, the evangelicals were still hopeful that they could overcome the problems that they had been encountering with the non-Protestant immigrants. At the Boston meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in that year, John M. Schick, President of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Ohio stated the evangelical's position in a speech entitled "The Immigrant Problem" in which he not only spelled out the "Problem," but also gave the answer:

No question forces itself upon the attention of this nation with steadier persistence than the one raised by the constant coming of foreigners to find homes in the United States... Commerce in its growth has developed business ability, and the American merchant now crowded in his own market is unable to welcome, as he once did, a possible rival in the foreigner, who comes to develop and divide his trade. Laborers, mechanics, artisans of every sort feel the effect of similar conditions. All find themselves hindered in their business, if not actually defeated in their enterprises and work by the omnipresent foreigners, to such an extent as to make them seek protection against almost certain calamity by restricting immigration... Hence, too, the tide of immigration, which once flowed westward, where the unsettled portions of the country invited the pioneer to win a home by making it, has changed its course, and, breaking into streams, it now flows towards our cities. American industries, protected from foreign competition, afforded opportunities for more lucrative employment in the East, and the immigrant seems to have found it out. Instead of scattering themselves over western territories, they now crowd into the cities and shops of the East, where they give the American workmen home competition for foreign... With too much elasticity, in the application of restrictive measures, even if restriction of immigration can be accepted as the best policy in the premises, must come a serious doubt whether these can prove efficient to avert the dangers which some earnest economists are fearing... There is, without doubt, room for important changes, in both the habits and customs of our immigrant population. Too many instances have been shown, in which they have regarded their civil rights as merchantable, and American politicians have, usually, purchased them. It has been

pointed out that their socialistic, antirepublican, tendencies, agitations, and organizations, are dangerous to the commonwealth, and in these not a few Americans have participated. It is charged that they are even more than willing to engage in the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating liquors. We are also warned that they are, both for pleasure and profit, destroying our American Sabbath, by introducing Continental laxity here. Other dangerous traits have been discovered in our alien citizens, but these will suffice to demonstrate the necessity for some remedy to cure the social malady pressing us from our relation to the foreign element affecting American life.

When our nation is constantly confessing by the laws enacted that it is unable to safely absorb the body of immigrants coming to us annually; and when past efforts at restriction have not as yet made the presence of foreigners in this country any less menace to American institutions; and particularly when our statesmen seem to be at a loss to know what next to do, it will not be amiss to draw attention to the possible efficiency of that one agency which in all our past history has gathered into its fold foreigners of every class and country, and united them in the bonds of a Christian fellowship, which has always made them a blessing and never a danger to our national life.

For the element of danger in the situation confronting this nation will not be eliminated from our body politic until larger numbers of our population, both native and foreign are lifted into that divine life of which Christ is the head. In no crisis of American history has the Church of Jesus Christ been found wanting when the nation needed its help; and in the solution of this great problem it will, without a doubt, continue to efficiently use the only potent agency for the saving of the nations by preaching the Gospel through which along individuals and nations are transformed into sons of God.²⁸

The “Immigrant Problem” was however not solved by the evangelicals’ *lifting the native and foreign members of the population into that divine life of which Christ is the head*. Like the temperance “Problem,” The solution was the law, which the evangelicals supported, having no other option.

²⁸ John M. Schick, “The Immigrant Problem”, *National Needs and Remedies*, Proceedings of the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Boston, Mass., December, 1889

Chapter 1
The Antebellum Years

Evangelism in its strictest sense means the preaching of the Gospel to the unregenerate. It is generally applied to those beliefs held by orthodox Christians that stress the sinfulness of man's nature, the personal relationship of man with his God, his divine salvation through faith, and the need for conversion through preaching and other means. In nineteenth century America, evangelicalism was principally associated with the following Protestant sects: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Congregational. These sects were the least ritualistic and most emphatic of the personal role of the individual in his search for salvation. Evangelicalism was closely linked with missionary activities, utilizing humanitarian philanthropic operations as a means to its end, and was most characteristically expressed in revivals.

While the evangelical sects enjoyed great power in America's revolutionary era, it was not consistent and depended on the individual colony. As an example, Delaware's 1776 Constitution required all public officials to swear their belief "in God the Father, in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost." Maryland, which stipulated that its officeholders be of the Christian religion, extended its benefits of religious liberty to Christians alone. In 1790, Pennsylvania vowed to deny state offices to any atheist as well as anyone who did not believe in "a future state of rewards and punishments." In New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Georgia only evangelical Protestants could be elected according to their constitutions of the 1770s and the 1780s.

Evangelical control was conspicuous in both Connecticut and Massachusetts, where a measure of establishment continued into the nineteenth century. Unlike the Church of England that suffered great unpopularity during the English Revolution and experienced swift disestablishment thereafter, Congregationalism in New England was

“locally owned and operated.” No popular wave of resentment or suspicion washed over the Congregationalists, who continued to encourage local governments “to make suitable provision...for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality.”²⁹

Evangelical power became separated from the political sphere with the establishment of the United States of America and the First Amendment to its Constitution. In Connecticut, Baptists, Quakers, and Episcopalians joined with Jeffersonian Republicans to sever the last remaining ties between Congregationalism and the state which was finally accomplished in 1818 prompting Jefferson to write to John Adams that he rejoiced to see that “this den of priesthood is at length broken up, and that a Protestant popedom is no longer to disgrace American history and character.” Several more years passed before Massachusetts managed, after considerable litigation, to remove all vestiges of an alliance between church and state from its constitution, one that had already endured for two hundred years.³⁰

While the evangelicals took into account this separation of church and state, their fear was the risk inherent in having a republic. Anything might happen as a result of this rapid extension of freedom to an untutored and undisciplined people. As stated by Samuel Schmucker:

In despotic and arbitrary governments the absence of a moral principle is to some degree compensated by what are termed the five strong points of monarchy; a hereditary monarch, a nobility, a standing army, an established church, and a strong police. But in a republic, whose cardinal features are the direct antithesis of these points, in which all power is ultimately wielded by the *people*, it is evident that the destiny of the government is indissolubly linked to the character of the people....³¹

²⁹ The 1780 Massachusetts Constitution

³⁰ Edward Gaustad, The Religious History of America, (Harper Collins, Glasgow, 2004) , p. 131-132.

⁴ Samuel S. Schmucker, The Happy Adaptation of Sunday Schools to the Peculiar Wants of Our Age and

The main issue for the evangelicals was control of the formation of this character. Evangelists wanted more than government approval for specifically Christian institutions. They wanted more than the right to influence the political life of the nation; they wanted the government and the Christian community to endorse and support the programs of their voluntary societies as the primary agents for the Christianization of America. “When we were colonies,” wrote Lyman Beecher, “the law could make provision for the creation and application of moral powers. But these means of moral influence, the law can no longer apply; and there is no substitute but the voluntary energies of the nation itself, in associations, patronized by all...who love their country”.³²

In the 1820s, there was hardly any persecution of Catholics. Their numbers were so small that they scarcely drew attention to themselves and as long as they obeyed the law they were left unmolested. Nor was there any anti-Catholic motivation in the early efforts of the evangelists. Protestant feeling about the growth of the Catholic Church in the United States did not crystallize at once. In the late 1820s, it took the form of concern over Catholic competition that spurred the Protestants to greater missionary exertions of their own. The right of Catholics to propagate their own faith was nowhere denied since such denial would have been contrary to the American principle of complete religious freedom. The sudden awareness of Catholic growth struck Protestants as strange, and

Country: A Sermon Preached at the Request of the Board of Managers, (American Sunday School Union: Philadelphia: 1839), p. 7.

³² Lyman Beecher, The Memory of Our Fathers: A Sermon Delivered at Plymouth on the Twenty-Second of December, 1827 (T.R. Marvin, Printer, 1828) p.17

made them feel uneasy, but there was not yet any distinct apprehension of a menace to the nation.³³

Reports from the West, however, soon began to alarm the evangelicals. Their first concern was with their own religious adherents. Thousands of Protestant emigrants from New England and the Middle States began to settle there during the depression that followed the War of 1812. Uprooted from their homes, freed from the restraints of an organized community, and cut off from the benefits of stated worship and religious teaching, these settlers caused the evangelicals increasing concern. The settlers had to be provided with Bibles, Christian literature, and an educated ministry lest they should lapse into infidelity. Additionally, expansion began to change the tolerant Protestant outlook towards the Catholics in the West. The “Correspondence” in *The Home Missionary*, initially gave no attention to Catholics, but later issues began to print notices of Catholic growth with increasing frequency. Notices such as, “The Jesuits are making rapid strides here in their usual way, building chapels, schoolhouses, and establishing nunneries,”³⁴ appeared more often.

This was a period in American history when religion played a prominent role. While the majority of Americans were neither “profane nor pious,” an increased fervor manifested itself, especially in the evangelical churches throughout the country. The result of this increased fervor was a coloring of every subject, from the reform of politics to the attack against prostitution. Tocqueville summed this up when he remarked, “There

³³ “Notices of the Papal Church in the United States,” *American Quarterly Register*, II (1830), p. 189-190.

³⁴ *The Home Missionary*, II (1829), p.11

is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America".³⁵

If religion and religious enthusiasm played an important part in American life in the antebellum years, the American evangelical clergy played an even more dominant role. Almost no other single class or group exerted as much prolonged and varied influence upon American thought and society, as did this group.³⁶

The efforts of the evangelical clergy, especially through the use of revivals, paid large dividends. The first half of the nineteenth century saw an increase from 365,000 to 3,500,000 members in the Protestant churches. These years show a relative increase, as well as an absolute one. In 1800, one out of every fifteen Americans was connected with a Protestant church. By 1835, the ratio was one out of eight, indicating the magnitude of the 1830 revivals. By 1850, one out of every seven was a member.³⁷

What made evangelism a powerful force in the antebellum era was not only the expansion of the number of its adherents, but also its connection with the many efforts to improve society, which were then prevalent. More than anything else, this was, in the words of historian Alice Felt Tyler, a period of "restless ferment." These were the years when great humanitarian movements were popular, when temperance and antislavery societies were most vigorous, when missionary societies flourished and when education, women's rights, the improvement of the condition of the poor, and penal reform were matters of public interest. Permeating them all was a strong religious force, a moralistic

³⁵ Alexis DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (Penguin Classics, NY, NY, 1831) p. 285

³⁶ Charles Cole Jr., *Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists*, (Octagon Books, NY, NY, 1977) p.12-13

³⁷ Grover C. Laud, *Evangelized America*, (Ayer Co., Manchester, N.H., 1928) p. 195

enthusiasm linked with the many revivals that were, in themselves, characteristic of the era.³⁸

Although there was great diversity among the various sects during these years, they present a number of common denominators. First of all, most church members believed that their religion was the true one. Second, Christianity was the preserver of all that was good in their civilization. Third, the hand of Providence guided their own and the nation's destinies. Most of them held the same view as that of Lewis Tappan, a Protestant merchant and abolitionist, "Christianity is the conservator of all that is dear in civil liberty and human happiness; and that infidelity sets loose all the base passions of our nature."³⁹

One of the most important actions taken by the evangelicals during the antebellum period was the institution of national voluntary societies. Laymen and clergy of several Protestant denominations, most of them Presbyterians and Congregationalists, aided by a smaller number of Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians, sought to supply the religious needs of the expanding country. These groups joined to form five great national interdenominational societies, the American Education Society, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday School Union. The American Education Society subsidized future ministers in colleges and universities while the American Home Missionary Society helped poor congregations pay their pastors and sent men to new settlements. The American Bible Society distributed millions of copies of the Bible and the American Tract Society supplemented and extended religious and moral reading by issuing almost

³⁸ Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment*, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Me., 2007), p. 142.

³⁹ Lewis Tappan to Benjamin Tappan, Dec. 12, 1829 (Benjamin Tappan Papers).

200,000,000 books and tracts before 1861. The American Sunday School Union sent missionaries to establish schools and then furnished the young scholars with lessons, religious volumes, and moral stories. Additionally, to end wars, liquor drinking, and slavery, they founded the American Peace Society, the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance, and the American Antislavery Society. Held together by the idea of benevolence toward man as the highest Christian virtue, and united in promoting what they considered the fundamentals of evangelical Protestantism, these societies worked outside regular church organizations to convert the nation to God.⁴⁰

Society managers often contended that the very existence of the republic depended on evangelical Protestantism. In 1843, the Tract Society's executive committee surveyed the country and concluded that the United States had reached a critical point in the experiment of popular government. American liberties had produced national evils. Freedom of the press had degenerated to "unbridled licentiousness" and "blind partisanship," freedom of immigration and an easily obtained franchise for foreigners had brought in millions of voters who were ignorant of American institutions and laws. The freedom of conscience had aided the "spiritual despotism" of Catholicism. According to the Tract society committee, the remedy for all these ills was not political action but the evangelization of the whole people. Only when there was "absolute dependence on the spirit of God" would the country be safe.⁴¹

The problems of these societies were intensified by the millions of immigrants who came to America. Although they looked upon all immigrants as potentially troublesome, the managers considered Catholics especially dangerous. Opposing them on

⁴⁰ Clifford S. Griffin, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol.44, No.3. (Dec., 1957) p. 423-424.

⁴¹ American Tract Society, *Annual Report*, XVIII, (1843), p.24-26

religious grounds, the societies also feared that the “Romanists” might eventually control the entire country through the polls or form an alliance with the ungodly and thus make good government impossible. Protestant leaders despaired of ever successfully attacking the perceived root of this evil, the naturalization laws. A Methodist preacher in Boston warned as early as 1834, “The time has gone by in which your laws of naturalization might have been amended. Your ballot box is now under the control of too much foreign influence and domestic ambition to allow of such an amendment as would affect the evil. Nothing remains for us but the more indirect operation of moral means.”⁴² The Reverend Gardiner Spring, a well-known Presbyterian divine, and for several years a manager of the Bible, Tract, and Education societies, said that Catholics joyfully seized all the civil rights Americans provided but used these rights only as representatives of the Holy See. Spring claimed that Catholics held the balance of power between American political parties and that in using the franchise these foreigners might decide almost every question on their own terms. In his view, only the Pope would benefit.⁴³ To other managers, Catholicism was also an anathema; it was a religion essentially opposed to all American civil institutions.⁴⁴

In 1826, the Bible Society printed a report of the Young Man’s Bible Society of Baltimore stating that soon the new states in the Mississippi Valley would have a population and resources equal to or greater than the Atlantic commonwealths. Political

⁴² A. Stevens, *An Alarm to American Patriots: A Sermon on the Political Aspects of Popery*, (Printed by David H. Ela, Boston: 1835), p. 17-18

⁴³ Gardiner Spring, *The Danger and Hope of the American People; A Discourse on the Day of the Annual Thanksgiving, in the State of New York* (New York, 1843) p. 21-29

⁴⁴ *Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society*, V (May, 1833), p. 339.

power was passing across the Appalachian Range.⁴⁵ Lyman Beecher went even further, saying,

My interest in the majestic West has been greatly excited and increased.... The moral destiny of our nation, and all our institutions and hopes, and the world's hopes, turns on the character of the West, and the competition now is for that of preoccupancy in the education of the rising generation, in which Catholics and infidels have got the start of us. I have thought seriously of going over to Cincinnati (to accept the presidency of Lane Seminary).... to spend the rest of my days in that great conflict.... If we gain the West, all is safe; if we lose it, all is lost.⁴⁶

As far as the immigrants were concerned, the Tract Society thought that the Irish in the West constituted a serious threat to American institutions. Estimating their numbers at between 750,000 and 1,000,000, the managers saw Hibernians everywhere: “crowding our cities, lining our railroads and canals...and electing our rulers.”⁴⁷

While the Societies were worried about the political and religious effects of Western growth, they most feared the social changes in the East due to the change in the population base. The Atlantic coastal cities were crowded with thousands of low-income workers and the poor whom the managers held responsible for vice and crime, mobs and riots. Concerned over the recent riots in Philadelphia and the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island⁴⁸ the editors of the Presbyterian New York *Observer* said that such actions were a disgrace to the republic.⁴⁹

The societies ascribed the urban problems to the non-Protestant immigrants. In an analysis in 1857, the Bible Society's managers said that poverty was in general the result

⁴⁵ American Bible Society, *Annual Report*, X (1826), p. 89-90.

⁴⁶ *Autobiography*, edited by Charles Beecher, (two vols., New York, 1865), II, p.224.

⁴⁷ *General View of Colportage as Conducted by the American Tract Society in the United States, May, 1845* (New York, n.d.), 44-46.

⁴⁸ The Dorr Rebellion – 60% of the states' male population could not vote because they did not own land. Thomas Dorr organized a revolt to change the state charter. The majority of those who could not vote were Irish immigrants. – The rebellion failed.

⁴⁹ New York *Observer*, July 20, 1844.

of ignorance, vicious indulgences, or indolence. Expanding on these views, it was thought that the poor forgot the moral virtues in a haste to be rich, that they spent their money foolishly on worthless amusements, and that many of them had an aversion to honest work. Gripped by these evils, the city's poor were "congregated in filth and bound together by the horrid ties of vicious and beastly appetites. In their sensual sty the man is transformed into the brute." There was no crime too base for these poor: "Amid these orgies, crimes against society are plotted, and the most savage passions stimulated to action."⁵⁰ Viewing the immigrant horde of almost 5,500 foreigners who arrived in New York City on April 21, 1854, the Sunday School Union thought that among these new arrivals were at least 100 whose ideas made them "implacable foes to the best interests of society, if not to its peace and safety, and probably 1000 private or public paupers."⁵¹

While the social problems caused by the urban immigrants were of great concern to the Protestant societies, the fact that the overwhelming majority of these immigrants were not only not Protestant, but Catholic was of far greater concern. The Tract societies, home and foreign missionary societies, Sunday school societies, and other adjuncts to the formal religious system, which were organized at this time all, were to play a part in the crusade against Rome. The advent of foreign immigration on a large scale was the most important force that stimulated the anti-Catholic movement in America. Native antipathy to immigrants was to a considerable extent rationalization of previously existing prejudices against Catholics dating back to the English Civil War where a central problem involving Catholics in the eyes of English Protestants was the issue of popery,

⁵⁰ *Bible Society Record* (New York), II (September, 1857), 137-138.

⁵¹ American Sunday School Union, *Annual Report*, XXX (1854), 10-11.

the allegiance to a foreign ruler (the pope). Two hundred years later in the New World the issue was the same, now involving American Protestants. Fundamentally, the aliens were opposed because they were Catholics rather than because they were paupers or criminals. The preponderant number of papal adherents among the Irish and Germans coming to the United States made the evangelicals wonder if their land was safe from Popery and fears were current that this immigration was a means by which Romish power could be transferred to America.⁵²

The conflict between the Catholic Church and the evangelicals became more intense when the Bible Society attempted to enlarge the scope of their activities by pledging itself to continuously labor until the Scriptures were read in every classroom in the nation. Due to the fact that the version of the scriptures that was to be used in these readings was not one officially authorized by the Catholic Church many Catholics would be unwilling to allow their children to attend public school. It was for this reason that Catholics were bound to contest the dictates of the Protestants.⁵³

The Catholic response to the Protestants' actions was to demand that the Bible be excluded from public schools. This action brought the conflict to a new level, one that, to the evangelicals threatened the nation itself. For many religious men and women of that generation, a belief in and knowledge of the Word of God was as essential to the preservation of the state as was the Constitution. It was felt by many that schools without Bible reading would rear a nation of Godless voters and that infidelity and anarchy were synonymous and equally undesirable. National security, as well as the Protestant

⁵² Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade: 1800-1860, (Quadrangle Paperbacks, Chicago: 1938) p. 36.

⁵³ Ibid. p.143

religions, required the very training for children against which the Catholics were directing their attack.

With this belief generally held, Americans accepted without question the evangelicals' assertion that the school controversy clearly demonstrated Rome's enmity to the Scriptures. To Protestants there was only one Bible and because Catholics had objected to the reading of the King James Version, it was assumed they must oppose the reading of any portion of God's word. It was repeatedly asserted by evangelical speakers, editors, and writers that Popery was not sanctioned in the Scriptures, and that it was traditional within the Catholic Church to forbid the Bible to the people lest they discover the error of their religious system.⁵⁴

As European immigration increased, in an attempt to convert Catholics and to warn the United States of the evils of the Papal system, the religious societies then thriving in such large numbers began to change tactics. Both the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, long active in the cause, were virtually converted into nativistic organizations during this period. Each was concerned with winning converts from among the ranks of American Catholics. The Bible Society attempted conversion by distributing the Holy Book, while the Tract Society used colporteurs who would plead with the "deluded" Papists and "save" them from the faith in which they had been born. To this end, members of the latter society not only adopted resolutions at each annual meeting endorsing this method of redeeming Roman souls, but also tempered the tone of their tracts, so that Catholics might read and be converted.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ New York *Observer*, July 27, 1844

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, November 29, 1845 & May 15, 1847

A third major society with a long record of opposition to Rome, the American Home Mission Society, was also being driven into the arms of the nativists. The rising immigrant tide threatened to offset the work of its missionaries, while the European revolutions raised the specter of foreign despots seeking the conquest of the United States through a union with Popery. Also, the addition of Mexican territory, from the Mexican American War, with its Catholic population substantiated the belief in the minds of the societies that America was being surrounded by Papal forces bent on its destruction. The goal set by the American Home Missionary Society (establishing a “pure religion, undefiled” throughout the United States) was becoming more important, for as Catholicism increased, Popery rather than infidelity became the great obstacle to evangelical Christianity.⁵⁶

The political ramifications of the alien invasion were as important as the social. The solidarity of the foreign-born vote, whether cast for Whigs or Democrats, created the impression that the immigrants were all acting in accord with a general command and that command came from the Catholic Church. Evangelicals who thought that priests bartered the political power of their parishioners for favors and the protection of Catholicism were afraid that this “unholy alliance” would spell the doom of both Protestantism and democracy. It was also felt that Protestantism would not be able to stand against a Catholic Church receiving state support, and democracy would soon crumble in the hands of such corrupt leaders.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The Protestant Crusade, p. 275-276

⁵⁷ *Congregationalist*, September 10, 1852

Three specific areas which caused conflict between the evangelicals and the immigrants in antebellum America were the public school issue, the cities, and temperance.

The Public School Issue

By 1826, the evangelicals had realized that they could no longer dominate the public schools in the country. They lost the battle even in the most theocratic of all states, Massachusetts. In that year, the legislature passed a statute authorizing school boards to select textbooks, provided “that said committee shall never direct any school books to be purchased or used, in any of the schools under their superintendence, which are calculated to favor any particular religious sect or tenet.”⁵⁸

With this loss, the evangelicals changed their strategy and began to support nonsectarian teaching, which they believed would preserve a measure of Protestant influence over the public schools as long as the King James Bible was used. While Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians all had significant differences when it came to church issues, for the vast majority, support of the public schools was a unifying feature. Protestant missionaries provided the major energy behind the creation of the common school systems in many states. They did so in the sure conviction that the schools would help spread their notion of the right form of civil religion for the nation. Horace Mann affirmed his belief in a nonsectarian use of the Bible in public schools. “Our system,” he wrote, “inculcates all Christian morals; it founds its

⁵⁸ Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States, (Harper & Bros., NY, NY: 1950) p. 53.

morals on the basis of religion; it welcomes the religion of the Bible; and in receiving the Bible, it allows it to do what it is allowed to do in no other system, to speak for itself.”⁵⁹

The historian Timothy Smith has shown that Protestant support for the public schools that was being developed in the 1830s and 1840s was based on “a new religious synthesis, one which would give members of diverse sects a common faith.”⁶⁰ The evangelicals themselves were building this religious synthesis. Thus as the frontier opened in Ohio and further West, “Missionaries attempted to provide a Protestant paidea for settlers on the frontier: a total education through the common school, sectarian academies and colleges, Sunday Schools, the pulpit, religious reading, and a number of formal and informal associations.”⁶¹ This idea of synthesis was supported by the evangelist Calvin Stowe, a professor of Bible Studies at Lyman Beecher’s Lane Seminary. He stated that, “. . . notwithstanding the diversity of sects, there is common ground on which the sincerely pious of all sects substantially agree.”⁶² Of course the “sincerely pious” did not include Catholics, Mormons, freethinkers, and atheists. For Stowe and his allies, all of these groups were beyond the national consensus and more in need of conversion than serious consideration. Understanding the roots of the public schools in this evangelical consensus is essential in order to comprehend the reason that the evangelicals battled with the non-Protestant immigrants in the nineteenth century.

When the public schools were being created in the early 1800s, most of those doing the institutional building were confident that “Schools and churches were allies in

⁵⁹ Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, p. 57

⁶⁰ Timothy J. Smith, “Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850,” *Journal of American History*, 53 (1966-1967), p.679.

⁶¹ David Tyack, “The Kingdom of God and the Common School,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 36 (Fall, 1966), p. 453.

⁶² Calvin Stowe, *The Religious Element in Education* (W.D. Tucker & Co., Cincinnati: 1836), p. 26.

the quest to create the Kingdom of God in America.”⁶³ Through this effort “from the Alleghenies to the Pacific...evangelical clergymen spread the gospel of the common school in their united battle against Romanism, barbarism, and skepticism.”⁶⁴The key to rescuing people from the grasp of these evils, the preachers believed, was moral education into the American, Protestant consensus. Lyman Beecher wrote: “Let Catholics mingle with us as Americans and come with their children under the full action of our common schools and republican institutions, and the various powers of assimilation, and we are prepared cheerfully to abide the consequences.”⁶⁵ Beecher also had a fairly good sense of what those consequences would be. A commitment to a climate of diversity in which each learned from and respected the other was not at the heart of his agenda. For him, and for many who followed him, Americanism and Protestantism were inseparable.

In one of many speeches on schooling, Calvin Stowe voiced his fear of native “barbarians” and immigrant Catholics, defined by him as almost anyone who disagreed with the Beechers and Stowes of this world. Such fear helped fuel the commitment to schooling in Protestant morality. It is not merely from the “ignorant and vicious foreigner” that the danger is to be apprehended. It was felt that in order to sustain an extended republic like our own, there must be a national feeling, a national assimilation, and that nothing could be more fatal to our prospects of future national prosperity than to have our population become congeries of clans, congregating without coalescing, and condemned to contiguity without sympathy.⁶⁶

⁶³Tyack, “Kingdom of God,” p.448.

⁶⁴Ibid. p.450

⁶⁵Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Kessinger Publishing, Cincinnati: 1835), p. 50.

⁶⁶ Calvin Stowe, *On the Education of Emigrants, Transactions of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Western Literary Institute and College of Professional Teachers*, (Cincinnati, 1836) p. 68-69

Stowe often spoke of his fear of increased immigration and stated, “It is altogether essential to our national strength and peace, if not even to our national existence, that the foreigners who settle on our soil, should cease to be Europeans and become Americans.”⁶⁷ The goal was to remake European immigrants in the image of such people as Beecher, Stowe, and their allies. It would be the job of the common schools to induct all into the common culture.⁶⁸

One example of a clash between the Catholic immigrant and the evangelicals in the public school situation was the Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844, which were among the most dramatic and violent episodes in pre-Civil War American history. Although the riots grew out of cultural and religious conflict between Philadelphia’s Protestant nativists and Irish Catholic immigrants, they were the immediate result of a political controversy over the use of the Bible in the Philadelphia public schools. In 1842, the Philadelphia County Board of School Controllers ordered that the King James, or Protestant, version of the Bible, be used as the basic reading text in all Philadelphia public school classes. The Catholic Bishop of Philadelphia asked that Catholic children be allowed to read the Douay, or Catholic, version of the Bible. The Board’s decision was a compromise that pleased no one. Catholic children could leave their classrooms while Bible reading exercises were conducted, but the Douay Version was still not to be admitted into the schools. As a result of this decision, one teacher, a Lousia Bedford, decided to suspend all Bible reading in her class until such time as the School Controllers devised a better method for excusing Catholic students from the exercise. Word of the decision to “kick the Bible out of the schools,” as the Protestants inaccurately described

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 69-70

⁶⁸ Daniel Aaron, Cincinnati, 1818-1838: A Study of Attitudes in the Urban West, PhD. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1942, p.329.

it, spread like wildfire throughout the city. The ensuing riot initially manifested itself as a clash between Catholics and Protestants. Later that year however, fighting again erupted but this time the militia was called out to suppress a group Protestant rioters. Not long after, a grand jury was convened to study the riots. The jury, stacked with nativists, declared that the riots were caused by “efforts of a portion of the community to exclude the Bible from our public schools,” and blamed the Catholics for starting the Catholic-Protestant strife. The Philadelphia Bible Riots did, however, show that Protestant political control was beginning to slip. The School Board was willing to compromise and when the Protestants rioted, the militia was called out to suppress them.⁶⁹

The Cities

A major area of American society in which the traditional influence and prestige of Christian orthodoxy was being most severely challenged during the antebellum period was that of the city. The rise of cities was an important political and social development in the first half of the nineteenth century. To the evangelicals, the challenge was not fundamentally different from the one encountered in the West. As in the West, so in the Eastern cities, the evangelicals viewed the advance of infidelity as a menace to American political and social institutions. The social problems found in the cities were unique to the urban areas. Pauperism, caused largely by the rapidly shifting industrial conditions, could be blamed almost entirely on immigrants, who inhabited mostly Eastern cities and were cared for by the municipal and state authorities. These immigrants were considered to be

⁶⁹ Michael Feldberg, The Turbulent Era, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1980) p.7-11.

a constant burden on the taxpayers. Nativist resentment at this new burden was especially great because it was generally believed that many of the paupers were deliberately sent to the United States by European powers anxious to escape the burden of their support. The evangelists were able to interest Congress into looking at the problem, but it came to no avail. Obviously the politicians believed that the nativistic support that they would gain by furthering legislation to stop pauper immigration did not balance the alien vote which they would lose by such a step. In this they were correct, but the nativist propaganda linking Catholicism and immigration and making them both equally dangerous to the United States had nevertheless immeasurably increased nativist strength.⁷⁰

The Temperance Crusade

In colonial times, the use of alcoholic beverages was not considered a social problem, though the Puritan clergymen were quick to condemn individual excesses. The ravages of drinking became more apparent during the Revolutionary era. In 1808, Lyman Beecher began a temperance crusade. His efforts began to bear fruit, when the first temperance organization was founded. It was known as the Massachusetts Temperance Society, and in 1826, the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was also organized. So successful was the work of this society that all the major Protestant denominations officially endorsed the temperance crusade. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the crusade had no thought of enlisting the civil authorities, relying instead on the voluntary societies. Then in the early 1840s the

⁷⁰ Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860, p. 135.

temperance crusade was carried into politics resulting in the enactment of the Maine Law in 1851.⁷¹

As the leadership and membership of the temperance societies came largely from the churches, the appeal of the movement was necessarily religious. The reform took on the attributes of a huge religious revival. Temperance workers spoke as evangelists preaching a new gospel. Persons who responded to the powerful appeal were required to sign a pledge of total abstinence and were then known as “converts.” The rationale for the support of the temperance movement by the evangelists was simply that the “drunkard” having fallen victim to the consummate work of Satan for human destruction was beyond the reach of God’s saving grace. He could never inherit the Kingdom of Heaven if he was to continue imbibing. Drink became an enemy that must be destroyed and an obstacle to the church’s efforts to redeem the world.⁷²

New York in the 1850’s was an example of a situation where a mixture of some of the city’s inhabitants and the consumption of alcohol created alarming implications for the evangelicals. Less than half of the city’s residents were native-born while more than one-quarter had migrated from Ireland and one-sixth from Germany.⁷³ What precipitated cooperation among the city’s otherwise diverse immigrants was the rise of the prohibition question, which more than any other issue, drove beer-drinking Germans and whiskey imbibing Irishmen to unite in a pro-liquor Democratic party. Opposition to prohibition was a potent mobilizer of German and Irish opinion, for the threat to close a man’s

⁷¹ The Maine Law was one of the first statutory implementations of the temperance movement. The passage of the law, which prohibited the sale of all alcoholic beverages quickly spread and by 1855, twelve States had joined Maine in total prohibition.

⁷² L. Armstrong, *An Address to the Temperance Society of Malta, New York* (1834).

⁷³ Country of Birth, 1855: U.S.A, 303,721 (48.2%); Ireland, 175,735 (27.9%); German States, 95,986 (15.2%); Other 54,462 (8.6%). *Census of the State of New York for 1855* (Albany, 1857), pp. xxxiv, 117-118.

whiskey saloon or beer hall posed a more immediate challenge than nativist rhetoric. Prohibition even enabled the immigrant-oriented Democratic Party to attract the support of native-born drinkers. While the liquor question united the immigrants, a second condition had greater long-range significance for the evangelicals. With the unfolding of the liquor controversy, the immigrants began to develop mechanisms to organize and maintain power. Saloonkeepers and grocers became linchpins in the Democratic Party. When the Irish, in particular, learned to channel their energies into saloon politics, they created, in the patronage-based political machine, an institution that guaranteed both a Hibernian-dominated Democratic Party, and a party controlled city.⁷⁴ Even worse than this immigrant collusion from the evangelical's viewpoint was the fact that native-born Protestant drinkers, who found comfort in Irish saloons and German beer parlors joined. Thus the Temperance movement drove the minority of the native-born drinkers into participation in immigrant subcultures. The power of the immigrant grogeries and groceries made the evangelicals uneasy. They worried that if immigrant-drinking mores became preeminent, then other immigrant values, the obvious example being Catholicism, would come to dominate American life.⁷⁵

The forces that had, for half a century, been breeding antagonism toward the foreigner and Catholic, took political form in the early 1850s with the rise of the American or Know-Nothing Party. Although the party professed vehement enmity for immigrants, the true motive behind the whole Know-Nothing movement was a hatred of Catholicism. Official party pronouncements and opinions of members reflected far more fear of the Papist than of the foreigner. Many Protestant aliens who were zealous against

⁷⁴ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "When the Irish Ran New York," *Reporter XXIV* (June 8, 1961) p.32-34.

⁷⁵ W.J. Rorabaugh, "Rising Democratic Spirits: Immigrants, Temperance, and Tammany Hall, 1854-1860", *Civil War History* 22 (2) 1976.

Popery were members of the order and official spokesmen for the party openly welcomed these foreign-born Protestants. With Catholics there was no such equivocation. Every Know-Nothing firmly believed that Papists should be barred from every office in the national, state, and local governments and, if possible, driven back to the priest-ridden lands from whence they had come. The Know-Nothing party was really a “No-Popery” party, despite all the gloss and fine statements in its pronouncements.⁷⁶ The Know-Nothings stood on a three-plank platform that demanded; a twenty-one year waiting period for naturalization, that only native-born Americans could be elected to public office, and the rejection of “foreign interference” in the social, political, and religious institutions of the country. The public schools were the main focus of this last tenet. While the evangelicals did not call for immigration restriction during the antebellum period, they were convinced that Catholicism was, at its core, a hostile conspiracy that threatened both Protestantism and the American way of life. As one Philadelphia nativist put it:

The day must come, and, we fear, is not too far distant, when most of our offices will be held by foreigners – men who have no sympathy with the spirit of our institutions, who have done aught to secure the blessings they enjoy, and instead of governing ourselves, we shall be governed by men, many of whom, but a few short years previously, scarcely knew of our existence.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Anna E. Carroll, The Great American Battle or, the Contest between Christianity and Political Romanism, (Edwin Mellen Press: New York, 1996), p. 146-150.

⁷⁷ Michael Feldberg, The Philadelphia Riots of 1844: A Study of Ethnic Conflict, (Greenwood Press, Westport, Ct.: 1975), p. 60.

Chapter 2

The Cities

By the late 1860s, the tension between the evangelicals and those who had yet to be brought “under the transforming power of the gospel”⁷⁸ had increased. The drink traffic was growing, liquor imbibing immigrants continued to pour into the country, and the enemies of God’s will were better organized than ever before as they could now count on the unwavering support of the Democratic Party. The “Rumocracy” was everywhere, perceived by temperance crusaders to be the avowed enemy of “true piety,” a party that wouldn’t “support for office anyone who [would] vote to control the Sabbath-day or sales of liquors.”⁷⁹ The evangelicals lamented the arrival of those “unsaved millions” and the consequent growth of an “immigrant voting power” that had “wrought a radical change upon many of the sections of the United States.” In this instance, evangelicals referred implicitly to the changed nativity structure of the electorate.⁸⁰ The increased number and voting powers of those who brought with them “infidelity,” those who were without the “pure gospel,” who were “formalists in religion,” and who were Catholics, aroused their fears and reenergized their commitment.⁸¹

The evangelists did not devise a new catalog of sinful activity to meet the conditions of the 1870s and 1880s. The evils to which they stridently drew attention were the old evils. The solutions that they demanded were the old prescriptions. Most

⁷⁸ John Todd. *The Moral Influence, Dangers and Duties, Connected With Great Cities*, (J.H. Butler Co.:1841) p. 19.

⁷⁹ *Proceedings of the Sixth National Temperance Convention, 1868*, p. 68.

⁸⁰ *Annual Report of the American Home Baptist Home Mission Society, 1880* p. 23-25.

⁸¹ *Annual Report of the American Home Baptist Home Mission Society, 1885*, p. 16.

important, their litany of evils included “attempts to prostitute the Holy Sabbath.” In order for the evangelicals to counter this “incoming flood of Sabbath desecration,” they demanded a return to “a scriptural observance of the Sabbath. “It was a time for “all the friends of the Sabbath to unite in one grand effort to be continued until the Lord’s Day shall be rescued from all impending dangers by which it is so seriously threatened.”⁸² The threats came in various guises. They included pleasure-seeking activities such as baseball playing, social visiting, secular reading, and excursions on steamboats and railroads. These threats also encompassed commercial and governmental activities like the buying of groceries, the publication of Sunday newspapers, the Sabbath operation of cheese factories, Army regulations providing for the Sunday inspection of soldiers, and the running of mail trains on Sunday. To discourage these and other breaches of God’s commandment, evangelicals cooperated with each other in a varied array of interdenominational agencies, such as the New England Sabbath Protective League, the International Sabbath Association and the American Sabbath Union. They petitioned both state legislatures and by the mid-1880s the national Congress, for laws to eradicate these sins. The evangelicals pledged themselves to vote only for candidates opposed to the desecration of the Lord’s Day and to choose “for our rulers, out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.”⁸³

The evangelicals had singled out the Sabbath-breaking, rum drinking refuse of European countries that the flood tide of immigration had deposited on American shores. It was the Irish and Germans who were the avowed enemies of righteous behavior. By the mid-1870s, these attitudes were articulated with a heightened and sustained sense of

⁸² *Minutes of the Annual Session of the Northwest Iowa Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. 1880. p. 16 - 17.*

⁸³ *Minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of Cleveland, 1877, p.30.*

urgency, a righteous unwillingness to compromise, and they were linked even more explicitly with injunctions to political behavior.⁸⁴

Adding to the nativist evangelical attitudes towards the Sabbath breakers and the drinkers was the anti-Catholicism of immigrant evangelicals—the British, Canadian Protestants, Dutch, Irish Protestants, Norwegians, and Swedes who had lingering memories of “Romish persecution” which predisposed them to oppose the pope’s legions in the New World.⁸⁵

The native and immigrant evangelicals, groups commanded by the Lord to “teach all nations,” were resolved to do no less than bring the “uplifting power” of gospel religion to those multitudes who were “in the bonds of a fatal religious formalism.” The true believers that they were, they could never bring themselves to abandon all hope that their evangelization would transform even the hearts of the papists. In the 1870s and 1880s, the home mission and church extension reports of the denomination conferences spoke repeatedly of the “growing danger” of the “ever-flowing, never ebbing” tide of Catholic immigration, of the hierarchy’s “extreme efforts...to use them [Catholic immigrants] as a force in politics to accomplish their objectives.” To avert this dire calamity, even more effort had to be devoted to reaching “Catholics with the truth, leading them to Christ, Americanizing them.” for “we [the evangelicals] must take care of them or they will take care of us.” Yet the reports spoke as well, of “the most disheartening difficulties,” the “slow progress” that characterized the work. Because of this, the evangelical groups depended more heavily than earlier than ever on solutions

⁸⁴ Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892: Parties, Voters, and Political Cultures*, (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill: 1979), p.212.

⁸⁵ James I. Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the United States*, (Daniel Miller Co., Windsor, Ohio: 1899) p. 295.

that entailed legal coercion and, eventually, immigration restriction.⁸⁶ However, before legal solutions were tried, the evangelicals were encouraged by the belief that they had at their disposal the most effective approach to mission work, evangelization. For evangelicals, this promised the quickest and most adequate solution if employed on a large enough scale.

The belief that evangelization was the most adequate solution had its source in the social philosophy of American Protestantism, according to which there exists a vital and determining link between the spirit of evangelical Protestantism and the ideals of American institutions and ways of living. According to this view, the best American citizen is the one who is most thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Protestant Christianity and who, through his membership in a Protestant church stays under the influence of “the most constructive” element in the community. The most effective way, then, to make good Americans of the foreign-born and their descendants was to draw them into the membership of the Protestant churches.

The belief in evangelization as the most adequate method of Americanization imbued American churches with a true sense of its importance. For the first time in the history of the church such an undertaking was to not only be an end in itself, but a means for the accomplishment of a social goal vitally affecting the welfare of American society. “Americanization through Evangelization” now became the inspiration of the mission enterprise among the immigrants.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the General Conference of the Congregational Churches in Maine, 1880.* p. 138.

⁸⁷ Theodore Abel, *Protestant Home Missions to Catholic Immigrants*, (Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York: 1933), p.4

While the assimilation of immigrants had been the prime motive in launching the mission work among non-Protestants, hardly less important had been its purpose. Implicit to the social philosophy of American Protestantism was the need to maintain the dominant position of the Protestant churches in America. In order to maintain this dominant position there must be a sustained opposition to the Catholic Church.

There is an irrepressible conflict between two conceptions of Christianity. We grant ...choice, but we also claim the right to bear witness to the conception, which we believe to be the Gospel of the Grace of God. One the one hand there is a religion of autocracy and aristocracy with sensuous forms which appeal to the imagination and to superstitions which hold men in their power. It has numbered among its adherents saints and martyrs...but it has fostered persecution...and where it rules, liberty is denied and ignorance and illiteracy reach their highest rate. On the other hand where evangelical Christianity has been spiritual and vital, in place of autocracy has reigned religious liberty; instead of aristocracy, religious democracy; and in place of formalism and superstition, the Open Word of God which has everywhere been the Magna Charta of civil and social progress.⁸⁸

This animosity had been quiet during the war because of a strong religious unity within the Lincoln government during the conflict. Once the hostilities were over, the deep-seated hatred of Protestants for Catholics reemerged and this time it involved the Black man. For instance, a writer in the *Western Christian Advocate (Methodist)* wrote:

...the time is coming when we may need not merely the Negro labor, but the Negro vote...The Negro, when educated and intelligent, will ever think, act, and VOTE on the on the side of freedom, civilization, republicanism, loyalty, and the Protestant religion. Educate him and put a vote in his hand, and no truer patriot walks the American soil. [Look, on the other hand, at] the Irish Catholic – that goes by the solid column, perhaps a hundred thousand strong, for slavery, retrogression, drunkenness, mobocracy, and disloyalty. It is a compact instrument in the hands of the priest, and by him handed over for consideration to the mobocrat. [The] Negro is a native-born American. The home grown Negro is far better entitled to his vote than the...Romanist immigrant...his vote will more than neutralize the power of the disloyal vote for our country's

⁸⁸ C. A. Brooks, *Through the Second Gate*, (The American Baptist Home Mission Society, New York, 1922,) p. 10-11.

ruin...Methodism would have nothing to lose by an enfranchisement that might double the Methodist vote in this nation...The Romish vote has, to a great degree, ruled our country. It sustained all the aggressions of slavery, and so produced the rebellion. Could the Negro vote have counterbalanced it, as it had a right to, the entire history of our country would have been widely different from the time of John Quincy Adams' defeat to the present time⁸⁹

In short, the Black man, who had at first been used as an aid to help win the war (in the Emancipation Proclamation), must now be used to fight the Pope. The new crusade to Protestantize America by enfranchising the Negro went on apace, especially in the Methodist press. The *Central Christian Advocate* in an article entitled "Romanism and the Rebellion" stated that the New York *Tribune* had "called the Catholic priesthood to account for their almost universal sympathy with the rebellion and its single cause – slavery."⁹⁰

Now that slavery was about to be vanquished, the next problem for a victorious North, as the evangelicals saw it, was to reduce the overwhelming power of Catholicism, a task that could be accomplished with the aid of African Americans. The *Western Christian Advocate* gave as its main reason why the "Negro" should be enfranchised, stating, "There is in the Northern states, an Irish Catholic vote, which is essentially disloyal and instinctively sympathetic with rebellion and treason."⁹¹

The Methodists were not the only ones with such an attitude towards the Negroes and the Catholics. The New York *Observer*, a Presbyterian organ, made an appeal against allowing the African Americans to become Catholic, namely because Catholic voting was controlled by the priests. The Catholic *Freeman's Journal* of New York answered this by

⁸⁹ Rev. Hollis Read, Editorial, "The Negro Problem Solved," *Western Christian Advocate*, January, 18, 1865

⁹⁰ *Central Christian Advocate*, January, 18, 1865

⁹¹ *Western Christian Advocate*, May, 17, 1865

stating, “The Presbyterians are very uneasy. They exhibit enlargement of the pupils of the eyes, and itching of the nose... We recommend to these feeble folks of Presbyterianism, to put blankets round them, put their feet to the fire, and to take Fahnestock’s remedy.”⁹²

Continuing with the theme that the Catholic Church was unpatriotic, the Methodist *Independent* printed a series of articles written by the Rev. Robert M. Hatfield of the Wabash M.E. Church of Chicago, showing that, “the Roman Catholic hierarchy is plotting the overthrow of free institutions in the United States, and that probably there will soon be a second rebellion more terrible and sanguinary than the one just closed.” All that was needed, said Hatfield, was a leader who could be the ‘tool and puppet of Rome.” On the one side will be arrayed the Catholic Church, the copperheads, of the North,⁹³ and the white-washed but unrepentant rebels of the South.”⁹⁴

It was also in 1865 that the Protestants believed that they had an issue with the Catholic Church with which they could prove that the Church was disloyal to the Union. The issue was the test oath that was part of the radical Constitution of the state of Missouri.⁹⁵

⁹² Quoted by the Selingsgrove, Pa. *Times*, June 18, 1865, Fahnestock’s remedy was a cure-all patent medicine used in the nineteenth century.

⁹³ Northern Democrats who opposed the Civil War, they wanted a peace settlement with the Confederates.

⁹⁴ *Western Christian Advocate*, July 26, 1865.

⁹⁵ According to this Constitution, certain classes of persons, including bishops, priests, or other clergymen “of any religious persuasion, sect or denomination,” were by the provisions of the Constitution allowed sixty days to take the oath. Those who failed to take it and continued to function as religious ministers were subject to fine and imprisonment. The terms of the oath, according to Justice Field of the Supreme Court of the United States, were that the individual was required to deny not only that he had ever been in armed hostility to the United States, or to the lawful authorities thereof, but that he had ever “by act or word,” manifested his adherence to the cause of the enemies of the United States, foreign or domestic, or his desire for their triumph, over the arms of the United States; or his sympathy with those engaged in rebellion, or had ever harbored, or aided, any person engaged in guerilla warfare against the loyal inhabitants of the United States. On this subject, the Most Rev. Peter Richard Kenrick, Archbishop of St. Louis sent a pastoral letter to every priest in his diocese, which said in part “Reverend Sir: Since under the new Constitution, a certain oath is to be extracted of Priests, that they may have leave to announce God’s word, and officiate at marriage, which oath they can in no wise take, without a sacrifice of ecclesiastical liberty...” A Catholic priest, the Rev. John A. Cummings, pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Louisiana, Missouri, who did not take the oath was arrested and indicted by a grand jury. His case was eventually

When the Supreme Court struck down the Missouri test oath provision, it became more and more difficult for the evangelicals to attack the Catholics by linking them with the rebels. Thereafter, anti-Catholic and anti immigrant agitation would take other forms. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this agitation took the form of the A.P.A, *The Menace*, the K.K.K., and criticism of Tammany.

All of the problems that the evangelicals had with Roman Catholic immigrants coalesced in the nation's cities. As an example, as early as 1862, a Congregationalist leader warned that 60 percent of New York City's population was unreached by Protestant churches and such things were just as bad in other cities. Furthermore, he warned, the gap was increasing yearly.⁹⁶ Protestantism in the pre Civil War era had advanced significantly in an America predominantly rural and small-town, an America in which natives of British background were usually in control. But after the war, the evangelical forces were faced with the spectacular growth of the cities and the unprecedented expansion of industry that made them possible. The burgeoning of the cities before the war had already presented the Protestants with problems enough (such as the German and Irish immigration in the 1840s), but now due to the huge population growth, these problems swelled to formidable proportions. Additionally, the Protestants found the cities to be increasingly dangerous. For in cities gathered aliens, immigrants, and Roman Catholics, who followed ways of life which often contrasted sharply with the

heard by the Supreme Court of the United States, the court ruled in favor of Father Cummings "... This court now holds this constitutional provision (test oath) void on the ground that the Federal Constitution forbids it. W. Johnson (1912). "Missouri Test-Oath," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved May 27, 2008 from the New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14538a.htm>.

⁹⁵ Arthur Schlesinger, *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898*, (Macmillan, New York: 1933), p. xiv.

Protestant style. In much of the Protestant preaching and writing of the time, the cities were symbolized as places where all the elements that threatened Christian civilization were concentrated. An example of this thinking can be seen in a remark made by the Rev. Samuel S. Nelles, president of Victoria College, Toronto, Canada, he stated, “Chicago, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and New York, and I know not how many more cities, give too sad and mournful examples of wide-spread infidelity and immorality of many kinds⁹⁷

In her 1873 novel *We and our Neighbors*, Harriet Beecher Stowe, always a sensitive barometer of middle class Protestant concerns sends her well-to-do heroine on an all night search through New York’s slums for the wayward daughter of her Irish maid. “Can it be,” Mrs. Stowe exclaims through this character, after describing the city’s dance halls, brothels, and cellar “bucket shops” where cheap beer was sold by the pail to the poor, “that in a city full of churches and Christians such dreadful things...are going on every night?” Impressing upon her readers the “paganism” of contemporary city life, she posed the central question “perplexing modern society”: How could the church once more influence behavior and “regulate society” in urban America?⁹⁸

Josiah Strong’s *Our Country* made clear that as of 1885, the answer to Mrs. Stowe’s question had yet to be found. The same point was the central theme of Samuel Lane Loomis’s *Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems* [1887]. This point was heavily underscored by the Reverend William S. Rainsford, an Episcopal churchman and reformer. “The whole aspect of the modern Protestant churches, in our large cities at least,” Rainsford wrote in *The Forum*, “is repellent to the poor man.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1884, p. 495.

⁹⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *We and Our Neighbors*, (J. B. Ford & Co., New York: 1873) p. 439-440.

⁹⁹ W.S. Rainsford, “What Can We Do For the Poor?” *Forum*, 11 (April 1891), p. 123.

Evangelical Protestant churchmen of the Gilded Age saw their creed not just in theological or ecclesiastical terms but also as the foundation stone of the American social order. For them, the urban decline of Protestantism was not just frustrating; instead it involved moral and social ramifications of the gravest kind. They would not, if they could help it, watch from the sidelines as the moral destiny of the city was decided.

Accordingly, Protestant leaders made determined efforts to revitalize the organizations that they constructed in the past. The American Tract Society issued an array of updated tracts aimed at a new generation of readers. The American Sunday School Union reversed its mission to the middle-class to begin working with the urban poor.

As Protestants reaffirmed their revivalistic, missionary thrust in the effort to win converts and to Christianize American life amid the changing realities of the latter nineteenth century, they were forced to use approaches and methods unknown to their predecessors. Seeking to affirm continuity with them, and stilling the fears of those who felt they were being swept along too fast, they continued to talk about the importance of the Christian Sabbath. For them, the continuation of Sunday observance was a sign that Christian civilization, which meant so much to them, was still publicly recognized.¹⁰⁰

Neglect of Sabbath observance was most frequently blamed on immigrants. “Nearly all the Presbyterian Narratives speak of the frightful prevalence of Sabbath desecration,” declared the first “Annual Narrative of the State of Religion” produced by the reunited Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the predominantly

¹⁰⁰Robert T. Handy, A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1971) p. 84.

northern body that was formed as Old School and New School united in 1869-1870.

“This vice grows with the growth of immigration from the nations of Europe”¹⁰¹

While the Sunday observance struggle was cast largely in defensive terms, the temperance crusade in the years after the Civil war took on a new militancy. This renewal was marked by the organization of the Prohibition Party in 1869 and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in 1874. The temperance cause was a very important aspect of the struggle to maintain the patterns of Christian civilization in America, and was seen by the churches as a promising religious renewal movement. To them, a purified, reformed, Christian America must be a dry America. Those who could not or would not see that were regarded as trapped by the evil forces to be overcome if the country were to fulfill her destiny as a Christian nation.¹⁰²

The revival was again used as a technique to increase Protestant membership, this time in the cities. Dwight L. Moody, the successful revivalist led highly publicized revivals in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. These revivals attracted large crowds and were a very public attempt of the church’s to exert a moral influence in the cities.

Less colorful, but equally ambitious in their urban objectives, were the many city missions established in these years. An appraisal of the urban effort as stated by the American Home Missionary Society noted:

The immigrant city has not as yet been adequately touched. The wise general masses his army where the enemy is densest. The hostile forces that threaten the future of America...camp to day in solid city wards; they are entrenched behind miles of tenement blocks. The enemy has shifted

¹⁰¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1870, p. 131.

¹⁰² Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*, p. 89-92.

his ground. What is the home-missionary army for but to follow on and train and mass its guns against this new attack¹⁰³

The city mission effort was infected with a nagging sense of unfulfilled promise, however. In the heart of the city were the densely packed immigrant wards. They seemed impervious to even the most dedicated effort. Among the sharpest critics of the city mission movement were those who shared its goals, but believed they had discovered a more effective strategy for achieving them. The Reverend William Rainsford, a Golden Age evangelical leader, had little good to say of city missions. “How could the ugly little mission chapel service hope to win the very people that the strong preacher and beautiful service had failed to draw? The small mission church, struggling to live, equipped with second-rate machinery, human and material can never succeed and is a waste of energy.”¹⁰⁴

The Reverend Rainsford and other liberal churchmen favored the strategy of de-emphasizing the doctrinal elements that rendered Protestantism unacceptable to the immigrants, as the price of remaining a force for moral order in the city. From such thinking grew the institutional church movement, which offered a variety of secular activities and programs geared to the interests and needs of the urban newcomers.

The best known of the institutional churches was the Reverend Rainsford’s Saint George’s Episcopal Church located on the Lower East Side of New York City. To respond to “the social needs and aspirations of the masses of the people,” Rainsford introduced several community-based programs such as a boy’s club, recreational

¹⁰³ Joseph B. Clark, Leavening the Nation, (Kessinger Publishing, New York: reissued 7/25/07) p. 279-280.

¹⁰⁴ William S. Rainsford, The Story of a Varied Life: An Autobiography, (Doubleday, Garden City, New York: reissued 1970) p. 199.

facilities, and an industrial training program. On the religious side, he added a Sunday school and congregational singing. While some of the churches in the major cities emulated the idea of the institutional church, most did not. “It is very difficult, if not impossible, to carry on a church and a clubhouse under the same management,” noted one church journal sarcastically in 1898.¹⁰⁵

The school situation, which had been the subject of heated acrimony between the evangelicals and the Catholics in antebellum America, produced a maelstrom of fury and drove antipopy to new heights of frenzy after the war.¹⁰⁶ In the words of Paul Kleppner, “The Catholic clergy assaulted the public school.” As the evangelicals saw it, the Catholic assault took several forms. First, the Catholic clergy attempted to transform the common school into a “Godless” institution by demanding that it be purged of Bible reading and any form of devotional practice. Second, in some localities they also demanded that the school’s hiring practices be changed so that Catholic applicants for teaching positions would no longer be discriminated against. Third, they objected to the anti-Catholic content of textbooks and diatribes against their religion by non-Catholic teachers. Fourth, the hierarchy threatened to undermine the public schools by extending its own parochial school system. And finally, they revived earlier demands that a share of the public school fund be diverted to support their church schools.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ “The Institutional Church,” *The Churchman*, Oct. 15, 1898, p. 514

¹⁰⁶ One of the major supports for the clergy’s position was the increase in Catholic immigration. Natural population increase was another. By the 1870s and 1880s, the sons of prewar immigrants were coming of voting age. The prewar stream of immigration had come mainly from Ireland and Germany. The Catholic component of that immigration implanted a fertility time bomb that exploded by the 1870s. That decade marked an immensely significant turning point in the sources of the continuing growth of the country’s Catholic population.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill: 1979) p. 221

To the evangelicals, education as imparted by the common school was nothing less than “a handmaid to religion and the teacher...one of our best missionaries.” Public schools, “pervaded with the spirit of Christian morality,” reinforced and strengthened the principles inculcated by both family and church. They were bulwarks of the Christian religion and of American institutions. One Methodist figure described the schools as “the basis of our social fabric...to be cherished and promulgated by the agencies of the church as well as by those of the state.” They were said to be the only “fit training ground for a morally responsible citizenship.”¹⁰⁸

Additionally, the evangelicals viewed the public school as an agency for mass evangelicalism and homogenization of the society as well as part of “Americanization through Evangelicalism.” All children, even those who were enslaved by “Romish superstition,” would be exposed to the Bible. It was also a means of contesting the presence of the immigrant because in addition to the moral benefits, all instruction in the public school was conducted in the English language. By teaching English to the children of non-speaking parents, the public schools became vital agencies for “absorbing, assimilation, and digesting these foreign elements. “We are a nation of remnants, ravelings from the Old World...The public school is one of the remedial agencies which work in our society to diminish this...and to hasten the compacting of these heterogeneous materials into a solid nature.”¹⁰⁹

By the 1880s, the public schools had become the most important evangelical problem-solving agency. As the immigrant generation resisted their evangelizing

¹⁰⁸ *Minutes of the Minnesota Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1885, p. 45.

¹⁰⁹ *Proceedings of the Annual Baptist Autumnal Conference for the Discussion of Current Questions*, 1888, p.77-78.

overtures, Protestant religious groups concentrated more heavily on “saving” the next generations. The idea was to put the child in the public school, where he would be exposed to biblical morality and would associate with other children reared in “true Christian families.” This placement would mean that both the loyalty to the churches of their fathers and its underlying foreignism would be eroded. As the child internalized such values, the society would become more homogeneous and godly. It was thought that “America [would] be Saved Through the Children.”¹¹⁰

The problem for the Protestants was not only that the Catholics rejected the public school system, but also that they built an alternative school system that subverted the evangelical idea of molding those heterogeneous remnants of European society into a homogeneous American community. The Catholic school system perpetuated cultural pluralism by training succeeding generations to be as foreign and as Catholic as their parents. Catholic education did not produce a Bible-reading, Sabbath-observing, drink abstaining, “Christian American.” Protestants felt that Catholic schools produced not an independent citizen of the American Republic, [but] a subject of the Pope.” It was also felt that such schools deprived Catholic children “of the education needed to enable them to act their part in American society.” The objective of the Catholics as the evangelicals saw it was to exacerbate religious animosities, to set neighbor against neighbor, and thus “to break up and destroy homogeneity.” *With such Catholic attitudes, there could be no reconciliation.*¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ *Minutes of the Vermont Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1880, p. 48

¹¹¹ *Minutes of the Session of the New England Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1891, p. 82-83

The irreconcilable enemies joined battle early and often. The tempo of conflict accelerated as the Protestant hope for evangelizing the immigrant faded and the size of the Catholic population increased. The conflict attained the proportions of an Armageddon when the Catholic clergy determined to extend and expand the parochial-school system. In November 1875, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda issued an "Instruction to the Bishops of the United States concerning the Public Schools." The "Instruction" itemized the dangers that public school education posed to the faith and morals of Catholic children. The remedy lay in, "the establishment of Catholic schools in every place." The hierarchy was mandated to build such schools and Catholic parents were commanded to send their children to them.

Not surprisingly, these actions led the evangelicals to sound the antipopy alarm. The worst of their earlier fears had been realized. The Catholic school system was growing and more Catholic children were being denied the spiritual uplift of public education. Society's moral progress, its homogenization was being retarded in response to the dictates of a "foreign potentate." Worse yet, for the evangelicals, the Catholic hierarchy revived its antebellum claim to a share of the public school fund. That claim, if conceded, would open the floodgates to a faster and more extensive growth of these "socially divisive" schools.¹¹²

The textbooks used in the nineteenth century public schools carried the anti-Catholic message by dividing the religions of the world into two basic categories that were simply labeled true and false. True religion is confined to Christianity and all virtue is identified with only the Christian religion. During the century, true religion was limited

¹¹² Paul Kleppner, The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892, p. 228.

to Protestantism while Roman Catholicism was depicted not only as a false religion, but also as an active danger to the state. Catholicism in the textbooks was thought to be subversive of good government, sound morals, and education.

In their presentation of Roman Catholicism, the textbooks made the power of the papacy the most severe point of attack. The papacy was regarded as a gigantic hoax and conspiracy. Religious persecution was also a favorite theme. Puritans came to America to escape persecution and the only persecutions described in the texts are Roman Catholic. Bloody Mary, St. Bartholomew's Day and the Inquisition were all common and favored topics. "No theme in the public school textbooks," wrote the historian Ruth Elson, "is more universal than anti-Catholicism."¹¹³ Elson went on to say:

. . . the United States is a Protestant nation with a divinely appointed mission. As the Chosen People its inhabitants have a special motive for piety, and concomitantly they have a special motive for patriotism. American nationalism and religion are thoroughly interwoven; love of the American nation is a correlative of love of God.¹¹⁴

Elson concluded that a child exposed to the indoctrination of these schoolbooks would form the conclusion that America should not be thought of as a melting pot and that therefore unrestricted immigration was undesirable.¹¹⁵

Another issue that arose out of the school controversy, which caused acrimony between Catholics and Protestants, was the political aggressiveness of the Catholic clergy. Specifically, they demanded action by public decision makers in support of their aims. Bible reading, devotional ceremonies, and hiring practices were matters to be

¹¹³ Ruth M. Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) p. 53.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 62.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 69-70.

resolved locally, so petitions signed by thousands of Catholic laymen began to flood into state legislatures, school boards, and city councils. The Catholic petition campaigns were not directed exclusively at any single level of government and they were usually confined to places in which Catholics composed a large segment of the electorate. For example, in 1874 the Board of directors of Boston's penal and charitable institutions authorized the celebration of Sunday Mass for Catholic inmates. Also in 1875, Rochester's Board of Education prohibited all religious exercises in the city's public schools.¹¹⁶

When Catholic pressure group activity was reinforced by a massive number of votes, public decision makers tended to respond favorably to the petitions, although even then the response typically was slow and only partial. Their limited success did not escape the ever-watchful eyes of the evangelicals, however. As Catholics continued to press their claims during the 1870s and 1880s, the evangelicals mobilized to present their own petitions and to defeat pro-Catholic decision makers. They also directed their own pressure group activity at the state level to overturn the pro-Catholic decisions that had been made, or were likely to be made, in the cities and towns. This activity was an attempt to counter Catholic pressure group activity at the state level. The evangelical's political allies, specifically the Republican Party, opposed Catholic proposals and supported the antiaid amendments.¹¹⁷ The party's most visible spokesman, President U.S. Grant announced his position in September 1875 by stating, "Encourage free schools, and

¹¹⁶ Robert H. Lord; John E. Sexton; and Edward T. Harrington, History of the Archdiocese of Boston. 3 Vols., (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944) p. 71-72.

¹¹⁷ Charles B. Kinney Jr. Church and State: The Struggle for Separation in New Hampshire, 1630-1900 (Teacher's College, Columbia University: New York, 1955) p. 137-138

resolve that not one dollar appropriated for their support shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian schools.”¹¹⁸

In 1878, the evangelicals’ ally, *Harper’s Weekly*, in reviewing the election of a new Pope, stated that this event was a matter of importance as the Roman Catholic priesthood in America had already placed themselves in opposition to nearly all the principles of republican governments. They opposed public instruction unless controlled by priest and nun. This it was suggested, and was described as an attempt to create despotism in the midst of a republic. The article also stated that the Catholic Church abhorred “free schools, knowledge, progress, and republicanism.” Japan had thrown open its ports, and China had yielded to some traits of Western civilization, but the Roman priesthood was said to “have none of it.”¹¹⁹

John Jay, grandson of the Founder, in a discourse on public and parochial schools in New York, wrote that parochial schools were taught chiefly by foreigners or by those whose habits, sympathies, and connections were un-American. The necessity of foreign teachers was explained by the desires of the founders of such schools to preserve not only orthodoxy but also the foreignism associated with them. Jay wrote:

Roman Catholicism and modern civilization stand apart as the representatives of two distinct epochs in the world’s history; not only are they unlike, they are absolutely antagonistic and irreconcilable...what is life to one is death to the other.¹²⁰

Harper’s Weekly went on to sum up the attitude of American Protestants toward the public schools and their struggles with an immigrant religion by stating:

The coming of a foreign corporate body, bent on warring against a fundamental American institution, was a piece of effrontery unparalleled in modern history. The

¹¹⁸ *Appleton’s Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1875, p. 744.

¹¹⁹ “A New Pope,” *Harper’s Weekly*. March 2, 1878, p.170.

¹²⁰ John Jay, “Public and Parochial Schools,” *Denominational Schools*, (Syracuse, New York, 1889) p. 61.

sacred truth of all republicans was expressed in the words: The public school is just as fundamental an institution as manhood suffrage or trial by jury.¹²¹

¹²¹ “The Battle for the Control of the Public Schools,” *Harper’s Weekly*, February 7, 1880, p.90-91.

CHAPTER 3
POLITICS

To many native Protestants, it seemed that Catholics, controlled as they were by a foreign monarch, waged open war on hallowed institutions and practices. Catholics demanded an end to Bible reading in the public schools. Worse yet, in states such as Maryland, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, they initiated legislative efforts to secure public money for the support of the parochial schools in which their “foreign” doctrines were taught.¹²² Nor did the Protestants see this merely as some vague or transitory peril. Catholics had “been taught to idolize the Pope of Rome as incarnate God...and [had been] trained in the unrepublican habit of passive obedience and non-resistance to a foreign *Hierarch* who claims the right to think for them.”¹²³ That Catholics were not free to think for themselves – not free to do right – but were ruled by the “despotic power” of “the Romish priesthood” posed a threat to civil as well as religious liberty.¹²⁴ That threat was perceived all the more clearly as a result of the political activity of Catholic voters. Chief among these activities was their support, especially that of the highly visible and assertive Irish, for the Democracy.

As early as the 1830s, some evangelical spokesmen had called for the creation of a Christian party to oppose the Catholics. In the 1850s, due to enormous Catholic immigration, large numbers of native Protestants became members of the Know-Nothing party making the suggestion a reality. Simultaneously, there was also a revulsion against the “Spirit of the Party,” against the structured divisiveness of a political party, and

¹²² Harold M. Helfman, The Cincinnati Bible War, 1869-1870, (Ohio State Archaeological Society: Cincinnati: 1951) p.369

¹²³ George Robertson, The American Party: Its Principles, Its Objects, and its Hopes (Frankfort, Ky.: 1855) p.2

¹²⁴ Proceedings of the Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1853, p.42

against the ethos of loyalty to its norms. In this context, the “anti” theme exhibited a positive side. Salvation for man, and for society, was possible only through an act of free will; whatever restrained man’s liberty jeopardized his, and society’s, salvation. Moreover, God commanded that the “saved” exalt his glory and work for the salvation of others. To break the chains that bound the free will of others – whether the bondage of the black man to his white owner or of the immigrant to the pope or any man to Demon Rum or to the “Spirit of the Party” – was nothing less than God’s dictate.¹²⁵

It was not a single-principled party that emerged from this convergence of streams, but rather a broad loosely structured popular front coalition that can best be designated as an anti-Democratic grouping. Between 1856 and 1860, the popular front began to develop into a political party by pragmatically toning down antipopery and identifying “Catholicism with ‘party,’ Democracy, and slavocracy.” And as they resisted Protestant antipopery, Catholic voter groups of all ethnic backgrounds and across all status levels cohered solidly into the ranks of the Democracy.^{126 127}

As officeholders, voters, and lobbyists, evangelical Protestants shaped the tone and character of the Republican Party. Their religious values prized above all free will, the “right to do right.” They accepted Republicanism, not as a party, but as an antiparty crusade for righteousness.¹²⁸ At the grass roots level, party organizers worked to shape a

¹²⁵ *Minutes of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1854*, p. 18-19

¹²⁶ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1971) p. 140

¹²⁷ Beginning in the mid-1840s, vast numbers of German and Irish immigrants, a large proportion of them Catholic, had come to the United States, and this influx was growing steadily. As more and more of these newcomers became citizens, they began to make their impact felt in politics. Repelled by the nativist wing of the Whig party, immigrants – and especially the Catholics – decisively favored the Democratic Party. William P. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party: 1852-1856*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 1987), p. 21

¹²⁸ Mildred Thorne, *The Liberal Republican Party in Iowa, 1872* (The State Historical Society of Iowa: Ames, 1952) p. 131

“Protestant Party” by merging patriotism with a continuing and accelerating attack on the Pope and his American coreligionists.

The transition from antiparty to party as a positive referent came about because the evangelicals saw that using the compulsive power of the federal government to purge their society of sin was merely the natural consequence of “the divinity of our civil mission.” The progression from conversion to social responsibility to legal coercion of the unregenerate was a divinely dictated one for the evangelicals and they did not fail to be aggressive against what they perceived as the major sins of the day. Chief among them were Sabbath breaking, demon rum, and popery – all connected to the immigrants.¹²⁹ They perceived too, the role that Catholic voters played in blocking attainment of their cherished political goals.

Catholic immigration also created another danger that the evangelicals perceived as the growing aggressiveness and political power of popery - Catholic voting power. In the wake of John Fremont’s defeat in 1856, coupled with the continuing loyalty of many immigrants to the Democratic Party, the Republican press began to issue scathing denunciations of the foreign-born Catholics. The intensity with which Republicans expressed such criticism confirmed the continuing power of religious nativism among party members. Irish Catholics were the target for particular abuse and insult. The Irish “pour out on election day in herds and droves, no creature thinking for himself, but like sheep following their leader, away they go pell mell together, just as their own may direct”¹³⁰ The *New York Courier and Enquirer* attributed Fremont’s defeat to “Irish bog-

¹²⁹ *Minutes of the Maine Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869*, p. 10

¹³⁰ *Buffalo Morning Express*, November 13, 1856

trotters, with necks yet raw with a foreign priestly yoke.”¹³¹ Even before the Civil War, some Catholics had been nominated and elected to office in areas where they comprised a large element of the electorate. The Republicans lost badly in the New York State elections in 1855, to both the Know-Nothings, which showed the power of nativism in the state and to the Democrats because of the party’s weakness among immigrant voters. While the Republicans did well among native-born voters, they had almost no strength among the Germans and the Irish. The liquor issue, which the party could not avoid (because of the power of the evangelicals within the party), hurt it with foreign-born voters. As an example, the Democrats carried Buffalo, which had previously contained a decisive Whig Majority, thanks in part to solid support from immigrants, who, according to one paper, “gave an emphatic verdict against the prohibitory liquor law.”¹³²

One consequence of the 1855 defeats was a surge of anti-Catholicism in several important Republican newspapers. In Buffalo, *the Express*, a leading journal in Western New York State, charged that Catholics voted “en masse” for the Democrats, “and the impression has obtained generally that they did so under instructions from their Priesthood.” The Catholic Church was nothing short of “a political institution” and “an auxiliary of the Democratic party.”¹³³

After Fremont’s defeat, the basic problem confronting Republicans was to gain support of the bulk of the Know-Nothings without alienating the foreign-born. Any emphasis on antiforeignism promised to drive immigrant voters more solidly into the arms of the Democratic Party. The Republican National Party platforms in 1860 and

¹³¹ New York *Courier and Enquirer*, November 20, 1856

¹³² Albany *Evening Journal*, November 6, 1855

¹³³ Buffalo *Express*, November 7, 1855

again in 1864 supported this idea.¹³⁴ Anti-Catholicism, on the other hand, entailed little political risk, since party leaders had concluded that the Catholic vote solidly and hopelessly Democratic. Moreover hostility to the Catholic Church was one principle on which both religious nativists and Protestant immigrants could unite; indeed in many areas Protestant immigrants had cooperated with the Know-Nothings when the latter emphasized anti-Catholicism as distinct from anteforeignism. When the Know-Nothings were openly anti-immigrant, naturalized Protestant voters bitterly opposed them.¹³⁵ In the same spirit an Illinois Republican editor, noting that German Protestant immigrants had brought a strong animosity toward Catholicism with them to this country, advocated that anti-Catholic pamphlets be circulated among them in order to “stir up their prejudices anew.” The result, he predicted, would be that “we shall have every man of them vote the Republican ticket.”¹³⁶

No immigrant group came in for greater abuse among Republicans than Irish Catholics. The *Cleveland Leader* denounced them as “sots and bums” who lived in “rotten nests of filth” and voted the Democratic ticket. In other editorials it referred to the Irish as “dupes of Popery” and “cattle” who blindly supported the Democratic Party. At

¹³⁴ *The 1860 Republican Party Platform Clause #14* “That the Republican party is opposed to any change in our naturalization laws or any state legislation by which the rights of citizens hitherto accorded to immigrants from foreign lands shall be abridged or impaired; and in favor of giving a full and efficient protection to the rights of all classes of citizens, whether native or naturalized, both at home and abroad.

The 1864 Republican Party Platform Clause #8, Resolved, That foreign immigration, which in the past has added so much to the wealth, development of resources and increase of power to the nation, the asylum of the oppressed of all nations, should be fostered and encouraged by a liberal and just policy.

¹³⁵ William E. Gienapp, “Nativism and the Creation of a Republican Majority in the North before the Civil War.” *The Journal Of American History*, Vol.72, No.3. (Dec., 1985) p.543

¹³⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* also editorialized that: “Republicanism has nothing to hope from the Catholic vote. There is not a Catholic in Chicago who does not hate it; there is not one who does not set it down as a heresy.” What was true in Chicago, it continued, was true almost everywhere. *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 8, 1856.

the same time, Republican journals often went out of their way to praise Protestant immigrants and to distinguish Germans in particular from Irish Catholics.¹³⁷

The Party's 1856 national platform managed to balance an appeal to Americans and the foreign-born in a single clause by promising to protect "liberty of conscience" and the "equality of rights among citizens." Liberty of conscience was a time-honored religious nativist phrase that referred to the right of individuals to interpret Scriptures for themselves and as such carried distinct anti-Catholic connotations.¹³⁸

Further strengthening the animosity toward the Catholic Church was the growing affinity of evangelical Protestants for the Republican cause. Northern Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists evidenced a common hatred of Catholicism and a strong opposition to drink. Their presence in the Republican Party helped to give it puritanical overtones, and Democrats labored hard to portray Republicans as a group of moral busybodies who had sought to regulate other people's private lives. A New England paper emphasized the relationship of these issues for many voters when in a variation of the phrase that would reverberate throughout postwar politics; it charged that the Democratic Party was the champion of "Rum, Romanism, and Slavery."¹³⁹

In accounting for John Fremont's showing in 1856, the Democrats placed greater emphasis on the influence of the Protestant clergy than any other cause. These "political parsons" as the Democrats derided them, entered the presidential campaign with great enthusiasm. In fact, Henry Ward Beecher, the most famous Protestant minister in

¹³⁷ Thomas J. Kremm, "Cleveland and the First Lincoln Election: The Ethnic Response to Nativism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 8 (Summer, 1977), p. 83-85

¹³⁸ Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (W.W. Norton & Co., New York: 1983) p. 178-180

¹³⁹ *Hartford Courant*, March 31, 1856

America, at the time, stumped actively for the party's ticket under the direction of the Republican national committee. Aware of the clergy's influence with some voters, Republicans posed as the defenders of the pulpit's involvement in politics (while simultaneously condemning the Catholic clergy for allegedly directing their flock to vote Democratic.).¹⁴⁰

The clergy's active participation helped give the Fremont campaign its strident moral tone. "The present political contest is a religious movement, a revival of religion, a great awakening to be classed among the moral reformations of the world" asserted the *New York Observer*. However the election turned out, rejoiced one minister as the campaign ended, "the religious feeling throughout the free states is thoroughly aroused, I trust never to sleep again."¹⁴¹ Just before the election, the *New York Independent*, the most influential religious journal of the time, exhorted its readers: "Remember it is for Christ, for the nation, and for the world that you vote at this election! Vote as you pray! Pray as you vote!"¹⁴²

The Republican Party and the evangelical Protestants were even closer by the 1864 election. The editor of the *Elmira Advertiser* the week before the election observed, "If McClellan is elected he must breast and overcome almost the entire ecclesiastical and ministerial force of the land.... These are the men, together with those who are found in the house of God on the Sabbath and who countenance the spiritual gatherings of the week time."¹⁴³ As the election results began to come in, the *New York Express* ascribed

¹⁴⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 19, 1856

¹⁴¹ *New York Observer*, October 30, 1856

¹⁴² *New York Independent*, October 16, 1856

¹⁴³ *Elmira Advertiser*, October 31, 1864

the Republican victory in Maine to the electioneering of the clergy on Sunday and declared Maine “hopelessly priest ridden.”¹⁴⁴

The Republicans carried the election of 1864 because the tide of the military conflict had turned in favor of the North. The soldiers’ votes in certain states were crucial. Lincoln carried the vote of the soldiers by a large majority, and the chaplains were probably as influential as the clergy back home. The Republicans carried almost all of the evangelical votes. The great majority of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Quaker, and pietist votes went for Lincoln.¹⁴⁵

This opposition to drink became even stronger when it became involved with politics. In 1860 when the Republicans swept the North, New York City voted staunchly Democratic. Although Republicans polled higher percentages in rural America (due to the strength of the mainly Protestant populations), they drew well in other large, northern cities. Lincoln carried Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia. He even won in the slave state of Missouri, a plurality in St. Louis. By contrast, he lost New York by nearly two-to-one.¹⁴⁶ The immigrants, with the liquor interest, formed an electoral majority. The Whig-Republican advocacy of prohibition had guaranteed that the liquor-drinking natives combined with the Germans would support the Democrats, while the rise of the saloon-based ward leaders had insured that the Irish would dominate the Democratic Party. The result was that the New York City Democracy won even larger victories at a time when the party’s national strength ebbed. Thus did the prohibition

¹⁴⁴ *Auburn Advertiser*, Sept. 20, 1864 citing the *New York Express*

¹⁴⁵ Victor B. Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement 1860-1870*, (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990) p. 88-89

¹⁴⁶ *Boston Transcript*, Nov., 7, 1860

issue and saloon politics transform the New York City Democrats into a pro-liquor, pro-immigrant institution.¹⁴⁷

By the early 1870s, evangelical groups had complained that New York City was “no longer ruled by Americans, but by subjects of a foreign power” and had called Roman Catholicism, “the established religion” of that city.¹⁴⁸ Worse, in the early 1880s, Catholics were elected to the mayoralties of major cities. New York’s first Catholic mayor, William Grace was elected in 1880, and Boston’s John F. Fitzgerald in 1884. That “the Catholics have taken the city of New York” – and Boston, Lawrence and Lowell – seemed a terrifying portent for the future, for Catholics in positions of executive power were still servants of the pope and always “ready to do priestly bidding.” In the cities that they controlled, the Irish Catholics would surely create a “politico-ecclesiastical despotism” in which Protestants would be stripped of their liberty of conscience and freedom of worship.^{149 150}

Prominent evangelical spokesmen joined other Americans in the common fear that the growing political power of the immigrant might well destroy municipal government. Daniel C. Potter, for many years pastor of the influential Sixth Street Baptist Church in New York City, warned his parishioners that the buying and selling of immigrant votes would corrupt elections, legislatures, and courts of justice. Whenever a given ethnic group banded together in a large city, he advised, its members become

¹⁴⁷ W.J. Rorabaugh, “Rising Democratic Spirits: Immigrants, Temperance, and Tammany Hall,” *Civil War History*, 22(2) 1976, P.157

¹⁴⁸ *Minutes of the Session of the New Hampshire Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1871*, p.24

¹⁴⁹ Proceedings of the Annual Baptist Autumnal Conference for the Discussion of Current Questions, 1888, p. 107

¹⁵⁰ In addition to these Irish mayors, the following were also elected to mayoral offices during this period: John Farley (Cleveland), John Campbell (Philadelphia), William F. Sheehan (Buffalo), Timothy (“Father Tim”) O’Brien (Milwaukee), Christopher A. Buckley (San Francisco), Michael (“Hinky Dink”) Kenna (Chicago), and Hugh McLaughlin (Brooklyn).

involved in public affairs under the banner of their nationality. The Manhattan clergyman shared a widespread feeling that universal suffrage subjected America to a terrific strain because it allowed the “larger immoral class” of foreigners to play a major role in politics.¹⁵¹

More than the fact that it was the Catholics that were taking over political control of the Northeastern cities, was the fact that these Catholics were Irish immigrants and the offspring of Irish immigrants. The Irish had turned against the Protestant ruling class as far back as the 1790s, when the Federalists sided with their archenemy, England, in its war with France. The Irish joined Jefferson’s coalition, where all blocs were welcome.

The Irish remained unwaveringly Democratic even during the antislavery crusade, though not out of sympathy for slavery as much out of suspicion of the motives of the nativist Protestant crusaders. “The only difference between the Negro slave of the South and the white slave of the North,” said Congressman Michael Walsh of New York, one of the first Irish politicians to succeed on the national level, “is that one has a master without asking for him and the other has to beg for the privilege of becoming a slave...The one is the slave of an individual; the other the slave of an inexorable class.”¹⁵² It was resentment such as Walsh expressed that kept the Irish linked to the Democratic Party. Although the Irish fought well for the union during the Civil War, and despite the glory with which the Republicans emerged from the war, there is no sign that the Irish ever contemplated giving up their allegiance to the Democrats.

¹⁵¹ A.K. Potter, “The Duty of the Hour for American Baptists,” *Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, II (July, 1880), Supplement.

¹⁵² Quoted by Milton Viorst, *Fall From Grace: The Republican Party and the Puritan Ethic*, (Simon and Schuster, New York: 1971), p.120

To the nativist Protestant, this allegiance was costly. In the skills of democratic politics, the manipulation of people and power to achieve personal and social objectives, the Irishman was the nativist's superior. Unlike the evangelicals, he did not think of politics as something of a necessary evil. It was not, as it was for the evangelicals, a quest for virtue or a compromise between the demands of body and soul. To the Irishman, politics was an instrument of collective action. Though it was the evangelical who rendered homage to the separation of Church and State, it was the Irishman for whom politics, as a practical matter, was exclusively Caesar's domain, entirely distinct from that of God. The Irishman looked upon democratic politics as an exciting game, worthy of any man's full time and talent and one at which he proved himself remarkably adept.

The Irishman who took up politics, unlike his evangelical counterpart, made no claim to special righteousness. He did not pretend that he was making a sacrifice for public service. He did not deny that politics presented excellent prospects for a career, with substantial rewards in both money and status. The Irish politician made himself an institution in response to the needs of his community. He had a job to perform, and whatever his shortcomings in terms of conventional evangelical morality, as an institution, he served the community's needs. As some one once said, the political boss had only seven principles, five loaves and two fishes. Politics was an entrepreneurial vocation like any other business. Banfield and Wilson have written: "A political machine is a business organization in a particular field of business – getting votes and winning elections. As a Chicago machine boss once said... it is 'just like any sales organization trying to sell its product.' The politician's aim was and is to invest his supply of capital – jobs, favors, and the like – as to earn a profit, some of which he will take as "income" and

the rest reinvest in quest of larger returns. In other words, the immigrant political leader took the one vocation open to him, politics, and made it into as close an approximation as he could of the more valued business callings in the society, from which he was effectively barred. He acted out the American success story in the only way open to him.¹⁵³

This was the case because economically, most occupational doors that did not lead to manual labor were closed to the Irish and immigrants that arrived later and were only gradually pried open after much time had passed and many intergroup enmities (e.g., Catholic vs. Protestant) had been engendered. Party organizations represented one of the few career ladders available to the immigrant. Here status could be achieved when few other routes were open.

It was the superb irony of machine politics that the boss had no better ally in solidifying immigrant support than his traditional enemy, the evangelical reformer. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the immigrant and religion were the volcanic issues of the day. Whereas the reformer, especially the Protestant, middle and upper class variety, regarded the newcomer with contempt as well as fear that he and his culture would pollute the “native” stock and pervert the ideals of American democracy, the boss supported the immigrants’ culture and traditions, but also exploited his old-world hostilities and new-world frustrations.

To the evangelical reformer, the urban problems resulted largely from an unholy marriage between the boss and the immigrant. To the evangelical, the immigrant was a moral cripple. “These newcomers,” said one high-minded reformer, “were ignorant,

¹⁵³ Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson, *City Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard and M.I.T Presses, 1963) p. 115

clannish and easily controlled. Their moral sense had been blunted by ages of degradation.” It was a head-on collision between two different political styles. Politics to many evangelical reformers was the Protestant ethic preached and practiced. The public good must be put before personal welfare. Politics must reflect correct business habits: efficiency and low costs; above all, the politician must be a man of unblemished integrity and committed to high moral principles. Whereas to the immigrant, politics meant not some misty goal of elegant principles, but something that that would specifically advance his welfare. When an evangelical reformer ventured into the immigrant slums to preach temperance, Sabbatarianism, civic responsibility, the evils of patronage, the necessity of justice, and the logic of practicing economics, the newcomer’s reaction was one of suspicion and fear. The call for efficiency and the end of patronage might mean the end of his job. Economy might scotch the building of a school for his child. To him civic responsibility was an understanding of his plight, justice was a playground for the children, or something to eat when times were bad; and temperance reform, “got between the people and its beer!”¹⁵⁴

If the Irish politician did not invent the urban political machine, he brought it to a level that has not been surpassed. The machine was the politician’s instrument for acquiring and perpetuating power. But had it not served its constituency well, it would have never survived. The evangelical has traditionally loathed the machine. It is the antithesis of everything he regards as meritorious. It flourished, however because it performed a useful social function, one in which the evangelical politician was himself unwilling to engage.

¹⁵⁴ Alexander B. Callow Jr., The City Boss in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) p. 93-94

When the evangelical reformer called for honest and efficient administration to lower the costs of government, he was talking a language that the immigrant in the slums failed to understand. Honesty in politics was, after all, a Puritan virtue, not a practical consideration. It had nothing to do with the unemployed or the overworked, the hungry or the cold, the grim conditions of life in the ghetto. The immigrant knew the Protestant nativist as his exploiter, distant and pious and cold. The machine, whatever its faults, was his ally. At the local level, in particular, the Irish had none of the characteristically Protestant inclination towards moralizing and crusading in politics. The Irish flavor was pragmatic rather than idealistic. The Irish responded in terms of personal interest, of opportunities to be gained, of politicians who would deliver bread-and-butter benefits. Let the well-established Protestants mount moral crusades; the outsider Irish Catholics concentrated on winning elections, this separated them from the Protestants psychologically as well as politically. The Protestants deigned to dabble in politics with a *noblesse oblige*, holding political office at arms length, the Irish jumped into the political arena. As Mr. Dooley remarked about Thanksgiving, “’Twas founded by th’ Puritans to give thanks f’r bein’ preserved f’r th’ Indyans, an’...we keep it to give thanks we are preserved fr’ m the Puritans.’ To the services that the machine rendered, the immigrant responded with his gratitude and with his votes.¹⁵⁵

While the Germans immigrated to the United States at the same time and in approximately the same numbers as the Irish (the late 1840s), they did not have the same interest in politics, preferring to succeed economically, also while the Irish settled primarily in the cities, a large proportion of the Germans continued West after reaching America and eventually procured farms in the Midwest.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 122-123

As they succeeded in politics, the Irish occupied the role of go-between for newer immigrants. They were not distant models. It was the Irish whom the new immigrant groups encountered as the officials at Ellis Island, as the policeman, fireman, city workers, precinct captains, ward chieftains, and machine bosses. To late nineteenth century immigrants, the Irish were the “Americans.” While the Protestants still had major differences with the Irish immigrants and their descendents over religion, schools, and politics, on a local level, “to a large extent Protestant America abandoned to the Irish the task of politicking, policing, and dealing with the newcomers.”¹⁵⁶

The Irish in Boston politics is an example of the transition of municipal power from the Yankee¹⁵⁷ to the immigrant Irish. America, as most Protestant New Englanders understood it was clearly under assault in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Immigration trends combined with the ugliness of industrialization produced a mood of despair and depression. This was translated into fear of the Irish Catholic challenge, which “in race conscious America, meant only barely less than a challenge to civilization itself.”¹⁵⁸ Moorfield Storey, a Mugwump¹⁵⁹ leader and prominent Boston attorney, worried about the survival of “free government.” In an essay entitled *Politics as a Duty and as a Career*, published in 1889, he wrote:

A republic cannot stand if it becomes an oligarchy of “bosses”...The immigration of every year adds to the mass of poverty and ignorance in our country...[The immigrants are unfit] to take part in our political contests, yet in a few years they become citizens and their votes in the ballot box count as much as our own.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ William V. Shannon, *The American Irish* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 136

¹⁵⁷ Yankee is a term used to refer to an ethnic group whose origins are predominately Anglo-Saxon and Protestant and whose heritage lies generally in the colonial past. I am also use it interchangeably with the term Brahmin.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Adams, *Conservation in a Progressive Era: Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 133

¹⁵⁹ A Mugwump is a Republican political activist who supported the Democrats because of Republican political corruption.

¹⁶⁰ Moorfield Storey, *Politics as a Duty and as a Career*, p.-4-5

As an indication of the strength of the machine bosses, the *Methodist Quarterly Review* published an article in its July 1877 issue comparing the total number of Methodists to the number of members of the other Protestant sects in the fourteen largest cities in the United States at that time. The cities were: New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, St. Louis, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, New Orleans, San Francisco, Buffalo, Washington, D.C., Newark, and Louisville. The article showed that Methodism had the largest number of communicants in nine of the fourteen cities and had more total adherents than the next largest group, the Presbyterians. The conclusion that the article reached was that the total number of Protestants in these cities was unlikely to increase because thirty-five per cent of the total population of the same cities was foreign born. An examination of the administrations of the fourteen cities in 1877 reveals that other reasons for the lack of growth in the Protestant religions in addition to the percentage of foreign born were: nine of the cities were controlled by machines, nine of either the mayors or bosses were democrats (the majority of the evangelical Protestants were Republican), eleven of the mayors or bosses were Catholics, and of the nationalities of the mayors or bosses, there was one German, two Jews, and eleven Irish

With the loss of political control of the cities, the Protestants continued the battle with the Catholic immigrants in two different ways. When the Irish in Boston were able to command a majority about 1890, the native Protestants thereafter attempted to run the city from the state house. Boston's police commissioner was appointed by the governor and so was the licensing board; a finance commission, also appointed by the governor, was set to make continuing investigations of the city's affairs and was given the power of subpoena. Much of the interference of the legislatures in the affairs of other large cities at

this time and afterward reflected the same cleavage between the outnumbered native Protestants and what Mayor James Curley of Boston used to call “newer races.” So the Protestants with their statehouse control did not lose complete political control to the immigrants.

The other area to which the old elite Protestants moved was to a relatively new set of institutions, the community service organizations. The local hospital, Red Cross chapter, Community Chest, and Family Welfare Society now became their public activities, rather than local public office. In this way, the native middle-class Protestant retired to a sphere in which they could conduct public affairs in the manner their culture prescribed, and since the boards of these organizations were self-perpetuating; they could not be crashed by outsiders.¹⁶¹

The most important of these organizations in New York City was the Citizen’s Association. Formed in 1863, its goal was “to organize the highest intelligence of society represented by the better classes of merchants, manufacturers, capitalists, bankers, and others (all Protestant) to oppose corruption (Tammany Hall) and promote reform and progress in all matters that interest the citizen.”¹⁶² Arguing that a clique of professional politicians had subverted republican government, they called the Tweed Ring’s domination of local politics a “[f]oul and Monstrous Conspiracy.”¹⁶³ The city had to be

¹⁶¹ Edward C. Banfield & James Q. Wilson, *City Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966) p. 39-40

¹⁶² Citizen’s Association of New-York, *Report of the Citizens’ Association of New York, New York, December 1, 1868* (New York: Published by the Citizens’ Association, 1868) p.1

¹⁶³ Citizen’s Association of New-York, *Items of Abuse in the Government of the City of New-York, Tax-Payers, Citizens, Read! Read!, The First and Highest Duty of Every State is to Protect the Homes and Rights of All its Citizens* (New York: Citizens’ Association of New-York, 1866), p.3

rescued from the “dregs of Europe,” from the “rascality of the old world” that flowed into it.”¹⁶⁴

Although the analysis of the situation by the Citizens’ Association was couched in a nativist mold that feared the subversion of the Republic from the outside, the conclusions they drew did not suggest a limitation of immigration at this time (1871). Indeed the opinion of the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* that immigration was “the most fruitful source...of the rapid material progress of the country” was widely shared.¹⁶⁵ This idea that a limitation of political rights was not to be based on nativity, but rather on economic status was continued into the 1880s by the Protestant elite, the positive assessment of immigration, however, shifted during the decade. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, for example still asserted in 1882 “every immigrant...adds to the wealth-producing capacity of the nation,” but by 1887 saw “immigration as far more potent for evil than for good. “¹⁶⁶Immigrants allegedly brought anarchism, socialism, and “almost every danger to the organization of society peculiar to the present time”¹⁶⁷ By 1889; the journal even supported restrictions on immigration. Because of “the race changes” of immigrants, they now saw them as “vicious, degraded, ignorant, and amenable neither to law nor reason, without a code of morals, knowing nothing about the theory of our government, and in fact abhorring all government.”¹⁶⁸ Because the majority of American workers were born overseas, the New York Protestant elite combined their fears of Catholic and Jews with their anxiety about trade unions and radicalism.

¹⁶⁴ Citizens’ Association of New-York, *Report of the Executive Council*, 1866, p.21

¹⁶⁵ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, March 25, 1871, p.353

¹⁶⁶ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, August 19, 1882, p.35. Ibid. May 28, 1887, p. 669

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p.669

¹⁶⁸ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, July 30, 1892, p. 55

Another cause that the Protestant elite became involved in after its beginnings at Seneca Falls in Western New York in 1848 was women's suffrage that was closely linked with the Protestant antislavery and temperance crusades. As the movement grew, it became embedded in the Republican Party, guardian of the conventions that the ruling class considered basic to the preservation of the status quo.

Ultimately, the woman suffrage cause became openly a campaign against the outsider, in this case, the immigrant. Susan B. Anthony, the most celebrated of the suffragettes confessed her disgust that:

...the dangerous experiment has been made of enfranchising the vast proportion of crime, intemperance, immorality, and dishonesty, and barring absolutely from the suffrage the great proportion of temperance, morality, religion and conscientiousness; that, in other words, the worst element have been put into the ballot box and the best elements kept out. This fatal mistake is even now beginning to dawn upon the minds of those who have cherished an ideal of the grandeur of the republic, and they dimly see that in woman lies the highest promise of fulfillment. Those who fear the foreign vote will learn eventually that there are more American born women in the United States than foreign-born men and women; and those who dread the ignorant vote will study the statistics and see that the percentage of illiteracy is much smaller among women than among men.¹⁶⁹

While the Catholic political influence was basically local, it could have national implications. The Catholic issue in American politics in the Gilded Age grew out of the traditional anti-Catholicism that existed in the United States. This assumed that Catholics could not be trusted in public office at the national level, since they owed their allegiance first to Rome, and because they sought to destroy the Republic by abolishing: freedom of speech freedom of the press and by abolishing religious toleration Also, as Catholics grew in numbers and political strength after the Civil War due to immigration, and as the importance of rural areas, strongholds of Protestantism, began to decline, these rural

¹⁶⁹ Quoted by Milton Viorst, *Fall From Grace*, p. 129

elements came to look upon Catholics as representing the most degrading features of urban life – slums, saloons, gambling houses, and corrupt political machines.¹⁷⁰

During the campaign of 1872, *Harper's Weekly*, the Protestant Republican magazine asserted that the Catholic Church in America was “loud in its denunciation of American civilization,” that it furnished “three-fourths of the criminals and paupers who prey upon the Protestant community,” that it never ceased its “attacks upon the principles of freedom,” and that “its great mass of ignorant voters have been the chief source of our political ills.”¹⁷¹ *Harper's* also declared that “Romish priests” and “Romish bishops” had become partisans of Horace Greeley, “the candidate of disunion and religious bigotry,” also that the election of Greeley would be fatal because he was “a noted opponent of the Bible and a firm friend of Rome”¹⁷² *Harper's* pictured Greeley as the accomplice of the “Jesuit faction” which “would rejoice to tear the vitals of America freedom, and rend the beast that had offended it shelter.”¹⁷³ It charged that the Jesuits had allied themselves with the Ku Klux Klan and Tammany Hall, and it called upon “every sincere Protestant to labor ceaselessly to defeat the schemes of the Jesuits, and drive their candidate back to a merited obscurity.”¹⁷⁴

In 1876, the Republicans attempted to exploit the alleged Democratic-Catholic alliance by issuing several pamphlets which charged the Catholic Church in America with forcing her communicants to vote Democratic in order to make way for a change in our form of government. The pamphlets warned that the United States would be in

¹⁷⁰ Vincent P. DeSantis, “Catholicism and Presidential Elections, 1865-1900”, *Mid-America*, Vol. 42, Number 2, April, 1960, p.67

¹⁷¹ *Harper's Weekly*, September 14, 1872, p.18

¹⁷² *Ibid.* p. 19

¹⁷³ *Harper's Weekly*, October 12, 1872, p. 31

¹⁷⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, October 26, 1872, p. 12

danger “if the Ultramontane element of the Church, through the success of the Democracy, should obtain control of our national affairs.”¹⁷⁵

Catholicism was a side issue in the national campaign of 1880,¹⁷⁶ although the New York *Herald Tribune* proclaimed that this was a Protestant country and we were a Protestant people, and the San Francisco *Argonaut* maintained that “Where the Protestant Church and the non-sectarian schoolhouse cast their shadows, wherever temperance, intelligence, and patriotism exist, there the Republican Party has triumphed.”¹⁷⁷

On October 29, 1884, a Protestant clergyman named Samuel D. Burchard established a landmark in the history of ethnic voting in America. He was greeting Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine on the steps of New York’s Fifth Avenue Hotel, on behalf of a delegation of Protestant clergymen:

We are your friends, Mr. Blaine, and not withstanding the calumnies that have been urged in the papers against you, we stand by your side. We expect to vote for you next Tuesday.... We are Republicans, and don’t propose to leave our party, and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been RUM, ROMANISM, AND REBELLION. We are loyal to our flag; we are loyal to you.¹⁷⁸

With the Irish vote – and its effect on a very close race – hanging in the balance, Blaine wound up his campaign in New York. He had every reason to be hopeful, since Irish voters were swinging his way and even Tammany Democrats were lukewarm to Cleveland (who was denounced as pro-British because of his free-trade policy). Then

¹⁷⁵ *Washington Chronicle*, October 15, 1876, p. 28

¹⁷⁶ Not however at the local level. This was the year in which the first Catholic mayor was elected; William R. Grace became mayor of New York City. The *New York Times* predicted that the election of a Catholic mayor would mean that the public schools would be “Romanized” by the introduction of Catholic teachers and textbooks. *New York Times*, October 30, 1880, p. 16

¹⁷⁷ John Gilmary Shea, “The Anti-Catholic Issue in the Late Election,” *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, VI (January, 1881), p. 40

¹⁷⁸ Florence E. Gibson *The Attitudes of the New York Irish Toward State and National Affairs, 1848-1892* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 390

Burchard alliterated, and on the following Sunday handbills containing his words were distributed at Catholic churches throughout the country. It worked particularly well in New York, because on election night, Cleveland carried New York State by a mere 1,149 votes out of 1.67 million cast.¹⁷⁹ In 1860, the loss of New York City, due to the votes of the Irish did not cost Lincoln the election, but now twenty-five years later, the loss of New York City, again due to the Irish immigrant may have cost Blaine the election and made Cleveland the first Democrat to become president after the Civil War. This action exacerbated the Catholic-Protestant cleavage because the Irish concentrated on winning elections, instead of using politics as an avenue to integration into the middle class. Politics enveloped the Irish, and the Irish social structure became an integral part of the process of recruiting other Irishmen into both the party and the government. As the Irish immigrant swarmed into city politics, political office was recognized as *the* career to attain, and politics became the secular extension of their essentially religious identity. Political success through the Democratic Party was also the equivalent of rising in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, in that the most admired figures among the Irish were usually those who rose to prominence in each. And, for the most part, it was the Irish who became the power-wielders in these institutions. Still, their impressive success in politics – and the Church – was also a mark of their alienation in a Protestant society whose views of the management and ends of government so strongly clashed with those of the Irish.¹⁸⁰

The native Protestant inherited from his Anglo-Saxon ancestors a political ethos very different from that which the immigrants brought with them. The ethos of the native

¹⁷⁹ Edward Wakin, Enter the Irish-American, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976) p. 105-107

¹⁸⁰ Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians, (University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, 1966) p. 8

could not mix with that of the immigrant, becoming a major reason for immigration restriction. Richard Hofstader described the difference in *The Age of Reform*:

Out of the clash between the needs of the immigrants and the sentiments of the natives there emerged two thoroughly different systems of political ethics...One, founded upon the indigenous Yankee-Protestant political traditions, and upon middle class life, assumed and demanded the constant, disinterested activity of the citizen in public affairs, argued that political life ought to be run, to a greater degree than it was, in accordance with general principles and abstract laws apart from and superior to personal needs, and expressed a common feeling that government should be in good part an effort to moralize the lives of individuals while economic life should be intimately related to the stimulation and development of individual character. The other system, founded upon the European background of the immigrants, upon their unfamiliarity with independent political action, their familiarity with hierarchy and authority, and upon the urgent needs that so often grew out of their migration, took for granted that the political life of the individual would arise out of family needs, interpreted political and civic relations chiefly in terms of personal obligations, and placed strong personal loyalties above allegiance to abstract codes of law or morals.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Richard Hofstader, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955) p. 9

CHAPTER 4
THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE¹⁸²

¹⁸² “The American Evangelical Alliance was formed to promote evangelical unity, support urban religious effort, and resist the Catholic religious dominance in the cities.” Paul Boyer, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920, (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1978) p. 329

In his book *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860*, Ray Allen Billington, makes the point that “lack of unity among the Protestants had long been recognized as their greatest weakness in the battle with Rome, both by Protestants who urged the necessity of a united front”¹⁸³ and by Catholics who took every occasion to ridicule Protestant division. “How degrading is the spectacle that Protestantism is made to present” remarked the *Freeman’s Journal*, “when its ministers are found disputing among themselves, on all subjects of hope, faith, and charity; unable to arrive at unity, except when marshaled into the ranks of Protestant Bigotry, to deliver anti-Popery lectures and to assail the only denomination that never goes out of its way to meddle with them.”¹⁸⁴ Even impartial foreign observers pointed out that the “chaotic condition of the Protestant community, divided into warring sects, increases the power of a church whose characteristic is unity.”¹⁸⁵ Criticisms such as these, particularly from the hated Catholic journals, aroused such resentment that many Protestants sought a means of uniting the hitherto divergent sects.

The first attempt in this direction was international in scope but participated in by most of the American denominations, which sent delegates to a World Convention and Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846. Those attending united in deploring the “existing divisions” in the Christian Church and made some progress in drafting articles of faith, which would be acceptable to all the denominations represented. However, they

¹⁸³ Gardiner Spring, *A Dissertation on the Rule of Faith; Delivered at Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Annual Meeting of the American Bible Society* (New York, 1844) p. 100-101

¹⁸⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, February 19, 1842

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life, II* (New York: Angell Press, 2007 (Reissued)), p. 87

soon became so involved in debating the admission of slave holding delegates that the meetings ended in confusion, and nothing was accomplished.¹⁸⁶

The next General Conference of the World Evangelical Alliance was held in New York City in 1873¹⁸⁷. The American evangelicals were confident about the outcome of their efforts in holding the first major ecumenical conference, one of worldwide proportions that the nation had ever seen. They expected to be successful in converting that large segment of the American people still outside the evangelical fold.

The New York conference had been delayed first, because of the American Civil War, secondly because of the Franco-Prussian War, and lastly because the evangelicals wished to wait until the Vatican Council of 1870 had taken place. The Congregationalist preacher Joseph P. Thompson told a special meeting of the Alliance that once the Council had finished, evangelicals would know better their responsibilities and duties to the Church of Christ. He captured contemporary evangelical opinion when he observed that:

The Pope has thrown down his Syllabus – as a challenge to modern society – denouncing a government untrammelled by the Church; denouncing a free press, civil marriage, secular education, and whatever tends to the improvement of mankind, apart from the traditions and sacraments of Rome; and it is alleged, that he has manipulated the composition of the council, with a view to secure its sanction to the usurpations that he has so steadily pressed in the interest of Papal autocracy and infallibility.¹⁸⁸

Tensions between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism existed in American culture from its colonial beginnings and dated back to the sixteenth century Reformation. By the mid nineteenth century, heavy immigration of the Irish and German Roman Catholics and the proliferation of Mormon (1830), Unitarian (1825), and Universalist

¹⁸⁶ *United States Catholic Magazine*, V (November, 1846)

¹⁸⁷ The American Evangelical Alliance was formed to promote evangelical unity, support urban religious effort, and to resist Catholic dominance in the cities.

¹⁸⁸ Evangelical Alliance, Document, III (1869), p.9 – Thompson was pastor of the prestigious Broadway Tabernacle Church.

(1793) churches, religious groups which diverged too far from the Protestant character of America, forced evangelicals to realize that their nation was becoming unacceptably pluralistic. Recognition of this pluralism however did not mean the denominations admitted immediately their mutual Protestant character. Such admission appeared gradually as the nineteenth century moved toward its midpoint. It arose, in good part, from the increasing doctrinal and stylistic similarity that the evangelical revivals induced in the bulk of the churches, a concomitant to the contemporary emergence of a more unified and democratic character among Americans. In effect, the Second Great Awakening and subsequent revivalism equated Protestantism with evangelicalism.

This strengthening of American Protestantism had two general effects. On the one hand it increased the number of evangelicals and thereby made Protestant cooperation more possible. On the other, it narrowed the range of acceptable pluralism thereby increasing estrangement from non-Protestant perspectives.¹⁸⁹

The response of American Protestant leaders to the swelling of the Roman Catholic fold due to immigration reflected both hostility and paternalism. Protestant spokesmen often described the Roman Catholic Church and much of its hierarchy and clergy as instruments of the devil. The Roman Catholic laity, to the contrary, were misguided beings who needed to be freed from their bonds by the Protestant gospel.

As American evangelicals prepared for the worldwide conference in 1873 in New York City, they were confident about their efforts. They expected to be successful in converting that large segment of the American people still outside the evangelical fold, thereby insuring their perspective would permeate fully American institutions.

¹⁸⁹ Charles Y. Stark & Glock, Robert, Religion and Society in Tension, (New York: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 5-6

Nevertheless, their efforts reveal a sense of urgency. One of the chief factors affecting evangelical union was the need for an evangelical front, united in defense of true religion and American Christian civilization, against Roman Catholicism and infidelity. For example, in 1868, the report of the joint Old-New School committee on reunion (of the Presbyterian Church) made it quite clear that revitalized “anti-Christian forces – Romanism, Ecclesiasticism, Rationalism, Infidelity, Materialism, and Paganism itself,” much of it considered of immigrant origin, were struggling for national ascendancy. As a result, “the welfare of the whole country, and the kingdom of our Lord in all the earth” providentially required evangelical unity.¹⁹⁰

This evangelical drive for unity was heightened during the American Civil War by the French military occupation of Mexico. The appearance on the continent of a Roman Catholic power frightened northern evangelical denominations because of their apprehension that the French presence augured massive internal subversion of American Christian and democratic institutions by Roman Catholicism and infidelity.

It was clear at the 1873 gathering of the Evangelical Alliance that external pressure was an over riding factor as the speeches bore out. Two Americans spoke on the general topic of Romanism and Protestantism, the Rev. Roswell D, Hitchcock, D.D., LL.D, of the Union Theological Seminary in New York spoke on Romanism In The Light Of History:

But why on a Protestant platform, this elaborate criticism (of Papal Infallibility, by the previous speaker)? Why this concern of ours about the doings of the Vatican Council? Why so much of our programme given up to the Roman Catholic question? Partly, no doubt, because we feel that our evangelical Protestantism is newly and doubly menaced. Infidel bugles are sounding behind us. And evangelical Protestants are not

¹⁹⁰ Presbyterian Church in the USA [New School], General Assembly, *Minutes*, 1863 (New York, 1863) p. 28-29

standing shoulder to shoulder. It would not be idle to say that we are not alarmed. But this is not the whole of it. Not Protestantism only is menaced; Christianity itself is menaced. With the battle on both sides of us, before and behind, we must be careful how we handle our weapons.¹⁹¹

The Rev. George P. Fisher of Yale College spoke on Protestantism, Romanism, and Modern Civilization, in which he pointed out the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism, and why Protestantism is superior. – “Protestantism, as compared with the opposite system, sets free and stimulates the energy, intellectual and moral, of the individual, and thus augments the forces of which civilization is the product...The spirit of Protestantism favors universal education so that the lay Christian can read and interpret the Scriptures and take part in the administration of government in the Church. Far more has been done in Protestant than in Roman Catholic countries for the instruction of the whole people...That Protestantism should be more friendly to civil and religious liberty would seem to follow unavoidably from the nature of the two forms of faith...Protestantism has bestowed a great boon upon civilization in supplanting the ascetic type of religion. Christianity came not to destroy, but to fulfill...The Protestant religion keeps alive in the nations that adopt it the spirit of progress.”¹⁹²

The 1873 meeting was the last world wide General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance held in the United States. The next conference was in Washington, D.C. in 1887. This conference, attended by American evangelists dealt with the problems that faced American evangelical religions. These problems were in large part caused by the existence of the Catholic Church in the United States and the basis of its strength – immigration.

¹⁹¹ *Proceedings of the Sixth General Conference of Evangelical Alliance*, 1873, Edited by Rev. Philip Schaff, D.D. and Rev. S. Irenaeus Prime, D.D. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1874), p. 435

¹⁹² *Ibid.* p.461-465

After the Civil War, the evangelical position on religious and civil liberty often reflected an increasing awareness of a massive growth of non-Protestant religious and cultural pluralism in American society. As Robert Handy, the religious historian, suggests, while the middle third of the nineteenth century may be best described as a “Protestant Age” in America, postwar Protestantism faced an increasingly frustrating growth in the heterogeneity of the culture it once so fully dominated.¹⁹³ There was a case where the social and political influence of a mushrooming, immigrant-fed Roman Catholic minority forced the evangelical leadership to reassess the formal and informal relationships of civil authority to evangelicalism. Reassessment obliged evangelicals to confront the essentially deistic origins to the democratic constitutionalism of their Religion of the Republic as well as the First Amendment requirement that civil authority hold neutral ground between religion and the public.¹⁹⁴

The problem was however, that their strong sense of identity meant evangelicals rejected other religious worldviews. Assuming one’s religious perspective spilled over into all areas of life, evangelicals believed Roman Catholicism dangerous to America because related to an authoritarian and hierarchically organized church; faithful Roman Catholics accordingly could not adjust to an American democratic structure based on Protestant sources. By definition, then, the true “American Citizen” must be evangelical and anti-Catholic because the bulk of Roman Catholics could be neither democratic nor evangelical.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Robert Handy, The Protestant Quest for a Christian America (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1967) p.10-13

¹⁹⁴ Philip Jordan, The Evangelical Alliance for the United States of America, 1847-1900: Ecumenism, Identity and the Religion of the Republic, (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982) p.102

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 117

Evangelical anti-Catholicism was not only caused by controversy over specific religious issues. For example, the attempts of New York City's Boss Tweed to win greater immigrant support, through city and state appropriations to Roman Catholic parochial schools and benevolent institutions caused considerable uproar among Protestants. Protestants became convinced that Catholics were responsible for urban government corruption in general and for such boss systems as the Tweed Ring in particular – Did not Catholics receive vast sums from the machine? Were not the bulk of machine supporters Catholic immigrants? Evangelicals were as upset about the size of the public funds given Catholic institutions as the related transgression against separation of religion from civil authority (most Protestants only became concerned about such appropriations when Catholics began to receive the lion's share). Protestant fears escalated further when Catholics attempted to translate past *de facto* relationships, between Protestant institutions and government, into legally endorsed connections open to Roman Catholics as well.¹⁹⁶

Protestants effectually started to question government funding of private nonsectarian charities and schools only when massive immigration made Roman Catholicism powerful enough to challenge the system. In the post-Civil War period, Catholics were a sufficiently large and self-confident portion of American society to make felt their demands for a share in the benefits that fell formerly to the nonsectarian and Protestant bodies alone.

Another consequence of public funding for Catholic schools was the injection of a bitter religious controversy into the educational and political system. The evangelicals believed that nonsectarian religious instruction still found to some extent in, as an

¹⁹⁶ "Outrageous Appropriations," *New York Observer*, April 21, 1870, p. 126

example, New York's public schools, and the continued use of the King James Version of the Bible, did not favor any particular religious group. Rather, these practices fostered the common good by inculcating that morality and virtue though essential to stable democratic government. It further assumed democratic government could only continue to function if the nation were evangelical in culture, ideals and values. The peoples of diverse nationalities and cultures that constituted the general population had to be educated to its acceptance. Such presuppositions were connected to other evangelical ideals of freedom of conscience and separation of church and state without any indication of the implicit contradictions between them.

Many Roman Catholics, to the contrary, believed that doctrine required the Church to control the education of its youth. Growing alienation from the American public school led to the creation of a separate Catholic school system. The religion taught in the public schools and the use of the King James Version of the Bible made these schools unacceptable to Catholics. By the 1880s, the Catholic attempts to share in public funds given to nonsectarian schools became more numerous and vigorous. The evangelicals reacted to this "peril" by increased efforts at molding public and legislative opinion in defense of publicly supported nonsectarian institutions and in opposition to the sectarian system that the Roman Catholics desired.¹⁹⁷

During the 1880s, American evangelicals began to shift their attention away from World Alliance attempts at greater cohesion of the various Protestant evangelical groups and toward solutions of national problems thought to threaten the existence of the evangelical republic itself. The solutions to these problems caused the evangelical community to reverse its ideas to meet changing economic conditions. As an example,

¹⁹⁷ "Our Established Church," *Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1, 1880, p. 8

most evangelicals were won over to the cause of labor unions (based on demands for a living wage supportive of those evangelical ideals of house, home, family, church, and school) at the expense of another old commitment, an open door to immigrants. Using an argument relevant to American culture ever since, labor unions helped to convince the evangelical faithful ever since that labor's just cause was impossible unless the source of cheap labor which forced wages down to impoverishment, the immigrant, be kept out.¹⁹⁸

Immigration swelled the population and contributed a dangerous heterogeneity to culture and religion (especially as it appeared the mainstay of the new labor union movement which seemed to threaten capitalism). Population shifted to the cities and overflowed the western frontier, thereby changing the context and locus of power for American culture. The evangelicals believed that the geometric growth of Roman Catholics and the expansion of Mormonism into states neighboring Utah threatened the political fabric of the Republic. (Evangelicals assumed both religions so controlled their members that they voted according to Church dictates, thereby threatening that independence of mind requisite to democracy. Evangelicals also held Mormonism repugnant for its polygamy and assumed crimes of violence.) To cap it all, a high level of illiteracy and intemperance provided the means for socialism and secularism to attack the moral base of America at the very time when a "tendency to class distinctions within and without the church" (evangelical denominations now appealed primarily to the middle class) hindered the one group (evangelicals) capable of defending the nation. These developments were "evil" because they threatened the reality upon which American evangelical identity rested. Introduction of conflicting moralities, cultural attachments

¹⁹⁸ Philip Jordan, "Immigrants, Methodists, and a 'Conservative' Social Gospel, 1865-1908," *Methodist History*, XVII (October, 1978), p. 16-43

and religious allegiances augured ill for the evangelical Religion of the Republic and its nation mission. How could evangelical America transmit its high culture, morality, and proper religious perspective to the world if America ceased to be evangelical? The dangers (caused by immigration) were real. The American mission was at stake.¹⁹⁹

To deal with this situation, the first General Conference of the American branch of the Evangelical Alliance took place in Washington, D.C. from December 7th to December 9th, 1887. This was the first of three of the most significant conferences ever held in the United States in the interest of social Christianity. The primary purpose of the meeting was to enunciate the problems facing American evangelicals hence the meeting title “National Perils and Opportunities.” Some of the general problems were: Dangers to the Family, The Issue Between Capital and Labor, and The Misuse of Wealth. The addresses concerning problems caused by the Catholic Church and immigration were entitled: Immigration, The City as a Peril, Ultramontaniam, and The Saloon.

The President of the Alliance W.E. Dodge, a successful New York merchant, gave the opening greeting. His address included the follow remarks on immigration.

Immigrants are pouring into the country in increasing volume. These new additions to our population are not absorbed and Americanized as formerly, and are settling in masses in our large cities and new states – retaining language, habits, and traditions foreign to our ideas, and rapidly changing the character of our people.

The power of the saloons is highly organized, and notwithstanding all the grand work done for the cause of temperance, claims to control legislatures and laws. Secular unions and infidel clubs all through the country, and exert a baneful influence, especially upon our foreign population.

The Roman Church embraces a large portion of our people; and while we admire and respect its religious devotion and admirable charities, and have nothing but kindness and regard for individual members, it still holds its first allegiance to a foreign power, which claims the absolute right to control all consciences and all peoples, and is, therefore, a dangerous menace to the Republic.

Our cities are growing in size and influence, beyond our conception. They are becoming great manufacturing centers, drawing population from all sections of the

¹⁹⁹ J.H. Vincent, “The Great Danger,” *Christian Advocate*, June 24, 1886, p. 393

interior of our country, and from all the world. Their condition is not fully understood by Christian people, and the provision for their religious care is sadly inadequate.²⁰⁰

The urban problem was treated first by the Rev. Daniel Dorchester, D.D., of Boston. His address was entitled “THE CITY AS A PERIL”

A citizenship unassimilated into the national, moral and religious life of any people is a peril. We are unable to produce from the pages of history an example of a nation so greatly exposed to peril at this point as our own; and the sources of this peril are concentrating in the large cities more than anywhere else.

If the new additions to our city population were homogeneous in race and general ideas, the case would be more tolerable. How different is London, with only 1.6 per cent of its immense population born outside the British Isles! How much easier there, the work of reform, philanthropy and evangelization than in the heterogeneous populations of our American cities! In our urban centers we find every conceivable nationality, as well as all shades of religion, the darker shadows of no religion, and many owing supreme allegiance to a foreign Pontiff.

...In these facts lie the most serious perils of the cities. How grievously have morals been debauched, pauperism, insanity and crime augmented and moral progress retarded by these exotic masses. The problem of city evangelization has been inconceivably enhanced in difficulty, and its solution indefinitely postponed, by this continual addition of these radical socialistic pauper and criminal classes, as too many of them have been. Under such circumstances it has become a grave question, CAN OLD WORLD SUBJECTS BE TRANSFORMED INTO NEW WORLD CITIZENS?

...Our Western cities are rapidly becoming Germanized and our New England cities Irishized. We are being dominated by those who have been invited to share in, not to overturn, our beneficent institutions.²⁰¹

The Rev. Simon J. Mcpherson, D.D. of Chicago, Ill. also spoke on the topic of “THE CITY AS A PERIL”

...This perilous importance of the city has, in every age, been enhanced by the corresponding fact; bad men have been quick to utilize it as the fountainhead of their radiating streams of evil. Every one of the urgent perils, like immigration, ultramontanism,²⁰² divorce, the social evil, the saloon, and the conflict between labor and capital has its chief base of operation in the city. Our cities have immigrants of all kinds, and chiefly from the lower elements. They include not only honest workmen, but also Jesuits and other plotters, visionaries and other revolutionists, communists and anarchists, exiles and sometimes government paupers, from almost every nation under heaven, Christian, infidel or heathen.

²⁰⁰ “National Perils and Opportunities,” The Discussions of the General Christian Conference of the Evangelical Alliance (New York: Baker & Taylor Co., 1887) p. 3

²⁰¹ Ibid. p.26-29

²⁰² A term used to denote integral and active Catholicism. After the Reformation, Protestants used the term to mean control by a foreign power, the Pope.

“Immigration” was the title of an address by Prof. H.H. Boyesen, of Columbia College

*This was one of the first public addresses by an evangelical Protestant speaking in favor of immigration restriction*²⁰³.

...A large proportion of the foreigners who come to us now are hungry malcontents, who arrive with the avowed purpose to overthrow our institutions. A considerable number of them are men who, on account of moral or intellectual defects, do not fit into any orderly society, and who in consequence are embittered against all order; men whom Europe is fortunate in getting rid of, and America correspondingly unfortunate in receiving; men who are bent on avenging here what they suffered there. There are at present unmistakable indications that unless some drastic remedy is applied to check the influence of this class of foreigners, the relation of economic and political which has hitherto prevailed will be reversed, and the future will be fraught with perils which it is the part of prudence to foresee, and which it is too late to avert when they are already upon us. It behoves us, therefore, to apply the remedy before the evil is beyond control – before the elements of discontent and disorder shall have transplanted to the New World the very conditions to escape which they fled from the old.

What I propose to show in the present address is that, unless some such restrictive measure is before long passed by Congress, a crisis is at hand, in a not very remote future, which will seriously affect our national identity. The immigrant of to day is not the same as the immigrant of ten and twenty years ago. He is, as statistics prove, largely drawn from a lower stratum of European society.

...The undoubted fact, that that the more prolific foreigner is continually gaining numerically upon the native, and year by year becoming a greater power politically and economically, contains an ominous augury for the future of the Republic.

...We have, in my opinion, arrived at this point, when a continuation of our former policy of indiscriminate absorption would be dangerous, if not fatal. It is a question, not of sentiment, but of self-preservation. It is the problem of problems with which every individual, as well as every society, is confronted, in one shape or another, viz., what degree of altruism is comparable with self-preservation? If we continue to bear the effects of foreign abuses and misgovernment; if we extend our responsibilities beyond the boundaries, which reason and self-interest prescribe – we shall sooner or later imperil our national existence. If others sow the wind is it fair that we shall reap the whirlwind? As long as immigration remains unrestricted, as long as five men enter for every one that is needed, confusion must occur, and suffering must be the result.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ As an example of a typical evangelical attitude toward immigration restriction previous to this conference, in 1852, the evangelical Unitarian clergyman Edward Everett Hale published his *Letters on Irish Immigration*, which vigorously opposed all calls for restriction of Irish immigration. Hale urged that the doors be opened wide, that they should be welcomed even “care for them if sick.” Not making a humanitarian gesture at all, Hale believed that shrewd pragmatism underlay his open-door policy. He analogized the emerging industrial social structure as a pyramid and expressed his confidence that the Irish would forever occupy the pyramid’s lower level. “their inferiority as a race compels them to go to the bottom,” said Hale, and he drew the inevitable conclusion with his comforting forecast that “we are all, all of us, the higher lifted because they are here.” Edward Everett Hale, *Letters on Irish Immigration*, (Boston: Philps, Sampson and Co., 1852), p. 54-58

²⁰⁴ “National Perils and Opportunities” p. 52-74

“THE SALOON,” An address by the Rev. A.G. Haygood, D.D., LL.D
This address connects immigration to the “Saloon as a Peril”

Our territory is filling up with all sorts of people from all countries. Presently there will be hundreds of millions of us – at no distant period, twice a hundred millions. With the immigrants flocking to our shores are many of the excellent of the earth, and they are welcome; among them come thousands who bring us only evil, and every kind of evil. These have no ideas or sympathies in common with the genius of our institutions. There is nothing in them in harmony with those influences and principles of life that have made us a great people; they come with notions and feelings hostile to what is truly characteristic and good in our national life. The worst elements in this foreign life gravitate to the saloon as soon as it reaches our shores. It is in sympathy with the saloon, and, as all men know, in the large cities and towns the foreign element is the surest supporter of the liquor traffic. In the large cities there are few elections that the saloon and its foreign vote cannot control. The bad element in the foreign life is steadily flowing in upon us, the saloon only makes worse. And every evil tendency, native and imported, is by the intensity of our American life forced into more rapid development than would be possible in a lower and less eager country. The saloon aggravates all.²⁰⁵

“METHODS OF CO-OPERATION IN CHRISTIAN WORK,” An address by Rev. Josiah Strong, D.D., General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance.
In this speech on Christian co-operation, Strong treats the topic of the schools and foreigners.

...Another illustration of the need of a comprehensive organization, which will make possible the co-operation of our Protestant churches, is the attack upon our public school system, the attempt to pervert public funds to the support of sectarian schools. The Alliance has abundant evidence that this is the fixed purpose of Ultramontaniam in the United States, a policy which is fraught with immanent danger to our free institutions.

The common school is the principle digestive organ of the body politic. It does more than anything to assimilate the children of the immigrant. In the common school these children of European peasants are the peers of any. They breathe a new atmosphere of self-respect and independence, and are taught to think. With such training, there is little danger of their being made the minions of a foreign potentate.

The parochial school would build a wall around these children and separate them from Americanizing influences would make of Irish children Irish *men*, of German children German *men*. Our land is broad enough for a thousand million *Americans*, born in whatever land, but not large enough for these diverse elements *among* us which refuse to be *of* us.²⁰⁶

The second of these three important conferences took place in Boston in 1889.

Between the first two conferences, the evangelicals realized that America appeared to be

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 163-164

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 354

undergoing a general moral and spiritual degeneration affecting all aspects of its culture. The masses no longer seemed to attend church. The sanctity of the family and home appeared to be in question. And, the clergy was declining in stature. Even preaching the gospel no longer answered fully those problems. And to some, immigration was the reason. For instance, lawyer, professor, and former U.S. ambassador to Britain, Anson D. Phelps praised Alliance work and its Washington Conference to William E. Dodge, Jr. He informed Dodge that “free government means to us a government in the hands of the lowest and worst class of foreigners, organized and stimulated by demagogues of our own race and theirs.” Phelps asserted categorically,

Unless we can take up arms against this influx of foreigners, and the suicidal policy that makes them all voters as soon as they arrive (virtually, for the naturalization laws are a farce), we shall see a condition of things before long to which the Southern Rebellion was child’s play. The dying out of religious faith to so large an extent among the masses of so called ‘Protestants’ seems to me another dangerous feature in our modern life. And politics certainly descends to a lower depth at each turn of the wheel. I cannot assume to propose a remedy. It is well for such men as compose the Alliance to take counsel together.

My own view is that free government cannot be made to stand except by a thorough purification of the electorate, which in this country should include the exclusion of all foreigners. Through what revolution this is to be accomplished no one can now predict. Probably through an intermediate military despotism.²⁰⁷

One source of difficulty was that much of evangelical Protestantism broke away from the common man when its constituency became middle class at mid-century. Many of the churches that were evangelical from their inception, such as the Methodist and Baptist folds, appealed originally to the simple rural and mill town folk of America. Yet their emphasis on the work ethic and insistence that members avoid such corrupting (and expensive) habits as liquor, tobacco, and theatre meant evangelicals accumulated property and rose in social standing to a middle class status. Their situation improved

²⁰⁷ Letter, Anson D. Phelps to William E. Dodge Jr., December 7, 1889, “The Evangelical Alliance in Boston,” *Churchman*, Dec. 21, 1889, p. 771

further, as was true of most native Americans, when rapid post-Civil War industrialization drew so many foreign immigrants into the labor pool that a concomitant growth in the managerial and white collar force was essential. The latter opportunities fell primarily to those having mastery over the American language and cultural values. Evangelicals, particularly those in the urban areas, benefited enormously from these new positions, but tended to look askance at the increasingly heterogeneous labor force at their disposal. A reason Protestantism lost track of the common man was not just that he was increasingly an immigrant, but that many of the immigrants after 1880 derived from southern and eastern Europe. For example, roughly one million persons came from that area compared to four million from northern Europe during the decade from 1880 to 1890. Although the “new immigration” did not exceed annually that from northern Europe until after 1896, it changed significantly the cultural context of American labor. The new immigration displaced that of Germanic origin as the source of unskilled laborers in American industry and mining. Previously, nearly all Americans originated from Germanic and Celtic sources. On top of the religious, cultural, and political differences that the evangelicals had with the English-speaking Irish, they now found an almost incomprehensible gap between themselves and the Latin Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and eastern Jews, given the strange languages and peasant customs of the latter.²⁰⁸

The “Peril” psychology involved in the Washington Conference (1887) underwent a subtle shift during the period leading up to the Boston Conference (1889). The first Conference title, *National Perils and Opportunities* now became *National Needs and Remedies* in Boston. Protestant leaders now believed applied Christianity provided

²⁰⁸ Philip Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance for the United States of America, 1847-1900*, p. 162-163

the solution for most religious problems engendering the confidence that imbued the Boston Conference. Still, the subject of immigration arose during the proceedings in the address given by the Rev. Frank Russell, D.D., Field Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, entitled ALLIANCE METHODS

...This brings us to the field. Here are evils that rise threateningly against us and require the activity of all our forces to meet them. There is illiteracy, not among our freedmen alone, but in our communities; there is barbarism, not among our Indians alone, but in our communities; there is polygamy, not with the Mormons only, but among our communities; intemperance is commingled with us; our city populations breed and strengthen vices; capital and labor, twin brothers, quarrel in their common workshop; nearly every community has a back yard of poverty, untidy and unwholesome; there are communism and anarchy that either boldly threaten or whisper in the dark places; some of our fundamental institutions, the ballot, the Sabbath, the schools, are openly assailed; and immigration with all its blessings, surely strengthen these threatening evils.²⁰⁹

The Alliance returned to the theme of immigration restriction in 1893 during their Conference in Chicago entitled *Christianity Practically Applied*.

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF CHARITY given by the Rev. H.L. Wayland, D. D. of Philadelphia:

...Another cause (of pauperism and crime) is indiscriminate and unrestricted immigration; which brings among us a vast volume of ignorance, of poverty, of degradation, which reduces the wages of native-born American citizens to the starving point, and which affects for the worse our whole life, social, industrial, moral.

...We must in self-defense erect a barrier against indiscriminate immigration; no not indiscriminate, rather the immigration is made up of chosen material, chosen by the European governments, which select their very worst and most repulsive material to deposit upon our shores. Only let us restrict immigration wisely, justly, with a regard to the guaranteed rights of all nations.²¹⁰

The dynamo that organized and promoted these three conferences of the Evangelical Alliance was the organization's General Secretary, a Congregationalist minister, Josiah Strong. His first book, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present*

²⁰⁹ "National Needs and Remedies," *The Discussion of the General Christian Conference, Under the Auspices and Direction of the Evangelical Alliance, December 4th, 5th, 6th, 1889* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1890) p. 102

²¹⁰ "Christianity Practically Applied," *The Discussions of the International Christian Conference, Under the Auspices and Direction of the Evangelical Alliance, October 8-14, 1893* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1894) p.451 & \$55

Crisis. (1885), catapulted Strong to evangelical leadership. Its message combined the traditional evangelical argument that the barbaric American West must be won to evangelical republicanism for the health of the nation, with a new perception that an equally barbaric city had emerged as the “nerve center” of modern American society.

“The city,” Strong noted, “has become a serious menace to our civilization, because, in it, excepting Mormonism, the dangers [to evangelicalism] are enhanced. The perils (*Our Country* listed perils just as the Washington Conference did.) included immigration, Romanism, socialism, and wealth. Strong saw *Our Country*, the Anglo-Protestant Empire being overwhelmed by German and Irish immigrants. “Because our cities are so largely foreign, Romanism finds in them its chief strength.” For the same reason, Strong saw the saloon and intemperance to be urban problems. Socialism thrived on “the social dynamite” of roughs, gamblers, thieves, robbers, lawless and desperate men of all sorts” who gathered there. The new urban immigrants simply fell beyond the range of Protestant outreach and attraction. Foremost among them were Catholics and Jews.²¹¹

In chapter four of *Our Country*, which Strong entitled “Perils-Immigration,” he outlined the three controlling causes of immigration into the United States. 1. The attracting influences of the United States - ...it can hardly be questioned that the development of our wonderful resources will insure a high degree of material prosperity for many years to come. And the brightening blaze of our riches will attract increased immigration. Equal rights also and free schools are operative. We expend for education nearly six times as much, per caput, as Europe. 2. The expellant influences of Europe –

²¹¹ Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 155-156

Social or political upheavals send new waves of immigration to our shores...the prospect for the next fifteen or twenty years is not pacific. 3. Facilities of travel are increasing – There are great multitudes in Europe who look westward with longing eyes, but do not come, only because they cannot gather the passage money and keep soul and body together. The reduction in rates, even a few dollars, makes America possible to add thousands. The threefold influences, therefore, which regulate immigration all co-operate to increase it and indicate that for years to come this great “gulf-stream of humanity” with here and there an eddy, will flow on with a rising flood.

In view of the fact that Europe is able to send us six times as many immigrants during the next thirty years as during the thirty years past, without diminution of her population, and in view of all the powerful influences co-operating to stimulate the movement, is it not reasonable to expect a rising tide of immigration unless Congress takes effective measures to check it?

Josiah Strong on why the immigrants are a problem to the United States. 1. Influence on morals - ...The typical immigrant is a European peasant, whose horizon has been narrow, whose moral and religious training has been meager or false, and whose ideas of life are low. Not a few belong to the pauper or criminal class. Moreover, immigration not only furnishes the greater portion of our criminals, it is also seriously affecting the morals of the nation population. But by far, the most effective instrumentality for debauching popular morals is the liquor traffic, and this is chiefly carried out by foreigners. 2. We can only glance at the political aspects of immigration. It is immigration that has fed fat the liquor power; and there is a liquor vote. Immigration furnishes most of the victims of Mormonism; and there is a Mormon vote. Immigration is

the strength of the Catholic Church; and there is a Catholic vote. Immigration is the mother and nurse of American socialism; and there is a socialist vote. Immigration tends strongly to the cities, and gives to them their political complexion. And there is no more serious menace to our civilization than our rabble-ruled cities. These several perils are all enhanced by immigration.²¹²

Josiah Strong provides representative texts on the problem of Roman Catholicism as perceived by late nineteenth century Protestants. Perhaps these writings did not generate the fervor shown before the Civil War during the period of Nativism and Know-Nothingism, during “the Protestant Crusade” against Catholic intruders. Perhaps the decline in fervor came about because it could be seen that the Catholic tide was irreversible and that those of Roman obedience could not be cajoled or threatened or forced to go back to Europe. But now added to the original Catholic immigrants from Europe, the Irish and the Germans, came Catholics from southern and eastern Europe, and also from eastern Europe large numbers of Jews who represented another huge urban population element that added to the downfall of the Protestant empire by chipping away at the power centers of Protestant hegemony.²¹³

The Europeans were not the only immigrants that the evangelicals had an interest in. When the gold rush brought the first Chinese to California in 1848, it brought into the state one of the most emotional and complex social, political, and economic problems in American history. By 1853, the twenty-five thousand Chinese in California comprised the largest single minority group in the state. Not only did custom, habit, and language isolate these strange immigrants from their Caucasian neighbors, but also the white

²¹² Josiah Strong, Our Country (Revised Edition) (Cambridge: The BelKnap Press, 1963), p.41-55

²¹³ Martin Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America, p.160-161

miners soon came to resent the industry and frugality of the Orientals and their willingness to work longer hours for lower wages. This deflated the price of labor in the gold fields and led to anti-Chinese riots and to discriminatory anti-Chinese legislation, e.g. in 1855, the state legislature levied a fifty-dollar head tax on all Chinese immigrants.²¹⁴

The first champion of the Chinese in America was an evangelical Presbyterian clergyman, the Reverend William Speer. A former medical missionary in Canton, Speer opened the first Christian church for Chinese in the United States in San Francisco in November 1853. Additionally, he developed the thesis that “the interests of California forbid a policy calculated to exclude or debase Chinese immigration.” Using statistical information, he pointed to the positive material benefits of Chinese immigration to the state, emphasizing trade with China for West Coast shippers, rents from Chinese tenants for California landlords, and taxes from the Chinese for the state treasury. Speer was subsequently commended by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for his work in combating the impression that the Chinese were “a nation of savages.”²¹⁵

The early interest of evangelical clergymen in the Chinese in the United States was related to their belief that God Himself had placed the Chinese on American shores to be converted so that they might return to China as native bearers of God’s Holy Word. “Suppose it were possible,” calculated the Presbyterian clergyman James Eells, “that 10,000 of the whole number should be converted to Christianity... This would furnish

²¹⁴ Harley F. MacNair, The Chinese Abroad: Their Position and Protection (Commercial Press Ltd.: Shanghai, 1924), p. 281-282

²¹⁵ “Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1859,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, XII (1860), p. 533

10,000 native missionaries to teach Christianity to their people, “ and would exert considerable American and Christian “influence upon their native land.”²¹⁶

With the conversion of the entire Far East as the ultimate prize, the evangelical denominations threw themselves into the task of bringing the California Chinese into the Christian fold. The Presbyterians began their work in 1853 under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Speer. The Baptists entered the domestic Chinese mission field in 1854, followed by the Episcopalians in 1855, the Methodists in 1868, and the Congregationalists in 1870.²¹⁷

The 1868 Burlingame Treaty with China seemed to ensure a steady flow of Chinese immigrants to America. The treaty represented a major breakthrough on the proselytization front, and, it was enthusiastically received by American churchmen. “Thanksgivings were heard in thirty thousand pulpits and all the missionary boards, Bible societies, and churches, of every name and sect, were of one heart and one mind in praising God, who had opened the long shut doors of the Celestial Empire.”²¹⁸

However, the depression in the 1870’s caused an intense competition for jobs between American and Chinese workers in California. The result was anti-Chinese agitation and violence. There was also the fear that California was being inundated by a veritable hoard of wholly inassimilable heathen of evil habits and peculiar morals. It seemed, as Horace Greeley expressed it in 1870, that “what has hitherto been a rivulet may become a Niagara, hurling millions instead of thousands upon us from the vast, overcrowded hives of China.”²¹⁹

²¹⁶ A. J. Hanson, “Our Pacific Coast Problem,” *Methodist Quarterly Review*, XXXIII (January, 1881) p.45

²¹⁷ Ira M. Condit, *The Chinaman As We See Him*, (New York: Kessinger Publishing, 1900) p. 95-102

²¹⁸ Editorial, *Independent* (Feb. 27, 1879), p.16

²¹⁹ Willard B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1885), frontispiece & P. 51

The evangelicals attempted statistically to minimize this fear of the “Yellow Pearl,” and they energetically defended the Chinese against the charge that they were an immoral, racially inferior, incurably heathen, crafty, low, lascivious, and generally debased race of people whose continued presence in the United States threatened the very structure of a well-ordered, moral, Christian society. On the contrary, the evangelicals maintained that the Chinese were sober, polite, thrifty, quiet, and inoffensive; that they were eager to learn English and read the Bible²²⁰

After the Rev. Speer, the leading clerical spokesman for the Chinese was the Methodist evangelical Reverend Otis Gibson. At various times in his career, he was a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist representative to the Evangelical Alliance, and a delegate to the first Ecumenical Conference of Methodism held in London in 1881. His book, *The Chinese in America*, published in 1887, was the most influential single work expressing the pro-Chinese clerical viewpoint. Widely quoted and extensively paraphrased by writers favorable to Chinese immigration, it was utilized by legislators and clergy alike.

Gibson’s controversial role in the debate on Chinese immigration turned essentially on his willingness to argue the case for Chinese immigration and assimilation largely in terms of a vigorous and sustained attack on Roman Catholicism, Irish workers, and labor unions. This approach, adopted and expanded by other pro-Chinese clergymen, ultimately took the form of a full-blown conspiracy thesis, which maintained that the Vatican and American organized labor were involved in a joint, calculated subversion of

²²⁰ George F. Seward, Chinese Immigration in its Social and Economic Aspects (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1881) p. 211-217

free American institutions.²²¹ As an example, the Reverend A.J. Hanson of San Francisco pointed out that “Jesuitical bigotry in the background was ever active in rousing race prejudice and fomenting class hatred against the Chinese,” and with a finger pointed squarely at the Irish he assured his readers, “that there would be no Chinese problem were there no turbulent European element on our hands, holding the ballot, swayed by crafty priests and designing demagogues.”²²²

The subject of Chinese immigration was also a topic at the Evangelical Alliance’s “National Perils and Opportunities” conference in Washington. The Reverend S. L. Baldwin, D. D., of Boston, a former missionary to China spoke out against the restriction of Chinese immigration:

The people of the country may well consider whether the time has not come for laying some restrictions upon immigration; but as is often the case, we began at the wrong end, and restricted immigration at the Golden Gate (the Chinese Exclusion Act) when we ought to have done it at Sandy Hook. The industrious, peaceable Chinese should not be excluded while lawless socialists and anarchists are freely admitted.

...the exclusion of a Chinaman, merely because he is a Chinaman is an abomination

...foreigners from Europe – whose immigration we were encouraging by hundreds of thousands in a single year, while our politicians were standing aghast at an immigration of peaceful Chinamen, which barely reached the sum of 100,000 in a quarter of a century.

...Briefly then, let Christian statesmen deal with this immigration question on lines of Christian principle, looking to the securing of peaceful and law-abiding citizens and doing away with all discriminations against a particular race.

Baldwin’s comments on the Irish immigrant - ...Let the Roman Catholic Irishman, when legally naturalized, cast his one *vote* (his italics), but not more than once in an election.

And Roman Catholics - ...our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens may be given a rest from the arduous duties of governing our great cities for us in interests of rum, by the aid of the boodle; the political atmosphere may be cleared of the dense fogs of corruption; our legislative halls may be purged from

“Ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,

For which the Heathen Chinees is by no means peculiar,”

²²¹ Robert Seager II, “Some Denominational Reactions to Chinese Immigration to California,” 1856-1892, *Pacific Historical Review*, 28:1, p. 54-55

²²² Editorial, *Christian Advocate*, LIII (Feb. 7, 1878), p. 88

The favorite line of argument with the pro-Chinese evangelical Protestants was that the industrial resources of California could not be developed without the aid of “Chinese cheap labor.”

That the Central Pacific Railroad was built through the agency of a Chinese laborer; that every agricultural and mechanical industry has been developed through this agency; and in fact, the whole material prosperity of the Pacific Coast is due alone to this “blessing in disguise” which a wise Providence has conferred upon this people...²²³ The plain and logical deduction is, that if Chinese immigration into the United States is ordained by God; if it is his will that it should be so, that the heathen may be converted to Christianity, as these fervid missionaries assert, then the opposition to it which nearly the whole people of the Pacific Coast set up is an unpardonable sin...and we are in danger of eternal damnation²²⁴

By the end of the 1870s however it became clear that the pro-Chinese evangelicals were exercising little real influence in the Chinese immigration debate – and the basic reason was economic, the Chinese immigration took American jobs. As the publisher of the San Francisco Evening Bulletin explained the situation: “The merchants have been the last to realize it, but I think that their business is falling off because the laboring men cannot earn money to buy.”²²⁵

Following the adoption of the federal Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the evangelicals largely confined themselves to sporadic condemnations of anti-Chinese outrages and an insistence on the full maintenance of the treaty rights of those Chinese already in the United States.

²²³ This argument was never used by the evangelicals when discussing material prosperity on the East Coast, nor in discussions about the building of; canals, turnpikes, and railroads (including the Union Pacific) by European immigrants.

²²⁴ Willard B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad*, p. 66

²²⁵ *Investigation by a Select Committee of the House of Representatives Relative to the Causes of the General Depression in Labor and Business; and as to Chinese Immigration*. 46 Cong., 2 sess, House Misc. Doc. No. 5 (Washington, 1879) p. 258

It seemed evident to the pro-Chinese evangelicals that American exclusion and persecution of the domestic Chinese could only provoke retaliatory Chinese exclusion and persecution of American missionaries in China. Certainly this was uppermost in clerical minds in 1892 when Congress debated and passed the Geary Bill, a proposal designed to extend for an additional ten years all federal laws in force relative to the exclusion of Chinese laborers. The *Independent* pointed out that if the Geary Bill became law we could enter no protest to China if she drove out every American merchant and missionary.²²⁶ The Reverend Gilbert Reid, a Baptist missionary to China, referred to the legislation as “a contravention of treaty law,” and argued that the measure would harm American commerce and severely prejudice American missionary interests in China.²²⁷ Similarly, the Board of Managers of Missions of the Episcopal Church contemplated “with serious apprehension the effect of such legislation upon our missionary work,” and hoped “that the said law shall be so judiciously and leniently enforced that our foreign relations [with China] may not be disturbed.” The Methodist General Conference, meeting in Omaha in 1892, concluded that Methodist missionaries in China would be exposed to further attacks by irate mobs unless the Conference officially took a pro-Chinese stand on the Geary Act. A resolution that suitably condemned the legislation as a cruel and undemocratic violation of the 1880 was therefore passed.²²⁸

In retrospect, it appears that the pro-Chinese evangelical forces exercised little influence on the final outcome of the Chinese immigration exclusion debate. Nonetheless, the evangelicals did display courage in their advocacy of the Chinese.

²²⁶ Editorial, *Independent*, (March 10, 1892), p. 13

²²⁷ Gilbert Reid, Chinese Exclusion: Its Bearing on American Interests in China (Rochester: Union and Advertising Press, 1893), p.29-30

²²⁸ *Christian Advocate*, LXVII (May 19, 1892), p. 329; (June 16, 1892) p. 402

Convinced that God had brought the Chinese to American shores as part of some larger plan, they argued that these too were God's children. However it should also be noted that the evangelicals defended the Chinese in America so that their missionaries in China would be allowed to continue their work since conversion of the entire Far East was the ultimate prize.

CHAPTER 5

THE IRISH

This chapter deals with the Evangelical Protestants and the Irish immigrant, specifically the evangelical and the two fields of endeavor that the Irish had success with in the nineteenth and twentieth century United States – politics and the Catholic Church, this combination of successes would be the basis of convincing the evangelical Protestants that immigration restriction would be their only means of either “holding their own” in a pluralistic society or perhaps returning to the time when they were predominant.

The genesis of the agitation between the Protestants and the American Catholic Irish dates back to the Reformation in England and Henry VIII’s break with Rome. Before the Reformation, England had regarded Ireland as an area to be exploited for the interests of the Crown. Now England decided that Ireland and its troublesome Catholic people must at all costs be subdued to eliminate the chance that the Irish might jeopardize England’s security. This was the case because the English were continuously involved in political struggles with Catholic monarchs who, the English believed, might try to induce the Irish to make war against England when the latter was engaged in hostilities on the continent. Henry VIII also passed the Act of Supremacy, which obliged the Catholic Church in Ireland to deal with the English government and obey it in matters of religion. From the latter part of the sixteenth century onward England continued to increase its religious sanctions. By the end of the seventeenth century, the religious issue dominated the relations between England and Ireland, and

...as the cause of the Church and nation became ever more closely identified and the idea of nationality grew up in Europe, the stereotyped division that has lasted till our own time developed. In Ireland the words Catholic and Irishman became almost synonymous, and the word “English” was often used to denote a Protestant.²²⁹

²²⁹ Edward MacLysaght, Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Cork University Press, 1950) p.295

England realized that the success of its rule in Ireland was dependent upon the elimination of its chief opposition, the Irish hierarchy. Insofar as the Church maintained its sovereignty in ecclesiastical matters, it remained the institutional symbol of Irish identity and so the ultimate source of Irish resistance to England.

Perhaps of even greater importance, however was that the Irish Church was the only institution that symbolized the spiritual values and the hopes of the Irish. Furthermore, as Protestantism remained the force responsible for their misery, the Irish reflexively turned to the Church when it spoke on doctrinal matters. Consequently, any political movement that was imputed to have a Protestant influence would draw the Irish hierarchy's condemnation and the aversion of the Irish.

The Irish also had to deal with the bias and ruthlessness of Anglo-Saxon law. The Irish were compelled by the nature of the legal system to bargain for justice and forced to resort to illegitimate means to gain some consideration for their claims. As a result of their experiences with the courts, the Irish had seen:

...that matters went by favor rather than by right...This they called "interest"...the Irish peasant believed that unless he ha[d] what they called interest, he ha[d] no chance of success before any tribunal.

If a man became entangled with the law, his relatives and friends immediately set in motion the machinery of "interest" beseeching the landlord, the agent, the politician, the priest, everyone they believed had power and influence to put in a "word" for Pat or Owen. One of the benefits of belonging to a strong faction was that it frequently enjoyed the protection of its "interest" by a magistrate. In return, the magistrate expected the free labor of the faction in digging, planting and harvesting. A magistrate who set himself out for "interest" was apparently no less respected for his susceptibilities. The people had more faith in the "interest" of a partisan magistrate than they had in the law of the land. They had more trust in the personality of a human being than in the impersonal workings of the law.²³⁰

²³⁰ George M. Potter, *To the Golden Door* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960) p. 63-64
Conrad Arensberg described the functions of favor, interest, and influence as follows: "...the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct and personal approaches of social

These illegitimate means also extended to voting. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the Protestant landowners acquainted the Irish with new corrupt political practices. Following Ireland's decades old agitation for the right to vote in local elections, England, in 1793, extended the franchise to those Irish Catholics who were forty-shilling freeholders (a freehold worth at least forty shillings per year above the rent). The use to which the vote might be put was immediately apparent to the English (and the Irish)

...the bestowal of the franchise on Catholics by the Irish [Protestant] Parliament...had established in Ireland a new approach to household suffrage. The right to vote was given by a freehold of 40s., this consisting, in the great majority of cases of a lease for life. The great landholders vied with each other in the creation of these freeholds. On election day these tenants were brought to the poll by the driver of the estate, like so much live stock conveyed to market.²³¹

Because of the contrivance of the landlords who openly competed with each other in creating freeholds to assure themselves election to office, a greater amount of Irish had attained the status of freeholder (and the vote) than would have ordinarily have been the case. Such political manipulations thoroughly acquainted the Irish with the art of manipulating the vote.

The sum of their experiences with government led the Irish to define politics as an incessant struggle between those in authority and those who had none. The former would inevitably use the power of government to satisfy their interests at the expense of those

obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond." Conrad Arensberg, *The Irish Country-Man: An Anthropological Study* (New York: MacMillan, 1937), p. 178

²³¹ James Bryce, *Two Centuries of Irish History* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench and Co., 2008) p. 297

over whom they held it. The following excerpts from Anna Maria Hall's short story, *Going To Law* points up the contempt in which the Irish held the law:

It isn't *Law*, please yer honour, only a question. Sure it isn't the likes o' me would be trying to get law out of yer honour without paying for it.

I'll tell them...when they see a prosperous man reduced to begging and forced into exile. I'll tell them *that's what he got by going to law.*²³²

An important organization, formed in Ireland in 1823, was the Catholic Association. At the onset, it was little more than a debating club. Within a few months of its formation however, the Association began to receive small donations from people all over Ireland, certain that at last an organization was genuinely concerned with their problems. Additionally, it also gained the support of the clergy. The Association's appeal to the people was all the more irresistible by having united the political and religious leaders. The Association also marked the first occasion since England conquered Ireland that political leaders, priests, and the people were actively and effectively collaborating for common purposes.

The Association appealed to the two most important classes in the country – the priests and the men on the land...[The priests] presided over parish branches of the Association and supervised the collection of "Catholic rent" [dues for the Association] at the church doors after Sunday Mass. The people were roused from their stupor when it was brought home to them that the Association catered to their individual needs.²³³

The Association's activities were so effective that a member of the British Parliament, one of the committee investigating the activities of the Association, commented with admiration: "I did not conceive any system of government could be so

²³² Mrs. S.C. (Anna Maria) Hall, *Going to Law, Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (Edinburgh: Wm. And Robert Chambers, 1851) p. 218

²³³ Michael Tierney, *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin: Richview Press, 1949) p.136-137

complete in carrying on communication from heads to inferiors; I thought it a most complete organization for that purpose.”²³⁴

Lacking only a slate of candidates for political office, the Association was actually a popular, dues-paying political party – the first of its kind in modern times. Its great public following as well as its dependence upon and concern for its local “constituents” suggest that its influence on the Irish who developed the structure and functions of the Democratic Party in American urban areas was more real than imputed.

As an agent of political socialization, the Association gave the Irish a mass-based popular political organization. It was wholly dependent upon the support of the people and acquainted them with the rudiments of maintaining a political organization. In joining the priests and people within the parish where politics was preached from the pulpit, the Association created the primary Irish political unit, in which everyone shared the same religious and political views.

The most conspicuous aspect of Irish life was that it set in a context shorn of nearly every influence but raw power. In the ecclesiastical realm, the Irish dwelt under the incontestable power of the Church; in the secular world, they were everywhere subjugated by the power of the landlords and Anglo-Saxon government authorities. It was inevitable, therefore, that the political ethos of the Irish became power oriented.

The conflict between Ireland and England centered on irreconcilable religious differences. Consequently, it was impossible to develop a common political morality and a political order that could accommodate their conflicting interests. Because the English used their monopoly of government exclusively to further their own ends at the expense

²³⁴ Comment of Major Warburton, quoted in R. Barry O’Brien, Two Centuries of Irish History: 1691-1870 (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1907) p. 281

of the Irish, the result was to strip the law of all dignity by using it to deprive the Irish of their land, to persecute them for their religious convictions, to exclude them from power, and to thereby to transform them into an implacably hostile people.

Since this system rested on a foundation of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, the power interests of England, and the avarice of the landed aristocracy, the Irish could not obtain justice or acquire respect for the law while they remained Catholic, sought political independence, and desired to have their land restored. Under such conditions moral arguments that sought to remedy Ireland's distress were scarcely more than a clawing at the wind, for the political order that England had established rested on a base of power that went on essentially impervious to moral influences. Such was the history of the Irish with Anglo-Saxon government.²³⁵

The Frenchman Gustave de Beaumont, a magistrate, prison reformer, writer, and travel companion of Alexis de Tocqueville when he journeyed to the United States, wrote of Ireland

Having been forced to struggle for his religion against the Englishman, and for his country against the Protestant, [the Irishman] is accustomed to see partisans of his faith only amongst the defenders of his independence, and to find devotion to independence only amongst the friends of his religion.

In the midst of the agitations of which his country and his soul have been the theatre, the Irishman who has seen so much ruin consummated within him and around him, believes that there is nothing permanent in the world but his religion – that religion which is coeval with old Ireland – a religion superior to man, ages, and revolutions...

In defending his religion, the Irishman has been a hundred times invaded, conquered, driven from his native soil; he kept his faith, and lost his country. But, after the confusion made between these two things in his mind, his rescued religion became his all, and its influence on his heart was further extended by its taking there the place of independence. The altar at which he prayed was his country.

²³⁵ Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians (University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame & London, 1966), p. 47-48

The Irish people exists in its church; there alone it is free; there alone it is sure of its rights; there it occupies the only ground that has never given way beneath its feet.²³⁶

By the time of the Great Famine, when multitudes of Irishmen immigrated to the United States, Ireland had known English political oppression for approximately two centuries. As the helpless victims of a government whose policies and actions were completely shorn of even moral pretense, the Irish acquired an immutable contempt for undemocratic law, as well as for those who made, administered, enforced and interpreted it. The sum of their political experiences forced them to adopt the view that political power was to be sought by all conceivable means, and that it was to be used only in the interests of those who possessed it. This was the dominant political component of their ethnic identity.

In the United States, the social style and values of the Irish were viewed by Protestant Americans in terms of the religious cleavage that identified the Irish as Catholics – which was the most convenient term with which to stereotype the Irish, and through it the Irish represented the least desirable social and religious element. Well before the Civil War, the religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics had become the pivotal issue, aside from politics, directly affecting the Irish for many decades to come. For instance, after the colonial period of American of American history, anti-Catholic prejudice on any large scale remained dormant until the advent of Irish Catholic immigrants in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. As the French hierarchy gave way to an Irish hierarchy and as the militant brand of Irish Catholicism

²³⁶ Gustave de Beaumont, "Ireland: Social, Political, and Religious," in James Carty, Ireland: 1783-1850 (Dublin: C.J. Fallon, 1949) p. 110

replaced the less militant French and English varieties, agitation against foreigners and Catholics grew.²³⁷

In the view of the Protestants, Catholicism was an alien belief allied to foreign cultures, but it became most identified with the Irish who were its arch exponents and defenders and who were to fight the battle of religious discrimination for all other Catholic immigrants who came to America in their wake. The religious issue contained within it another of broader significance – that of admittance to full membership in society itself. It was exceedingly difficult for Irish Catholic immigrants both to feel and become accepted by their new land since Protestantism and Americanism had long been synonymous. Will Herberg on this subject:

Normally, to be born American meant to be a Protestant; this was the religious identification that in the American mind quite naturally went along with being an American. Non-Protestants felt the force of this conviction almost as strongly as did the Protestants; Catholics and Jews despite their vastly increasing numbers, experienced their non-Protestant religion as a problem, even as a obstacle, to their becoming full-fledged Americans; it was a mark of their foreignness.²³⁸

Irish assimilation with the Protestant majority was equated with the Irish conforming to middle-class, Protestant values of work, education, leisure, and propriety, and this association of middle-class standards with Protestantism confronted the Irish as an insurmountable social barrier. Religious differences aside, everything about their existence militated against their emulating the social standards set by Protestant – American society. The *Boston Reporter*, the diocesan newspaper, dignified the work that the Irish performed:

²³⁷ Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., “The Formation of the Catholic Minority in the United States, 1820-1860,” *The Review of Politics*, January, 1948, p.14

²³⁸ Will Herberg, “Religion and Culture in Present-Day America,” in Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., Roman Catholicism and the American Way of Life (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), p.7

Will Americans go into the quarries and hew out solid rocks? Will they go into morasses and dykes and creeks of the forest and hew out and establish a railroad or a continuous canal? ... Will the Americans... labor in the wasting drudgery of metal foundries, glass furnaces, and other similar occupations, which require the bone and sinew, and robust constitutions, which Irishmen alone can bring into such labors? No! they will not do this work. If it depended upon them, it would remain undone.²³⁹

The historical religious and class cleavages between the Irish and the Protestants found in America a new climate in which to flourish. The Irish took refuge in what made them distinctive from Protestant American society – their religion and their entry into American politics. As it was, there were powerful internal and external forces reinforcing the Irish ethnic identity and solidarity, constraints that both gave them an overriding sense of social distinctiveness and kept them isolated from Protestant society. These constraints were: the conservatism of the Irish clergy who rose to power in the Catholic Church; the exclusive character of the parochial school system; and the nature of the initial experiences of the Irish with the ideology, ends, and advocates of the Protestant Reform Movement in the generation before the Civil War. Each of these constraints effectively impeded the assimilation of the Irish into Protestant society.²⁴⁰

The bond that had developed between the priests and the people in Ireland had lost none of its strength and effectiveness. Until the appearance of local politicians and the more prosperous saloonkeepers, the priests were the only influential figures in the Irish communities to whom the Irish could turn to for advice and assistance. Just as had in Ireland, the priests went among the people sharing their few joys and unending troubles.

²³⁹ Quoted from the *Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph*, February 6, 1845, by Willard E. Wight, “The Native American Catholic, and Immigrant, and the Immigration,” p.212

²⁴⁰ Edward M. Levine, *The Irish and Irish Politicians*, p. 69-70

The decision to establish a Catholic system of education completely separated from the American public schools actually originated in Ireland in 1849. It was prompted by the proselytizing efforts of the Protestants in the north of Ireland and especially by their proposal to create nondenominational schools to teach both Protestant and Catholic children, who would receive common religious instruction. A spokesman for the church condemned it, declaring

...it to be contrary to the spirit and practice of our Holy Church to sanction united religious instruction, or to sanction any instruction in matters connected with religion given to Catholics by persons who themselves reject the teaching of the Catholic Church...From that time denominational education became one of the chief of the Catholic claims.²⁴¹

With the establishment of parochial schools in the United States, Catholic students, a minority in the public schools, could avoid exposure to the influences of Protestant values. So gravely concerned had the Irish become about the issue of education that in the eastern United States, where religious animosities were especially virulent, Irish parents were known to prevent their children from attending public schools when there were no parochial schools available. The breach between the Irish Catholic and American Protestant religious and educational values was widened by the early efforts of the Catholic Church to obtain public funds to help reduce the burden of financing their schools. Archbishop John Hughes of New York spearheaded this effort in the state legislature, not only was he unsuccessful, but his actions widened the Irish-Protestant breach even more.²⁴²

²⁴¹ G.P. MacDonnell, "From the Insurrectionary Movement of 1848 to the Land Act of 1870," in O'Brien, p.441

²⁴² This action by Bishop Hughes was begun before the Civil War, before the incorporation of the Fourteenth Amendment into the Constitution prohibiting the use of government funds to support religious institutions.

The immigrants, shunned by the Protestant natives, congregated with their own kind; it was a form of voluntary segregation reinforced by economic necessity. They gravitated to the older sections of the towns and cities where the rents were the lowest. Often they lived in shanties and cellars. They had their own churches, their own schools, their own newspapers and their own shops. To the Protestants there was something suspicious about the foreigners and their tendency to create nations within a nation.²⁴³

Native American Protestants castigated the Irish and the German immigrants. The Germans, because some of them were radical atheists, but also because most of the Germans' "Sundays of pleasure" (picnics, etc.) conflicted with the Protestant's more puritanical observance of the Sabbath. But usually, the Germans enjoyed a reputation for industry and thrift, most of them being skilled trades people who rarely became a burden on the community.²⁴⁴ Protestant reaction to the Irish was much harsher; New York nativists saw the Irish immigrant as a positive menace. Foreign observers like James Buckingham, an English traveler, writer and lecture and Edwin L. Godkin, future editor of the *Nation*, gave the following reasons for this reaction: 1) the Irish worked at menial tasks and were therefore considered socially inferior; 2) the Irish were clannish; and 3) the Catholic Irish voted as a political unit at the behest of their priests.²⁴⁵

Since wealth was the criterion of social worth, it was obvious to the native American Protestants that the poor, destitute Irish were inferior specimens. The arrived in America ragged, penniless and half starved. Bishop Dubois of the New York diocese, as

²⁴³ Max Berger, "The Irish Immigrant and American Nativism," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXX (April, 1946) p. 146

²⁴⁴ Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949) p.214

²⁴⁵ Max Berger, "The Irish Immigrant and American Nativism," p. 150

early as 1827, noted the poor physical and financial condition of the Irish as they arrived on these shores. Unskilled, or at best semi-skilled, close to half of the gainfully employed Irish toiled with picks and shovels building the canals, turnpikes, and railroads of the state, or labored as freight handlers, or engaged in the construction trades in the expanding urban areas.²⁴⁶

Protestant New Yorkers were so alarmed at the growth rate of the Catholic Irish immigrants that even when events in England favored a lessening of Catholic/Protestant tensions, it had the opposite effect in the United States. When in 1829, Great Britain's Parliament passed the Catholic Emancipation Act, Father (later New York Bishop) John Hughes, reflecting the hopes of the Catholic clergy, believed it would immeasurably help the position of the Church in America as well as in England. However the Act had the opposite effect in the United States. Catholicism's triumph in England alarmed some of the Protestant clergy, who in 1830 began publication of the *Protestant*, a bitterly anti-Catholic newspaper edited by the Reverend William Craig Brownlee a Presbyterian cleric who was a professor of Greek and Latin at Rutgers College in 1825 and who also founded the anti-Catholic organization, the American Society to Promote the Principles of the Protestant Reformation. With the publication of the *Protestant*, many of the national reform organizations (e.g., the American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, etc.) began warning its members of the serious threat posed by the flood of Catholic immigration.²⁴⁷ Henceforth, anti-Catholicism remained part of the American reform societies. By failing to play a significant role in the movement against alcohol,

²⁴⁶ Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, Publishers, 1951) p. 66

²⁴⁷ Clifford S. Griffen, Their Brothers Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1860 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960) p. 140

slavery, and other social evils of the day, the Church stood condemned in the eyes of these reformers as being reactionary.²⁴⁸

Politically, the religion and class cleavage produced the same results in America as it had in Ireland. The interests and values of both the Irish and the Protestants were deeply imbedded in religious conflict.

Two issues affecting the Irish prior to the Civil War did much to exacerbate the already hostile feelings generated by the religious question. The first was the emergence of the Know-Nothing Party, composed of Protestant nativists who looked upon the Irish as dangerous Catholics who were neither desirous nor capable of adopting the values that distinguished what was in their minds the “American way of life.” As Catholics, the Irish were an unwanted menace who were certain to debase the American character and destroy the national welfare.

The second issue, partly arising from the first, was that of Reform, which the Irish strongly resented. And as the Reform movement gained momentum in the 1840's the position of the Irish grew worse. The Irish as an example wanted better living conditions, but they did not appreciate the patronizing concern of Protestant reformers whose real interest seemed less in replacing slums with decent housing than in bringing the Irish into conformity with their own standards and style of life. Another issue that the reformers stressed was temperance, the Irish, however, were well aware of the problem of alcoholism in their midst and resented abstemious Protestants who insistently sought to deprive them of an age-old custom, a way of conviviality, as well as escape.

²⁴⁸ Thomas T. McAvoy, “The Formation of the Catholic Minority in the United States, 1820-1860,” *Review of Politics*, X (January, 1948) p. 24

The most insistent of the Protestant reforms (aside from temperance) was the issue of slavery. The growing public advocacy of abolition struck the Irish as fraught with irony, for Irish Catholics could not forget that Protestant preachers and ‘Puritanical fanatics’ who spoke so eloquently against slavery condemned Rome with equal fervor.

The Irish also had strong personal reasons for opposing abolition. Negroes were increasing in competition with them for jobs in some eastern cities. Generally speaking, the Irish opposed abolition because of their fundamental hostility toward the Protestants. The concern that the Protestants showed for the Negroes plight in the American South was absent when the Irish were dying in the streets during the famine in Ireland.

The historian George Potter offers the following analysis of the Irish view of the Protestant reformers’ drive to abolish slavery:

“It should be remarked...that Catholic Irish opinion, except in the drive for political equality, in which it was radical in temper and method, was more likely to be found on the more conservative side. The Irishman by nature as well as by the teachings of his Church, opposed innovations, had little patience with reform and reformers, and put small faith in the use of law to change or perfect human beings. The leading Catholic Irish lawyers upheld the strict construction of the Constitution on slavery, in this being as one with the conservative legal minds of the North.

The *Boston Pilot* in 1839 urged its readers to beware of the danger of contributing, even in the smallest degree, to the support of abolitionist and antislavery societies: ‘That we should simply caution our fellow Catholics to stand aloof from these insidious and bloody-minded sectarians is not enough. We charge them with treason to the country – as conspirators against the peace of society – and as a class of tyrants of the most dangerous and treacherous character.’²⁴⁹

The Protestants ironically facilitated the Irish entry into American politics; since in Ireland, they outlawed the Irish language, in favor of English, so the Irish spoke English fluently when they arrived in America. Also, they had an extensive familiarity with the institutions, processes, and laws of Anglo-Saxon government. Additionally, the Irish were better equipped through class, personality, and political experience, than the

²⁴⁹ George M. Potter, *To the Golden Door* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1960) p. 376

nativist Protestants to build urban political organizations. In his study on the subject, the sociologist Edward Shils noted:

The nativist leaders have almost without exception been characterized by their inability to organize an administrative apparatus for their movements, or to hire or attract others to do the work for them. The organization of an administrative apparatus involves a minimum of the capacity to trust other individuals and to evoke their trust and affection to an extent sufficient for them to pursue the goals set by the organization or its leaders. America nativist-fundamentalistic agitators have lacked this minimum of trust in even those who share [d] their views.²⁵⁰

In contrast with the immigrants who came to America after them, the Irish had a very distinctive political culture, composed of specific and deep-seated attitudes about the ends and means of government, attitudes whose legitimacy was reaffirmed as a result of their experiences with Protestant America, the Reform Movement, and the Know-Nothings.

Once settled in urban areas, the Irish capitalized on their political skills and knowledge that, in addition to their status and social exclusion, gave them access to the menial jobs in city government and prompted them to enter local politics in the Democratic Party. Political power that had been used at their expense by the Protestants in Ireland now became their quest in America.

Since the impact of the Jacksonian era, the dominant strata of this nation have typically held in disesteem those who, like the Irish, have intentionally sought careers in politics. Nowhere was this idea stronger than when the Protestants lost political power to the urban masses who, in the eyes of the former, were bent on destroying the quality of life in the cities. This transfer of power necessarily bred animosities for the immigrant

²⁵⁰ Edward A. Shils, "Authoritarianism 'Right' and 'Left'" in Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda. Eds., Studies in the Scope and Method of "The Authoritarian Personality" (Glenco: Free Press, 1954) p. 42

Irish who entered urban government since their political style contrasted glaringly with that of the Protestant nativists that they had ousted.

The middle and upper-class Protestants, who had been so prominent in giving government its direction and tone in the early days of the nation now lost out to the Irish immigrants who captured public offices and staffed the urban bureaucracies. Their methods were deplored by the Protestant upper strata, whose understanding of the purpose of government was that the interests of the entire community, be it city, state, or nation were paramount. By this standard, the advancement of narrowly personal and selfish group interests was to degrade the nature and conduct of governmental affairs. Compromise, temporizing, and power struggles could only have an adverse affect on the public welfare.

Excluded from society by the Protestants because of their religion and class, the Irish took employment with municipal government and identified with and captured power in the urban Democratic Parties. Urban government became their preserve, an Irish occupational enclave that gave sharper focus to their presence and social separateness because of their commitment to the Democratic Party.

Further heightening their identity and alienation was their use of the governmental powers that they had won. Their political style was to maximize these powers by negotiating with their competitors. This style was developed out of their confrontation with the Protestant reformers (a style learned in Ireland), whose dedication to issues and policy-making caused the Irish to draw away even further from that phase of politics for which they lacked both inclination and interest.

The social characteristics that impart uniqueness to the Irish political style are deeply rooted in the perspective and history of the Irish as an alienated working class. These characteristics are: a deeply genuine and abiding interest in people as distinct individuals; a political morality with distinctive attitudes toward both political means and ends; a near-clannish definition of and concern about political loyalty; and a predominant interest in political power.

These characteristics are elemental components of the ethnic identity the Irish developed under England's rule and were reinforced by their formative social experiences in the United States. Also under British rule the Irish found that government was exclusively self-serving, corrupt, and invariably acted at their expense. This experience bred in them a completely cynical attitude towards government, which anti-Catholic sentiment and the Reform movement in America perpetuated. Irreconcilably opposed to Protestant society, the Irish were driven into further social isolation.

The classic thesis, put forward by the historians Lawrence McCaffery and Thomas Brown to explain this isolation holds that the nearly 1.5 million Irish who fled famine conditions and arrived in the United States between 1845 and 1854 initially thought of themselves in 'peasant' terms: they identified themselves in terms of their families, villages, parishes, and counties. Forced into urban centers with Irish people from every part of Ireland, the immigrants soon began to lose their old modes of identity. This process was accelerated as nativist hatred and common living conditions forced the Irish to think of themselves as a single community. McCaffery states the classic thesis concerning the primacy of the American experience in creating Irish-American nationalism: "When the Irish came to the United States they brought their townland,

parish, county, regional, and clan loyalties with them, but the common ghetto experience and Anglo-American Protestant hatred contributed to the creation of a larger Irish identity...²⁵¹

The Irish-American was defined by his Irish heritage, but he was also a loyal American dedicated to the United States. In a speech given in 1855, on St. Patrick's Day, the noted orator Thomas Francis Meagher insisted that America "does itself great wrong when it supposes, in view of that which occurs in the emigration from Ireland, that it can fail in its strength because of the addition which it receives from poor old Ireland drawing our drops of her choicest blood, and infusing them into the veins of this young giant, that he may go forward with more rapid strides to achieve the brilliant conquest which awaits him in the future."²⁵²

The conception of Irish-American identity that came to predominate during this period was a reformulated memory of an Irish past couched in terms of vengeance against Britain, which depicted Irish strength and pride. The Irishman was also a loyal American dedicated to the United States who had no duties inconsistent with the needs of his adopted country. An assertion that reflected a common response to Protestant nativist charges of dual loyalty.²⁵³

This memory, replaced by commemorations (lectures, speeches, and poems) offered each St. Patrick's Day further widened the gap between the Irish-Americans and the nativist Protestants because these commemorations reformulated the same past in different terms: blood and race, martial prowess, heroic struggle, hatred of Britain and in

²⁵¹ Lawrence McCaffery, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (Bloomington: Catholic University of America Press, 1976), p. 108

²⁵² *The Irish-American*, Vol.VII, no.12, March 24, 1855, p.2

²⁵³ Kenneth Moss, "St. Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 29, Issue 1, 1995, p. 125

place of stoic spirituality, a sense of coming confrontation with the British enemy.

Clearly, St. Patrick's Day provided a symbolically potent forum for sermons and orations that commemorated the Irish past and subtly or explicitly offered an interpretation of the Irish-American present.

St. Patrick's Day and its Parade became the focus of Commemorative activity in the Irish-American community because it met the needs of the community in a way that small banquets could not. In the first place, faced with nativist Protestant animosity, the community needed to demonstrate both its cohesion as an ethnic community and its loyalty to the United States simultaneously; in this sense, the parade was a public demand for respectability by Irish Catholics who found themselves in a materially promising but hostile environment. It provided a visible, public venue for the physical and symbolic enactment of Irish-American strength and cultural/national cohesion: yearly processions of tens of thousands of Irishmen through the city trailed by cheering onlookers had a sheer physical power that was itself a challenge to Protestant attitudes. Moreover the ranks of armed militiamen carried both physical and symbolic value for the Irish onlookers; also, numerous speakers made reference to the force of Irish arms and the coming liberation of Ireland from the British. Equal in importance to the show of force involved, the parade was a chance to demonstrate that Irish-Americans were not the disorganized, brutish drunkards that Protestant-America imagined them to be. Thus the *Irish American* urged marchers not to drink and to behave solemnly and decorously as befit the occasion; the illustrations of the march published in the *Irish World* in 1872 and 1873 are striking for their depiction of the ordered ranks of the militia and of the solemn military bearing possessed even the civil society marchers – a picture at odds with the

snide comments habitually made by nativist Protestant newspapers about the amount of drinking involved in the annual celebration.

Perhaps more importantly, the St. Patrick's Day parade also served as a ritualized form of public memory for the Irish-Americans who marched under banners that depicted the past in terms of a pantheon of Irish nationalist heroes. It provided a perfect symbolic forum for the expression of Irish nationalism that formed the core of Irish-American identity; faced with terrible hardship and nourished by hatred of Britain, the Irish-American community was welded together from disparate county and local identities and traditional religious affiliations into a group that imagined itself as a single ethnic body. Like all such communities, this imagined community needed to project its unity back into the past in Ireland and that coupled with the fact that many Irish-Americans were also involved in funding, arming, and participating in anti-British actions overseas gave it two different, yet joined, reasons for their continuing distancing from the American Protestants, the fact that the community was Irish and Catholic.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 10

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATION

When the Rev. Robert Baird, a Presbyterian scholar, attempted to explain to Europeans the American “voluntary system” of disestablished churches, he took pains to demonstrate that the separation of church and state had encouraged rather than discouraged clerical concern for education. “Primary instruction in the United States owes almost everything to religion,” he observed, “as the most efficient of all the principles that prompts its promotion.” He added that in the public school “a pious and judicious teacher, if he will only confine himself to the great doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, in which all those who hold the fundamental truths of the Bible are agreed, can easily give as much religious instruction as he chooses.”²⁵⁵ The separation of church and state had aroused healthy competition among the denominations, but the common problems facing Protestantism had also led to voluntary cooperation. The result was a society permeated with religious purpose. Education demonstrated this evangelical Protestant influence: both sectarian schools and public education were part of a pervasive Protestant crusade. Schools and churches were allies in the quest to create the Kingdom of God in America.

Native-born Protestants viewed the common school system, which preserved and inculcated American values, traditions, and ideals, as the cornerstone of republican society. They valued a society in which men rose because of their merit, and in which hard work was rewarded.²⁵⁶ The common school served both as a symbol and a guardian of this society of opportunity, providing a free public education to all children and was therefore one of the country’s surest protections against degenerating into a privileged society similar to those in Europe so abhorred by Americans. “The free schools...are the

²⁵⁵ Religion in America (New York: Harper & Bros., 1844) p. 148

²⁵⁶ Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 11

foundation on which our Republican institutions rest.”²⁵⁷ When Catholics denounced public education and sought to reduce the common schools’ financial support, the Protestants reacted in alarm. In their eyes, the Church’s criticism of this bastion of republicanism was little short of subversive.

The bedrock upon which the evangelicals created the common school was the use of the Bible as the primary text. In 1888, shortly before his death, George Atkinson, an evangelical minister, known as the father of the common school in the state of Oregon, spoke to the National Education Association’s national convention in San Francisco, urging educators to use the Bible as a textbook in the public school. He argued, “the right training of...future citizens takes precedence of every other question.” The school must reach those whose home and church do not train and “compel...youth to be law-respecting and law abiding citizens.” As the influence of family and minister diminished, the public school had to take over an increasing share of the task of moral indoctrination. There was a “pressure of *necessity* upon the guardians of the public welfare *now*” to avert catastrophe. Secular history and civics were not enough; the school must teach the Christian sanctions that buttressed rectitude. “These principles are axioms, self evident truths,” he said, “needing only to be stated in order to be admitted. Of such quality is the Decalogue, the Proverbs, the aphorisms of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and in his Parables. The maxims of political economy in the Hebrew commonwealth have never been surpassed or annulled in the experience of nations who have tried them.” Thus Atkinson proposed to employ “God’s book of human rights and laws” as the basic source of authority in the public school. “Why not engrave the Ten

²⁵⁷ Carl C. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) p. 51

Commandments at one end of every school-room, and the Sermon on the Mount at the other end? Why not follow that pathway of light that prepared the way and predicted the coming of Him who should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles? Why not restore the word of God to the public school, and enrich the pupils with its treasures of wisdom and knowledge?" He ended his oration with a call for "The Bible is our text book."²⁵⁸

"If it be objected that this will infringe the rights of conscience," said Atkinson, "the answer can be made that no right of personal conscience is so sacred as the right of self-preservation of a body politic." If the religious truths he wished to inculcate were not "self-evident" to all, no matter – the state must prevail. By the time Atkinson made his speech, this argument of social self-preservation had become a stock-in-trade of evangelical ministers.²⁵⁹ Reconciled to – indeed proud of – the voluntary system in their churches, many Protestant ministers, like Atkinson, saw no incongruity in urging the majority to make the common school a Protestant establishment. There was little difficulty for the Protestant churchmen of this era to support the common school because they believed that religion and civilization were partners. In a study of public education in New York, where the city took over the formerly Protestant Public School Society in 1842, the historian Timothy L. Smith has explained that

It was not secularism but nondenominational Protestantism, which won the day. An evangelical consensus of faith and ethics had come so to dominate the national culture that a majority of Protestants were now willing to entrust the state with the task of educating children, confident that education would be "religious" still. The sects identified their common beliefs with those of the nation, their mission with America's mission.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ George Atkinson, "The Culture Most Valuable to Prepare Law-Abiding and Law Respecting Citizens," *National Educational Association, Address and Proceedings* (Topeka, Kan.: Kansas Publishing House, 1888) p. 114-117

²⁵⁹ "The School Question," *The Christian World*, XXI (February, 1870) p. 40

²⁶⁰ Timothy L. Smith "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850," *Journal of American History*, LIII (1966-67) p. 687

While the Protestant churches did maintain their own particular religious identity and put their spiritual work first, in the movement for a morally sound civilization, they identified with the common national effort. They believed that ‘Protestantism,’ ‘Universal Education,’ and free republican institutions’ must all stand and fall together.²⁶¹

The Presbyterian educator William Bean Kennedy gave this explanation as to why the nineteenth century Protestants favored public education so strongly:

Protestants supported public schools because they saw them as a means for moral and spiritual instruction. They were conscious of the values of literacy and citizenship training, but for them the key was moral education. They expected basically a continuation of what they knew to have been the case for centuries: the schools in Western Christendom taught Christianity because it was a fundamental part of the society to which they belonged.²⁶²

In the east, the common school movement was primarily a revival of educational concern or a redefinition of educational responsibility. As the frontier moved from the Alleghenies to the Pacific, leaders were creating communities where none had existed before. There, evangelical clergymen spread the gospel of the common school in their united battle against Romanism, barbarism, and skepticism. Evangelical ministers fought each other in their churches with malicious abandon, competing for that scarce commodity, churchgoers. But in supporting public schools, they generally declared a truce. Alexis de Tocqueville noted that the sects differed in modes of worship but they preached “the same moral law in the name of God,” and this moral law could be taught in the common school.²⁶³ Just as they often preached in rotation on Sundays under the roof

²⁶¹ David E. Harrell Jr., Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866 (Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966) p. 219

²⁶² William B. Kennedy, The Shaping of Protestant Education: An Interpretation of the Sunday School and the Development of Protestant Educational Strategy in the United States, 1798-1860. Monographs in Christian Education, no.4. New York, 1966. p. 30

²⁶³ Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York: Vintage, 1958), p. 314

of the district school, so they realized that the only alternative to a common school was no school at all – or worse, a Roman Catholic institution. The usual curriculum and religious influence of a public school was scarcely distinguishable from a sectarian Protestant school; evangelicals supported both. The Protestant missionary Theron Baldwin spoke for most evangelicals when he said that it was “vital to the highest interests of these states...that *universal* education...be taken up as a great *Christian enterprise*.”²⁶⁴

One of the cherished values that the common school system reinforced was Protestantism. Lessons, textbooks, and teachers extolled Protestantism and often made derogatory remarks about the Catholic religion and Catholic countries.²⁶⁵ Usually, only the Protestant version of the Bible was used in the classroom. To Protestants, the situation seemed entirely appropriate, but Catholic parents and clergy understandably took offense. Attempts to allow pupils to use the Catholic Bible, or to ban religious instruction in the schools altogether, aroused the ire of the Protestants.²⁶⁶ If a school board was receptive to Catholic demands, popular indignation soared as the non-Catholic population, under the lead of Protestant ministers, rallied to the defense of the common schools. As an integral part of the defense of Protestantism and republicanism, the public school issue touched the lives of ordinary citizens in a way few issues could. “Romanism...cannot grow except

²⁶⁴ Timothy Smith, “The Protestant School and the Emergence of American Protestant Communities, 1800-1850,” presented at the Symposium on the Role of Education in Nineteenth Century America at Chatham, Massachusetts. June 1964

²⁶⁵ Ruth M. Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) p. 47. Elson asserts that “no theme in these schoolbooks before 1870 is more universal than anti-Catholicism” p. 53

²⁶⁶ Ray Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, p.292-293

on the soil of ignorance,” contended a Cincinnati resident. “I see in the preservation of common schools...a fatal barrier against the influence of Rome.”²⁶⁷

Public education, at this time was based on three critical assumptions. It tied patriotism to Protestantism, often coexisting with explicit hostility to Catholicism. It assumed family disorganization and that the schools and other organizations external to the family and to ongoing communal life were necessary to overcome the failures of family life. And, it was based on a sense that traditional patterns of work had to be reordered, that the casual, seasonal, quasi-independent work patterns of a preindustrial society had to give way under the demands of industrial capitalism to a new morality based upon consistency and regularity and an individualist work ethic of self control, self discipline, and self improvement.²⁶⁸

These developments were inextricably related to the vast influx of immigrants to America in the 1840s 1850s. The arrival of large numbers of impoverished Irish and non-English speaking Germans coincided with and stimulated the transformation of the America economy. Their poverty, foreignness, and their numbers made Catholicism more visible, less an abstraction. The Church became identified with the displaced, impoverished, and alien residents of America’s cities. As important, immigration changed the nature of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants. In Ireland, the Protestants held sway due to England’s control of the country, in America, under its laws, there was no non-democratic sovereignty, leading to the continuous Catholic/Protestant struggles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

²⁶⁷ William H. Baughin, “*Nativism in Cincinnati before 1860*” (M.A. Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1963) p. 157

²⁶⁸ Michael B. Katz, “The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 (Winter, 1976) p. 381

In the field of education, the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics came more quickly to the surface than in many other areas. Protestants did not recognize the Roman Catholic Church as an evangelical church, and maintained a steady polemic against “Romanism.” The Catholic population was steadily rising and Catholic parents in ever-greater numbers rebelled against the Protestant tone of the public school systems. Catholic criticisms of such systems and their determination expressed at the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore in 1884, to build a parochial school system that would include every parish, alarmed the Protestant sects. The Congregationalist reaction – “We cannot abandon our public school system on account of the difficulties with infidels or with Roman Catholics.”²⁶⁹ The Bible must be read in the schools, they insisted. The Methodist bishops saw it this way:

The combined and persistent efforts by the Bishops and priests of the Romish Church to destroy our system of common schools attract much public attention. The general diffusion of virtue and intelligence among the people furnish the only sure basis on which civil and religious liberty can rest. It becomes us, therefore, cordially to unite with all intelligent Christians and all true patriots to cherish the free institutions bequeathed to us by our Protestant forefathers, in giving an intelligent, firm, and earnest support to the civil authorities in maintaining, extending, and rendering more perfect and efficient our system of primary education, until all the people throughout the land shall share in its benefits and participate in its blessings.²⁷⁰

The Protestant educational commitment forced the Catholic hierarchy and its lay leadership to consider the question of schooling more systematically than ever before. The informal assumption that children would be educated under “the parents roof” and in informally arranged school settings, or for a handful, in academies and seminaries, became insufficient as formal schooling moved towards universality during the

²⁶⁹ Daniel D. Williams, *The Andover Liberals: A Study in American Theology* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970)

²⁷⁰ *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1872, p.456

nineteenth century. The growth of separate Catholic schools was not so much a natural and preordained extension of the Church's mission in America, but a response to the rapid development of a Protestant-based public school system, often guided by people who felt themselves alienated from America's dominant culture. Catholics in New York and elsewhere had still not made the choice of a parochial school system until under the leadership of Bishop John Hughes of New York; the Church began to wage an organized crusade to develop a separate system of education for Catholics.

Eventually despairing of any hope of reforming the public schools, Catholics shifted their efforts to securing tax monies for parochial schools. To the Protestants, the use of public funds to support private religious schools was a violation of the constitutional principle of separation of church and state. Worse still, it seemed a flagrant grab for power by the Catholic Church, especially after 1840 when the growth of public education coincided with the influx of large numbers of European immigrants, primarily Irish and German Catholics, in the two decades preceding the Civil War. Protestant nativists were enraged when in many states Democratic legislators (supported by these immigrants) introduced and supported church-sponsored school legislation, while the Whigs, (who wished immigrant support) despite opposing the Church's proposals, refused to continuously oppose Catholic legislation.

These actions by the Catholic Church marked a new turn in nativism. William H. Seward, the new governor of New York, sent a message to his state legislature calling for state funding for schools with teachers "speaking the same language, professing the same faith" as the children. Seward (a Republican) was certain that poor Irish and German Catholic parents would not send their children to schools dominated by Protestants. In the

end, Catholics did not get public money for their schools, but with the governor's help, they won an elected school board for New York City which ended nativist Protestant control.

This partial victory by the Catholic Church only served to heighten the animosity between Protestants and the immigrant driven Catholic Church. Nativism now moved into the mainstream of Protestant church life. Anti-Catholic resolutions appeared at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1841 and at various statewide general associations of the Congregational church. Soon, Methodists, Episcopalians, and local branches of Baptist congregations were involved in an expanded question of Catholic villainy. By the mid 1840's, American Protestant churches presented a virtually united front against Rome, and the vanguard movements, such as the Protestant Reformation Society, could expect more help than ever before in spreading the anti-Catholic word.

These conflicts focused on divergent sets of social norms. They were rooted in the combatant's religious perspectives. Thus while Catholics and evangelicals did battle over such questions as temperance and the "Puritan Sabbath," there was much more at stake. It was therefore natural that the evangelicals reserved their most persistent acrimony for the parochial schools.

Initially, Catholic parochial schools were not designed to "educate" in the literal and classical sense of the term, but to socialize the young into a specific value system. Their function was that "of propagating the Catholic faith, and inculcating those principles of Catholicity dominating the teachings of the Church, in the acceptance and practice of which one cannot fail in being loyal to the Faith in which he was born." Once we realize that the common school system was established for precisely the same reason,

to inculcate a specific set of values, we can appreciate the persistence of the conflicts between Catholics and evangelicals over “education.” The contest was a question of whose value system was to be transmitted to future generations. It was through the agency of the public schools that the “reformers” sought to “Americanize” the “non-American”; to provide him with a new value system; to offer him a new set of perspectives through which to see his world. The establishment of a separate school system by Catholics struck at the very heart of the evangelical’s attempt to create their moral society.²⁷¹

The specific form in which the conflict between the groups achieved public expression varied over time. There were contests over the division of public school funds, the reading of the Protestant Bible in public schools, free textbooks for public schools, and the employment of Catholic teachers in public schools.²⁷² Since all of these questions involved the use of government power, the conflict over religious values was fought out in the political arena. The recurrence of such disputes served to reactivate latent party loyalties, and to reinforce the commitments of the contesting groups to the political parties that had become the vehicles for the implementation of their values to the point that in the minds of some Catholics Americanization implied the Republicanization of Catholic voters.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Harry H. Heming, The Catholic Church in Wisconsin (Milwaukee: Catholic Historical Publishing, 1896) p. 292-293

²⁷² Neither side was reluctant to discuss the religious conflict. The *Michigan Catholic* identified the “enemy” as Methodists, Baptists, and “the British Americans who have recently become citizens for the purpose of opposing the Irish and the Catholic vote” (October 3, 1889). The *Catholic* also reminded its readers of the connection between religion and politics: “If Catholics separate religion from politics, how can the Church produce any effect in support of popular government?” (November 14, 1889)

²⁷³ Thomas T. McAvoy, The Great Crisis in American Catholic History, 1895-1900 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co. 1957) p. 62

An example of this was the Bennett Law passed by the Republican controlled Wisconsin Legislature in 1889. Two sections aroused tremendous opposition. Section One provided for the compulsory attendance of children at “some public or private day school in the city, town, or district in which he resides.” Section Five declared that “No school shall be regarded as a school under this act unless there shall be taught therein, as part of the elementary education of children, reading, writing, arithmetic, and United States History in the English language.” In combination, the provisions constituted a frontal attack against those parochial schools where instruction was given in a language other than English. Either such schools adopted English as the language of instruction, or they ceased to be “schools” in the legal sense, and parents could not satisfy the compulsory attendance provision by sending their children to such schools.²⁷⁴

The reaction was not delayed, the Milwaukee Democratic platform for the 1890 municipal election condemned the law as “wholly uncalled for, and uselessly harsh and unjust; and infringing on the liberty of conscience and on the natural right of parental control over their children.”²⁷⁵

The Catholic prelates of Wisconsin who controlled the non-English speaking (mainly German) schools in the state (there were also some Lutheran schools) joined the ranks of the law’s opponents, issuing a public declaration in which they condemned the measure as a blatant interference with “the sacred inalienable rights of parents.” In their view the law aimed at the ultimate destruction of the parochial school system. Republican leaders used the bishop’s declaration to raise the specter of Catholic domination over the Democratic Party. The “great principle...of the right of the state to control the secular

²⁷⁴ Louise P. Kellogg, “The Bennett Law in Wisconsin,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, II (September, 1918,) p. 3-25

²⁷⁵ *Milwaukee Journal*, February 28, 1890

education of children,” the Republican controlled *Milwaukee Sentinel* argued, “has been challenged - as much of the thunder of Rome as the Catholics bishops command has been hurled at it.” The *Sentinel* also warned Lutheran voters that they should not ally with “the devil’s own grandmother.” The Democrats countered by identifying the Bennett Law supporters as prohibitionists and reminding the German Lutherans that the ministers and churches that favored temperance supported the law while “the churches that oppose it are the beer churches and are supported by beer drinkers.”²⁷⁶

The Bennett Law was repealed in 1891; however, it evoked a bitter pitched battle between the Republican Protestants and Democratic Catholics because the educational question dealt not merely with external manifestations of conflicting values, but with the attempts on the part of each group to perpetuate these values. It was not merely the present, but the future that was at stake, and not merely Wisconsin, but other locations as well.²⁷⁷

To the evangelicals the danger was not imagined, but real. They were aware of the increasingly militant stance of the Catholic hierarchy on the parochial school question. They were witnesses to the rapid growth of the parochial schools. They knew that the Catholic clergy condemned the public schools for “Godlessness” while simultaneously fighting to make them even more secular by eliminating Bible reading. Any and all hope for the future preservation of evangelical values depended upon Christianizing the children of the immigrant Catholic.²⁷⁸ The Wisconsin United Brethren Conference observed that, “A foe to the common school has arisen in the foreign immigrant element,

²⁷⁶ Harry H. Heming, *The Catholic Church in Wisconsin*, p. 283-286

²⁷⁷ The Republican Party attempted the same legislative action in Illinois (the Edwards Law) with the same result, a Democratic victory.

²⁷⁸ *Minutes of the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1890, P. 56-57

with foreign ideas and customs, who in the name of religion and personal liberty threaten the life of our time-honored American free school system.”²⁷⁹

Whatever their differences over the public school question, Catholics had to unite to fight discrimination against their children who attended public schools. Many found the public schools intolerant, causing them to struggle to clear the schools of anti-Catholicism. By the end of the 1880’s, the Irish especially complained of maltreatment in all aspects of public education: insults to their people and religion by teachers and textbooks; administrative penalties against Catholic children; prejudice against Irish Catholic teachers; and prejudice against the Irish and other Catholics in the election of school boards.²⁸⁰

In Boston, during the same decade, the Irish had risen to the top in municipal politics. Hugh O’Brien, the first Irish mayor of Boston, won his first term in 1884. By 1887, the city government had Irish Catholics serving in all the major posts, including chairman of the school committee. The Protestants however organized to destroy Catholic influence in the schools. One minister put it baldly: “It was a question of Romanism against Protestantism.”²⁸¹

After two years of agitation, the anti-Catholics held full control of the schools. Even the *New York Times*, normally unfriendly to Catholics, commented editorially on the blind prejudice of some of the Protestant ministers. Also, the Protestant Irish (the Orangemen) involved themselves in the battle; they organized a British-American

²⁷⁹ United Brethren in Christ, Wisconsin Annual Conference Records, 1890, p. 41

²⁸⁰ According to John Higham, there was a peak of anti-Catholic agitation in the middle Seventies, which he traces to Catholic demands for state aid to church schools. This tide ebbed, but nativism rose to a new higher crest of hysteria after 1886. *Strangers in the Land* (New York: Atheneum, 1963) p. 28

²⁸¹ *Irish World*, August 4, 1888, p.4

Association that opposed any understanding with the Catholics.²⁸² The outcome was the opposite of the wishes of the Protestants. The bigotry in the management of the public schools contributed to the destruction of support for them within the Irish Catholic community causing them to now support parochial schools in far greater numbers than they had before.²⁸³

Schooling in the United States during the nineteenth century offered many instances of Catholic battles over control of education. Catholics tried to find parallels to their circumstances that others might understand their side of the story. As an example, demand by patriotic organizations led the Malden, Massachusetts schools to dispose in 1895 of a history text with a Confederate bias. The *Irish World* saw this campaign as a parallel to the Catholic struggle to destroy the “conspiracy against truth” in history books.²⁸⁴ When controversy arose later over an anti-Catholic text used in New Jersey normal schools, the principal of the a Hoboken teacher training school had argued that he could not simply remove the book because other people would not like Catholic dictation. The same publication asked whether the GAR would accept a history based on Confederate sources and how it would react to the answer that the book could not be removed because of the reaction of former Confederates.²⁸⁵

Towards the end of the century, the parochial elementary and grammar schools had grown substantially, but only a few Catholic secondary schools had been established, and most of these were private and often expensive. Admission to the public high schools was important to those Catholics who expected their children to continue their education.

²⁸² *Ibid.* July 28, 1888, p.6

²⁸³ *Ibid.* June 28, 1890, p. 4

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.* June 22, 1895, p. 4

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* March 26, 1898, P.1

The parents had to fight rules that denied places to parochial school graduates or gave entrance preference to those who came from public schools. Detroit's superintendent of schools decided in 1897 that parochial school graduates were not eligible to take the examination for the teacher training school. To make matters worse, the school board then decided to employ only teachers with Detroit public school training.²⁸⁶ That same year, Superintendent of Schools William Maxwell of Brooklyn, New York ordered that all qualified public school graduates must be admitted to their high schools before others were considered.

For those who accepted the common school and did not see the necessity of joining secular or religious educational facilities, anti-Catholicism and Protestantism were not evils to be concerned about. But for those Catholics who believed that formal schooling must include instruction in Catholicism, there could be no solution in the public schools. Nevertheless, so large a number of Catholic children attended public schools (mainly because of financial difficulties and because of a lack of enough Catholic schools), that choices had to be made on questions of secularization, those Catholics who wanted religious schools found it necessary to demand that religion be excluded from public schools. Catholics continued to work actively through the end of the century at removing anti-Catholicism and Protestantism from the public schools.

However, education was one instance in which attempts were made by Protestants and Catholics to work out a *modus vivendi* that would allow compromise. Despite the emergence of the common school movement, the line between public and private still remained malleable, not yet hardened into the distinctions that would mark the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These attempts at working agreements were

²⁸⁶ *Catholic Review*, October 29, 1897, p. 273

generally begun in smaller cities and towns. The plans were conceived as a means of saving money by both the municipalities and the Catholic parents.

Despite the promise with which these arrangements often begun, the compromises were almost invariably undermined, usually through a combination of hostility from non-Catholics, members of the Catholic hierarchy, and ultimately court decisions against the breach between church and state. The most famous of the compromises, the Poughkeepsie, New York plan, went into effect in 1873, and lasted until 1898 when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ruled that teachers in religious dress could not teach in a public school.²⁸⁷

The Poughkeepsie Plan survived as long as it did because of strong support from non-Catholic community leaders, a willingness to accept Catholic separateness in schooling, and because of its low profile. The overriding reason however, accepted both within and outside the church, was the desire to keep school costs down. The situation in Minnesota was entirely different; the Catholic Church's leading "Americanizer," Archbishop John Ireland, actively instituted a compromise plan he believed would integrate public and parochial schools.

Speaking before the National Educational Association in 1890, Ireland began by declaring himself "the friend and advocate of the state school" while upholding the parish school as a present necessity. But, he added, "where possible I would have all the schools state schools." The issue was how to combine Catholic and Protestant

²⁸⁷ State Superintendent Skinner held "that this union of interests is no longer desirable nor for the best interests of the schools of the city. It has been a case of irritation and discord among the patrons of the schools; is against the spirit of our institutions which call for a complete and total severance of church and state and is against the letter and spirit of the Constitution. The public school system must be conducted in such a broad and catholic spirit that Jew and Protestant and Catholic alike shall find therein absolutely no cause for complaint as to the exercise directly or indirectly of any denominational influence. In this respect every school maintained at public expense should be free, open, and accessible, without reasonable ground for objection fro any source whatever." *New York Times*, December 26, 1898.

religious teaching in state schools. “The state need not teach religion; but for the sake of its people and for its own sake, it should permit and facilitate the action of the Church.” To do this, Ireland proposed that the state pay for all secular instruction in denominational schools, and that local school boards “rent buildings formerly used as parish schools,” run them as state schools, with the “tacit understanding that so long as the teachers in those schools, Catholic in faith, passed their examinations and do their work as cleverly and loyally as other teachers, teachers of another faith shall not be put in their places.”²⁸⁸

Despite initial controversy, Ireland moved quickly to implement his ideas choosing the Minnesota communities of Faribault and Stillwater. The opposition to his plan was forthcoming almost immediately, in Stillwater, non-Catholic opposition was intransigent, while in Faribault, the added costs of schooling Catholic children and pressure to deny public classes to nuns in religious garb undermined the support the plan originally had. Additionally, unlike Poughkeepsie, there was also opposition from within the Church hierarchy which coalesced around two issues: integration with the state system would (1) undermine the Catholic atmosphere of the parochial school and the authority of the clergy over its operation and (2) destroy the basis for foreign language schools so painfully developed and tenuously held by non-English speaking Catholics.²⁸⁹

Poughkeepsie and Minnesota were only the most prominent of the compromise arrangements that would have integrated Catholic and public schools. That they failed is important since it gives weight to the premise of this paper, that the school issue became one more instance where Protestants could not unite with Catholics (even

²⁸⁸ Timothy Morrissey, “*Archbishop John Ireland and the Faribault-Stillwater School Plan of the 1880’s*,” Doctoral Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1975 p.128

²⁸⁹ Ibid. p.145

after experimenting to see if it could be done), leading eventually to the Protestant support of restriction of immigration.

In *A Popular History of the Catholic Church in the United States* written in 1876, John O’Kane Murray, New York physician and amateur historian discussed several educational issues confronting American Catholicism. In a unique section, Murray illustrated the practical side of Catholic education by escorting his readers through a typical American Catholic school of 1876.

Although there was a daily prescribed course in religious instruction, “the influence of religion permeated the classroom during the entire day. “Even the walls speak their lessons of wisdom,” suggested Murray, teach the young heart, and ‘drive afar off each thing of guilt and sin.’” Murray’s illustration exemplified an educational philosophy endorsed by the great majority of nineteenth century Catholics, the view that Catholic education was vitally important because of the permeation theory of religious education; namely, that the total environment educates as effectively as the written word and oral communication and for that reason Catholics needed an education for their children that would be not only free of Protestantism, but if possible, subsumed in Catholicism.

Catholic leaders obviously feared the religious contamination of their immigrant flocks. They looked about and all they saw was Protestant heresy as the deadly enemy of their traditional faith. They perceived themselves at war with a heretical majority and viewed American Catholicism in a state of siege against a powerful and determined enemy. Religious education seemed indispensable for the preservation of the true faith and the advance of the Church in America. Cultural pluralism jeopardized

Catholic religious unity and the public schools clearly manifested this danger. In a *Sketch of the origin and Progress of the Catholic Church in the United States*, the Reverend Charles White, Washington D.C. pastor, religious journalist, and theologian, described the different dimensions of American heterogeneity: “The general mixture of Catholics with errorists of every description in social and political life, the intermarrying with the sects, the gigantic efforts made by the state for the support of the schools in which religion [Catholic] is ignored, and by which by the completeness of their outward arrangements present every attraction to the poorer class of people...”²⁹⁰ White reviewed the pleas of the Councils of Baltimore and individual bishops for the establishment of religious schools for Catholic children. It was important to guard these children against sectarian wolves who appeared under the guise of innocent sheep. The only way to counteract these evils in the United States, judged White, was “the more general establishment of parish schools in which Catholic youth will be trained to the knowledge and practice of their religion, and a more enlarged and earnest attention to the sacred sciences in our higher institutions of learning, by which the faith will acquire a more solid and influential character.”²⁹¹

It may be doubted whether considerate treatment would have kept more Catholics, especially the Irish Catholics, in the public schools, given that many emigrated to the United States so devoted to the Catholic Church they could consider nothing but religious schooling, even though the public schools were well spoken of by citizens of their new country and they were free. On this subject, the cautious historian can accept the

²⁹⁰ Charles I. White, “Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Catholic Church in the United States of America,” in J.E. Darras, *A General History of the Catholic Church: From the Commencement of the Christian Era until the Present Time*, 4 vols. (New York: P. O’Shea, 1866) p. 661

²⁹¹ Ibid. p.662

judgment of Father John Talbot Smith, who wrote: “Had the Protestant teachers in the public schools been more kindly and less ready to insult the faith of Catholic pupils, the education question would have been delayed for many years.”²⁹²

²⁹² John Talbot Smith, The Catholic Church in New York (New York: Hall & Locke, 1905) Vol. 1, p.187

CHAPTER 7
TEMPERANCE

Though excess had been condemned in colonial Protestantism, especially among Methodists, the adding of temperance to the definition of Christian civilization was for the most part an innovation of the nineteenth century. While drinking had generally been accepted in church functions, to the evangelical mind, a drunken man was a poor example of citizenship in a Christian commonwealth. After the separation of church and state, the continuing Protestant effort to secure this Christian civilization had to proceed chiefly by influencing personal behavior. An increase in the consumption of alcohol in the new century suggested a decline in personal morality and was seen as a threat to Christian civilization. As a result, a determined campaign against intemperance was launched.

The leader of this crusade against alcohol was Lyman Beecher. In 1808, he preached a series of sermons on intemperance that were published in a number of editions. Soon the evangelical forces were adding temperance to their profile of a Christian America. The Episcopal bishop of Ohio, Charles P. McIlvaine, was a forceful advocate of temperance, in one of his tracts; he summed up the threat of intemperance to the nation:

Here, then are three important points which we may safely assume as entirely unquestionable: - that our country is horribly scourged by Intemperance; that the time has come when a great effort is demanded for the expulsion of this evil; and that no effort can be effectual without being universal. Hence is deduced, undeniably, the conclusion that it is the duty and the solemn duty of the people in every part of this country, to rise up at once, and act vigorously and unitedly in the furtherance of whatever measures are best calculated to promote reformation.²⁹³

The evangelical determination in support of temperance was so effective that by the 1850's, a total of sixteen states and territories had taken some kind of action in restricting liquor traffic. The churches, viewing the individual drinker, considered

²⁹³ "Address to the Young Men of the United States on Temperance," *The Temperance Volume; Embracing the Temperance Tracts of the American Tract Society*, no. 244, (New York, n.d.) p.5

temperance “the center of all social reform.” But when temperance failed, prohibition was enlisted to support an essentially Puritan ethic.

Social developments in the 1840s and 1850s increased the sense of urgency among the religious advocates of temperance. Beginning in the 1840s immigration to the United States from Europe rose rapidly. Between 1845 and 1855, nearly 3 million immigrants, the vast majority from Ireland and Germany arrived to start a new life in America. Many of them brought attitudes toward the use of alcohol that sharply conflicted with American temperance practices. Germans saw no incompatibility between drinking and family entertainment and offended Protestant sensibilities by enjoying their beer on Sundays.

A more extensive array of complaints greeted the 1.5 million Irish newcomers. The great majority of Irish immigrants were young, penniless, male refugees from famine. Driven by familiar customs, their straitened circumstances in America, and loneliness, they drank whiskey, often to excess. This culture alarmed the evangelicals who were already put off by the poverty and Catholicism of the Irish. Although a few Irish temperance societies that practiced moral suasion enjoyed modest success in America, both Irish and German immigrants keenly resisted virtually all legal attempts to control drinking.²⁹⁴

Also during the 1840s, the “ultraist” doctrine of total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages dominated the Protestant temperance societies, and heavy drinking by the lowly Irish and Germans was used as a warning to those who sought acceptance as members of the middle class. Temperance proselytizers warned that the drinker is not

²⁹⁴ Thomas R. Pegram, Battling Demon Rum (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 1998) p. 32-33

only immoral and sinful in his vice but on the road to certain ruination. He will lose his industrious devotion to work, and then his reputation for reliability, and finally not only his job but his status in the middle class. If, as some argued, temperance politics was status politics, it also represented an effort to uplift a native population that feared comparison with the immigrants. Temperance and nativism made natural moral partners: foreigners were wasting themselves in drink, deluding themselves in their choice of schooling, and risking their souls by accepting the authority of sinister and manipulative priests who denied them access to the true Bible. The native American was asked to see in the immigrant a vision of dangers confronting himself and his nation. He must try to save America by damming the tide of immigration and forcing those wretched aliens already here to change their destructive ways that threatened everyone.²⁹⁵

Until 1838, the American temperance movement did not attempt direct political action. In that year the Massachusetts legislature passed the first major temperance bill, the Fifteen-Gallon Law, which prohibited purchase of liquor in quantities of less than 15 gallons. Since cash was scarce among the poorer sections of the state, effectively, it restricted drinking among the immigrants more than among the nativist middle and upper classes. It was repealed two years later but the precedent of seeking temperance through law was established. It was the first in a campaign to outlaw taverns and to limit the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The association of the Irish and the Germans with opposition to temperance programs added a significant meaning to temperance in the political area. It widened the cultural gap between the native and the immigrant by placing each as an opponent to the

²⁹⁵ Whitney R. Cross, The Burned Over District (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950) p. 116-118

others way of life. The American Protestant and the immigrant Catholic were not simply two peoples of different cultures. When the temperance forces sought legislative ends, each group became an impediment to the others victories. The alliance between the temperance societies and the anti-immigrant movement of the Know-Nothings completed a polarization process in which political defeat was tantamount to a loss of status and power for the cultural group that bore the loss.²⁹⁶

The relationship between the native American and the immigrant populations of the cities also had a welfare orientation. The upper-class, displaced power elite of the Eastern seaboard attempted to shore up a fading control through the moral regeneration of the new electorate. The Protestant “common man” sought his own self-improvement through the temperance societies. Both wished to assimilate the immigrant to American society and to solve the problems of urban poverty through temperance. They viewed the immigrant as an object of benevolence: someone they would help to achieve the morally sanctified habits of the native American, of which abstinence had become so cardinal a virtue. Here as in the antislavery movement, temperance was again an effort of those who practiced virtue to make their style of life a universal one.²⁹⁷

That the immigrant became an object for commiseration and concern of the native Protestants was logical enough if one examined his standards of welfare, as well as morality. During the 1840’s and 1850’s, the American labor force began to develop significant industrial characteristics as the American economy became larger, more urbanized, and more composed of unskilled labor. And most significantly, the Irish and

²⁹⁶ Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press) p. 55

²⁹⁷ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1933) p. 25

German immigrants were the backbone of that industrial expansion. Wherever cities developed, so did the complex of criminality, intemperance, poverty and ill health. It was more typical of the Irish than of the Germans, but it was an apparent problem in German Ohio as well as Irish Massachusetts.²⁹⁸ During the 1840's the cost of intemperance to the society was an important theme in temperance literature. One of the leading tract's of the late 1840's was Samuel Chapman's *Temperance Lecturer: being facts gathered from a personal examination of all the jails and poor-houses in the State of New York, showing the effects of intoxicating drinks in producing Taxes, Pauperism, and Crime*. The subtitle of this work was typical of this genre in its stress on temperance as a solution to a perplexing public problem of both moral and financial dimensions. In Boston and other parts of Massachusetts, rural areas resented the large state tax bill resulting in part from the high rates of pauperism among the Irish immigrants.²⁹⁹

Benevolence and hostility were not the only reasons for the Protestants to become involved with the immigrants; there was also the view that the immigrant was an immoral creature who threatened the safety of the populace and its institutions. In the 1840's and 1850's, the temperance movement engaged in both moral benevolence and nativistic hostility. This hostility was evidenced in the political affinities between Prohibition and anti-immigration.

The Know-Nothings made considerable headway through a combination of abolitionism, temperance, and an appeal to nativism. The political confrontation between native and immigrant was a real one based on real cultural differences. Temperance to the Irish and German immigrant was a tyranny over their ways of life and not a move to

²⁹⁸ Vera Shlakman, *Economic History of a Factory Town* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969) p. 37

²⁹⁹ Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941) p. 191-192

uplift society. The “grogshop” and beer stein were accepted parts of Irish and German group life, they had no experience with revivalism or any tradition of drinking to be revived. When the temperance reform swept the nation, heavy drinking became a falling off from a once accepted moral standard. This was not the case among the immigrants, where they did not view their drinking patterns as a severe problem.

Politically, the immigrant populations were the most powerful opponents of the temperance forces. The fear of losing immigrant support was a major source of political compromise on Prohibition issues in the 1850's. In 1854, the Republican Party had been outspoken in favor of Prohibition, however, as they became a national party, this support became a liability which they dropped when immigrant opposition proved strong enough to cost state elections.

During the political contests of the 1840's and 1850's, the absence of alcohol had become more and more a symbol of middle-class, native American respectability. The urban lower class immigrant had emerged as both the opposite of the temperance ideal and a political opponent of significant concern.

The solutions that the temperance culture provided for the problems of an expanding industrial society were predicated upon the belief in the dominance of middle-class styles of life as symbols of success and prestige in American life. In holding out that style of life as the legitimate and dominant definition of respectability, the propagators of the temperance doctrine had confidence that power, prestige, and even income were legitimately tied to the values of the sober, industrious, and steady middle-class citizen. Before the Civil War, the temperance movement was preoccupied with the establishment of abstinence as a norm of behavior. In the last half of the nineteenth century they

operated with the conviction that such was the case; that abstinence as an ideal was a mark of middle-class membership.

In using temperance as a vehicle for dealing with urban social problems, the Protestants attempted to set the terms for mobility and justice by sponsoring the uplift of the lowly. Through the doctrine of total abstinence, they issued an invitation to the immigrant of obtaining middle-class membership, by abstaining from the use of alcohol.

The temperance forces also used the schools as a means of persuading the immigrant drinker that his conduct was harmful and immoral, by the use of the McGuffey Reader that stressed temperance, sobriety, and the Protestant ethic.³⁰⁰

After the Civil War, it became apparent to the temperance forces that they could not assimilate the drinker into their orbit; they had failed to bring about a sober, temperate, and well behaved society. This was the case because the rural, Protestant, native American was almost always in favor of Prohibition and the urban, Catholic, immigrant almost always opposed.

The campaign for national Prohibition had a polarizing effect on the temperance movement. It promoted an atmosphere in which the meaning of Prohibition as a symbol of Protestant middle-class, rural supremacy was enhanced in a period of industrial growth, urban development, and Catholic immigration.

The polarizing effects of the campaign for national Prohibition were expressed in an editorial in the Anti-Saloon League journal: “The liquor issue,” wrote the editor of the *American Issue*, “is no longer one of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ arguments. Henceforth it is to be a question of ‘wet men’ and ‘dry men.’”³⁰¹ In effect, attack the saloon rather than the

³⁰⁰ The McGuffey Readers introduced a temperance ethic as part of their general effort to mold character.

³⁰¹ *The American Issue*, 20 (January, 1912) p. 4

drinker. Both the singleness of purpose represented by the League and the sense of opposition suggested by the “anti” character of its name are dominant features of the temperance movement.

The saloon was pre-eminently an urban institution. For the small-town native American Protestant, it epitomized the social habits of the immigrant population. The saloon was also a source of the corruption that he saw as the bane of political life. The Protestant native additionally reacted against the ethics of personal reciprocity on which machine politics was built. If it were to continue, the growth of urban communities, so ran this argument, would wreck the Republic. It would lead to the supremacy of those people “who gather its ideas of patriotism and citizenship from the low grog shop.”³⁰²

Within the context of Protestant antipathy to urban and Catholic communities, the saloon appeared as the symbol of a culture that was alien to the character of American values. *Anything that supported one culture necessarily threatened the other.* “The Anglo-Saxon stock is the best improved, hardiest, and fittest...if we are to preserve this nation and the Anglo-Saxon type, we must abolish saloons.”³⁰³

The saloon however did great service, as well as great harm to workingmen. It was, in particular, the friend of the immigrant, his only contact with the outer world. In Henry Roth’s novel about Jewish immigrant culture in New York City, *Call It Sleep*, a Jewish mother describes the constriction of her life, after several years in America:

But here I am. I know there is a church on a certain street to my left, the vegetable market is to my right, behind me are the railroad tracks and the broken rocks, and before me, a few blocks away is a certain store window that has a kind of white-wash on it – and faces in the white-wash, the kind children draw. Within this pale is my America, and if I ventured further I should be lost.³⁰⁴

³⁰² Ibid. (June, 1913) P. 4

³⁰³ Ibid. (April, 1912) P.1

³⁰⁴ Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep* (Picador: Paterson, NJ, p.37

The saloon was as important to the immigrant, as its abolition was to the Prohibitionist. The saloons provided immigrant votes to the city bosses and corrupt politics to America; but it could only do so by providing jobs and help to the immigrants in return. The ward heelers and barkeepers were the first welfare workers of the slums. The saloons were the first labor exchanges and union halls. They had names such as the “Poor Man’s Retreat,” “Everybody’s Exchange,” “The Milkman’s Exchange,” “The Social,” “The Fred,” and the “Italian Headquarters.” In one sense, the attack on the saloons was the attack of capital on the haunts of labor.³⁰⁵

The work of the Anti-Saloon League joined by the Methodist Board of Morals had a great deal of influence on the passing of Prohibition, but the churches had long ago taken a staunch temperance stance. The new change that impelled its passage was the fact that the consumption of alcohol continued to increase after 1850. This rise was accompanied by a decrease in the consumption of distilled spirits but a large increase in beer drinking, a situation that suggests both a rise in moderate rather than excessive drinking, and the immigrant populations as a source of a large percentage of the rise.³⁰⁶

That the cities were the source of much of the increase is suggested by two other facts. First, local option had been evaded in the cities but in the small towns and rural areas it was well enforced.³⁰⁷ Second, by 1914, there were 14 states that passed Prohibition laws, all predominantly rural, but even so, national drinking rates were at an all time high.

³⁰⁵ R. Calkins (ed.) *Substitutes For the Saloon* (Boston: Ayer Co. , 1971) p. 61

³⁰⁶ Robert Bale, “Cultural Differences in Rates of Alcoholism,” *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 6 (March, 1946) p. 480-496

³⁰⁷ “Local prohibition has succeeded [in the United States] precisely where state prohibition has succeeded, in Rural and thinly peopled districts and in certain small towns...local veto in America has only been found operative outside the larger towns and cities” Joseph Roundtree and Arthur Sherwell, *State Prohibition and Local Option* (London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1900) p. 253

Moreover, the opponents of any prohibition of drinking and their immigrant allies could count on the unwavering support of the Democratic Party, for the “Rumocracy” was everywhere perceived by the temperance crusaders to be the avowed enemy of “true piety” – a party that wouldn’t support for office anyone who... [would] vote to control the Sabbath-day or sale of liquors.”³⁰⁸

The immigrants also caused a political problem for the temperance forces, when they began to question the political character of the party of “great moral ideas,” the Republicans. The prewar temperance crusaders had allied themselves with the Republican Party; but by the late 1860s they had discovered that the requirements of pragmatic party building sometimes conflicted with their righteous demands. Sensitive to the growing size of the Irish and German voting population, some Republican leaders sought to avoid antagonizing them. However to do that as the temperance forces saw it, was to pander to the “saloon vote,” to compromise principle for mere votes. Some temperance people began to question the sincerity of the party’s commitment to righteousness. These questions increased in intensity and frequency when the party in 1872 approved a national platform voicing disapproval of laws “for the purpose of removing evils, by interference with rights not surrendered by the people to either the state or national government.” Although ambiguously phrased, the plank, authored by the editor of the *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, was perceived by temperance supporters as an effort “to appease the liquor vote.”³⁰⁹

The Republican Party’s answer to this dilemma heightened the distance between the Catholic immigrants and the Protestant nativists, was by showing their concern over a

³⁰⁸ *Proceedings of the Sixth National Temperance Convention*, 1868, p. 26

³⁰⁹ Sixteenth plank of the 1872 Republican National platform.

greater evil, the sin of popery. When Republican strategists in the 1870s cranked up their anti-Catholic themes, they were not embarking on some new political departure, they perceived that the groups at which they directed them were already imbued with anti-Catholic values. Twisting “the Pope’s big toe”³¹⁰ was a way of deflecting acrimony towards the party by reminding these groups of the rapport between their dispositions and the party’s political character.

The rise of Prohibition’s strength owed a great deal to the sense of cultural change and prestige loss which accompanied the increased urbanization and immigration of the of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The domination of American life, thought, and morality by the ethics of Protestant theology was waning and with it the concept that other those of other religions could be brought into the Protestant orbit, leaving only a coercive approach to drinking, Prohibition.

The centralization of opposition to Prohibition was within the Eastern, urban states where a large percentage of Catholics and immigrants were to be found, major urban and industrial areas like Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New York were the last to ratify the Eighteen Amendment. The areas of national Prohibition sentiment were thus Protestant, rural and nativist. They were more likely to be found in the South and Midwest. While states with high percentages of immigrants were likely to oppose Prohibition, this was less true when the foreign population was Protestant and rural.³¹¹

More significant perhaps, perhaps was the fact that within the individual states it was the urban areas that provided the greatest opposition to Dry laws, and the repeal of such laws as did exist. Even in rural states, it was in the cities that the state and local laws

³¹⁰ An expression used in the nineteenth century in a pejorative way.

³¹¹ *Anti-Saloon League Yearbook*, 1913 (Westerville, Ohio: American Issue Publishing Co., 1913) p. 10

were most often and openly evaded. As an example, in Alabama where Prohibitionist sentiment was strong, the ten strongly Wet counties were the dominant political, industrial, and financial centers of the state. The same was true in North Carolina and the other Southern states, where the Catholic population was small and the percentage of immigrants outside of the cities almost nil.³¹²

Contrast this with Connecticut and Rhode Island, the two states that failed to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment: the Catholic percentage of the total church population was 67 and 76 respectively. The Anti-Saloon League, being a league of Protestant churches, could look for small influence in the cities where the Catholics predominated. Sixty-five percent of the churchgoers in cities of 350,000 at this time (1900) were Catholics. Three-fourths of the Catholics in the United States lived in cities of 25,000 or more, and in those cities, they constituted one-half to two-thirds of the churchgoing population.³¹³

The Prohibitionists continuously represented the cities as full of foreigners making evil profits out of poisonous drink. It was impossible to raise good Americans there. The International Reform Bureau (a prohibitionist organization) warned the God fearing:

In this age of cities it is to be expected that conversions will decrease if we allow needless temptations about our your to increase, such as foul pictures, corrupt literature, leprous shows, gambling slot machines, saloons, and Sabbath breaking. Instead of putting around our boys and girls a fence of favorable environment, we allow the devil to put about them a circle of fire; and then we wonder that they wither. *We are trying to raise saints in hell.*³¹⁴

³¹² Alexander Strong and Donald Strong, Southern Primaries and Elections (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1950) p. 11

³¹³ Peter H. Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), p. 31

³¹⁴ Dr. and Mrs. W. Crafts, Intoxicating Drinks and Drugs in All Lands and Times (Washington, D.C.: International Reform Bureau, 1909) p.15

This was also true in the Midwest, when the Arbeiter Bund of Michigan³¹⁵ declared its opposition to prohibition, the *American Issue* said: “Really, is not the country growing rather tired of having a lot of swill-fattened, blowsy half-foreigners getting together and between hiccoughs laying down definitions to Americans regarding the motive of our constitution and laws. But then we suppose that to intimate anything of this sort is A.P.A.-ism and ‘attempting to excite odium against foreigners.’”³¹⁶

There was a quality of desperation in the country’s fear of the city after 1896. When McKinley defeated Bryan, the country seemed to have lost its chance to govern the nation. The census of 1900 showed that two in every five Americans lived in urban areas. In 1860, it had been one in five, and the cities were growing faster than ever, as European immigrants poured into the urban slums. It is small wonder that denunciations of the city rose to the pitch of hysteria on Chautauqua circuits³¹⁷ and in prohibitionist periodicals.

The prohibitionists understood and were conscious of the conflict of cultures that both produced the Prohibition issue and characterized the opponents. Dry men were native Americans; they were Protestants who took their religion seriously; they were the farmers, the small-town professionals; and their sons and daughters, while they had migrated to the big city, kept alive the validity of their agrarian morals. Wet men were the newcomers to the United States; the populations that supported the political machines of Boston, New York, and Chicago; the infidels and heathens who didn’t keep the Sabbatarian laws of Protestantism; and the sophisticated Eastern “society people.” All of these were perpetuating and expanding the modes of life that the Dry had been taught to

³¹⁵ A German-American workingman’s organization.

³¹⁶ *American Issue*, Maryland Edition, August 1, 1908

³¹⁷ Traveling lectures

see as a mark of disrepute in his own local social structure. The outnumbering of the rural population by the urban, wrote an Anti-Saloon League editor, has been the cause of the wreckage of republics. “The vices of the cities have been the undoing of past empires and civilizations.”³¹⁸

The attack on the saloon emerged in urban areas as a link between Progressivism and the temperance movement. It made it easier to depict Prohibition as a move toward good government and the end of political corruption. In the same fashion, nativism carried with it connotations of positive progressive reform. It sought the end of machine politics by limiting the power of groups [immigrants, mainly Irish] who were felt by the temperance movement to have no respect for American political principles. The sources of this reform were as much religious in origin as they were political. The California Voters League declared that its objective was “a management of public offices worthy of an enlightened, progressive Christian country.”³¹⁹

The struggle between the Protestant evangelical churches and the saloons was based on different views of the role of God and man in society. It was also bound up with their fears of the Roman Catholic Church. The basic problem of the drys was to translate this struggle into political terms. If they wanted a law against the saloons, they would have to obtain it through the democratic process. The Protestant prohibitionists pushed the problem of liquor so much into the forefront of political affairs that it overshadowed more important matters. The Jesuit weekly *America* acknowledged this in an editorial:

The Decalogue is no longer up to date. “Thou shalt not kill,” in certain contingencies, is of less moment than “Thou shalt not drink wine”; “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is on a par with “Thou shalt not use tobacco”; whereas, “Thou shalt not

³¹⁸ *The American Issue*, 21 (June, 1913) p.4

³¹⁹ Gilman Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, University of California Publications in History, 57 (1957) p.105

steal,” appears to be of less consequence to a class of reformers than “Thou shalt not play Sunday baseball.”³²⁰

A concrete political response to the Catholic opposition to temperance was to attempt to restrict immigration. Republicans successfully managed to pass laws partially cutting immigration, but President Cleveland vetoed a bill to impose a literacy test on all immigrants. Since at this time, the Protestants did not have the votes to stop immigration, perhaps the total amount of votes could be *expanded* – in the proper evangelical direction.

Specifically, it was clear to the evangelicals that the role of women in the non-Protestant ethnic family was very different from what is was in the evangelical Protestant family. Since one of the reasons impelling evangelicals and Republicans toward prohibition was the fact that not only were the cites of the Northeast becoming increasingly Catholic, but that the male Catholics congregated around the neighborhood saloon and generally took their political views from the saloonkeeper, who thus became the political powerhouse in his particular ward. Therefore, prohibition also meant breaking the political power of the urban Democratic machines.

But while the social lives of the Catholic males revolved around the saloon, their wives stayed at home. On the other hand, evangelical women were increasingly independent and politically active, the wives of the Catholic women revolved around hearth and home. Politics was strictly an avocation for husbands and sons. This situation became a reason for the evangelicals to push for women’s suffrage, perceiving that far

³²⁰ *America*, March 6, 1915

more evangelical women than Catholic women would take advantage of the power to vote.

Perhaps the major single organization in the women's suffrage movement was the Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1874 and reaching a membership of 300,000 by 1900. While the passage of prohibition laws was the organizations main thrust, it was also involved in agitating for other laws associated with drinking:

[The WCTU] has been a chief factor in State campaigns for statutory prohibition, and constitutional amendments for the protection of women and children...The association protests against the legalization of all crimes, especially those of prostitution and liquor selling.³²¹

Not only did Susan B. Anthony begin her career as a professional prohibitionist, but her two successors as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association - Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw – also begin their professional careers as prohibitionists. The leading spirit of the WCTU, Frances E. Willard, was born of New England-stock parents who moved westward to study at Oberlin College, then the nation's center of evangelical pietism. Guided by Miss Willard, the WCTU began its suffrage activities by demanding that women vote in local option referendums on prohibition, Willard wanted women to vote on this issue because “majorities of women are against the liquor traffic...”³²²

Conversely, whenever there was a voters' referendum on woman's suffrage the Catholics and foreign born, responding to immigrant culture and reacting against the evangelical-feminist support of prohibition, consistently opposed women's suffrage. In

³²¹ Susan B. Anthony and Ida Harper, The History of Woman Suffrage. Vol. 4 (Rochester: Susan B. Anthony, 1902, p. 1046

³²² Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (New York: Atheneum, 1970, p. 183

Iowa, the German's voted against women's suffrage as did the Chinese in California, even though the women's suffrage amendment in that state was heavily supported by the anti-Catholic American Protective Association. The cities, populated by immigrants opposed women's suffrage, while the evangelical rural areas favored it. Thus, the Oregon referendum of 1900 lost because of opposition in the heavily Catholic cities of Portland and Astoria.

In 1877, a women's suffrage referendum was defeated in Colorado. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in favor of women's suffrage in 1880, Anthony presented her explanation of the Colorado vote:

In Colorado...6,666 men voted "Yes." Now, I am going to describe the men who voted "Yes." They are native-born men, temperance men, cultivated, broad, generous, just men, men who think. On the other hand, 16,007 [men] voted "No." Now I am going to describe that class of voters. In the southern part of that State are Mexicans, who speak the Spanish language...The vast population of Colorado is made up of that class of people. I was sent out to speak in a voting precinct having 200 voters; 150 of those voters were Mexican greasers, 40 of them foreign-born citizens, and just 10 of them were born in this country.³²³

Massachusetts gave women the power to vote in school board elections in 1879. By 1888, their votes, combined with the male evangelical votes were enough to drive Catholics off the school board. In contrast, Catholic women scarcely voted, "thereby validating the nativist tendencies of suffragists who believed that extension of full suffrage to women would provide a barrier against further Catholic influence."³²⁴

Annie Wittenmyer, an influential organizer in the women's movement wrote a history of prohibition crusade with statistics on the ethnicity of those involved in the liquor traffic. She claimed that, "more than two-thirds of the entire liquor business is in

³²³ Alan P. Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 87

³²⁴ James P. Kenneally, "Catholicism and Woman Suffrage in Massachusetts," *Catholic Historical Review* 53 (April, 1967), p. 253

the hands of a low class of foreigners, although the entire foreign population of the country constitutes less than one-sixth.” She cited a study done by the Philadelphia Reform Club that found the vast majority of saloon owners to be of foreign, particularly of German or Irish descent. Of over eight thousand liquor dealers in the city, only 205 were native-born. Wittenmyer also saw a clear connection between immigration, alcohol, and larger social problems like poverty and prostitution. She concluded, “We are slowly learning the fact that we are building jails and almshouses that ought to have been built in Germany and Ireland, and that America is rapidly becoming a sewer for the moral filth of Europe.”³²⁵ Eliza Daniel Stewart, another crusade leader,³²⁶ believed that native-born culture should have pre-eminence; she also stated that if the immigrant “is not satisfied with our institutions, as she finds them, let him by all means return whence he came...What right has he to claim special consideration above the native? Stewart particularly resented the political influence immigrants had achieved on the city level and claimed, “if not arrested, this continual thrusting of the foreign element forward and above the natives in every political contest will bear its fruit not very far hence.”³²⁷

The formation of the Anti-Saloon League in 1895 focused the Protestant struggle for the Eighteenth Amendment into nonpartisan political channels:

The Anti-Saloon League had become transformed into an independent temperance agency with its own organizational structure, its own constituency, its own leaders, and its own methods and policy. From a coalition of existing temperance groups, it had become a national federation of state anti-saloon leagues, which, in turn, had become federations of individual churches throughout each state. With a highly centralized yet extremely flexible federal structure, the league, through its closely

³²⁵ Annie Wittenmyer, “The Work of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union,” *The Dissenters: America’s Voices of Opposition*, ed. John Gabriel Hunt (New York: Gramercy Books, 1993), p. 123-125

³²⁶ In 1872, she urged wives of “drunkards” to sue alcohol dealers and was among the first to propose what are now known as server liability laws.

³²⁷ Eliza Daniel Stewart, *Memories of the Crusade* (Columbus, Ohio: William G. Hubbard, 1889) p. 385

coordinated state branches, could reach down into thousands of local churches and mobilize at almost a moments notice, a large body of Protestant voters.³²⁸

Evangelical denominations felt themselves under attack by the liquor habit and all who participated in it. “Of all the weapons used against the Church of Christ, we believe intemperance is the most dangerous and deadly.” A report to the Presbyterians declared in 1904.³²⁹ The Anti-Saloon League’s power was gained by combining rural, small town middle-class, and progressive interests (in all of which Protestants were deeply involved) to rescue American civilization from the threatening forces of the city, the immigrant, and the liquor industry:

As local option increased, it assumed more and more the nature of a conflict between country and city. One reason for this was the growing determination of the old stock middle-classes to clean up the cities and rid them of vice, crime, poverty, and corruption. Unless cleansed, they feared, the cities would undermine the foundations of American civilization and prevent any further progress toward uplift and reform.³³⁰

The historian Joseph Gusfield put it in terms of religion:

The Eighteen Amendment was the high point of the struggle to assert the public dominance of old middle-class values. It established the victory of Protestant over Catholic, rural over urban, tradition over modernity, the middle class over both the lower and the upper strata.³³¹

When the prohibition amendment went into effect, a long sought goal of much of the Protestant world seemed to be permanently realized. This was a dramatic example of the power of the churches when mobilized by what they regarded as a clear moral issue. Though many forces worked together toward the ratification of the amendment, the

³²⁸ James H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920 (Cambridge: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1963) p. 135

³²⁹ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1904*, p.188

³³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 151

³³¹ Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade, Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963) p. 7

evangelical churches believed that it was a victory for them especially. In the words of the Southern Methodist bishop James Cannon Jr.

In any discussion of ‘why’ the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the prohibition movement in the United States has been Christian in its inspiration and has been dependent for its persistent vitality and victorious leadership upon the active and finally, upon the practically undivided support of American Protestants.³³²

Encouraged by this achievement, evangelicals hoped to overcome all the obstacles that lay between them and a Christian America. Though the saloon had come to symbolize for the evangelical mind much that stood in the way of a better world, its closing was but one of the needed forward steps. The Protestant crusaders were convinced that many other important issues could now be dealt with: the work of their missions at home and abroad, the progress of Christian education, and dealing with dissenters and aliens. But the mood was buoyant and the sense of accomplishing their objectives was high:

Thirty years ago was there one of us here in this room who believed that we would see the saloon abolished in the American nation? There are many of us in this audience tonight who will live to see other institutions of lust and evil and sin absolutely extirpated from American life. But what we are being told today is just what Christians have known from the very beginning, that any generation might have the Kingdom of God if it would open itself to the full inpouring of the will and power of God.³³³

³³² Virginius Dabney, *Dry Messiah, The Life of Bishop Cannon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949) p. 136

³³³ *Federal Council Bulletin*, June, 1919, p. 102

CONCLUSION:

The Road to Restriction - Nativism

In 1790, the total population of the United States, excluding Indians, was 3,929,000 of whom 698,000 were slaves. The white population was 80 percent British (the remainder mainly Dutch and German) and 98 percent Protestant. Excluding blacks, America was a highly homogeneous society in terms of race, national origin and religion. “Providence has been pleased,” John Jay observed in *The Federalist*, “to give this one connected country to one united people – a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs, and who, by their joint counsels, arms, and efforts, fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established liberty and independence.”

America was founded as a Protestant society, and for two hundred years almost all Americans were Protestant. Protestant beliefs and values had been the core element, along with the English language. Protestant values shaped American attitudes towards private and public morality, economic activity, and public policy. “In America, the nineteenth century European visitor, Philip Schaff observed, “everything had a Protestant beginning.”³³⁴

The settling of America was the result of economic and religious motives; religion was a predominant motive in the creation of most of the colonies, Anglicans in Virginia, Quakers and Methodists in Pennsylvania, and the Puritans in Massachusetts. The Puritans defined their settlement based on a “Covenant with God” to create a “city on a hill” as a model for all the world, and people of other Protestant faiths to see. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Americans defined their mission in the New World in biblical

³³⁴ Philip Schaff, *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961) p. 72

terms. They were a “chosen people,” on an errand in the wilderness,” creating “the new Israel” or the “new Jerusalem” in what was clearly “the promised land.” America was the site of a “new Heaven and a new earth, the home of justice,” God’s country. The settlement of America was vested “with all the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual appeal of a religious quest.” This sense of holy mission was expanded into millenarian themes of America as “the redeemer nation” and the “visionary republic.”³³⁵

The Puritan message, style, and doctrines spread throughout the colonies and became absorbed into the beliefs and outlooks of other Protestant groups such as the: Baptist, Methodist, pietist, fundamentalist, and evangelical. While these movements differed, they were generally committed to an emphasis on the individual’s direct relation to God. Also, the supremacy of the Bible as the sole source of God’s word, salvation through faith and for many the transforming experience of being “born again,” personal responsibility to proselytize and bear witness, and democratic and participatory church organization.³³⁶

Religious enthusiasm was a distinctive trait of many American sects in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and evangelism as has been shown in this dissertation has been central to American Protestantism. From the beginning, America was, in the words of the University of Chicago historian Martin Marty, an “evangelical empire.” Evangelical Protestantism, according to George Marsden, was, “the dominant force in American life” in the nineteenth century, to Garry Wills, “the mainstream of American religion.” In the early nineteenth century, Protestant sects, preachers, and

³³⁵ Sacvan Bercovitch, The Puritan Origins of the American Self (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) p. 144

³³⁶ John C. Green et al., Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield) p. 243-244

adherents exploded in number. Young men of restless energy,” as the historian Nathan Hatch has said, “went about movement-building as self-conscious outsiders. They shared an ethic of unrelenting toil, a passion for expansion, a hostility to orthodox belief and style, a zeal for religious reconstruction, and a plan to realize their ideals... They offered the common people, especially the poor, compelling visions of individual self-respect and collective self-confidence.” The history of American Evangelicalism is more than a history of a religious movement,” William McLoughlin, the leading scholar of the Great Awakenings states, “To understand it is to understand the whole temper of American life in the nineteenth century.”³³⁷

Most Protestant sects emphasize the role of the individual in achieving knowledge of God directly from the Bible without intermediation by clerical hierarchy. Many denominations also emphasize that the individual achieves salvation or is “born again” as a result of the grace of God, also without clerical intermediation. Success in the world places on the individual the responsibility to do well in this world. “Protestantism, republicanism, and individualism are all one.”³³⁸

For more than two hundred years Protestant Americans defined their identity in opposition to Catholicism. The initial anti-Catholicism of American Protestants derived both from their Reformation struggles against Catholicism and from the English view of Catholicism as a major threat during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Britain’s Protestant culture differentiated it from the French and Spanish. Fears of papist conspiracies and of alleged Catholic sympathies or hidden Catholicism of Stuart

³³⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, Who Are We: The Challenges to America’s National Identity (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004) p.66

³³⁸ Frances J. Grund, The Americans in Their Moral, Social, and Political Relations (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1968) p. 355

monarchies were recurring themes in seventeenth century England. In the eighteenth century, anti-Catholicism was reinforced by the repeated wars with France. The British were determined to maintain their purity as a Protestant people. In 1609, Parliament “denied naturalization to all non-Protestants.” In 1673, the Test Act excluded Catholics from public office, a ban that remained in effect for the armed services and judiciary until 1793 and for Parliament until 1828. Persecution by continental Catholic regimes led many Protestants to become refugees in Britain in the eighteenth century. In 1740, Parliament limited naturalization in the home country and the colonies to Protestants with exemptions for Jews and Quakers, but not Catholics.³³⁹

British attitudes and actions were replicated in its American colonies. American Protestants saw the Papacy and Catholicism as the Antichrist. The wars of Britain with France and Spain led the colonists to view the Catholics in their midst as potential traitors. Colonial governments allowed naturalization of Jews, but not Catholics, and by 1700, aside from Maryland, “restrictions on Catholic worship were nearly universal in the colonies, remaining relatively light only in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.”³⁴⁰ Their anti-Catholicism also helped to turn the colonists against the mother country, since in 1774 Parliament passed an act decreeing toleration for the Catholic Church in Quebec. The American reaction was intensely critical. Alexander Hamilton denounced it as “popery”; others used more colorful language. In one of its first actions, the Continental Congress vigorously protested against this law, which Americans ranked with the tax on tea as a threat to their civil and religious liberty.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 5 -6

³⁴⁰ Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 12

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 58-59

This issue of popery also concerned the states. In New York, as an example, when debate ensued on the question of religion, the issue was the religious freedom article of their proposed constitution and whether Roman Catholics had an unqualified right to equal enjoyment of its terms.

John Jay spoke for those who insisted that Roman Catholics should not be permitted the full rights accorded to others because of their supposed temporal allegiance to the pope. The draft of the plan of government authored by Jay contained an article stating that “free Toleration be forever allowed in this State to all denominations of Christians without preference or distinction and to all Jews, Turks, and Infidels.” But this toleration was to be denied “to such Christians or others as shall hold and teach for true Doctrines, principles incompatible with and repugnant to the peace, safety and well being of civil society in general or of this state in particular.”³⁴² Jay’s hatred of Catholicism³⁴³ led him to propose a virtual *carte blanche* for the state government, granting it a commission to inquire into the doctrines of sects to assess their bearing on public safety. He was willing to accept a power that the English government in a hundred years of rule in New York had never claimed to possess, power to regulate private religious beliefs as well as public acts.³⁴⁴

The anti-Catholic colonial laws severely restricted Catholic organizations and activities and reduced the attractions of America to potential Catholic migrants. In 1789, about one percent of Americans were Catholic. Even this small amount of Catholics

³⁴² C.Z. Lincoln, Constitutional History of New York (Rochester: Reprint Services Corporation, 1906) p. 541

³⁴³ Jay believed that that Catholicism was at root a conspiracy against Protestantism, and as such was politically dangerous if not subversive. Fortifying this view were bitter Jay family memories of the persecution and banishment of their Huguenot ancestors from France by a Catholic king. These memories were so vividly compelling that Jay was bent on making it impossible for Catholics to settle in New York. Frank Monaghan, John Jay (New York: Ams Pr Inc; [1st AMS ed.] edition) p. 25

³⁴⁴ C.Z. Lincoln, Constitutional History of New York, p. 544

caused alarm, because of the fear that immigrants from non-English countries would join them. Nativism was powerful in ethnically homogeneous New England. The Federalists were convinced that the nation's problems were caused by foreigners who spread revolutionary ideas, maintained conspiratorial relations with foreign governments desiring the downfall of the United States, and were alien in their speech, dress and style of life. "If some means are not adopted," said the Federalist Congressman Harrison Gray Otis, "to prevent the indiscriminate admission of wild Irishmen & others to the right of suffrage, there will soon be an end to liberty and property."³⁴⁵

This was the Protestant/Catholic religious situation in America at the turn of the nineteenth century – a prevailing anti-Catholicism based on tensions between Protestants and Catholics in Europe, since the Catholic population in the United States was miniscule and at that point had given the Protestant population no cause for alarm. Philip Schaff, who, after coming to America in the mid-1840s, concluded that the Protestant sects "have given the country its spirit and character. Its past course and present condition are unquestionably due mainly to the influence of Protestant principles."³⁴⁶

This spirit and character began to be moderated early in the nineteenth century. In the 1820s, 62,000 immigrants entered the United States from Ireland and Germany, even by 1840, there were scarcely one million foreign-born in the United States, when the population was about seventeen million. Because of this, the American people showed a considerable degree of homogeneity and cohesion. Most of the population was of British origin, seasoned by long residence in America. Ethnically, America has probably never shown a greater degree of sameness than at any time in its history. In the 1840s however,

³⁴⁵ David Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jefferson Democracy (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965) p. 164

³⁴⁶ Philip Schaff, America, p. 73

almost 800,000 immigrants arrived from Ireland, and in the 1850s, 952,000 came from Germany and 914,000 from Ireland. Ninety percent of the Irish and a substantial portion of the Germans were Catholic. This huge influx rekindled anti-Catholic fears and passions. Americans had defined themselves as an Anti-Catholic people and they were now being invaded by the enemy.

To appreciate the disruptive impact of this antagonism around the middle of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to recognize two factors. One of these is the sheer magnitude of the wave of immigration that suddenly hit the country in the late 1840s and the other is the degree of frank, unconcealed enmity then existing between Protestants and Catholics based on the religious conditions in Europe.

It is widely known, of course, that migration to America at the time of the Irish famine was very heavy. But it is seldom realized that proportionally, *this was the heaviest influx of immigrants in American history*. The total of 2,939,000 immigrants in the decade between 1845 and 1854 was less than one-third of the number in the decade before the First World War, but the total population was much smaller...Moreover, this riptide of immigration between 1845 and 1854 struck with severe shock in a society with a very small proportion of foreign-born members. Total immigration had never reached 100,000 before 1842, nor 200,000 before 1847, but it exceeded 400,000 three times in the four years between 1851 and 1855. In addition to the general fact that immigration was extremely heavy, there was a further, more specific feature; no less than 1,200,000 of the immigrants came from one country-Ireland.³⁴⁷

The origins of immigration restriction began before the Civil War. In addition to whites, the nation was also comprised of Indians, Orientals, and Negroes, engendering

³⁴⁷ David Potter, The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861(New York: Harper & Row, 1976) p.241-242

much discussion among white colonials concerning the superiority of white-men over non-whites. After the Civil War, as an increasing percentage of immigrants began to arrive from non Anglo-Saxon countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, more and more attention began to be paid to the differences within the white race. A popular nineteenth century position held that the writings of St. Paul reflected an “Aryan” tone; that Dante had a “Teutonic face;” and that anyone who called Jesus a Jew was either a fool or a liar³⁴⁸

Underneath the assertions of Anglo-Saxon superiority lay a great anxiety. Many “native” Americans spoke disparagingly of ethnic minorities, because they feared that these minorities might become majorities, that they might displace the “old American” stock in numbers and influence,

In the early twentieth century, the eugenicists became the champions of selective legislation immigration restriction legislation. They did not invent the view of Nordic superiority, but they elaborated and popularized it. Anti-immigrant feeling at that time was unprecedentedly high, and in their hands the view of Nordic superiority became a powerful instrument for mobilizing such sentiment on behalf of restrictive legislation. The Eugenics Committee of the United States of America constituted the most influential lobby in Congress advocating restriction. Considerable attention was paid to the fact that most immigrants came from countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. Proponents of restriction began arguing their case on the grounds that the old “American” or “Nordic” type was in danger of being replaced racially by the influx of undesirable, biologically inferior new immigrants. The best-known work supporting the notion that the descendants of a genetically pure “Nordic race” had originally settled America, was

³⁴⁸ A.J. Todd, Theories of Social Progress (New York: Macmillan, 1918) p. 276

Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*, written in 1916, which purported to show that this "Nordic race" was biologically superior to other European "races." The new immigration threatened to eradicate it from the American blood stream. A highly influential book, it served as the major source of inspiration to racial propagandists in the 1920s and helped mold the view of Congress and the public alike.³⁴⁹

To eugenicists, the high incidence of disease, illiteracy, poverty, and crime in immigrant neighborhoods constituted sufficient testimony to the newcomers' innate inferiority. In addition, eugenicists advanced two propositions about genetics. They maintained that heredity is far more important than environment, an assumption that justified their claim that the immigrants' "undesirable" features could be corrected or improved.

To the Nordic nativist, the Catholic immigrant, like the Jewish immigrant (with some exceptions –the German Jew as opposed to the Eastern European Jew), never fully assimilated into American society, he merely existed on the periphery of it – all the time owing allegiance to the papacy. Even when displaying their patriotism, it was often seen as that of a Hyphenated American Catholic rather than a One Hundred Percent American. For example, Father J.H. Sherry's eulogy of Catholic self-sacrifice and patriotic loyalty given to the 1917 National Catholic Education Association conference could not escape accusations of "hyphenation" when he zealously pointed out:

Who was the first to lay down his life in the landing at Vera Cruz – Haggerty, an Irish Catholic. When we declared war on Germany who was the first to fall in defense of the flag and now lies buried in the broad Atlantic? Eopulucci, an Italian Catholic. But the Irish Catholic and the Italian Catholic were above all, American Catholics.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Genetics, Eugenics, and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924*, paper presented at the Joint Atlantic Seminar in the History of Biology, New York, March 7, 1970.

³⁵⁰ National Catholic Educational Association, *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting* (Buffalo, 1917), p.404

Race was not the only main reason for restriction sentiment, a second nativist tradition went back a century before. From the 1790s fear of foreign radicals was always present and in the 1870s, it returned with great force. Goaded by repeated wage cuts, railroad workers rioted from Baltimore to San Francisco. This outburst of unorganized, undirected misery was a new phenomenon in America. The New York *Herald* asserted that foreign demagogues “have imported ideas and sentiments which have repeatedly deluged France in blood...the railroad riots...were instigated by men capable of understanding our ideas and principles.”³⁵¹

In May 1886, a bomb exploded in Haymarket Square in Chicago. In itself, the occurrence was slight compared to the railroad violence of 1877. But because of the doubts and anxieties of the decade following, the Haymarket Affair was to go down as the most important single incident in late nineteenth-century nativism. In the big daily newspapers, restriction sentiment suddenly coalesced:

The enemy forces are not American [but] rag-tag and bobtail cutthroats of Beelzebub from the Rhine, the Danube, the Vistula, and the Elbe.

These people are not Americans, but the very scum and offal of Europe.

...An invasion of venomous reptiles.

Longhaired, wild-eyed, bad-smelling, atheistic, reckless foreign wretches, who never did an honest hour's work in their lives...crush such snakes...before they have time to bite

There is no such thing as an American anarchist... The American character has in it no element which can under any circumstances be wont to use so mistaken and pernicious...a firm stand in favor of the right of Americans to govern America.³⁵²

³⁵¹ New York *Herald*, May 20, 1878, p.6

³⁵² John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New York: Atheneum, 1973) p. 55

For years the memory of Haymarket and the dread of imported anarchy haunted the American consciousness. No nativist image prevailed more widely than that of an immigrant as a lawless creature given over to violence and disorder. Ripples spread out from Haymarket in a dozen directions, mingling more and more subtly with almost every current of xenophobia. Nativist reformers joined in denouncing the immigrant as an author of revolution as well as an agent of reaction; and for the wide public that associated Haymarket with labor militancy.³⁵³

Until the end of World War 1, labor had to walk a line between wishing to restrict foreign competition for American jobs and the realization that an extremely large proportion of union members were themselves foreign born. In 1919 however, the American Federation of Labor supported, by a vote of their membership, immigration restriction for at least two years. Union leaders justified their position on the grounds that demobilization would create great unemployment. A second reason, aside from economics, was the union's belief that immigration had exceeded the nation's capacity to unify and Americanize. As an example, Samuel Gompers in supporting the literacy test wrote that, "America has not yet become a nation, it is still a conglomerated mass of various and diverse ethnic groups...honeycombed with 'foreign groups,' living a foreign life."³⁵⁴

The most powerful group involved in the restriction debate was business. By 1870, about one out of every three employees in manufacturing was an immigrant. New England factory owners actively recruited labor in French Canada, and other businesses did the same in Europe. Even in 1882, when immigration reached its highest point in the

³⁵³ *Public Opinion* V (1888) p.432

³⁵⁴ *American Federationist*, XXIII (1916) p.253

nineteenth century, the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* greeted this immigration as a foundation for unparalleled business expansion.³⁵⁵ However five years after examining the urban problems that the nativists pointed to, from overpopulation to intemperance, the same publication now became worried because almost every “danger to the organization of society originated among immigrants. Every disturbance of the social order,” the journal warned, “diminishes the courage and enterprise of capital.”³⁵⁶

While few industrialists favored rigid limitations on immigration, after World War 1, most of them acknowledged the importance of some restrictive controls, on patriotic grounds. Wartime emotions had worked upon their national consciousness, and the Red Scare had frightened many of them.

With the opposition of business muted, and although adopted as temporary legislation, an immigration restriction act became law in 1921 which proved in the long run to be the most important turning in American immigration policy. It imposed the first sharp and absolute numerical limits on European immigration. It established a nationality quota system based on the preexisting foreign population of the United States – an idea that had survived in one form or another through all subsequent legislation. It ensured especially that the new immigration could not reach more than a small fraction of its prewar level. Above all, the policy now adopted meant that in a generation the foreign-born would cease to be a major factor in American history.³⁵⁷

By the time Congress passed the permanent immigration restriction law in 1924, industry had endured three years of rising production and profits without labor problems

³⁵⁵ Edith Abbot, *Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem: Select Documents* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926) p. 854

³⁵⁶ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, XLIV (1887) p. 669

³⁵⁷ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, p. 311

due to the restriction of immigration. In large measure, the industrial boom arose from tremendous advances in mechanization. To the extent that the decline in immigration after the war encouraged capital investments in machinery, restriction probably stimulated the whole upward trend. In any event, the combination of automation and the migration of black men to the North, were freeing industry from its historic dependence on European manpower. Business journals began to assure their readers that a permanent solution to the immigration problem had arrived. "Machinery," one business editor wrote, " 'stays put.' It does not go out on strike, it cannot decide to go to Europe, or take a job in the next town."³⁵⁸ The withdrawal of American business from the immigration restriction debate made the passage of a more stringent law relatively easy, because now no hand was raised against it except the immigrants who suffered from it.

³⁵⁸ K.H. Condit, "Immigration or Machinery?" *American Machinist*, LVIII (1923) p. 393-395

CONCLUSION

The Road to Restriction - Evangelicalism

In the 1850s, religious toleration was regarded more as an arrangement among the Protestant sects than as a universal principle. Given this background of religious antagonism, a certain amount of ethnocentrism on both sides, a measure of economic rivalry between natives and immigrants in the competition for jobs, and friction between native Protestants and immigrant Catholics became almost inevitable. Though it is largely forgotten today, and has consistently been minimized in American history, it is nevertheless true that for a considerable part of the nineteenth century the Catholic Church was chronically under fire. Its beliefs were denounced; its leaders were assailed; its convents were slandered, and its property was threatened or even attacked. With both the Protestant press and the secular press keeping up a constant barrage of abuse, mob action sometimes resulted. Between 1834 and the end of the 1850s, serious riots, with loss of lives, occurred in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in Philadelphia, in Louisville, and elsewhere. Convents were attacked, and one in Charlestown burned to the ground, while probably as many as twenty Catholic churches were burned in cities or towns from Maine to Texas. The Catholics in turn resented the discrimination and persecution that they encountered at the hands of the Protestants. Ill will led to hostile acts, which, of course, reinforced the ill will in a vicious circle.³⁵⁹

One of the issues that engendered criticism of the Catholics during the nineteenth century was that of “Americanization” which was intensely debated within the Catholic hierarchy throughout the nineteenth century. The leading American bishops generally, but not unanimously made great efforts to reconcile Americanism and Catholicism and to legitimate the Catholic presence in American society in the eyes of Protestant America.

³⁵⁹ Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism (New York: Quadrangle, 1964) p. 53-90

The Americanists argued, in the words of Archbishop John Ireland, “There is no conflict between the Catholic Church and America...the principles of the Church are in through harmony with the interests of the Republic.”³⁶⁰ Their opponents saw Americanism as a path of corruption leading to the worst forms of modernism, individualism, materialism, and liberalism. These debates culminated in and came to an end with Pope Leo XIII’s papal letter *Testem Benevolentiae*, in January 1899 and to Cardinal Gibbons’ denouncing the doctrine of “Americanism.”

During the nineteenth century, until the 1880s, the basic anti-Catholicism that was in existence in the United States was caused by the residual hatred of Catholics by the Protestants as a result of their interaction in Europe and the suddenness and massive amounts of immigration into the country. As a result of this immigration the battle between the two groups was fought in the schools, the cities, and in the political arena. During the first wave of immigration in the 1840s, the largest groups were the Irish and the Germans. For the purposes of this study, the Irish were more important because they were overwhelmingly Catholic (the Germans were: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) and because of two major factors, they controlled the American Catholic Church and by the 1880s, they also controlled the majority of the Northeastern cities politically either through election, through domination of a political machine, or both. During the 1880s, another factor was added, a new immigration from southern and eastern Europe that was almost completely non-Protestant.

Comparing immigration into the United States in 1890 with that of 1900, the total amounts did not change drastically, 444, 427 in 1890 and 448, 572 in 1900. The changes concerned the percentages of the total from each of the countries involved. Leaving out

³⁶⁰ Paul Johnson, *The Almost Chosen People* (Rockford, Ill., Rockford Institute, 1958) p.88

Germany since their immigration was only partially Protestant (the remainder were Catholic and Jewish) the changes are as follows:

Eastern Europe and Italy (Catholic) moved from 24.3% of the total in 1890 to 48.3% of the total in 1900 and Russia's (Jewish) total of 7.4% in 1890 became 20.2% of the total in 1900. While the Irish total declined from 11.9% in 1890 to 7.9% in 1900,³⁶¹ they still maintained the control of the Catholic Church and the Northeastern cities politically.

Faced with this situation, the Evangelicals reacted by to the threat by suggesting as an answer, an application of more aggressive Protestantism. Two examples:

The Lutherans:

Among the thousands swarming into our cities are found the most degraded people of our land – the very dregs of our society, These form hot-beds of corruption, breeding and sending forth germs more destructive than the much dreaded Asiatic cholera. Unless something is done to check these, our “government of the people, by the people, for the people,” will soon be found on the pages of history only. As our municipal governments already showing signs of infection, if not rottenness-especially New York-it is useless to look in that direction for deliverance. As far as our public schools are concerned, excellent as they are, history tells us that intelligence – even growing intelligence – can as little check decaying morals as it can save a people from the dire results of the same...What is now our duty as citizens of the land of the pilgrims pride; as the custodians of the free institutions for which our patriotic fathers died? Our duty is to use this God given power; to apply this only remedy that can save. We must organize in our cities more Christian congregations; build more churches; determine with Paul to preach nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and thus show ourselves worthy sons of our noble sires.³⁶²

The Baptists: The deterioration in the quality of the immigrant (from Southern and Eastern Europe) was taken for granted. And the most prevalent reaction to this new immigration was panic. In an address to the American Baptist Mission Society in 1889, The Reverend D.C. Eddy, editor of the *Lowell Day-star* stated that two flags were flying

³⁶¹ *U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Bicentennial Edition*, (Washington, D.C.: 1973) p. 398-399

³⁶² Rev. J.J.Young, D.D. *Lutheran Missionary Journal*, Vol., XXV, #1, January, 1904

in America. One was imprinted with the words “North America for Christ” while the other says “North America for Rome.”

The idea of capturing the United States for the Pope has not for one instant been abandoned. The immigrant now enters as a factor into the case. From every Papal country on the globe crowds of Roman Catholics are flocking to our shores. Every port is alive with them, and every inland town is affected by them...

We welcome to these broad acres every honest intelligent immigrant that fears God and keeps his commandments. But when we look at the aggregation of immigrants, whether from Great Britain, Germany, Italy, or dismembered Poland, we find them held in thrall of the Papal church, and marching under the flag blazoned “North America for Rome.”

Well, this hierarchy controls this vast immigration, places it where it will do the most good, i.e., where it will best subserve the purposes of Rome; teaches it how to vote, governs its conscience, and superintends its education. The drift of immigration is not without method, meaning, and significance. The thronging of great cities by Romish adherents is not an accident; it is part of that sagacious policy, that worldly cunning that boasts that it never made a mistake...

We take no pessimistic view. We have lost faith neither in God nor in the Gospel. We are simply looking squarely at a fact. We stand at the open gateways through which pour one-half million human beings every year, and we are settling the question whether we shall mould and civilize them, or they shall corrupt and overrun us. They bring a flag blazoned “North America for Rome.” We are deciding whether they shall plant it on Plymouth Rock, hoist it over the Capitol in the District of Columbia...or whether we shall blot out the word “Rome” and put “Christ” in its place. We neither fear or doubt, but we face a gigantic problem. A million Baptists –North, South, East, and West- behold the rising tide of immigration, measure its portentous meaning, comprehend its evident design, and turn to the Home Mission Society and with blood-earnestness ask:

“What are we going to do about it?”³⁶³

This immigration was for the Protestants and in this instance, a gigantic problem that loomed larger and larger every day. As the influx of immigrants grew heavier, the seriousness of the problem mounted until the only answer could be the dramatic influence of the gospel, which would bring about personal regeneration and promote unity-a fusion of alien peoples into one common nationality, one language, one political practice, and

³⁶³ D.C. Eddy, Immigration (pamphlet in the American Baptist Historical collection. 1889) p. 2-6

one patriotism.³⁶⁴In 1895 the cities could claim that half of the average total populations were either immigrants or children of immigrants. And in 1896, the American Baptist Home Mission Society resolved to begin meeting the challenge of the immigrant by “making a fresh advance in the work of city evangelization, with special reference to foreign population...”They saw as the true missionary end of the Society the transformation of the immigrants into Christian Americans.³⁶⁵

The renewed efforts of the Protestants to deal with the non-Protestant immigrant situation, came to nil. They did not have the government influence in the United States that they had in Europe and the amounts of immigrants coming into the country were too large. Additionally, the new immigrants were settling in the urban areas, reinforcing the control that the Irish had over the cities, especially in the Northeast.

Three examples from the Congregationalists that shows their movement from support of immigration to restriction:

July 10, 1884, “Restricting Immigration,” “...It ought to be remembered oftener than it is that, except so far as any of us has Indian blood in him, we are all immigrants or their descendents...It is in accord alike with common sense and with the fundamental principles of our form of government that every responsible immigrant should be admitted here.”³⁶⁶

September 22, 1887, “Immigrants and the Law,” “...Those [immigrants] who not only come with an honest purpose and a recognized ability to support themselves, but also have arranged exactly what they are to do, and where they are to do it, are the ones who deserve to be encouraged...If American skilled workmen cannot hold their own with foreign-born, we firmly believe that they can, then they deserve to be surpassed.”³⁶⁷

June 11, 1891, “Guarding the Doors,” “...This country is coming to be overburdened with multitudes who are in no sense patriotic, who are ignorant and clannish, almost more difficult to take care of when at liberty than after they have found

³⁶⁴ Kerr B. Tupper, *Immigration and Christianity* (pamphlet in the American Baptist Historical Society collection, 1891)

³⁶⁵ American Baptist Home Mission Society, *Annual Report*, (1895) p. 54

³⁶⁶ “Restricting Immigration,” *The Congregationalist* (July 10, 1884)

³⁶⁷ “Immigrants and the Law,” *The Congregationalist* (September 22, 1887)

their way into our asylums, poorhouses, and prisons. It has been shown by recent investigation that at least two out of every five of the new arrivals are unfit to become American citizens...Further legislation is needed not only to guard the entrances more effectively, but to provide that the immigrants already here shall so order their lives as to promote the welfare of the country...The recent proposal to the Pope of the Catholic Emigration Society of Europe to colonize Catholic emigrants to the United States, so that they shall retain their native languages in schools and in public life, illustrates one of the perils which menace our liberties. Every participator in such a scheme ought to be excluded from our shores."³⁶⁸

Concomitant with the opposition to European immigration from; business, labor, nativists, and the eugenicists, was the opposition from the Protestant Evangelicals. The battles between Protestants and non-Protestants (mainly immigrants) had been taking place for approximately one hundred years before the passage of the immigration restriction acts and at times had become extremely vehement. The reason for Protestant antagonism to the immigrant at times paralleled that of the non-religious opposition, and at others was solely because of religious differences between the Protestant sects and the religions of the immigrants. In 1887, H.H. Boyesen, a nineteenth century Lutheran author and professor of Germanic languages at Columbia University revealed his negative views on the recent immigration from Naples and Sicily:

I have, during the past year, again and again seen the Battery Park black with these creatures (in fact, preternaturally black), and the odors which surround them turned the milk of human kindness within me, and made me marvel at the heedless hospitality of the American nation, which was willing to mingle this course and brutal strain in their own fresh and vigorous blood.³⁶⁹

Similarly, Professor E.H. Johnson of the Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania combined his Anglo-Saxonism with intense nativism, creating the

³⁶⁸ "Guarding the Door," *The Congregationalist* (June 11.1891)

³⁶⁹ "Immigration," National Perils and Opportunities: Address by H.H. Boyesen, The Discussions of the General Christian Conference, held in Washington, D.C., December 7-9, 1887, Under the Auspices and Direction of the Evangelical Alliance (New York: Baker & Taylor) p.60

predominant pattern of belief for Baptists. To Johnson, the foreigners were not amalgamating rapidly enough. Therefore, he determined that they were to be considered the “dregs of society” and should be denied admission to the country. Upon seeing the immigrants disembarking at the port of New York, he stated:

I have stood near Castle Garden and seen races of far greater peril to us than the Irish. I have seen the Hungarians, and the Italians, and the Poles. I have seen these poor wretches trooping out, wretches physically, wretches mentally, wretches morally, and stood there almost trembling for my country, and said what shall we do if this thing keeps on? In the name of God, what shall we do if the American race is to receive a constant influx of that sort of thing, with a history as they had.³⁷⁰

Beginning in the 1890’s, Protestants and Americans in general began to move away from their previous acceptance of the stranger. The historic concept of the open gate was to be seriously questioned in the years to come. Under the influence of events on the domestic social scene, the debate of 1882 by Protestants (over the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act) turned into a prolonged discussion among Protestants regarding the relationship of immigration to Divine Providence, the outcome of which prepared the way for a rise in [religious] nativism.³⁷¹

In 1880, the conservative *American Christian Review* in a lead editorial questioned “Shall Americans Rule America?” The editor, J.F. Rowe declared:

The Curia of Rome makes no concealment of their fixed purpose to overthrow the government of the United States. The ruin of our free school system, which the Papacy hate [sic] with a deadly hatred, is to be made the entering wedge. Holding the balance of

³⁷⁰ Baptist Congress Proceedings (1888) p. 88-89

³⁷¹ Lawrence B. Davis, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973) p. 37

political power, the Catholics can at any time, by a nod from the Bishops and priests, turn the tide of popular vote.³⁷²

Rowe objected specifically to the influence of the Catholic bloc vote, and the political dimensions of the Catholic Church. Rowe wondered what Rome would do when the Catholic voting population increased to a majority in the nation. He traced Catholic growth to immigration and clearly feared that Catholicism was rapidly approaching the point at which it would hold the balance of political power in the nation.

So great was the concern over immigration among Protestant editors in the 1880s that they began to write about in the subject in their journals. In November 1881, David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, questioned the desirability of increased immigration into his home state of Tennessee for the purposes of reinforcing the labor pool:

It is true that interchange of peoples has its advantages; it also has disadvantages that fully equal the advantages. It is especially not desirable that people of foreign habits, feelings, and manners should come among us faster than they can be assimilated into our society. Many of our Northwestern cities and states have been Europeanized, instead of the immigrants being Americanized. This is not desirable for either class.³⁷³

The editors of Protestant journals in the large Midwestern cities of Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago also became involved in the problem of the immigrant in American society. In an 1881 lecture to students at Kentucky University, the *Christian Standard* editor, Isaac Errett, saw danger ahead in the “large importations of foreigners, and their speedy incorporation into the body politic.”

³⁷² J.F. Rowe, “Shall Americans Rule America?” *American Christian Review* 23, January 27, 1880, p. 28

³⁷³ David Lipscomb, “Immigration and Emigration,” *Gospel Advocate*. November 24, 1881, p. 742

Many of these immigrants are doubtless valuable acquisitions, and contribute effectively to the general weal, and are among the most devoted lovers of freedom. But hundreds of thousands of them are of a different character. Their ignorance, their vices, and their false ideas of freedom do not fit them to discharge the duties of citizenship: yet they are hardly landed until they are invested with all the rights and powers of citizenship.³⁷⁴

Errett bemoaned the fact that ignorance and vice were no bar to citizenship, and that as a result many American cities were controlled by voting blocs composed of these immigrants. Errett cited figures to buttress his argument, declaring that twenty-two percent of the voters in 1880 were illiterate. “It is easy to see,” declared Errett, “how such a vote as that, swayed by caprice or passion, could overpower all the intelligence and virtue of the country.”³⁷⁵

Perhaps the first Protestant editor to openly endorse the idea of immigration restriction was B.W. Johnson of the Chicago *Evangelist*. In March 1881 Johnson warned “the tide of immigration has set in with...increasing flow this year.”³⁷⁶ Johnson welcomed most of these, especially the Germans, but he urged that care be taken in instructing immigrants in America’s peculiar institutions. In July of 1881, Johnson observed that “our government has established the precedent of restricting immigration by excluding Chinese laborers from a refuge on our soil, and it is not impossible that the principle will have to be extended to the overcrowded population of Europe.”³⁷⁷ Johnson

³⁷⁴ Isaac Errett, “Lessons of a Century,” in *Linsey-Woolsey and Other Addresses* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1893) P. 187

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 188

³⁷⁶ “Current Events,” *The Evangelist*, (March 31, 1881), p. 193

³⁷⁷ “Current Events,” *The Evangelist*, (July 28, 1881), p. 463

believed that immigration could be a national benefit. But “an invasion so vast that we cannot assimilate and absorb it in our own population, so that it will disappear out of sight, will prove an evil.”³⁷⁸

When the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, Johnson was less than enthusiastic:

...there is a better and wiser policy in our relation with the Chinese, than to crowd them off into the Pacific or prevent them from coming to our shores. In whatever light the politician may regard the Chinese; the Christian should hail it as a means of carrying out the commission of his savior and sending the gospel to China.³⁷⁹

Johnson went on to state that it was due to unlimited opportunities in America that the Chinese immigrated to America. He objected to the idea of totally excluding certain races. He believed that restrictions should be based on “moral fitness, rather than upon blood.”

Another nativist Protestant writer and editor, the Reverend Charles C. Loos, President of Kentucky University wrote two articles on the subject of immigration in the *Christian Standard*. In March of 1883, he attacked the Socialist press in the United States because he believed that a large proportion of the foreign-born German population of the country remained hostile to “the institutions that have given them success and prosperity, Loos thought that, “these Germans are not satisfied with what they find here; with the primitive American institutions and manners.”³⁸⁰ Loos objected to the loss of the “American Sunday” along with other kindred American ideals and habits only to have them supplanted by the “German Sunday” and other Teutonic ideas that were “wholly un-American.”

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 464

³⁷⁹ “Home Missions Among the Chinese,” *The Evangelist*, (April 20, 1882) p. 242

³⁸⁰ “In the Old Fatherland and Here,” *Christian Standard*, (March 10, 1882) p.114

The foreigner, who after voluntarily and by preference coming to this land, after being made welcome and free and having all its unparalleled advantages fully and generously offered to him, seeks to make war upon its institutions and ways, or arrogantly to domineer in its councils and government, is an ungrateful wretch...and deserves only the indignant scorn and repudiation of every American, native or adopted.³⁸¹

In May Loos declared immigration generally to be a serious danger. “The statistics of immigration,” stated Loos, “is becoming more and more a question of the highest concern for the American people. It would hardly be too much to say, we think, that it is fast becoming a subject of serious alarm.”³⁸²

By 1886, the Protestant religious press exerted its influence over a large number of readers. There were over two hundred religious journals in the United States and Canada with an estimated weekly circulation of 2,500,000. It was estimated that there were about four readers for each subscription, so that almost 10,000,000 people were reached.³⁸³

While the church organs avoided the preoccupation with gruesome details which typified the journalism of the secular press, when writing about The Haymarket affair, the denominational journals pursued a policy of nativism as militant as that of the secular press. In the *Christian-Evangelist*, just prior to the bombing, the journal’s editor James H. Garrison had warned:

³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 114

³⁸² “A Serious Danger,” *Christian Standard* (May 19, 1883) p.228

³⁸³ “The Religious Papers,” *Chicago Times*, April 11, 1886, p. 27. The Methodists led with 50 papers publishing 500,000 copies; The Baptist journals reached 300, 000 subscribers; the Presbyterians, 250,000; the Lutherans, 200,000; and the Congregationalists 75,000.

Our laws require that our officials send back the paupers and criminals who land on our shores from foreign lands, but they permit men who are driven out of Europe for sedition to preach dynamite, flames, rebellion and robbery and murder...³⁸⁴

The *Christian-Evangelist* carried a full account of the Haymarket bombing and Garrison commented that:

...the large foreign population in this city, full three fourths of the inhabitants, gives it a formidable host of the most dangerous elements. The Bohemians, Poles, and many of the Germans, are socialists and anarchists of the worst type. We have noted the fact that foreign-born agitators have...for months been preaching dynamite, bombshells, and murder to throngs of European savages who had been cast on our shores.³⁸⁵

In an article displaying a righteous nativism and also an exception to the relatively high literary level of religious journalism, the *Methodist Northwestern Christian Advocate* of Chicago editorialized:

The republic is having an attack of indigestion. Her full repast of miscellaneous immigrants proves almost too much. The process of mastication, deglutition, elimination, and assimilation test the national stomach as none has ever been tried before. Little wonder that doctors suggest dieting and insist that no more indigestible anarchist shall pass the dentals of our ports. Better that politicians shall lack a few votes than we die of political dyspepsia.³⁸⁶

Not content with the foregoing, the Methodists re-emphasized there in the same issue their assault on “foreign influences.”

The barbarism and blood in over-free speech yielded its legitimate fruits on the evening of May 4th. Those bearded cutthroats, the two spies, Parsons and Schwab, harangued a crown of ignorant misled foreigners and advised violence to “capitalistic robbers.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ “Current Events,” *Christian-Evangelist* (May 6, 1886) p. 273

³⁸⁵ “Current Events,” *Christian-Evangelist*, Chicago, (May 19, 1886) p. 289

³⁸⁶ *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, (Chicago), November 16, 1887, p. 1

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 6

The Baptist *Standard* of Chicago took occasion following the riot to point out the evils of “European ideas of Sabbath keeping, and of the European theater and the European Saloon.” These evils said the *Standard* are due to “the influence of that foreign immigration upon the American-born themselves... With Sunday lost and these influences of which the Christian Sabbath is the center and inspiration,” continued the *Standard*, the alternative will be either despotism or anarchy.”³⁸⁸

The Boston Unitarian paper, the *Christian Register*, recognized that “The labor question overtops all others...” but became nativist after the riot:

The only difference between such a foreign invasion by a hypothetical horde of German and Polish anarchists from across the borders and that which is broke out in Chicago last week is that the element which caused the eruption has shown its alien character under the name of citizenship. Citizens or not, they are not Americans either in birth or in spirit; and they deserve to feel the rigor of the laws they have despised.”³⁸⁹

The Presbyterian journal, the *Interior*, adhering to the nativist pattern, attributed a vast portion of the nation’s ills to foreigners since “The instigators of violence and crimes are almost exclusively refugees from justice in Europe.”³⁹⁰ Decrying political corruption that tolerated the activities of anarchists, the *Interior* stated “The Roman Catholic Church is doing this [directing the use of the ballot] to the extent of its ability. It does it on the plea of promoting righteous. The result has ever been to foster and entrench corruption.”³⁹¹

The Haymarket affair stimulated a crudely nativistic sermon on Thanksgiving Day 1886 by the Reverend John P. Newman of the Methodist Episcopal Church in

³⁸⁸ The *Standard* (Chicago) May 13, 1886, p.4

³⁸⁹ *Christian Register*, May 13, 1886, p. 289

³⁹⁰ *Interior*, May 6, 1886, p. 4

³⁹¹ *Ibid.* November 3, 1887, p. 4

Washington, D.C. Lauding the “founding fathers,” who Newman informed his congregation, had “exhausted the right of revolution,” he offered his solution for the riots:

We are now bound to call a halt all along the line of immigration; to say to these people of the old world that this is not a new Africa, nor a new Ireland, nor a new Germany, nor a new Italy, nor a new England, nor a new Russia; also, this is not a brothel for the Mormon, a fetish for the Negro, a country for ticket-of-leave men; not a place for the criminals and paupers of Europe; but this country is for man – man in his intelligence, man in his morality, man in his love of liberty, man whosoever he is, whensoever he commeth.³⁹²

Haymarket pushed the *Christian-Evangelist* in St. Louis squarely into the restrictionist camp. In May, the editor observed, “if foreign populations in our country should continue to disturb its peace there is hope that the conviction will speedily arise that our gates have been open too wide.”³⁹³ The same paper was also convinced that the majority of the newer immigration was “assisted” by foreign governments. This was an immigration composed of “criminals, paupers, and insane.” These people had been deported en masse and dumped into the United States. The *Evangelist* declared that “it was time Congress would enact laws which will put a wholesome check on this overflow of the worst classes of Europe.”³⁹⁴

The Chicago *Christian-Evangelist* kept up its anti-immigrant offensive throughout 1888. In January, it called for “an immediate revision of our immigration laws and the stopping of every loop-hole for the worst elements...Convinced that European pauper dumping was a profound social problem, the *Evangelist* held that the current immigration

³⁹² John P. Newman, *America For Americans!: The Typical American; Our Place Among the Nations*, p. 8-9

³⁹³ “Current Event,” *Christian-Evangelist* (St. Louis) May 27, 1886, p. 322

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (June 17, 1886) p. 369

laws wholly inadequate and demanded an immediate revision. The *Evangelist* also took note of the growing political power of the immigrant blocs and especially pointed to the Irish in New York as evidenced by the flying of the Irish national flag from public buildings on St. Patrick's Day. "It is time that all foreigners in this country should be taught," declared the *Evangelist*, "that they must become Americans and be Americanized, or be unwelcome."³⁹⁵

In June 1888, editor J.B. Birney reported in the "Southern Department" of the *Evangelist* that even the South was becoming concerned with the immigration problem. "That many and great evils are being fastened upon us by unrestricted immigration is a proposition that no thoughtful American can doubt," wrote Birney. He compared the earlier immigration with the most recent arrivals and declared that the earlier immigrants came to the United States to be Americanized, not to foreignize America. "The time has come for discrimination in immigration," asserted Birney, "not so much as to nationality, but as to character, condition, and purpose." He wished to exclude communists, paupers, saloonkeepers, and the like, however he offered no suggestions as to how this may be accomplished. Birney (in conjunction with other evangelicals in the nineteenth century) sought to maintain America's cosmopolitan tradition and restrict immigration.³⁹⁶

Also in 1888, at the Baptist Congress in Richmond, Virginia, the Reverend C.C. Potter of New York City read a paper entitled "What to do With the Foreigners." He warned that the "danger line of uncontrolled immigration had passed," that, "masses of these people are already squarely against everything we hold dear," and that

³⁹⁵ "Current Events," *Christian Evangelist* (Chicago) January 26, 1888) p. 49

³⁹⁶ "Southern Department – Immigration," *Christian Evangelist*, June 14, 1888, p. 366

It must not be forgotten that the disorderly and Anarchistic elements in Chicago have undertaken this work of teaching, not accomplished by churches and they have chosen, as is well known, our Sunday as the time. Imagine, my Brethren, the deliberate establishment of schools in the large halls, generally in the rear of saloons. Imagine the assembled children sent to those gatherings by their parents taught to believe that anarchists are high and noble characters, and that executed murderers are martyrs.³⁹⁷

At the same meeting, the Reverend E. Nelson Blake of Chicago spoke on the subject of immigration restriction:

I would like to ask those who favor an unlimited opening of our doors, where was anarchism born? Had you live in Chicago in that night when those brave policemen went down before the cyanamide [sic] bomb, thrown not by a native of this country, you would feel differently brother, when you say welcome anarchists...

Who came to settle in this country? God fearing men and women with free institutions. Was communism or socialism born here? Did they spring from Plymouth Rock or Jamestown? There is a point where unlimited toleration must cease; that time has come in our government...when these men next rise they will do a bigger work than they did in Chicago – maimed officers, widows, and orphans for years will attest to their hellish work. You say we will take them in and amalgamate them into our institutions, and instill our principles into them! Don't flatter yourselves. You may as well take a mad dog and think you could make a pet of it and put it your daughter's hands. Our institutions will only be handed down to our children if we are worthy of maintaining and defending them.³⁹⁸

The Reverend A.G. Lawson of Boston summed up the meeting's feelings by stating that the Reverend Blake had simply faced the facts in Chicago, and that "sooner or later we shall have in other cities besides Chicago – unless God delivers us – similar results."³⁹⁹

In 1889, the *Christian Oracle* of Chicago, both attacked the Catholic Church as being foreign and looked at the immigration problem. In March, they reflected the view that Catholicism was nothing but a despotism with an infallible pope, both of which were

³⁹⁷ *Baptist Congress*, Richmond, 1888, p. 77

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 88-89

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 92

considered irreconcilable with American liberty. Romanism and freedom could not be harmonized, wrote the editors, D.R. Lucas and F.M. Kirkam. Either one or the other must prevail. Lucas and Kirkam also doubted Catholic protestations of their loyalty to republican principles. The editors held that Catholics had an allegiance to a foreign potentate, the pope, and were therefore not committed to the concept of the consent of the governed.⁴⁰⁰

In the same year the *Oracle* expressed concern over the importation of paupers and criminals. Evidence for this was adduced from the report of the Congressional immigration investigation then being conducted. The *Oracle* agreed with the Congressional committee that American business had been importing cheap Italian, Polish, and Hungarian labor, and that many of the imports were of the worst sort. Not only did this importation tax American assimilative powers, but it also caused depressed wages, labor unrest, and all manner of social ills in the large industrial cities.⁴⁰¹

The most important Protestant anti-immigration work in the decade of the 1880's was *Some American Evils*, published by George F. Hall. Hall was a graduate of Drake University, a noted lecturer and evangelist, and builder of the Christian Tabernacle in Decatur, Illinois. *Some American Evils* consisted of five lectures delivered from the pulpit of the First Christian Church of Emporia, Kansas. Hall traced the current social problems of the United States to foreign influences rather than to domestic economic maladjustments. The first lecture set the theme for the entire book, entitled "*America's Socialism; or What Shall be Done about Foreign Immigration?*" It traced almost every social problem to immigration. Citing Josiah Strong, author of *Our Country*, Hall

⁴⁰⁰ "Advice to the Pope," *Christian Oracle*, April 25, 1889, p. 264

⁴⁰¹ "Immigration," *Christian Oracle*, March 21 1889, p. 187

excoriated socialism as an un-American import and socialists as anarchists and murderers. Hall's remedy to this problem was an immediate restriction of immigration. "America is threatened!" cried Hall, "Wolves are entering the fold! Shut the gates, shut the gates.

Oh, for men today, to stand at the gates of America and say to the approaching socialist, anarchist, nihilist, and to all whosoever would enter in simply to defile: Depart! You can't come in here! Let Congress require, through a competent board of commissioners, a careful inspection of every incoming foreigner...The motive for leaving native land satisfactorily explained. And likewise the motive for setting foot on American soil.

It would be right for us as a nation to make very exact, very strict requirements of every foreign immigrant...Such a cause ought not to be construed un-American. It must not be. For just as the sun shines upon a prosperous republic here today, it will cast its shadows upon a lost and ruined government to-morrow, unless we come to a point like this."⁴⁰²

As with the *Christian Oracle*, Hall attacked both the Catholic Church and foreign immigration. In addition to alcohol, materialism, and denominationalism, the next greatest evil in Hall's opinion was the Catholic Church. In *Some American Evils*, Hall recounted all the familiar charges against Rome, accusing the Church of being a religio-political system bent on temporal supremacy. Again citing Strong's *Our Country*, Hall repeated the argument that Rome was opposed to modern liberties. He also declared unequivocally "No man can be a true Catholic and a true American at the same time." Allegiance to Rome constituted a divided loyalty that was unacceptable in the American nation. In his last lecture, Hall tied Romanism to immigration and stated his fear that Catholic immigration and its political control through Catholic concentration in the large

⁴⁰² George F. Hall, *Some American Evils* (Chicago: Columbian Book Co., 1889) p. 14

cities would eventually lead to Catholic control of the government. At that point, Hall believed, the Catholic Church would be the established Church in the United States.⁴⁰³

The decade of the 1880s had witnessed the rise of a new Protestant nativist concern – Southern and Eastern European immigration, which coincided with a surge of American nationalistic sentiment. The Civil War, Woodrow Wilson said in his 1915 Memorial Day address, “created in this country what had never existed before, a national consciousness.”⁴⁰⁴ That consciousness manifested itself in the decades following the war. “The late nineteenth century,” the historian, Lyn Spillman affirms, “was the period of greatest innovation in American national identity...Most patriotic practices, organizations, and symbols familiar today date from or became institutionalized at that time.”⁴⁰⁵

Protestant nativism was now characterized by a continuing and organized crusade against Rome, with, because of this rebirth of patriotism, a continuous push for immigration restriction. The *Evangelist* wondered, “shall a foreign religion decree that children shall grow up as foreigners instead of Americans?” The massive influx of immigrants who were markedly different than the Anglo-Saxon core culture of America caused the nativists to question the nation’s assimilative powers. The *Evangelist* expressed this concern throughout the 1890s and was convinced that almost all of the

⁴⁰³ Ibid. p. 45

⁴⁰⁴ Quoted in Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (Vintage: Colchester, England, July, 1974) p. 402

⁴⁰⁵ Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1997) p. 24-25

nation's social problems could be traced to the massive new immigration that was resistant to the normal process of Americanization.⁴⁰⁶

The end of the nineteenth century also saw the involvement of nativist Protestants into politics. In 1889, Congress launched an investigation into the immigration situation. The chairman of the House Committee on Immigration was a Republican evangelical minister from Indiana, Congressman William D. Owen. The Senate committee was chaired by William E. Chandler, Harvard educated and also a Republican.

The outcome of the committee work was the immigration law of 1891. Congressman Owen was the primary author of the new law that laid down a permanent foundation for national control of immigration, and for the first time immigration was placed wholly under federal authority. The act also expanded prescribed a practical means of enforcing existing immigration laws, and the first provision for deporting aliens already in the United States and expanded the categories of undesirable aliens. This 1891 law would remain the framework of America's immigration policy and became the basis for the eventual restriction of immigration. In 1891, President Benjamin Harrison appointed Congressman Owen to the post of Federal Superintendent of Immigration.

It was not all foreign immigration that the Protestants wished to restrict. At the national convention of the Disciples of Christ, an evangelical sect, the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS, The recent anti-Chinese legislation of the United States Congress, in direct violation of the treaty between our own government and that of China, is a serious offense against Christian morals; and

⁴⁰⁶ "Current Events" *Christian Evangelist*, June 12, 1890. p. 27

WHEREAS, such legislation by a so-called Christian nation is calculated to injure the Christian religion in the eyes of the Chinese people, and thus cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the heathen; and

WHEREAS, this action on the part of our government is likely to very seriously embarrass our missionaries in their work among the people of China; therefore be it Resolved, that we do most solemnly protest against this unrighteous legislation and most respectfully petition the United States House of Representatives and the Senate at the next session of Congress to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act, or to modify it as to bring its restrictions within the provisions of the treaty between China and the United States and in accord with the dictates of justice.⁴⁰⁷

The year 1893 was a pivotal one for Protestant attempts to restrict immigration. The *Kansas City Times* had charged that the immigration bill of 1891 was an admission that the Protestant churches could not win over the immigrants and make them Christian citizens. The *Times* thought that all Christian opposition to restriction was only a churchly apologetic. The *Standard* replied to this charge by stating that restriction was a “precautionary” measure, much like alcohol prohibition. Stating that this was an issue of practicality and not of sentimentality, the *Standard* observed:

It has been determined how far the Christianity of the United States has been able to cope with the influx of foreign paupers, criminals, and social propagandists. America institutions have already deteriorated in proportion to the increase in this unclean tide. It does not want to be “morally assimilated,” but is an active and persistent factor for evil the moment it touches our shores.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ “Resolutions,” *Missionary Intelligencer*” (December, 1892) p. 414. This resolution against Chinese exclusion was rooted in the mission work being done by the Disciples among Chinese immigrants.

⁴⁰⁸ “A Charge of Impotence,” *Christian Standard*, January 21, 1893, p. 50

In 1899, Francis A. Walker, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, commenting on the Darwinian notion of migration as a selective process bringing America the most energetic and enterprising of Europeans, turned the tables, declaring that natural selection was now working in reverse. Due to the cheapness and ease of steamship transportation, the fittest now stay at home; the unfit migrate. Eight years earlier, the *Missionary Intelligencer* said the much the same. In an article in 1892, the journal noted the shift in the origins of immigration and the undesirable character of the new immigrants. The article attributed the lower class of immigrant to the cheap steerage passage available since the Civil War. Unrest, overpopulation, oppression, poverty and the desire and the desire of European governments to expel paupers and criminals, all combined to send new undesirable aliens to American shores:

The discontented and disorderly have come. The socialist, and nihilist, and anarchist have come. The great army to keep our saloons and to desecrate our Lord's day have come. The camel has gotten his head into the tent, and his shoulders, and the danger threatens that he will get his whole body inside, and dispossess the present occupant, or at least greatly damage his habitation.⁴⁰⁹

Protestant nativists also used non-religious restrictionist groups to push their agenda in times of economic hardship and social division as well as in times of national crisis or war. This was demonstrated by the rise of the American or Know-Nothing Party in the 1850s. An organization formed as a direct result of the Irish wave of immigration that followed the Irish famines of the 1840s. Although the Know-Nothing Party's ambitions were lost in the Civil War, its ideas remained active throughout America. The Junior Order United American Mechanics and the Scottish Rite Masons continued beyond 1860 with their nativist theories, particularly anti-Catholicism. Two successor

⁴⁰⁹ "Our Foreign Populations," *Missionary Intelligencer*, April 1892, p. 108

organizations appeared in the 1880s. The first, the American Protective Association was fundamentally rooted in the Middle West. The other, the National League for the Protection of American Institutions, the NLP AI, drew its main strength from the East Coast Protestant elite and remained within the elite stratum, even as its influence spread. These bodies differed fundamentally from their unsuccessful precursor. Where the Know Nothings were dedicated to reducing Catholic immigrants' options of integration into American society, their nativist successors sought to halt Catholic immigration. "Whereas Know Nothingism was due to the jealousy of the growing political strength of the [Irish] Catholic immigrant...APAism [sic] was perhaps due to the envy of the growing social and industrial strength of the Catholic Americans."⁴¹⁰ Moreover, although both of these organizations had national ambitions and saw themselves as national bodies, they differed from the Know Nothings in their attempts to wield pressure through lobbying rather than the establishment of a stand-alone third political party. While the NLP AI sought to unite Protestant anti-Catholic prejudice by appealing to the similarities between America's diverse Protestant groups,⁴¹¹ the APA attempted to utilize the existing Republican Party's organizational apparatus in order to promote their anti-Catholic platform.

The NLP AI's role call of members contained politicians such as Benjamin Harrison's vice-president Levi P. Morgan; writers such as James Fenimore Cooper; academics such as David Starr Jordan; financiers such as Cornelius Vanderbilt (Junior), John D. Rockefeller and J. Pierpont Morgan; and publishers such as George Putnam and Charles Scribner. The organization largely confined itself to putting high-level pressure

⁴¹⁰ Humphrey J. Desmond, *The APA Movement* (Washington D.C., 1912) p. 9-10

⁴¹¹ "The Protestants are divided into numerous friendly divisions agreeing to the great essentials of religious beliefs, but differing on minor points." The Reverend Thomas J. Morgan, Baptist minister and member of the Board of Administrators of the NLP AI, cited in the *New York Times*, June 9, 1894.

on Congress to limit Catholic power. By contrast, the APA attempted to influence public opinion at a more local level.

The forming of the Immigration Restriction League, in 1894, coincided with the emergence of the massive wave of Southern and Eastern European immigration. Begun by three Harvard graduates, the league used books, pamphlets, meeting, and numerous newspaper and journal articles. Among its members was Madison Grant, a eugenicist and author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, a book that detailed the “racial history” of Europe. The League single-mindedly pushed for America to adopt a literacy test to control immigration using political allies in Congress, including member Henry Cabot Lodge.

Immigration into other areas of the country did not, in some cases, meet the same fate as immigration into the Northeast. Unlike in the North, the Irish Catholics never dominated the population of any Southern city. Upper-class southerners therefore, did not object to them because their immigration never threatened to overwhelm their cities and states. On the other hand Irish numbers were large enough to help boost white majorities. Therefore, the Irish Catholics helped soothe native fears of a servile insurrection without becoming a larger threat themselves.⁴¹² Nevertheless, European immigration was not looked upon favorably by the predominant Protestant group in the South, the Baptists. In the years immediately following the Civil War, the demands of agriculture and the desire for the industrial development of the South led the editors of Baptist journals to urge European migrants to come to the South. However, when it was realized that the

⁴¹² Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1967) p. 48

immigrant's customs and traditions were in conflict with those in the Southern states, the journals opposed their coming and became strong advocates of immigration restriction.

The Baptist Record (Mississippi), J. B. Gambrell, editor.

With regard to Chinese immigration, Gambrell approved President Hayes' veto of a bill to exclude the Chinese. He asserted that had the bill become law, a solemn treaty with China would have been broken, and Americans in China would have been exposed to injury and death, however, he did not have the same attitude towards European immigration, for he regarded European immigrants as a menace to American society because they did not know "God and His Sabbath."⁴¹³

The Biblical Recorder (North Carolina), C.T. Bailey, editor

Bailey's strongest editorial concerning immigration was written in regard to the Chicago riot in 1886. He blamed the foreigners for that violence and asserted that such criminals should not be allowed to settle in this nation. Furthermore, he desired federal legislation to prohibit all European immigration, as had been adopted towards the Chinese. He believed that foreign immigration was "the most dangerous of all evils that threaten our country."⁴¹⁴

The Baptist Courier (South Carolina), James A. Hoyt, editor

In this editorial, Hoyt wrote of the large numbers of immigrants who landed in 1886 and who migrated to all parts of the nation. Because of their low standards of morality and religion, he asserted that a great responsibility was imposed upon the Christians of America.⁴¹⁵

The Alabama Baptist (Alabama) C.W. Hare, editor

The editor, C.W. Hare pointed to the prevalence of riots and strikes as examples of the result of "unrestricted immigration." He also maintained that the labor unions, which were controlled by immigrants, used unfair and lawless methods against industry.⁴¹⁶

The Arkansas Baptist (Arkansas) W. A. Clark, editor

⁴¹³ *The Baptist Record*, May 6, 1886. p. 4

⁴¹⁴ *The Biblical Recorder*, August 25, 1886. p. 2

⁴¹⁵ *The Baptist Courier*, January 27, 1886, p. 2

⁴¹⁶ *The Alabama Baptist*, August 25, 1892, p. 2

The editor W. A. Clark was apprehensive towards unrestricted immigration. While some people “hailed with delight” the coming of immigrants, he saw that there were ominous features, especially the influx of a pauper populace.⁴¹⁷

The Alabama Baptist (Alabama) J.G. Harris, editor

Harris asserted that there were some grounds for the popular thought among “religious people” that the “beer guzzling, Sabbath-breaking Germans” would demoralize Southern society, declaring that the “touch” of some of the immigrants would corrupt the best community. He also stated, “We could and should pray God to forbid their coming to our State. But after all our praying and wishing, the fact remains that immigration is coming...He urged the churches to inaugurate a program of Christian evangelism for them. After the assassination of President McKinley he declared that foreign immigration was a menace and should be stopped.⁴¹⁸

The Biblical Recorder (North Carolina) J.W. Bailey, editor

In 1905, the governor of North Carolina advocated the establishment of an immigration bureau for that state, whereby needful workers for the textile mills and the farms would be sought. J.W. Bailey maintained that textile mills and farms could secure their own workers, and that such a bureau was unnecessary. He regarded with disfavor the European immigrants and preferred that they would not locate in the South.⁴¹⁹

The Florida Baptist Witness (Florida) F.C. Edwards, editor

The rapid development of the South in agriculture and in industry was proof enough for Edwards that the South did not need foreigners. “That the South is free from strikes, municipal graft, bossism, Sabbath desecration, and the like, is well known. These things rapidly follow in the track of European immigrants. We trust that we may be preserved from them.⁴²⁰

The Baptist Courier (South Carolina) A. J. S. Thomas, editor

The editor was pleased that so few of the 1,166,353 immigrants who came to the United States in 1906 had settled in the South. Although there were persistent efforts to induce immigrants to settle in the South, he sincerely, but not very hopefully, wished that only the most desirable class of foreigners would be brought to the Southern states.⁴²¹

The Baptist Chronicle (Louisiana) David F. Lawrence, editor

⁴¹⁷ *The Baptist*, December 18, 1895

⁴¹⁸ *The Alabama Baptist*, September 12, 1901. p. 4

⁴¹⁹ *The Biblical Recorder*, June 14, 1905, p.8

⁴²⁰ *The Florida Baptist Witness*, May 10, 1906. p. 6

⁴²¹ *The Baptist Courier*, January 10, 1907, p. 5

Lawrence was pleased that the number of immigrants was decreasing in 1908, asserting that they had been coming so fast that the moral and Christian forces of the nation had been overwhelmed. He was also glad because immigration to Louisiana was at least temporarily arrested, so that the threat of “dagoism” was not imminent.⁴²²

The Baptist and Reflector (Tennessee) E.E. Folk, editor

This editorial was written in 1915 when President Wilson vetoed an immigration bill because it contained a literacy clause. Folk charged that Roman Catholics were taking advantage of the country’s lax immigration laws “to dump the scum of Europe upon our shores.” He believed that the welfare of the nation depended upon some kind of restriction whereby the “vicious and worthless” groups would be denied entrance.”^{423 424}

At the end of the nineteenth century, immigration restriction in the West was generally aimed at the oriental populations. The Protestant nativist groups in general opposed the Jews and Catholics of the “old immigration,” based on their religions rather than on individuals. As the twentieth century progressed, the nativists target was the non-Protestant alien’s ability to assimilate and the results of that assimilation for American society. Race and nationality played a predominant role in objections to the “new immigration,” re-enforcing, the function played by religion in the “old.” Given this, it is hardly surprising that immigration restriction was supported by the Protestant religious groups, when the Nordic argument came to the fore, however, the vehemence of the West’s hostility to Asian immigration was greater than its opposition to Catholics and Jewish immigration.

In 1910, the Reverend M.D. Lichliter, a Methodist minister from Harrisburg, Pa. testified before The Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of

⁴²² *The Baptist Chronicle*, August 6, 1908

⁴²³ *The Baptist and Reflector*, February 4, 1915. p. 9

⁴²⁴ Carl Dean English, The Ethical Emphases of the Editors of Baptist Journals Published in the Southeastern Region of the United States, 1865-1915. A Thesis presented to the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, July, 1948

Representatives on behalf of the Junior Order United American Mechanics, of which he was the chaplain. Among his remarks was the following:

...The question of restricted immigration has been increasingly before our order for twenty years; in fact we were the first to call attention of the American Congress to the evils growing out of our "open door" policy of the government, resulting particularly from its recent changed character and by which "undesirables" from foreign countries have been entering our portals by the millions.

I wish to state that, by way of preface, that as an organization, the Junior Order United American Mechanics is not opposed to the immigration idea. We believe in immigration – that there has been a need for it, that there is still room for more – but only of the better sort.

...The immigration of the present is not the immigration of forty years ago. The problem confronting us in this second decade of the twentieth century is entirely different than at that time, because we are receiving, in the main, a different type of immigrant. With open arms our order welcomes the kith and kin and blood as that of forty years ago, we do protest against the admission of those who come into this country whose habits and manner of life tear down the standard of American life, of living and of wages, and whose traits of character, formed under the condition under which they have existed as races for centuries, possessing a low order of intelligence and an inferior standard of life, renders it impossible, even if they had the desire, to maintain the highest ideals of American morality and citizenship.

...The baleful influence of such a low type of immigration on our civilization, labor, morals, and citizenship is patent to every observer. How much of this emigration in later years is undesirable is difficult to compute. Those who have made it a study differ in their estimates. But enough is shown, even by conservative estimates, that a large percentage of them should not have been permitted to enter.

...The tendency of latter-day immigration is to go into the great centers, already congested, and add thereto an increasing danger to the peace and good order of the public domain. It is not necessary, before such an intelligent body of men, to give extended remarks on this phase of the problem, as you know that the vast number of immigrants settle in our cities and refuse to go out to the farms.

...Then there is another factor that enters into the problem, when we consider the segregation of the millions of undesirables, the lower order of immigrants into our great industrial centers – that of the menace to the peace and good order of our country in times of strikes and labor uprisings, when there is a dispute regarding the wages of employees of the vast corporations. We need but recall the railroad riots of 1877 and the Homestead strike some years later.

...Gentlemen, in conclusion, I trust that the gravity of the situation confronting our country and the importance of the subject may be felt to such a degree that you will give it the most careful and thoughtful consideration. Immediate action to restrict immigration is necessary in order to protect our wage earners against the vicious,

criminal, pauper labor that is being permitted to enter our ports. We should maintain the high standard established by our American laborer. His right to such wages in order that he have a comfortable home, and a sufficient competency to enable him to educate his children and maintain his dignity as an American citizen is unquestioned.

We look to you, gentlemen, for such legislation that will preserve and protect that standard of living and citizenship for which we contend.

I thank you gentlemen, for your courtesy in listening to me⁴²⁵

With the outbreak of war in Europe, Protestant concerns over immigration and their success over the use of the law to solve their problems (see their efforts in the making of the 1892 immigration law), prompted their return to Congress. In 1914, the Reverend Sidney L. Gulick, a former Protestant missionary to Japan, proposed a “nondiscriminatory” quota plan of immigration restriction. This plan would theoretically apply a uniform principle to all immigrant nationalities. Gulick proposed quotas for each nationality proportionate to the number of naturalized citizens and their American-born children in the country. Each year, a federal commission would fix the total allowable immigration at a certain percentage of those first and second generation immigrants who were now citizens. This proposal became the basis for the National Origins Act of 1924, with the exception that the 1924 law carefully discriminated against the newer immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In May 1914, the *Christian Standard* endorsed Gulick’s plan:

Such an amendment would be desirable...it would partly close the dangerously wide-open gates through which are pouring immigrants from Europe in such numbers as to make them not only undesirable, but perilous to our free institutions.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Statement of the Junior Order Of United American Mechanics, United States Immigration Commission (1907-1910). Statements and recommendations submitted by societies and organizations interested in the subject of immigration. Washington, D.C., USA: Government Printing Office, 1911. p vi.

⁴²⁶ “This Opportunity May Knock But Once,” *Christian Standard*, May 16, 1914, p.859

Another attempt to use the law to restrict immigrants came in 1915 when Judge Gilbert O. Nations published *Constitution or Pope? Why Alien Roman Catholics Can Not be Legally Naturalized*. Nations was a holder of a PhD in law and was professor of Roman and Canon Law at America University in Washington D.C. He was a Disciple of Christ and in the years immediately before and after the World War was a leading national spokesman for the anti-Catholic cause. In the 1920s, Nations would edit *The Protestant* in Washington D.C., the official organ of the Free Press Defense League and for several months in 1918-1919, he would edit *The Menace*, the era's most virulent anti-Catholic newspaper. In 1924, Nations was the presidential candidate of the American Party, a nativist party dating from 1914.

Nations was a prolific writer, producing several books, including *Papal Sovereignty: The Government Within our Government*. Nations advocated the withholding of naturalization from Catholic immigrants. His approach was strictly legal. He sought to demonstrate that by all the canons of international law the pope was a sovereign prince, and as such enjoyed the fealty of all Catholics. Since the Constitution strictly forbade divided loyalty and demanded the renunciation of all previous loyalties as a condition of citizenship, then it logically followed that Catholic immigrants must either renounce Catholicism or be denied naturalization.

A popular organization emphatically supportive of immigration restriction was the Ku Klux Klan. This Klan (known to historians as the second Klan) appeared in Georgia in 1915, and became a lineal descendent of the Know Nothings in the fact that its membership was Protestant and in its anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant agitation. The Klan also added anti-Semitism to its beliefs. Standard Klan rhetoric reviewed the gamut

of traditional anti-Catholicism, reiterating the arguments that Catholics bowed to a foreign power and plotted to gain full control of America in order to destroy American political freedom and democracy. The attack on Jews was at least as virulent, condemning Jewish political and economic influence. Very often Catholics and Jews were also lumped together in claims that heretic and un-American forces were “taking over” and threatening the country. New immigrants, being largely non-Protestant were an important target of Klan hatred.⁴²⁷

At its inception, the Klan carried a reasonably respectable public image. The Knights of a city or town commonly represented a fair cross-section of its economic makeup: only the unskilled and elites were underrepresented. Nevertheless, the Imperial Wizard and high officials proclaimed intolerance toward non-Protestants. The reconstruction Klan had responded to the perceived threat posed by the North and the freed slaves. Similarly, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan following World War 1 responded to different threats reflecting the changes in the larger society. As the forces of change grew, so did the Klan’s reaction against them. It became anti-Catholic instead of Protestant, anti-alien instead of Pro-American.

The Congressional fellowship of the Congregationalist Church met in March of 1924 to advise their Association of the attitude that their churches should take toward the Klan. “It has been said by some who have studied the Klan and its influence, shortcomings, and dangers rather carefully, that the report of this committee is one of the fairest presentations of its principles, methods and nature that has ever been given to the public.” The following is part of that presentation as it applies to the subject of this

⁴²⁷ Robert A. Goldberg, Hooded Empire (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982) p. 53

dissertation and gives the position of a major evangelical religion toward an organization that is both anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant:

...The Klan is an organization of native, white, Protestant, Gentile, American citizens justified by the fact that other classes of residents in our country have their peculiar, exclusive organizations. This organization is necessary to voice and protect the rights of those whom it represents against aggressions on the part of those other classes of citizens.

...While it never attacks any man's religion, it is pre-eminently Protestant in its sympathies and support.

...It is a champion of the public school, and advocates a national public school system. It would prohibit members of the Roman Catholic Church from becoming teachers in the public schools, because it understands the Roman hierarchy to condemn that institution and cannot see how a loyal Roman Catholic can be a loyal member of the board of teachers in the public schools.

...Because the Klan fears the influence of certain foreign ideals and sees a preponderance of foreign names in the criminal lists, it would cut off all foreign immigration and give the nation an opportunity to assimilate and Americanize the foreign people already admitted to our shores.⁴²⁸

In 1917, the Reverend Sidney Gulick, D.D., now secretary of the Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of Churches,⁴²⁹ in an attempt to convince the scientific community of his organization's views spoke to a meeting of The American Association For The Advancement Of Science on the subject of immigration. In this address, he attempted to balance immigration from the East with that of the West, and he also made the important point that Americanization of foreigners has not succeeded:

...The large influx of foreigners in recent years has produced a serious situation. Our laws have not adequately grappled with the many kinds of problems that have arisen. Present laws afford no method of control either of the numbers or of the races that may be admitted. We have reason to expect a large immigration of peoples that will prove extremely difficult of Americanization.

⁴²⁸ Frederick L. Fagley, "The Ku Klux Klan in New Jersey: Congregationalists Make Careful Study and Report," *The Congregationalist*, April 10, 1924, p. 460

⁴²⁹ The successor organization to the Evangelical Alliance.

Vast masses of aliens in our midst are not Americanized and we have no effective provision for their Americanization. Free immigration from Europe constantly threatens standards of living of American workmen. Differential treatment of, and legislation against, Asiatics produces international irritation.

These varied dangers threaten the success of our democracy.

We now need a comprehensive and constructive policy for the regulation of all immigration, and the Americanization of all whom we admit, a policy that is based on sound economic, eugenic, political, and ethical principles, and a program worked out in detail for incorporating that policy into practice.

...Our new comprehensive policy, moreover, must take into consideration not merely the relations of America with Europe, Africa, and West Asia, but also with China, Japan, and India.

...The need of regulating immigration from Europe and West Asia is so well recognized that nothing further will be said upon it in this brief discussion. It is important however, that Americans should realize that the present laws dealing with Japanese, Chinese, and Hindus are quite obsolete. They are not only obsolete; they are positively dangerous.⁴³⁰

In an effort to restrict immigration, the Protestant sects also supported the Literacy Test.⁴³¹ *The Baptist and Reflector*:

On last Thursday, President Wilson returned the Immigration Bill to the House of Representatives in Congress with his veto, on account of the literacy test. He based his veto largely upon the plea that people who come to America as the land of promise for the purpose of improving their condition should not be denied admittance because they had not had in the countries from which they came the very opportunity which they seek here. This is a strong plea, but it should be remembered that this lack of opportunity in their countries is due very largely to the dominance of Roman Catholicism, whose policy is to keep the people in ignorance in order to keep them in subjection. After they have ruined these countries, Roman Catholicism is now reaching out after America and is taking advantage of our lax immigration laws to dump the scum of Europe upon our shores. If it be claimed that that ignorance and viciousness do not necessarily go together, then certainly some test ought to be found for excluding the worthless and the vicious from our country.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Sidney L. Gulick, "A Comprehensive Immigration Policy and Program", *The Scientific Monthly*, March, 1918, p. 214-223

⁴³¹ When passed over President Wilson's veto, the Literacy Test required that any immigrant wishing to make his home in the United States would be expected to read a thirty to forty word passage, usually from the Bible, in the language of their choosing. It had been vetoed earlier by Presidents Cleveland, Taft, and Wilson.

⁴³² *Baptist and Reflector, Official News Journal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention*, February 4, 1915, p. 9

The next year another Baptist publication, *The Home Field*, printed an article on the literacy test:

It is reported that a committee of Congress is again preparing a bill to restrict immigration, that the emissaries of Rome and other non-patriotic interests are fighting it, but at present it includes the literacy test. To keep out the unlettered hordes from Catholic countries is to thwart the nefarious Romanist scheme to “make America Catholic.” The bill as reported to Congress should embody the literacy test. If that is in, it will not matter much what else is out. If that is out, no amount of piling up of imposing verbiage will atone for the lack. Readers should write to their congressmen and senators to that effect. It is hoped President Wilson will not again veto such a patriotic and just measure.⁴³³

The tensions engendered by America’s entry into the World war in April 1917 brought about a three year period of unparalleled xenophobia. The crusade for Americanization in this period represented a concerted drive for a real homogeneity among Americans. The period included the anti-hyphenate campaign, the demand for 100 percent Americanism, the anti-German hysteria of the World War, the red scare of 1919-1920, the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, and a wave of virulent anti-Semitism. So great was the xenophobia of the period that by 1921, the restriction of immigration was the national consensus, resulting in the passage of the Dillingham Bill and its signing by Warren G. Harding. It marked the most important turning point in America immigration policy by imposing the first clear and absolute numerical limits on European immigration and it established a national origins quota system. The popular hysteria of 1917-1920 helped accomplish what for decades Protestant nativists had been unable to achieve.

The Act however was temporary and was debated in the Congress until the permanent law, the Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act) was passed.

⁴³³ *The Home Field*, February, 1916, p. 26

Early in 1924, before the act was passed, the Protestant nativist press continued their support of immigration restriction. Four examples from *The Christian Advocate*, a national Methodist journal, which encapsulates the attitude of evangelical Protestants towards immigration restriction.

January 24, 1924:

Americans are being called to guard their cherished rights of freedom and democracy from many quarters. While we have slept, the Wooden Horse, filled with Greeks and other strangers has floated past the Statue of Liberty. We are opening our eyes on the greatest mass of unfamiliar humanity that ever gathered in any center of the world. Gradually, students and facts of immigration prod us awake, and we behold conditions which fill us with anxiety and rightly so. Some even think that the Americans have been dispossessed of their home, and now awake to find a new occupant in possession.

...We have welcomed these immigrants, and we are anxious that they shall have all that America can give them in helpfulness, provided they are inclined to conform to our standards of life and ideals. But the serious question before thinking people today is, "What are the foreigners going to do to us?" We may be able best to judge this by facing boldly and frankly what they are doing in our country and to our American ideals. One of the leading government immigration authorities has said to us that a serious handicap in handling this problem has been our fear to speak out boldly on the racial, religious, and intellectual factors involved in immigration. We fear to be called bigots and narrow nationalists. This fear has delayed proper remedial action until today America finds herself suffering from a serious difficulty. We have been orating about America, the "asylum of the oppressed," and now awake to find the stomach of the body politic gorged with certain racial groups, which cannot be digested, and the remedy to restore the the patient to his former normal health has not been found.

A month ago, we dealt with this racial question showing how foreign groups were alienizing America. It was pointed out then that despite McSweeney's Knights of Columbus Revised American History, the facts remain the same, and that America was founded and colonized by Anglo-Saxons and Protestants.

...It is these distinctive Angelo-Saxon and Protestant characteristics which make government of the people and by the people to flourish in America. That they are being threatened now by the wholesale immigration of the past thirty years causes thoughtful people to be anxious concerning the character of the new immigration law which must be enacted before next July.

...we have indicated in former articles how racial colonization affects America, but the religious is scarcely less important. The Jews flock together and live in ghettos in our large cities; comparatively few accepting American standards of life, and small numbers going to rural sections. The Mennonites and similar religious groups build up

barriers to American influence, and the great Roman Catholic Church has been a very serious offender by her encouragement to colonization and segregation.

For at least two generations, the Roman Catholic Church has promoted colonization and with her parochial schools, in many instances, has presented a barrier to true Americanization. Likewise, she has fostered the coming of masses from the Roman Catholic countries of Southeastern Europe. Many have believed her intention in doing this has been to promote a program often credited to the Roman hierarchy to Romanize the United States. Whether this is true or not, millions of Americans so interpret many of the acts which do not square with the American idea of fair play.

...It is generally understood that the parochial school is un-American in its conception, its standards and its teaching. If the revised history which the Knights Of Columbus are endeavoring to have accepted in this country is an index of the standard which is maintained in the parochial schools, the people will be more concerned than ever about the spirit of Americanism reaching the millions of young Americans who are being trained in these institutions.

...Old stock Americans everywhere are becoming concerned "with wild stories, doubtless untrue in themselves, but true enough in the larger facts they represent," that "the Jews dominate the economic life of the country," "the Catholics aim to dominate the political life," and that the alien immigration is at the root of an attack "upon Protestant freedom of conscience." "The alien is not consciously engaged in petty plots against the government or religion. But both consciously (in small numbers) and unconsciously (in huge masses), he is engaged in a movement far more subtle and far more dangerous. He is engaged in an elemental struggle to *remain alien*, and he is engaged in an elemental struggle to *make America alien*."

...Whereas the writer is not a Klansman and disapproves of many things charged to that organization, he likewise disapproves of many just as heinous things credited to the chief enemies of the Klansmen. In consideration of this immigration problem, it must be conceded that one has as much right to fight for American ideals in a business suit as in an army uniform, and it is high time that, in some manner, the American people should be aroused to certain outstanding dangers. May we, as American men and women unafraid of calumny, boycott, political disfavor or any other anti-American weapon, stand up bravely like our sires of Lexington and Yorktown and save American ideals, not alone for ourselves, but for the sake of the world.⁴³⁴

March 20, 1924

Many of us have been asking why the Senate Committee seemed to show such a different attitude from the House Committee on the question of regulating immigration. We have discovered what seems to be a very potential factor. It is the bloc of foreigners in the United States, who have obtained the franchise and use it en masse to the interest

⁴³⁴ "America – Alien or American: The Educational And Religious Aspects Of Immigration," *The Christian Advocate*, January 10, 1924. p. 42

of their fellow countrymen in the old land, rather than in consideration of conditions which prevail in this land, which has given them a home. This indicates that the foreigners in this country who have become naturalized, but not Americanized, control important legislation in the United States. This is proof enough that we should have awakened long ago to what mass immigration might mean to a democracy. Already the “Wooden Horse” our gates and the enemies – unconscious enemies, perhaps – are at work undermining the democratic principle.

Forgetting for the first time the few politicians who will trade their influence for votes, let us see how the mass foreign vote thwarts democracy. This, by the way, is not a supposition, but what is now in actual operation. There are senators who believe that almost complete closing of immigration would be helpful until we adjust ourselves. There are others who believe in a careful selection abroad, and in fact, most native born legislators seem to favor a decided restriction. Many of these, however, do not dare to vote their convictions, not, as might be inferred, because of cowardice, but because they believe the foreign bloc would put others in their places who would stand for no restriction at all.

This menacing situation prevails more generally in States with cities having large foreign groups and does not so directly affect representatives, the majority of whom come from districts predominately American or of Americanized constituents.

...It would be un-Christian and un-American to discriminate against any race or creed or be unwilling to be helpful to the oppressed of other nations, but there is such a thing as sinking a ship by an undue and uncontrolled cargo. In such a case, the ship is of no service either to the crew or the cargo. This democratic “Ship of State” is sailing on an entirely new course... This seems to be the time when the cargo needs to be carefully invoiced and cared for, lest the old ship, America, gets to rolling overmuch... The average number of votes cast in the country is only thirty-five percent of the electorate, whereas the foreign naturalized voters have been known to cast ninety-seven percent of their strength. How long shall the minority of citizens determine so largely the legislation which governs the future of the majority?⁴³⁵

April 3, 1924

The Immigration Bill is now before the lower house of Congress. It is the Johnson measure, basing immigration restriction upon the basis of two percent of the nationalities in this country according to the census of 1890. We believe that the general sentiment of the people supports this basis of limitation, but the Jews, Roman Catholics, and foreign organizations will vigorously fight against America restricting the flow of immigrants by this plan.

April 24, 1924

⁴³⁵ “The Menace Of Un-Americanized Citizens,” *The Christian Advocate*,” March 20, 1924. p. 361

...It must be confessed that some of the congressmen who were born in foreign countries or of foreign-born parentage, of certain races, showed greater concern for their old country ties than for their American national responsibilities...The Jews and Italians in the immigration discussion were the most outspoken champions of the “rights” of those who have never been in this country and have no claim upon this nation.

In 1942, the Episcopal Church asked the Reverend Walter Herbert Stowe, the managing editor of the *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* to research the subject of American immigration as it applied to the Episcopal Church. His study, was entitled *Immigration and the Growth of the Episcopal Church*, his conclusion:

...It was, in very truth, darkest just before the dawn. In the night of World War 1, the first glimmer of light began to be visible. The dawn came with the Johnson Act of 1924 which had a twofold purpose: (1) to reduce the number of immigrants so as to afford an opportunity for assimilation; (2) to allow such future immigration only as will preserve a reasonable degree of homogeneity in the population of the United States. Said the author of the act:

“The myth of the melting pot has been discredited...The day of unalloyed welcome to all peoples, the day of indiscriminant acceptance of all races, has definitely ended.”

It seems certain that the Immigration Act of 1924, with the modifications of the National Origins Act of 1929 to preserve the existing racial proportions of the American people was an epochal event in American history, marking a turning point as full of economic and social meaning as was the passing of the frontier about 1890.

Few of realized the significance of this act for the growth of the Episcopal Church, just as few of us grasped the paralyzing effect of unrestricted immigration on the rate of the Church’s growth since 1890 and the dark future for this Church if such immigration had continued much longer.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶ Walter Herbert Stowe, *Immigration and the Growth of the Episcopal Church* (Richmond: Richmond Press, Inc. , 1942) p. 35

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS PAPER THAT ARE APPLICABLE TODAY

The two main problems that involve immigration today are illegality and control. As far as illegality is concerned, my paper gives no assistance in solving the problem because it basically did not exist in the nineteenth century. The main problem, which has plagued those countries receiving immigrants in any age, is control. The main reason for a nation to accept immigrants is to benefit itself. Consider the United States – Thomas Jefferson buys the Louisiana Purchase, vastly increasing the size of the country, but who will do the work to develop it? The farmers who had their own land? The Colonial shopkeepers? Immigration was the answer, but the immigrants brought their own baggage, their ideas, customs, and religions, which in the main was different from those of the natives, causing the problems that I have written about and ultimately ending in the Immigration Act of 1924. After World War II, as Europe became more prosperous, the countries needed outside labor because their indigenous populations were not large enough or willing enough to do the “grunt” work necessary to take advantage of their opportunities, the answer, immigrants. Europe’s twentieth century Moslems are America’s nineteenth century Catholics and Jews, with the same results, problems

because of a lack of control of the situation. If the Europeans had looked to the American experience, they may have been able to set up a situation that could have benefited both themselves and their immigrants.

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