A PILGRIM'S FURTHER PROGRESS: EUROPE AND AMERICA IN THE THOUGHT OF ORESTES A. BROWNSON, 1840S - 1870S

by

Nanci C. Wooten

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Approved: Eugene C. Drozdowski
Thesis Advisor

Max Dixon
Major Professor

Michael V.R. Thomason
Major Professor

Max Dixon
Chairman of Department

Gratis D. Williams
Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

The four major studies of Orestes Brownson to date - Henry F. Brownson's three volume biography and the biographies by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Theodore Maynard, and Americo Lapati - have largely been biographical presentations which concentrate on the nature of Brownson's religious experiences from his youth to his conversion to Catholicism in 1844. The scope of his thought as a Catholic convert has not been sufficiently studied. Heretofore, studies of the convert Brownson have mainly been devoted to his theology and his personal life.

In examining The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, in twenty volumes, one finds that the majority of his journalistic articles were written during the Civil War and Reconstruction decades and that they contain observations on a wide variety of subjects, domestic and foreign. The journalist Brownson had been noted for his incisive comments on many aspects of American life; yet, little attention had been given to his extensive commentary on events in Europe. Consequently, the writer of this paper attempted to investigate this area of his thought and to find its significance in the totality of Brownson's intellectual pursuits.

After reading the four biographical studies of Brownson, attention was largely devoted to the vast amount of primary source material contained in his works. Other secondary sources cited in this bibliography were used for background material relating to the topics discussed in this paper. The research done provided ample material for the topic being investigated.

The conclusions derived from this research were that the convert Brownson wrote about European events from two perspectives. Primarily,

he was concerned with the events which related to the growth and future of the Catholic Church in the Western world. And, secondarily, he contended that the political and cultural events in Europe had a direct bearing on occurrences in the United States. Therefore, he wrote about these events so that his readers might understand the concrete relationship of developments on the continent with those in the United States.

As the years passed and the revolutionary developments in Europe increasingly threatened the Catholic Church, Brownson developed the theory that America's mission, under Catholic leadership, was to lead the European nations in a return to a Western Christendom based on the ordered structure of the Catholic Church. Thus, Brownson not only wrote about the immediate interaction of European and American events, but contended that this vital interaction would increase in the future with the result being a truly catholic Western civilization.

PREFACE

An often neglected area of historical research in the United States has been the cultural and intellectual history of the Civil War and Reconstruction decades. This has been understandable in light of the momentous political and military developments of the period. But now that these areas have been thoroughly investigated attention is being turned to the equally momentous cultural and intellectual developments during these years. The works of Orestes A. Brownson, a prolific journalist in these years, provide an excellent opportunity for research in this field. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the scope of Orestes Brownson's mind in the decades of the 1840s through the 1870s.

The Works of Orestes A. Brownson contain a vast amount of material on American and European political and cultural developments during these decades. The breadth and range of the topics Brownson discussed provide ample evidence in support of the view that Americans were not so totally absorbed in their domestic problems that they ignored developments on the continent. Although a large percentage of the masses may have been preoccupied with the immediate internal problems of these decades, Brownson's works reveal that he and a great many of the literary, religious, and political leaders of the United States were vitally interested in European events in themselves and from the standpoint of the effect they would have on the course of events in America.

I am indebted to Professor Eugene Drozdowski for helping me to become aware of the need for research in this area and for the invaluable assistance given to me in bibliographic matters.

Nanci C. Wooten
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Chapter I

BROWNSON'S EARLY LIFE: A QUEST FOR RELIGIOUS TRUTH

One of the most powerful and productive minds of mid-nineteenth century American Catholicism is found in the person of Orestes Augustus Brownson. Born at Stockbridge, Vermont on the sixteenth of September, 1803, Brownson was accompanied into the world by a twin sister, Daphne Augusta. He and his sister were the youngest of the six children of Sylvester and Relief Metcalf Brownson.[1]

Sylvester Brownson died shortly after Orestes and Daphne were born. Mrs. Brownson struggled to keep the family together for several years, but finally had to place Orestes under the care of an elderly couple in the neighboring town of Royalton, Vermont. The man was over sixty and his wife nearly fifty and both were steeped in the severe Puritan morality of rural New England.[2]

Brownson led a very solitary existence in Royalton. There were no

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[1] Americo D. Lapati, Orestes A. Brownson. New York: Twayne Publishers, Incorporated, 1965. p. 22.

[2] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

peers with whom he could associate. Consequently he lived in a fantasy world he created from the characters of the many religious books he read. His foster parents owned many of the theological works of Calvin and though he read these he devoted his attention primarily to the Bible, which he completed at the age of eight, Jonathan Edward's A History of the Work of Redemption, Dr. Watt's Poems, Philip Quarle (a novel), and the Franklin Primer.[3] It was this reading in works exuding the Calvinist ethic that prompted Brownson to search for a secure religious foundation; a search which would take him through a variety of religious denominations until he found this security in the Catholic faith.

Living in his fantasy world of Biblical characters, Brownson's imagination led him to have visions of conversations with the saints and with the Virgin Mary. He often dreamed of the bliss of heaven and the horrors of a Calvinist hell. It was not surprising, therefore, that at a very early age Brownson decided to become a minister.

Although Brownson's foster parents were strict and pious Puritans, they rarely attended church. As a result Brownson was never baptized. He was, however, very concerned about his religious life and wanted to know what church to join when the opportunity arose. He consulted a very religious old woman who lived on the corner of the farm which his foster parent's owned. Later in his life Brownson reported that during this conversation the old woman said, "My poor boy, God has been good to you. But do not join the Methodists or any of the sects. You yourself know the founder of the Christians, and I personally know both Wesley and Whitfield. When

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[3]Theodore Maynard, Orestes Brownson: Yankee, Radical, Catholic. New York: Macmillan Company, 1943. pp. 1-2.

you join any church, find out the one that began with Christ and His Apostles."[4] Brownson said later that it was this conversation that led him on his quest for the true church and prevented him from ever being a thoroughgoing Protestant.

Relief from the solitary existence Brownson was leading came in 1817 when Mrs. Brownson moved to Ballston Spa, New York and he joined her so that he could attend the academy there. The amount of time he spent at the academy is questionable; however, it has been established that this was the only formal education he ever received.[5] However, while living in Ballston Spa, Brownson, in his quest for religious certainty, did join the Presbyterian Church. Yet his sojourn as a Presbyterian was brief because the Calvinist doctrines of the total depravity of man and original sin gave him a very morbid outlook and caused him a great deal of mental anguish.[6]

In 1824, still perplexed over his religious anxieties, Brownson moved to Springwells, on the River Rouge, near Detroit, Michigan to accept a teaching position. The river was a "cesspool of malaria" during the summer months and Brownson contracted the disease. During his illness he devoted his time to the contemplation of religious doctrines and the future of his soul. He also studied the works of Dr. Winchester, the founder of Universalism in the United States, and Hosea Ballou, a prophet of this new school of Universalism.[7]

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[4]Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 4.

[5]Ibid., p. 6.

[6]Lapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 24.

[7]Maynard, Orestes Brownson, pp. 14-15.

Both Ballou and Winchester attacked orthodox structured Christianity and though Brownson questioned this he did agree with their position that religious belief must be a rational act, not a total reliance on authority. Therefore, he tentatively accepted Universalism and in a year's time became so enamoured by Universalist thought that he left his teaching position at Springwells and applied to the Universalist General Convention to be a licensed preacher.[8]

After one year's apprenticeship, on June 15, 1826, Brownson was ordained as a Universalist minister at Jaffrey, New Hampshire. During his period as an apprentice he had met Sally Healy whom he married a year after his ordination. Shortly thereafter, he became the editor of the Gospel Advocate, a Universalist semi-monthly journal.[9]

Universalism turned Brownson away from the supernatural, for it abolished hell, degraded heaven, and rendered revelation meaningless. Again, his quest for religious certainty led him to question the basis of religious authority in Universalism. Much to his dismay he found that the authority resided in man's rational powers. He could not reconcile this with his past reading of the Bible and the Calvinist emphasis on man's total dependence on God's grace.

To further complicate matters, Brownson saw that the Universalists made no distinction between virtue and vice; and, therefore, completely undermined Christian morality, in its orthodox sense. With God being the

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[8]Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 25-26.

[9]Maynard, Orestes Brownson, pp. 15-16.

loving God of the Universalists and not the punishing God of the Calvinists, Brownson could find no extrahuman criterion for judging between right and wrong. This led him to the obvious conclusion that judgment of this sort must come from the individual's own reasoning ability. As a result of this lack of a metaphysical frame of reference, Brownson could no longer accept Universalism and, therefore, openly declared himself to be an unbeliever.[10]

"Having tried faith without reason, and reason without faith, the two extremes, he now tried to explore for himself a via media."[11] During his last two years as a Universalist, he had read and talked about social reform. He had studied Robert Owen and William Godwin and concurred with their doctrine that man is formed by his environment and that all that would be necessary to obtain a perfect society would be to form its characteristics by the right sort of education.[12] At this stage in Brownson's quest for certainty a disciple of Godwin and Owen, Frances Wright, was lecturing in Utica, New York. By chance Brownson heard one of her lectures. It was this meeting with Mrs. Wright that acted both as a catalyst in Brownson's decision to leave the Universalist ministry, and in prompting his involvement with the Workingmen's Party.

As a political organization, the Workingmen's Party had originated in Philadelphia in 1827 and had extended into New York in 1829. The major aim

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[10] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, pp. 20-23.

[11] George Lathrop, "Orestes Brownson", The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art and Politics, Vol. LXXVIII. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896. p. 772.

[12] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 27.

of the party was to elevate labor, to make it respectable, and to have the useful arts as well rewarded as any other.[13] While working with this organization Brownson saw that he needed "religion of some sort as the agent to induce men to make the sacrifices required in the adoption of my plans for working out the reform of society, and securing to man his earthly felicity."[14] This realization of the need of religious authority caused Brownson to again establish himself as a preacher; this time as an Independent. And this sympathy he developed for the reform movements of the day would later change to a more moderate view of reform operating within the structure of the Catholic Church.

While in Ithaca, New York as a Independent minister, Brownson founded a bi-monthly journal, the Philanthropist, for the primary purpose of expressing his views to the public. Then, early in 1836, Brownson carried his ministry to Mount Bellingham in Chelsea and in May extended it into Boston.[15] While in Boston he heard the sermons of Dr. William E. Channing, the Apostle of Unitarianism, and he became convinced of the correctness of Channing's theory that social salvation could not be achieved by uprooting institutions, but that it could only be achieved through individual regeneration.[16] This theory remained as an essential part of Brownson's thought as a Catholic, with the modification that in-

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[13] Henry F. Brownson, Orestes A. Brownson's Early Life: From 1803 to 1844. Detroit, Michigan: H.F. Brownson, Publisher, 1891. p. 45.

[14] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 43.

[15] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Orestes A. Brownson: A Pilgrim's Progress. New York: Octagon Books, Incorporated, 1963. p. 41.

[16] William R. Hutchison, The Transcendentalist Ministers: Church Reform In The New England Renaissance. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1959. p. 43.

dividual regeneration could only be achieved under the auspices of the Catholic faith.

Brownson adopted Channing's position and when the Philanthropist failed due to financial reasons, he began to look for a Unitarian pulpit. He found a pulpit in Walpole, New Hampshire, a somewhat isolated rural community. Here Brownson had time to devote to studying as well as tending to the business of his pastorate. He studied the French language "which he mastered so thoroughly that, although he was never able to converse in it or any other tongue, very few Frenchmen were more competent critics of, or better appreciated the style of their writers."[17]

The first book Brownson read in French was Benjamin Constant's work, On Religion, in five octavo volumes. He then began to read other leading European thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Jouffroy, and Victor Cousin. Later in his life he said that he was indebted to the Saint-Simonians, Pierre Bayard, Enfantin, Leroux, Lerminier, and the Abbe de la Mennais for much of his social and philosophical thought.[18]

He agreed with these French thinkers that Christianity was basically a gospel of social reform, and that Protestantism was too divergent to be effective in these reforms. Thus, still searching for a secure religious ground, he maintained that there needed to be a new independent church, "the Church of the Future", with its basic truth being the eventual goodness of man.[19] Consequently, Brownson felt that

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[17] Henry Brownson, Brownson's Early Life, p. 86.

[18] Ibid., pp. 409-410.

[19] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 30-31.

it was his task to prepare for the coming of this institution through founding an organizational society and through publishing a book to prepare the public for this new church.

Accordingly, Brownson published New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church. It offered a program of social progress for the laboring classes, with a religious base as its authoritative guide. Then, Brownson moved to Chelsea to bring the gospel of the Church of the Future to the unchurched of Boston. To accomplish this he founded the "Society for Christian Union and Progress", using it as a means through which to communicate with the working classes.[20]

Brownson became quite a controversial figure in Boston. On July 1, 1836 he assumed the editorship of the Boston Reformer "disclaiming all blame for its errors, and all praise for the merits of its past career."[21] He intended for this publication to be a medium of free discussion on all topics connected with religion, morality, literature, and politics, regardless of party interests. The publication of this journal increased Brownson's popularity in both literary and political circles.

A few months after the publication of the journal began Brownson was awarded the political position of Steward of the Marine Hospital at Chelsea, Massachusetts. With a yearly salary of $1,600.00 and a rent-free house, Brownson had the financial security needed to establish his own literary review. Even though the periodical press was at his disposal, he

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[20] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 63.

[21] Henry Brownson, Brownson's Early Life, p. 161.

wanted his own publication "as a medium through which he could say what he wanted to say and say it in his own way and time."[22] Thus, in 1837 he began publishing the Boston Quarterly Review; Not only was he the editor he virtually was the sole contributor to the review.

While working with these literary reviews, Brownson met and befriended many of the bold and independent thinkers of Boston. In the fall of 1836 he met with some of these friends - Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Ripley, Frederick H. Hedge, Convers Francis, James F. Clarke, and Bronson Alcott - at George Ripley's home where they formed a loose society which came to be known as the "Transcendental Club."[23] From this time on, Brownson was counted as one of the leading Transcendentalists, but in reality he was only very loosely attached to the movement.[24] As Brownson said, "So far as Transcendentalism is understood to be the recognition in man of the capacity of knowing truth intuitively or of attaining to a scientific knowledge of an order of existence transcending the reach of the senses. . . .we are Transcendentalists."[25]

All during this period Brownson continued to publish his Boston Quarterly Review. As a rule the issues were stimulating discussions of the works of leading American literary and political, with occasional discussions of controversial European figures. In 1840 Brownson published

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[22] Ibid., p. 213.

[23] Schlesinger, Orestes Brownson, p. 46.

[24] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 84.

[25] Hutchison, The Transcendentalists Ministers, p. 153.

a review of Carlyle's recently published essay on Chartism. In this essay Brownson carefully examined events in France, England, and Germany. In this examination he discovered that a crisis was approaching in the Western world. This crisis, he thought, would be the result of the inequalities that existed in all countries. Brownson felt that these inequalities stemmed from the fact that the producers of wealth were excluded, as a rule, from the existing social benefits. In Brownson's eyes this injustice, inherent in all capitalistic systems, far exceeded the injustice of slavery. He continued this essay by attacking the wage system and declaring that social ills could not be cured unless the social structure were radically changed.[26]

This radical change entailed overthrowing the priesthood as the chief obstacle in effecting reform. Yet this was not to be a destructive change for when the priesthood was removed the Christianity of Christ would be re-established. In following articles Brownson proposed a definite program of operation which appeared to be extremely socialistic. And although Brownson does not directly relate these ideas to the French socialists, it is obvious that his study of their works greatly influenced his thinking on the economic system in the United States, and on the changes that should be undertaken. These proposed changes aroused a great deal of public protest and Brownson was the object of many fierce literary attacks. This controversy and the position Brownson took caused him to lose all chances of a future political career; however, it made him a national literary figure overnight.[27]

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[26] Schlesinger, Orestes Brownson, pp. 88-94

[27] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 98.

Then in 1843 Brownson became involved in another controversial issue. He wrote a series of articles on "The Mission of Jesus" for The Christian World. These articles were significant for they gave public evidence of Brownson unwittingly moving towards Catholicism. Brownson realized these tendencies, yet he was not ready to become a Roman Catholic for he had the following problems yet to consider: How could the Protestant movement be completely wrong? Why were the Roman Catholic countries in Europe unprogressive in comparison to the non-Catholic countries? Why did the Roman Catholics lack the leadership to extend social progress and freedom and instead tend to side with absolutism? And he feared the uncertainty that the transition to Roman Catholicism would bring personally; plus he still questioned the infallibility of the Pope, though he could conceivably grant infallibility to the Church.[28]

In his search for the true, authoritative church, Brownson had concluded, through logical deduction, that Roman Catholicism was clearly the church of history and the true body of Christ today. Therefore, even though he still harbored these doubts, in 1844 he decided to discuss entering into the Roman Catholic Church with Bishop Benedict J. Fenwick of Boston.[29]

Theodore Maynard, Americo Lapati, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Henry Brownson, all biographers of Orestes Brownson, agree that Brownson's spiritual progress indicated a continual move toward Catholicism. However, Theodore Maynard has been more concerned with establishing the concreteness

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[28] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 37-38.

[29] Ibid., p. 39.

of this thesis than the other biographers. He maintained that every step Brownson took after leaving Presbyterianism was in the direction of the Catholic Church. And he contended that almost all of the books Brownson studied influenced him in this direction, though few of these were by Catholic authors. Commenting on this topic in his later life, Brownson wrote, "The writer who first turned my mind in the direction of the Church was the Abbe Maret. . . .by his Le Panthéisme en la Société Moderne."[30] Obviously, to Brownson, the books read as a child had no direct bearing on his conversion.

Even with this statement in mind, Theodore Maynard contended that Dr. William Channing's Catholicity of general outlook did much to prepare Brownson for the acceptance of the Catholic faith. And to Maynard it was Pierre Leroux who freed Brownson from the doctrine of Transcendentalism. Maynard did not think that these statements contradicted Brownson's comment, for Brownson was commenting on an actual occurrence rather than indirect influences. And following this Maynard added that a major factor contributing to Brownson's conversion was that all during the early 1840s Brownson's closest friend and confidant was Isaac Hecker who was also turning to Catholicism and would eventually become a leader of the Paulists in America.[31]

The final evidence, according to Maynard, of Brownson's acceptance of Catholicism was found in the July, 1844 issue of his review. Before

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[30] Henry F. Brownson, Orestes A. Brownson's Latter Life: From 1856-1876. Detroit, Michigan: Henry F. Brownson, Publisher, 1900. p. 555.

[31] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, pp. 123-124.

his public conversion Brownson wrote,

> The Church in communion with the See of Rome is the only holy, apostolic church, or the one holy catholic apostolic church does not exist. We have tried every possible way to escape this conclusion, but escape it we cannot. We must accept it or go back to the no-church doctrine. Our logic allows us no alternative between Catholicism and come-outerism. . . .We are thoroughly convinced in mind, heart and soul, that Christ did institute a visible church; that he founded it upon a rock; that the gates of hell have not prevailed, and cannot prevail against it; and that it is the duty of us all to submit to it, as the representative of the Son of God on earth. 32

On October 29, 1844 Brownson was finally received into the Roman Catholic Church by Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston. The task of his Quarterly Review, immediately after his conversion, primarily was the defense of his new faith. Yet, this was not merely a personal defense. He also defended the Church against the climate of opinion that existed in America in the 1840s toward Roman Catholicism. This led him to discuss the political movements that had developed as a result of the Irish Catholic immigrant situation. He not only discussed this situation in great depth, but he expanded his interests to other European affairs which seemed to him to be of some consequence in the growth of Catholicism in the Western world. He discussed these events not only as they related to the European continent, but also as they related to concurrent American events and ideals.

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[32] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 138.

Brownson did not attempt to comprehensively review the total European scene from 1844 through 1876. He selected events which seemed to him to have a direct bearing on the growth of the Catholic Church in Europe and the influence these events would have on the growth of the Catholic Church in the United States. Thus, while he made some brief remarks on general European affairs from this perspective, his most important contributions lie in his critical commentary on such major events as the revolutions of 1848, the Oxford movement and the question of Catholicity in Great Britain, the relationship of the French monarchies to the growth of the Catholic Church in France, the Italian unification and its relationship to the temporal and sovereign powers of the Pope, the movements for unification in Central Europe, the relationship of the Turkish question to the future of Europe and of Catholic Christianity, and several other topical concerns such as higher education, literature, and scientific discoveries as related to Catholic doctrine. In Brownson's commentary on these topics, one sees the American mind of the mid-nineteenth century wrestling with events and ideas of international scope and attempting to ascertain the importance of these events in the future growth and stability of all the countries, on both sides of the Atlantic, that comprise and foster the traditions of the Western world.

Chapter II

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

Orestes Brownson became a convert to Catholicism in a period of anti-Catholic violence in America, as well as, a period of growth for the Catholic Church. He was not only confronted with this issue of domestic violence, with which he personally became involved, but during this involvement domestically he became aware of the larger question of the future of Catholicism in the international world.

The situation which Brownson was confronted was an intense American Protestant hatred of Rome. This pre-Civil War nativist thinking was so intense on occasion that historians have often erroneously regarded Nativism and anti-Catholicism as being synonymous. Though they were not synonymous, there were various factors which did contribute to a substantial anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States. Many Americans regarded Catholic immigrants as an alien and therefore threatening element existing in their society. The conflicting historic claims of the Protestant and Catholic churches and the Reformation conception of popery as steeped in moral depravity contributed to this negative attitude toward Catholics.

Also, the anti-Catholic heritage instilled in a great many Americans from their English ancestors and the original colonial fear of being wedged in between two foreign Catholic empires were contributing factors.[1]

Anti-Catholic sentiment continued after the colonial period because in many instances Catholicism did not harmonize readily with the popularly accepted doctrine of individual freedom. Added to this, all during the formative years of our nation there was a flood of Catholic immigrants coming into the United States. These immigrants revived many of the established negative feelings toward Catholics, particularly since these foreigners were often regarded as representatives of "the Roman despot" sent here to subvert American institutions.[2]

However, before the more radical aspects of the Nativist movement developed, most Americans let their concern for needed labor in the mills and in internal improvement projects override their prejudices concerning foreigners and Catholics. "The attraction of profit won out over the repulsion for foreigners and Catholics and the welcome accorded these newcomers on the whole was generous and good-natured."[3]

With this generally favorable atmosphere, the United States looked quite attractive to the Irish who were suffering from economic oppression and religious persecution. As a result, a great influx of Irish immigrants raised the Irishpopulation in America to nearly a million by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Germans also found the United States due to

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[1] John Higham, Strangers In The Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1955. pp. 5-6.

[2] Ibid., pp. 12-24.

[3] John Tracy Ellis, American Catholicism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955. pp. 60-61.

their experiences with repressive governments, religious discrimination, and universal military service, to be attractive. Consequently they came to the United States in great numbers.

Both of these German and Irish immigrant populations contained a large number of Catholics. In the 1820s there had been only 54,000 Catholics in America, but within twenty-five years these groups added 700,000 Catholics to this figure. Americans who had an intense dislike for foreigners and Catholics became extremely alarmed. This resulted in a great crusade, led by labor organizations and the Protestant Church, against these Catholic immigrants.[4]

The ministers and the labor leaders kept public opinion inflamed over this issue and forced Catholics to defend their rights. The first method Catholics' chose for defense was the use of their own Catholic press. Then the Church council spoke out advising Catholics to be patient and live peacefully and cooperatively with their non-Catholic fellow citizens.[5] However, violence did break out in 1844. Catholic churches were burned in Philadelphia, while in New York a show of armed defense by Catholic congregations prevented the instigation of violence by anti-Catholic forces. But Catholics assumed a belligerent attitude rarely, even though for the next two years they were to experience nativist persecution at its height.[6]

This nativist campaign caused Catholics, with their large immigrant

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[4] Ibid., p. 62.

[5] Ibid., p. 64.

[6] James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds., Religion In American Life: The Shaping of American Religion, Vol. 1. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961. pp. 84-85.

following, to withdraw their attempts to assimilate into American culture. Their feelings of inferiority as a minority group increased with this withdrawal and as a result their sensitiveness to the response of non-Catholics to Catholic affairs increased. The clergy, accordingly, assumed a pdicy of aloofness from politics leaving the Catholic laity entirely free to affiliate with whatever political party they desired. As a result, they became the object of political abuse with wide scale "catholic baiting" an established political practice.[7]

The Catholic Church in America grew despite these adverse conditions because the federal government protected their civil and religious rights. And another contributing factor to this growth was the fact that Catholics could move west if Nativist sentiment was too hostile in the industrial areas. They often did this with the help of colonization societies established by their Catholic brethren. Consequently, the Church moved west to meet the needs of these more remote members. An indication of the comparative strength and distribution of Catholics in the 1850s reflected this trend. The following figures represented the number and geographical distribution of the Catholic dioceses in the 1850s: Midwest - 24; East - 16; Far West - 8; South - 4; and Southwest - 3.[8]

It was amid these circumstances that Brownson became a convert to Catholicism. In fact, his conversion occurred not long after the mob violence in Philadelphia in 1844. Immediately after his conversion, the bishops requested that he continue writing his review for the primary

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[7] Ellis, American Catholicism, pp. 72-75.

[8] Ibid., pp. 85-87.

purpose of defending Catholicism. This request was not out of the ordinary for it also was the task of several other Catholic journals of the day. Brownson agreed to this request, although he was not yet extremely alarmed over existing anti-Catholic sentiment. However, from the following statement it is evident that he had no sympathy for the Native American movement:

> The great principle of true Americanism, if we may use the word, is that merit makes the man. It discards all distinctions which are purely accidental and recognizes only such as are personal. It places every man on his own two feet, and says to him: Be a man, and you shall be esteemed according to your worth as a man. . . .To each according to his capacity, to each according to his works. This is Americanism. It is this which we have inherited from our fathers; it is this which we hold as a sacred trust, and must preserve in all its purity, strength, and activity, if we would not prove degenerate sons of noble sires; and it is this which Native-Americanism, so called, opposes - and because it opposes this, no true American can support it. 9

Then in 1845, in response to the riots over the public school question in Philadelphia, Brownson wrote an article in his review in which he reiterated his lack of sympathy for Native Americanism and treated the subject in greater depth than in his first remarks. To his original objection to Native Americanism, Brownson added that Native Americanism was directly at war with the concept of the United States being a "chosen land, not for one race, or one people, but for the wronged and downtrodden of all nations to come to as a holy asylum of peace and charity."[10]

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[9]Henry F. Brownson, Orestes A. Brownson's Middle Life: From 1845 to 1855. Detroit, Michigan: H.F. Brownson, Publisher, 1899. p. 110.

[10]Orestes A. Brownson, "Native Americanism," 1845, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. 10. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 18.

In addition, Brownson charged that the Native American party was "contemptible and founded on low and ungenerous prejudices." He thought that their real design was to exclude foreigners by denying them the right to become citizens.[11] In elaborating on this, he contended that this desire for exclusion was a result of the work of politicians who were opposed to naturalized citizens solely on the gound that they did not uniformly vote on their side, of the work of labor leaders who accused immigrants falsely of undermining the labor market, and because the English contempt for the Irish had been reinforced in America.[12]

The Irish were often singled out as the object of abuse by the Native Americans. And with the Irish being, for the most part, Catholics, the hatred of foreigners on the part of the Native Americans was often identified with their Catholicism. These two elements eventually merged into an inseparable object of hatred, with the justification being that opposition to Catholicism was based on the fact that Catholics owed allegiance to a foreign power, the Pope, and therefore could not be good citizens. To Brownson this reasoning was utterly ridiculous. "If we really supposed that anyone among us would be so simple as to believe this, we should contradict it. But there are charges too absurd to need a reply."[13] Brownson thought that it was commonly known and understood that Catholics owed allegiance to the Pope only as the head of the Church and not as the head of state.

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[11] Ibid., p. 21.

[12] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[13] Ibid., p. 27.

He was not surprised, however, that there was a Native American Party filled with hostility to foreigners. Especially when one considered, as he stated, that "we are a refuge for all the miscreants of Europe who want to carry on their war against the peace of nation and social; mingle politics with out own, and make the merits of candidates depend on their views of O'Connell, Kossuth, O'Brien, Kinkel, Ledru-Rollin, Louis Napoleon, Franz Jospeh, Nicholas of Russia, or the sultan of Turkey. . . ."[14]

Yet, Brownson, in 1845, was not exceedingly alarmed over the future of Catholicism in the United States, for he was confident that Catholics saw these movements, comprehended their aims, and would, therefore, react accordingly. The only reason, then, that Brownson deprecated the Nativist Party at this time was "for the sake of those misguided citizens who may unite to form it."[15]

Nine years later, in 1854, after viewing the intense activity against Catholic foreigners, Brownson wrote on the subject again. He made no effort to say only what would please Catholics. "He defended against Americans his right to be Catholic and against Catholics his right to be an American."[16] He saw a storm gathering. Anti-Catholic mobs and riots had occurred in a number of states. Catholic had been attacked, their persons and property endangered, and their churches desecrated or demolished. And to make matters worse, authorities in many places were favorable to

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[14]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 532.

[15]Orestes A. Brownson, "Prospects of the Democracy," The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XV. New York: American Museum Society, Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 36-37.

[16]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 528.

these anti-Catholic elements.[17]

Writing in the Brownson Quarterly Review, Brownson said that these riots and mobs were, in most instances, the work of foreign radicals, not Americans. The reason for this foreign leadership, as he saw it, was that the general sentiment of the American people did not condone mob violence. Brownson then reminded his readers that:

> violence here has never equalled the Orange violence in Ireland, or even in Canada; and we have no outbreak to compare with the Gordon riots in England, or even the outbursts of passion which led to the enacting of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill by the British Parliament. Such things are so rare with us that when they do occur they make a deep impression upon us, as spots on the sun, or thunder from a cloudless sky. 18

Yet, even if Brownson's analysis were correct, an atmosphere of entrenched bias toward Catholicism still existed in the minds of the American populace. It was in this atmosphere that the Know-Nothing Party was formed. From 1854 to the outbreak of the Civil War it was a force which Catholics and foreigners could not ignore. Their endless production of books, pamphlets, and newspapers influenced thousands of Americans to harbor an intense dislike of Catholicism.[19]

To Brownson, these Know-Nothing publishers misapprehended and misapplied everything they encountered in Catholic literature, Catholic history, and Catholic practice. The reason for this, Brownson maintained, was that the authors constructed their theories on the basis of their

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[17] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Know-Nothings," 1854-1855, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 302.

[18] Orestes A. Brownson, "Philosophy and Religion," 1856, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. III. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 226.

passions, prejudices, ignorance, and weaknesses. Then they would seek facts to support their theories. Or, they would fix their conclusions and then seek or manufacture premises to concur with them.[20] As Brownson commented:

> There is nothing too harsh or too false for the anti-Catholic press and anti-Catholic preachers and lecturers to say of our holy religion, and nothing can be more unlike the Catholic Church than their pretended representation of her - too unlike indeed, even to be called caricatures, for they catch not one of her features. Even when anti-Catholic writers and speakers tell facts about Catholics, or the history of the Church, they so tell them as to distort the truth and to produce the effect of falsehood, or draw inferences from them wholly unwarranted. . . . 21

The Civil War had the effect of smothering much of this negative propaganda against foreigners and Catholics. The war effort required the abilities of all Americans; therefore, in order to gain support for the war effort, publication of diatribes against these groups stopped. Yet, all during the Civil War years, the Irish never ceased trying to use Americans to foster Irish independence abroad. Even though they were loyal Americans, they organized circles in the Army and Navy with the object of taking advantage of the strained relations between the United States and England with the hope of launching a movement, at the close of the war, for Irish freedom.[22] However, generally speaking the Civil War brought temporary unity and sympathy between the natives and the immigrants. Know-Nothing fever waned and the Irish

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[20] Orestes A. Brownson, "Christianity or Gentilism?", 1860, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vo. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 270-271.

[21] Orestes A. Brownson, "Conversations On Liberalism and the Church," 1869, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 18-19.

warmed to the good-will of the natives. Yet, in the opinion of Catholic historians twenty years later, the Church overestimated the harmony brought by war. There were no riots and burning of churches, but the estrangement was there. For example, "Two horsecar lines ran parallel at a short distance from each other; one took the Irish laborers to work; the other transported the proper gentlemen to their duties."[23] And as Catholics, the Irish were offended by the unequal status publicly accorded their religion.[24]

Immediately after the war, the United States was absorbed in economic expansion. She had demonstrated to the world that she was a power to be reckoned with, and, therefore, did not feel quite so threatened by outside forces. However, as industrial growth accelerated there was an influx of foreigners into the labor market. These foreigners were generally from Southern Europe; and, for the most part, were Catholics. At first Americans objected to their presence on the basis of their effect on the labor market. Then, they began to react to those elements which did not readily assimilate into American society.[25]

Brownson observed this trend but was not openly denunciatory until the Catholic issue became prominent as a result of a new attempt to request state aid for parochial education and Catholic charitable institutions. Brownson's interest in this issue focused on the press and the impact of the literature published by various organizations,

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[23] Barbara M. Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956. p. 45.

[24] Ibid., pp. 44-46.

[25] Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. 12-26.

such as the Organization of American Union which had been formed to unite against the political activities of the Catholic Church.

Speaking of the accusations of such organizations, Brownson charged that only the very ignorant could be made to believe the initial statements of such groups. They had said that the

> Church is the Babylonian sorceress who makes the nations drunk with the wine of her fornications; that she is 'the mystery of iniquity'; that the pope is the man of sin, or antichrist; that our nunneries are brothels, and their vaults are filled with the skeletons of murdered infants. . . .[26]

As a result, they changed their charges so that they would be related to the prejudices of the day. In 1871, Brownson cited these new charges:

> She is opposed to republicanism, denies the divine right of the people, or, more strictly, of the demagogues. She is said to be a spiritual despotism, the foster-mother of ignorance and superstition, the enemy of science and progress, of intelligence and liberty, individual and social, civil and religious. Her religious houses are dens of cruelty and tyranny and if she is permitted to continue and spread her peculiar institutions over this country, American democracy will be destroyed, and American liberty be but a memory. 27

Due to these and other accusations, Brownson vehemently attacked the Know-Nothing Party and the organizations which were affiliated with it. In comparing these to the Native American movement, Brownson contended that they did not contain any of the respectable national emphasis that had been incorporated into the Native-American movement. In retrospect, Brownson saw that the Native-American Party believed in the natural right of a nation

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[26] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Secular Not Supreme," 1871, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 319

[27] Ibid.

to preserve itself and therefore guard against any influx of foreigners which, in its judgment, was incompatible with the national purpose. However Brownson did not think that the Know-Nothing Party had made any such claim. He regarded them as "orangemen, hoping by means of maintaining Protestant ascendancy to rule the country; they are anti-Catholics; they are revolutionists and libertines, who find the church in their way and who would destroy her."[28]

After careful consideration of the Know-Nothing charges against Catholicism, Brownson concluded that their basic objection to the Church was that the Church was hostile to American democracy and democratic institutions. Therefore, he sought to defeat the Know-Nothing movement by showing that Catholicism was not inconsistent with American nationality, but was in accord with true American republicanism, and not wild Jacobinical democracy.[29]

Concomitantly, Brownson charged that Know-Nothingism was bringing into American politics the very elements the founding fathers had intended to exclude. The American principle was to leave religion to itself. Conversely, according to Brownson, the Know-Nothings were making religion an affair of the state with the religious differences of American citizens being a critical element in party contests. Thus, he concluded, "In this it is not only not American, but anti-American."[30]

In conjunction with this approach, Brownson continued to charge

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[28] Orestes Brownson, "The Know-Nothings," The Works of Brownson, p. 329.

[29] Ibid., p. 336.

[30] Ibid., p. 343.

that the real leaders of the Know-Nothing movement were foreigners. "These vile European vagabonds have seized upon the honest native-American republican sentiment and have sought to pervert it to a mere anti-popery sentiment. . . .It is really a foreign party, and therefore, as Americans and Catholics we disavow it."[31] And to this statement he added a charge similar to that he had made of the leadership of the Native-American movement, "The Know-Nothing Party is no Yankee invention, no American production, but an imported combination of Irish Orangeism, German radicalism, French socialism, and Italian astuteness and hate."[32]

To allow this type of leadership to flourish in America, Brownson contended, would have grave international consequences. And by public acceptance of their flagrant denial of the doctrine of equal rights, Brownson thought the masses were discrediting American institutions and playing into the hands of foreign despots who were seeking every opportunity to bring American institutions into disrepute and to cover the American character with contempt.[33]

As a native born Yankee, Brownson warned America that she should check the existing demagogical spirit which had allowed the corrupt influence of foreign radicals to flourish. And in this warning he made it clear that to him the most dangerous class of immigrants was non-Catholics from the continental states of Europe "Germans, Hungarians, and Italians imbued with the infidel and anarchial principles of the

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[31]Orestes Brownson, "The Native Americans," The Works of Brownson, p. 293.

[32]Orestes Brownson, "The Know-Nothings," The Works of Brownson, p. 311.

[33]Ibid., pp. 348-349.

mad European revolutionists."[34]

Another matter of international consequence, as Brownson saw it, was the Irish Catholic problem. As already mentioned, Brownson's original concern in this issue was focused on the attacks that had been made on the Irish during the Native American controversy. The Irish were quite influential in the Catholic Church in the decades of the 1840s through the 1870s and had several journals in the United States through which they insisted on being heard. These Irish journals conveyed the impression that to be Irish was synonymous with being Catholic, much in the same way that being an Anglo-Saxon was often equated with being Protestant. It was true that the Catholic faith, for Irishmen, had very much the character of a national religion. They were prone to think of it more as the Irish than as the Catholic faith. It was this situation which aroused the criticism of the Native-Americans and contributed to their identification of the immigrant threat with Catholicism, particularly Irish Catholicism.[35]

As a result of these circumstances, Brownson expanded his interests from a mere defense of Catholicism to a vital concern for the Irish-American immigrants as victims singled out by the nativists for scorn and contempt. His attention to this domestic situation fostered an interest in Irish Catholics in general and in their plight in Europe. This interest continued from a few years after his conversion to the

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[34]Orestes Brownson, "The Native-Americans," The Works of Brownson, p. 289.

[35]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 4.

very year of his death. His opinion of the role of the Irish-American changed in the latter years of his life to be more consistent with his ideas about the mission of Catholicism in the Western world, but this change represented a gradual expansion in scope rather than a complete reversal of his earlier position.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the position Brownson took in relation to the Irish in the 1840s and 1850s. Brownson had, on occasion, both praise as well as criticism for the Irish. However, such passages as the following led to the charge that he was anti-Irish:

> I love the Irish for their attachment to the faith and for many amiable and noble qualities, but they are deficient in good sense, sound judgment, and manly character. They lack honesty and truthfulness, and are unreliable. They can do nothing in a straightforward, manly way. They are slaves or tyrants and do not understand what it is to be freemen, and the only freedom they can understand is the freedom to make you conform to them. 36

Yet, if the Irish publishers had carefully studied his complete essays instead of lifting passages such as this out of context, they would have realized that Brownson was only attempting to make the Irish immigrants understand their relationship to America and to help them to be assimilated into American society.

In addressing himself to the Irish Catholic foreigners, in particular, he questioned their unyielding bond to their national customs and traditions. He contended that any attempt to maintain their own foreign nationalism on American soil would be unwise, for they would be

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36 Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 7.

operating on a basis contrary to the Anglo-American emphasis which would be the determining factor in the future course America would follow. Another negative aspect of the foreign nationalism of the Irish, as Brownson saw it, was that "the more prominent we make the Irish nationality, and the more we identify it with Catholicity, the more do we confirm the prejudices of the American people against our religion."[37] Therefore, to Brownson, the only approach to be taken then was to eradicate this image of a foreign nationality as the vehicle sustaining and spreading Catholicity; and, thereby, convince American non-Catholics that new Catholic American citizens were not enemies of an American nationality.

Although Brownson had charged that the Irish Catholic, to a minor degree, had aided and abetted the growing radicalism in the United States, his major indictment in this area was of the non-Catholic immigrants. He maintained that among the Irish the agitators were mainly the Protestants from Northern Ireland who were inspired by French Jacobinism. The only fault he found with Irish Catholic immigrants pertaining to radicalism was that they were too easily influenced by demagogic politicians rather than by their religious principles.[38]

Irish and Catholic editors alike were indignant over Brownson's statements. J.F. McMaster, the editor of the Freeman Journal, wrote an article accusing Brownson of "venting his spleen on the Irish." This article, also published in the Catholic Mirror, warranted a reply from

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[37] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 323.

[38] Thomas R. Ryan, "Orestes A. Brownson and the Irish," Mid America, XXVIII (July 1, 1956) p. 160.

Brownson. In his reply he flatly denied that he was anti-Irish and three years later when writing on the same issue he said:

> We had and have no interests and affections but such as are bound up with the Catholic body of which we are an insignificant member, and as the portion of that body from which we have the most to hope for Catholicity are Irish or of Irish descent, it is ridiculous to suppose that we are anti-Irish in our feelings, or were disposed to join the Know-Nothings in a war against the Irish Catholics, which could be only a war equally against ourselves. 39

While concerned with these domestic problems, Brownson also wrote several articles on the state of affairs in Ireland. From the beginning he made it quite clear that "we discuss these matters only so far as they have a bearing on Catholic faith, morals, and worship."[40] Therefore, when Ireland was embroiled over the issue of Home Rule in the 1840s, Brownson admitted that he was not equipped to discuss this or any specific political situation in detail. However, he did contend that Ireland had never lost her nationality; and, therefore, still possessed all the inherent rights of a nation. As such, he thought that Ireland was therefore entitled to self-government as much as any other nation; and that this national government should be free from all foreign control or dictation.[41] Brownson's hope was that one day Ireland would be equal to England on both a political and civil basis.

In 1849 in a review of Shandy McGuire, Or Tricks Upon Travellers: A Story of the North of Ireland, Brownson suggested that Americans should

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[39] Orestes A. Brownson, "Aspirations of Nature," 1857, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 574.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., pp. 573-574.

read this novel to help soften their attitude toward the Irish. Throughout the review he suggested various means by which this more positive attitude toward the Irish might be accelerated. One suggestion was that to prevent any further clash of "prides" the distinction between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon should be suppressed. Also, he discussed the negative reaction of Americans to Irish patriots and how the system of agitation they had developed was not the answer to Irish problems.[42]

Brownson's suggestion for the settlement of the issue of Irish home rule, also discussed in Shandy McGuire, was to let Celtic Ireland make peace with the English outside of Ireland and then they should use British imperial power to protect themselves against the English in Ireland.[43] Brownson discussed this subject for he felt that it was in the interest of Americans as well as the Irish since Irish politics were discussed as heatedly in the United States as in Ireland. The United States witnessed the development of associations, confederations, and political machinery to agitate for the Irish cause. There were also newspapers devoted exclusively to Irish interests. Committees and directories had been organized in the larger American cities for the management of Irish affairs and funds were solicited as if the country were Ireland herself. And, in addition, Brownson wrote, "Our candidates for public office are interrogated as to their views on Ireland, and the reputation of Anglo-American Catholics depends on the views they do or do not take of Irish politics. It is thus

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[42] Orestes A. Brownson, "Shandy McGuire: Or Irish Liberty," 1849, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 147,171.

[43] Ibid., p. 151.

that the question is made an American question, one with important bearings on American politics and social life."[44]

Another article written during these years which dealt with the Irish was entitled"Ireland, O'Connell, Etc." In this article Brownson's treatment of O'Connell, the Irish patriot, centered around O'Connell's attitude toward the United States. Brownson felt that O'Connell's derogatory remarks about the United States were hard to justify, but he thought that they were mainly for the purpose of conciliating friends or silencing enemies in England and Scotland, rather than being his private views. Yet Brownson could not dismiss the fact that these remarks negatively influenced many Americans in their opinions of the Irish. The resultant hostile feelings were heightened when O'Connell interfered in the domestic concerns of the United States by favoring the political faction intent on disrupting the Union. Brownson could not excuse this action of O'Connell's because he firmly believed that as a Catholic O'Connell should have been a friend of established order, firm and regular government, religion, law, and humanity.[45]

After this discussion of O'Connell, Brownson presented his theory that Ireland owed the preservation of her nationality to Catholicity and to the fact that her bishops and clergy had not depended on the British government, but on the Holy See and the Irish people.[46] Consequently, he contended that the popular movements in Ireland, which were often carried out on blind impulse, negated the work of the Church. However, these popular movements

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[44] Ibid., pp. 175-176.

[45] Orestes A. Brownson, "Ireland, O'Connell, Etc.," 1845, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vo. XV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 574-574.

[46] Ibid., pp. 578-579.

were not of ultimate concern for Brownson because he believed that the Church of God would never fail. "She is eminently anti-revolutionary, eminently conservative; but she always can, and always does accept and conform herself to the political order she finds established. . . .when one order has been thrown off, and a new one introduced, she leaves the old, and accepts and conforms to the new."[47]

Because the Irish had retained their Catholicity in its purest form, Brownson felt that they, by divine providence, were made to be the instrument of building up the church in England and the United States. As a result, next to America, Brownson gave his best affections and warmest sympathy to the cause of the Irish for they had done more than any other nation to introduce and build up the Catholic Church in America - the Church which Brownson thought would ultimately preserve the free institutions of the United States.[48]

After giving this challenge to the Irish Catholics, Brownson did say that the great body of Irish Catholics were still misunderstood. However, even though the great majority were modest, peaceful, and loyal citizens, he could not discount those "hanging loosely to their skirts. . . . a miserable rabble, unlike anything which the country has ever known of native growth - a noisy, drinking, and brawling rabble, who have, after all, a great deal of influence with their countrymen, who are usually taken to represent the whole Irish Catholic body."[49] Again Brownson attempted to

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[47] Ibid., p. 580.

[48] Ibid., p. 583.

[49] Orestes Brownson, "The Native Americans," The Works of Brownson, p. 289.

portray the Irish justly.

Partially because of his constant attempts to justly appraise the Irish, Brownson, after re-evaluating the role of the Irish in the Western world, somewhat altered his previous position in regards to the Irish. In 1873 he wrote a review on Father Thebaud's Irish Race, Past, and Present in which he openly acknowledged that he had made a mistake in the past when he had insisted that the Irish should Americanize. He now thought that they must guard against Americanizing for

> . . . .If they were to adopt, faith excepted, American modes of thought, manners, and customs and become absorbed into the Anglo-American community, they would lose all their influence in softening the hardness, and in relaxing the rigidity of our puritan manners . . . .and power of infusing into our national life a freer, more hospitable, genial, and cheerful tone and spirit. 50

Brownson postulated that if the Irish Catholics were Americanized they would not retain their faith beyond the second generation. So long, therefore, as the Irish retained their Irish characteristics and strong attachment to their religion and tradition, they would be supplying the very elements the population of the United States most needed. Thus, the Irish were not to maintain their unique characteristics so as to antagonize native Americans, but were to capitalize on their strong religious background to provide a stable, ordered element in American society.

Toward the end of his life, Brownson developed the idea that the long hostility that had existed between the English and the Irish was, in fact,

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50 Orestes A. Brownson, "Politics At Home and Abroad," 1859, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 563.

a conflict in two orders of civilization or social organization, rather than a conflict of races. He contended that the Irish represented the strongest and oldest civilization in the world and had preserved their primitive traditions dating back to Noah. These traditions had been continued because they had been reinforced by the Catholic Church while all the other nations had lapsed into barbarism and idolatry. Thus, Brownson saw the Irish order to be based on truer, deeper, and more universal principles than the Anglo-Norman, English, or Romanic Orders. On the basis of this theory he criticized the "young Irelanders", Fenians, and advocates of Home Rule for he felt that they had been attempting to impose the Anglo-Norman order of civilization on the Irish; and, as a result, were undoubtedly traitors.[51] By taking this position, Brownson agreed with Father Thebaud's thesis that the Irish had been preserved all along by Providence and trained to be missionary people especially to the English speaking world. Brownson openly subscribed to this mission of the Irish, particularly as it related to America.

Although Brownson consistently aimed at a just treatment of the Irish, one can detect a turning point in his attitude in a letter written to his old Transcendentalist friend and fellow convert, Father Hecker. In this letter, dated 1869, he wrote, "I think I am turning Paddy. . . .I am very Irish, when I do not listen to their defenses for themselves. They are remarkable people, the mainstay under God of the Church with us."[52]

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[51]Orestes A. Brownson, "Father Thebaud's Irish Race," 1873, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 554.

[52]Ryan, "Brownson and the Irish," p. 172.

Thus, it is evident that Brownson favored the Irish more as a people during the latter part of his life; and, indeed, was rather pro-Irish. Yet, this pro-Irish attitude was founded on a religious rather than a national basis and was an integral part of his whole scheme of thought as it related to the mission of the Catholic Church throughout the Western world. Though his attitude toward the role of the Irish-Catholic in America changed from the early 1850s to the mid 1870s, his concern for their proper attitude as effective Catholics in an all too secular world remained constant. As the immediate situations changed in these decades, his immediate reactions also changed, but this did not correspond to any ambivalence on his part for underlying these immediate reactions was his continual concern that the Irish Catholics be the most effective instrument for the advancement of Catholicism in a world which Brownson considered to be rapidly deteriorating to a state of rebellious anarchy. Before he realized this tendency towards decadence, he felt that the Irish could be most effective if they became totally assimilated into their surrounding culture. But when he came to the conclusion that radical, foreign elements were leading America astray, as they were their own nations in Europe, he decided that the Irish could be more effective if they would retain their unique religious characteristics and thereby provide the stability necessary to lead the United States out of the self-destructive, anarchic state toward which she was unwittingly moving.

Chapter III

ON REVOLUTIONARY AND OTHER NATIONALISMS IN EUROPE: WITH CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

After his conversion to Catholicism, Brownson's political views centered around the contention that liberty was impossible without order, order impossible without government, and worthy government impossible without a settled conviction held by the people as to its legitimacy. And, continuing in this line of thought, he wrote:

> Nothing deserving the name of government can be founded on the sense of the agreeable or of the useful. Governments, so called, which appeal to nothing higher, more catholic, and more stable, are mere creatures of passion and caprice, and must follow the lead of popular folly and excess, instead of restraining them and directing the general activity to the public good. 1

Thus, when surveying the momentous events which occurred in Europe in 1848 as a concerned American Catholic, Brownson remarked, "this is an

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[1] Orestes A. Brownson, "Legitimacy and Revolutionism," 1848, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 60-61.

an age of theoretical and to a great extent practical anarchy. Its ideas are marked by impatience of restraint, denial of law, and contempt of authority."[2] Realizing what he considered to be the inevitable, undesirable consequences of this prevailing sentiment, Brownson felt it his duty to protest against it and to do what he could to recall men to a sense of the necessity of government and to a sense of their moral obligation to uphold the law.[3]

To Brownson, man's moral obligation to uphold the law was inextricably involved in the vital relationship that should necessarily exist between religion and politics. Brownson presented his basic ideas on this subject in various articles written in the 1840s and consistently adhered to these views throughout the remainder of his life, as will be evident in this and other chapters concerning the political developments in Europe. An initial statement on this subject is found in an article entitled "Legitimacy and Revolutionism," written in 1848, in which Brownson wrote, "We are Christians, and do not understand the possibility of being Christians, and yet atheists in politics. . . .we cannot adopt one set of principles in our religion and a contradictory set in our politics."[4]

In further explanation of this attitude, Brownson said he was not questioning the various popular political doctrines which were disagreeing over whether the sovereignty of the government resided in the kings, nobles, or people. In fact, Brownson unequivocally denied the validity of any of

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[2] Ibid., p. 60.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

these political doctrines which postulated the human origin and right of government. With this denial, he contended that as a Christian one must believe that all power, all legal authority, came from God.[5] Yet, this was not to say that there was one particular form of government existing by divine right for every people. Each particular nation, according to Brownson, had its own established order given to its people by God. This established order was then identified with the whole public life of the people. It was the legitimate order, constitutional or otherwise; and, therefore, was sacred and inviolable. If sacred and inviolable, then Brownson contended, there must be no changes or innovations that would abolish it or in any way essentially alter it, even in the name of progress or reform.[6]

As a result of this theory, Brownson could in no way support revolution, for revolution was at opposite polarities with established order; order given by divine providence. Thus, Brownson viewed all revolutionists as both anarchists and atheists. By the latter years of his life he came to place more emphasis on revolutionism as an abrogation of the divine will of God; however, he still recognized the anarchic tendencies of revolutionism on the temporal level and deplored the existence of such social and political irresponsibility.

Brownson maintained these views despite the prevailing trends of his age which were in the process of democratizing and liberalizing political

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[6] Ibid., p. 72.

theory. As a result, his thinking was scorned and ridiculed as being completely anachronistic. This, however, did not deter Brownson for despite this criticism he consistently held these views until his death in 1876.

In a series of lectures Brownson delivered in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1851, on the subject "Catholicity and Civilization," he commented on the revolutions of 1848. In keeping with the political attitudes previously mentioned, he maintained that what the revolutionaries sought was not the liberty to do right, to do the will of God; but the liberty to govern themselves, or not to be governed at all. They wanted to follow their own devices, living as they chose without having to answer to any authority. Brownson summarized this attitude by saying that their slogan should have been "down with the church! down with the state! and up with liberty, fraternity, and equality!"[7]

Contending that one of the objects of the revolutions was to eliminate the authority of the church, convert Brownson maintained that the Machiavellian princes, the leading Protestant powers, and the Protestant church had all agreed that the time had come to end the papacy. Although, according to Brownson, this Protestant conspiracy had not achieved its end, it did succeed in perverting the Pope's liberal intentions and driving him into exile.

This attitude toward the Pope was of particular concern to Brownson, for to him the papacy was the key to the existence of the Catholic Church.

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[7]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 346.

He was alarmed over the situation that had developed in 1848 concerning the Pope, and this situation was one of his major topics of discussion from shortly after his conversion through the rest of his career. Brownson was convinced that there had been a Protestant conspiracy to end the papacy in 1848. This conviction, developing in greater degrees of intensity, is seen throughout his writings which deal with the political developments on the continent, particularly in Italy.

The fact that some politicians saw no religious threat in the revolutions of 1848, a danger which was all too apparent to Brownson, causedhim to write:

> . . . .these politicians will excuse us for saying that their appropriate place is in the nursery, not in the professor's chair, the halls of the legislatures, or the cabinets of ministers. As long as they consider it a proof of their wisdom to turn up their little noses at the bare idea of an infallible church, they must not expect us to swallow an infallible people, and especially, if such as they can be its leaders. The people are, no doubt, in general, honest in their aims, but they lack discrimination and forecast, and are, for the most part dupes of their leaders and their own passions. . . . [8]

Concomitantly, Brownson did not think that the mob should be applauded for what it had done in Europe. He felt that the mob had learned, from the radical leaders, to scoff at religion. They had become the ready instruments of base and unscrupulous demagogues. Consequently, Brownson felt that a protracted struggle against established order in Europe was inevitable. However, he was not fearful of the consequences of this struggle forhe was certain that God ultimately controlled the outcome. [9]

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[8] Orestes A. Brownson, "Recent European Events," 1848, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 106.

[9] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Licentiousness of the Press," 1849, The Works Of

At the time that he was writing, monarchial centralism was being dethroned in Europe by the action of the rebellious masses. Yet, Brownson advised that a counter-revolution on the part of the established order would only be folly, for the restless and discontented mobs would not rest until they had secured their goals. Thus, Brownson felt that the victory of republicanism in France should be accepted as an accomplished fact; but he refused to applaud the forces which won it for to do so would be to sanction the spirit and doctrine which made it necessary. Brownson could not do this because "the tendency to redress evils by changing the form of government is at bottom, no governmentism, that no popular revolution is ever final, or able to satisfy those who make it. Every popular revolution if left to itself, necessarily develops into a series of revolutions, each moving society further and further from government."[10] Here Brownson reiterated his theory that nations which existed independent of the spiritual order and authority would of necessity move to a condition of pure anarchy.

After commenting extensively on the political and social conditions in each of the European countries involved in the revolutions of 1848, Brownson came to three conclusions concerning the impact of the revolutions. First, in the social and political realm, he contended that by asserting the rights of the individual in favor of the rights of the community, which was the tendency of all modern socialisms, communisms, and red-republicanisms whether advocated by a Mazzini, a Kossuth, a Saint-Simon, a Cobet, or a Prudhon, one was authorizing social despotism. Furthermore, Brownson

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[10] Ibid., p. 107.

added "all the terrible political and social convulsions of our times originate in the pride of man which terms his duties his rights. In all these convulsions, which have made all of Europe a camp, if not a battle-field, the sole pretence has been the assertion and vindication of the rights of nature and of man."[11]

Secondly, Brownson contended that these radical red-republican movements were directed primarily against the Church, the only solid basis of a society, as he saw it. However, the failure of the revolutions brought about a reversal of this intention. According to Brownson, the revolutions broke the bond which had bound the church to the infidel and paganized governments; and, as a result, gave her a freedom and independence of action that she had not enjoyed since the Protestant Reformation.[12] Brownson would later see that this freedom was to be quite short-lived in many of the European countries, but at the time that he wrote this he did not forsee any such consequences. Consequently, he was overjoyed at this reversal of affairs in favor of the church.

Thirdly, Brownson concluded that the revolutions of 1848 had a definite impact on the United States. He contended that the revolutionary spirit had infiltrated into the large middle class in America, strengthening the newly developed notion that the state was independent of the moral and spiritual order. This development greatly distressed Brownson for he did not want the United States to follow the path to anarchy that the

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[11] Orestes A. Brownson, "Rights and Duties," 1852, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 310.

[12] Orestes A. Brownson, "Catholics of England and Ireland," 1853, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 394.

European countries had followed. Brownson hoped that Americans would recognize the folly of exalting the individual, as had been done in Europe, and profit by learning from their mistakes instead of having to suffer through them as a nation.[13]

In 1851, while considering the total impact of the revolutions of 1848, Brownson also wrote extensively on the Hungarian rebellion. Maintaining the same position he had taken previously, he contended that a rebellion for democracy or republicanism was as unjustifiable as a rebellion for aristocracy or monarchy. To Brownson the end did not justify the means, and whether a given rebellion occurred for the purpose of establishing one form of government or another had nothing to do with its justice or injustice. Brownson did not mean that a rebellion under any circumstances was unjustifiable, but he did contend that a rebellion for the purpose of changing the form of government, whether from a monarchy to a republican form or from an aristocracy to a democracy was always unjustifiable, and the highest crime known to law. Since, to Brownson there was no one government that was per se more legitimate than another, there was no form of government that had the right to establish itself everywhere.[14]

Continually holding the view that any revolutionary change in government was unjustifiable on the grounds that it overturned the established order which had been given by God, Brownson applied this theory to the

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[13] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 224.

[14] Orestes A. Brownson, "Webster's Answer to Hülsemann," 1851, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 179

Hungarian revolt. He definitely viewed the Magyar movement as a rebellion because he considered Hungary to be an integral part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As such, Brownson maintained that the only right Hungary would have to overthrow the existing government would be if the historical order had lost its legitimacy due to tyranny and oppression. This situation did not exist, according to Brownson. He contended that Hungary was merely resisting authority instead of resisting tyranny, as the Americans of 1776 had done; and, therefore did not have justifiable grounds for rebellion.[15]

Brownson was somewhat distressed about the attitude the United States took toward the Magyar rebellion. The United States had openly sympathized with the Magyars and had sent Dudley Mann as an agent authorized, if after inquiry he judged it proper, to recognize the revolutionary government of Hungary and to conclude a commercial treaty with it. Austria, through foreign minister Hülsemann, had complained that such an agent with such instructions was a violation of the policy of non-intervention which the government of the United States had professed. Secretary of State Webster answered Hülsemann's complaint by saying that America's action had been within her rights as a neutral. Brownson contended that Webster was wrong on the grounds that non-intervening states in a civil war could hold intercourse with only one party, the authority engaged in suppressing the rebellion.[16]

In Webster's attitude Brownson saw mirrored the erroneous conception

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[15] Ibid., p. 179

[16] Ibid., p. 181.

of the American public in regards to the rebellion. The public had allowed itself to consider the war only from the point of view of the rebels, according to Brownson, and to look upon it as a resistance to aggression in defense of acknowledged rights. Brownson contended that both the American populace and the American government failed to recognize that as a non-intervening state, we must always regard a civil war as a war legitimately waged by the sovereign to suppress rebellion and to maintain peace and good order in his dominions. To go beyond this, continued Brownson, was itself an act of intervention, for recognition of the rebellious subjects by a powerful state may be decisive to the outcome of the contest, for its weight given to the revolutionaries could cause them to advance their position when without it ther could have been no chance of preponderance.[17] Similarly, at a later date, Brownson was to take this same position in regard to any European power intervening in the Civil War in the United States.

In this entire controversy, Brownson's major concern was not to refute Webster, but to demonstrate the grave fault of the United States in its sympathy with European rebels in general, and with the Magyar rebels in particular, on the grounds that this sympathy would be fatal to all established political right and social order. Brownson thought that the United States should follow the purer days by adhering to Washington's Farewell Address which advocated non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations. He was unhappy over the fact that the United States had departed from what he considered to be a sound principle; and, instead had

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[17] Ibid., p. 183.

come to regard ourselves as the representatives of the only legitimate political system. As a result of the adoption of this attitude, Brownson saw that we regarded a rebellion of any people of other systems in favor of ours to be lawful. Brownson contended that even the State Department was guilty of this, for it regarded American democracy and European monarchy as fundamentally antagonistic, so that the legitimacy of one could not be proclaimed anywhere without denying the legitimacy of the other. Brownson considered this to be logically untenable for it would necessitate our subscription to the belief that no political system but ours was lawful.[18]

Webster's sympathy with the European revolutionaries on the grounds that their principles were in accord with American principles was vehemently objected to by Brownson. For to Brownson, Mr. Webster's position advocated that

> our institutions are founded on the denial of the lawfulness of all forms of government but the democratic, the assertion of the legality of the popular form of government universally, and the indefeasible right of the people everywhere to conspire, to rebel against monarchy, in utter disregard of public law, or of historical rights, for the sake of establishing it! And this pernicious doctrine is put forth, not by some foreign refugee from the dungeion, or the halter, not by some obscure radical desirous of attracting notoriety by the extravagancy of his paradoxes, but by the distinguished lawyer and statesman Daniel Webster, and by him not as a private citizen, but as secretary of state, by the authority of the president of the United States, in a grave official document addressed to a foreign court in defence of the american government and people. 19

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[18] Ibid., p. 194.

[19] Ibid., p. 203.

Brownson continued to comment extensively on the Austro-Hungarian situation in an article written a year after his criticism of Webster. In this article Brownson reviewed Les Saints Lieux, Pélerinage a Jerusalem, en passant par L'Autriche, la Hongrie, la Slavonie, Les Provinces Danubiennes, Constantinople, L'Archipel, Le Liban, la Syrie, Alexandrie, Malte, la Sicile, et Marseille by Mgr. Mislin, Abbé Mitre. This work was quite sympathetic with the established regimes of Europe. Consequently Brownson favorably reviewed the book and used its content as textual material to express his own views, particularly as related to Austria. In his discussion of the Austrian Imperial family, Brownson recognized that they had many faults which no lover of freedom and catholicity could disguise; yet, he thought that they were basically pious and well-disposed. Brownson felt that the predicament in which the Austro-Hungarian Empire found itself was essentially due to the fact that the administration of the state was almost wholly in the hands of the enemies of the Church. Therefore, Brownson advised the emperor that the government should not take a stand for or against the church, but that the church should be left free. The reason for this advice was that Brownson believed that only through the Church's freedom could government or society be on a firm footing. As he said, "The attempt to maintain society on atheistical principles, by chaining up the church, disparaging the clergy, ridiculing religion, and directing attention solely to worldly interests, roast beef and plum pudding, has signally failed, and we hope it will be long before a new crop of fools will be produced to renew it."[20]

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[20] Orestes A. Brownson, "Austria and Hungary," 1852, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 210.

Even in purely temporal matters Brownson agreed with Mitre's portrayal of Austria as being threatened with red-republicanism within and the opposition of the combined power of the whole revolutionary party of the continent, plus Great Britain and the United States, from without. Consequently, Brownson saw that this situation forced Austria to call upon Russia for aid in halting the Hungarian rebellion. Brownson did not consider Russia's action to be inconsistent with this thinking on non-intervention, for the established regime requested her assistance; and, thus, she had the right to intervene. However, the United States and Great Britain considered Russia's action to be unauthorized criminal intervention in the domestic affairs of a nation. Although Brownson considered the position the United States had taken to be completely false, and therefore inexcusable to him, he also realized that our sympathy with Hungary necessitated such a stand which conveniently provided the basis for our giving material aid to Louis Kossuth.[21]

However, Brownson did not consider all to be lost, for there were some statesmen who opposed Kossuth's demands as being impolitic and contrary to the interests of the United States. Brownson contended that Kossuth's demands should ultimately be opposed on the grounds that the United States did not have the right to intervene, for intervention would be striking a direct blow at the right of independent nations to manage their own domestic affairs. Brownson contended that if the United States had the right to intervene to spread democracy then Great Britain had the

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[21] Ibid., p. 214.

right to intervene to spread constitutionalism; and, neither the United States nor England could deny the right of Russia to intervene in opposition. In fact, Brownson thought that America's intervention gave Russia a very plausible pretext for doing so. And "the silly pretence that the allied sovereigns propose to intervene against our democracy here at home is unworthy of the least consideration, and no man knows it better than our present secretary of state."[22]

Finally, in this discussion of the role of the United States in Austro-Hungarian affairs, Brownson considered the fact that Kossuth and his friends had misrepresented the relationship which existed between Hungary and the Empire. Therefore, he attempted to correctly portray this relationship with the hope that it would reveal what position the United States should take. Acknowledging that the Austrian Empire was a federative state, Brownson drew an analogy between the Austrian Empire and the United States. He said that the relationship of Hungary to the Empire was parallel to that of the state of Massachusetts to the federal government of the United States. Hence, Hungary had no more right to secede from the empire and declare herself independent than Massachusetts would have to secede from the Union and declare herself independent. Accordingly, Brownson postulated that the United States had no more right intervening in this civil war in the Austro-Hungarian Empire than a European nation would have intervening in an internal dispute in the United States without the request of the United States government.[23]

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[22] Ibid., pp. 223-224.

[23] Ibid., pp. 217-218.

Therefore, Brownson retorted, giving Kossuth an ovation here, in the United States, had merely revealed to the world that Americans were fools and madmen. President Taylor, in his annual message to Congress, had professed a neutral policy toward the rebellion in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; yet, at the same time, he ordered Kossuth to be greeted on his arrival in the United States with a national salute, recognized him as Governor Kossuth, recommended him to Congress, and virtually requested an official reception by the nation. Brownson criticized the President for this, saying:

> The government has really let loose one of the most dangerous characters now living. The President knew in the outset that this man was a traitor and one to whom it is a profanation to apply the term patriot; he knew before sending his message to Congress that he was a turbulent spirit; that he would only abuse his liberty to stir up insurrections; to teach people insubordination to their magistrates, and to renew his efforts to dismember an empire which we profess to have relations of peace. [24]

Brownson went so far as to contend that there was a grand conspiracy, with its central government in London and branches even in the United States, organized avowedly for the purpose of revolutionizing by violence every legally constituted government in the civilized world. Brownson also thought that this conspiracy was against all religions except an idolatrous worship of what was called the GOD-PEOPLE or PEOPLE GOD and against all morality, all law, all order, and against society itself. Seeing Kossuth as a part of this movement, which he thought had Joseph Mazzini as its supreme head, Brownson questioned the wisdom of allowing Kossuth to be in the United States.[25]

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[24] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 418.

[25] Ibid., p. 419.

Brownson did not even care for Kossuth personally, as is evident in the following remarks:

> He is not the man, unless we are greatly mistaken, to make any lasting impression upon Yankees. He is eloquent and clever, and like all our modern revolutionists, has a great command of words. . . .but he is not a man of the high order of intellect. He lacks the ingredient of downright honesty of purpose, has too much to say of himself, and wears his principles quite too losely. . . .We shall have a good time with him, feast ourselves, have our own jollification, let him laugh a little at us in his sleeve while we laugh a good deal at him in ours, and then - cast him off. 26

Moreover, Brownson regretted that Kossuth's presence in the United States kept alive the popular sympathy with revolutionism. He contended that this sympathy fostered feelings incompatible with the safety of American institutions.

Another individual revolutionary to whom Brownson devoted a great deal of attention was Martin Koszta. Koszta, a revolutionary refugee from Austria, had been confined with Kossuth and other refugees in Turkey in the fortress of Kutahia. He was eventually liberated on the condition that he would never set foot in Turkey again. So he came to the United States and declared his intention of becoming a citizen. He remained in the United States one year and eleven months and then returned to Turkey. Shortly thereafter, he was arrested at Smyrna as an Austrian subject and conveyed and detained on board an Austrian big-of-war, the Huszar, then lying in port. American authorities at Smyrna protested against his arrest and detention and demanded that he be released on the grounds that he was an American citizen, or at least under American protection. When Austria would not comply with

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26 Ibid., p. 422.

this demand, Captain Ingraham, commanding the American sloop-of-war, the St. Louis, ranged his ship alongside the Huszar and threatened to fire upon her if Koszta were not released in a specified time. The situation was momentarily settled by placing Koszta in the charge of the French consul, who agreed to keep him in his custody until disposed of by the consent of both Austrian and American governments. He was liberated, accordingly, on the understanding that he would come immediately to the United States on board an American vessel.[27]

After an elaborate discussion of the technicalities of the case, Brownson pointed out that the situation had grown out of America's uncritical sympathy with the rebellious subjects of Austria and their efforts to involve us in the contest. Brownson contended that the revolutionists had only to fear Austria and Russia; and had, therefore, devised a plan to neutralize Russia by means of Turkey and Austria by means of a war between she and the United States - the contrived incident being the Koszta case. Austria, Brownson continued, understood the plan and therefore was not trapped, while the United States was blinded by her loyalty to the revolutionists and as a result lost face due to this incident.[28]

Brownson maintained that the real danger of the Koszta case was that it could establish a precedent and all of Europe would be swarming with well-known revolutionists who under the protection of American nationality were free to go whereever they pleased, making their connections for their revolutionary activities. This would not only be dangerous but would be

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[27] Orestes Brownson, "The Case of Martin Koszta," The Works of Brownson, p. 226.

[28] Ibid., pp. 246-247.

incompatible with the respect which the United States owed to all foreign governments with whom she professed to have relations of peace, and would be exceedingly discreditable to our national character.

Consequently, Brownson admonished the United States government:

> For the peace of foreign states, for the interests of social order, for the honor of our own country and the sake of our citizens travelling or residing in the continental states of Europe, we hope our government will not persist in the abominable doctrine which foreign radicals, refugees, robbers, thieves, cutthroats, and political incendiaries have induced it in the Koszta case to set up, and that it will hasten to retrieve its character, by retracting it and making honorable and suitable reparation by Austria. 29

Brownson devoted much of his attention to Austria and the people and events involved in determining her future because he considered Austria to be the key to the future of the continent of Europe, politically and religiously. Contending that European civilization was threatened by the anarchy and demagoguery of the revolutionists from the south and west and the religious threat of the Russians from the north and east, Brownson thought that Austria should be regarded as the point d'appui in guarding against these onslaughts. Brownson maintained that if Austria were dismembered nothing could prevent Russia from ruling all of Europe; therefore, the only safety for the Western powers would be to cultivate the friendship of Austria, enabling her to extend and consolidate her power so that she could be an effective counterweight to the liberal and damaging trends of the day.[30]

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[29] Ibid., pp. 243-244.

[30] Ibid., p. 248.

In regarding Austria as the symbol of established order and seeing the future of Europe in her hands, Brownson wrote:

> The revolutionists have destroyed liberty on the continent of Europe, they have involved their respective countries in all but complete ruin, and here, the last stronghold of political freedom they will do the same, if not frowned instantly down by our people. We may give them an asylum, for hospitality is a virtue that we would have our nation always practice, but we should do it only on condition of their remaining in private life, and scrupulously abstaining in word and deed from all interference in politics, foreign or domestic. It will not answer to make heroes of them or to put them forward as our teachers and leaders. Let them live and repent, but live in retirement, without honor or notice, as they deserve. The facts. . . .admonish us to look upon all revolutionists, in the modern sense of the term, as the enemies of God and mankind. We have been wrong and foolish in the sympathy we have extended to them; let us correct our error and hereafter show that we are capable of honoring the cause of freedom and order. 31

This is not only Brownson's statement of the position that should be advanced in regards to Austria, but in the straightforward manner so characteristic of Brownson, it is an indictment of revolution, revolutionaries, and the role the United States government had taken toward these revolutions. It is characteristic of Brownson's unchanging attitude toward revolutions. . . . an attitude of condemnation on the basis of their goal to subvert established order given by God. This attitude will be seen again in his discussion of the nationalistic movements in such countries as France and Italy.

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31 Ibid., p. 226.

Chapter IV

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND THE FUTURE OF CATHOLICISM

The swift and relatively easy victories of the Mexican War of 1848 caused an increase in nationalistic fervor in the United States. This heightened nationalism was coupled with an increased contempt for the effete monarchies of Europe. Americans tended to be sympathetic with those elements in Europe that actively engaged in thwarting these monarchies. Viewing democracy as the form of government to be fostered throughout the world, Americans were naively sympathetic with factions in Europe which favored more democratic forms of government. Brownson was also an ardent supporter of the democratic, or as he preferred it, democratic-republican cause, but he could not accept the disastrous effects the republican movements in Europe were having on the Catholic Church. As a result, the majority of his remarks concerning international affairs in the 1850s were directly related to the condition of the Church as affected by the growth of political republicanism and liberalism.

In the early 1850s Brownson composed lengthy articles dealing with the Catholics in England, particularly as they were affected by the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill which declared the profession and exercise of Catholicism to be illegal. The enactment of this bill, by what Brownson considered to be the most democratic political body then functioning in Europe, was a cause of great concern. He supported his English and Irish Catholic brethren in their efforts to have this bill repealed, writing "They and we are one body; their lot is our lot, and their victory or defeat is victory or defeat for us."[1]

This association with the Catholic element naturally colored Brownson's opinion of Great Britain, as is seen in his moral condemnation of Great Britain in an article he wrote in 1853 entitled "The Catholics of England and Ireland."

> Great Britain is the mainstay of the enemies of God and his Christ; she is drunk with the blood of martyrs; and in the approaching contest the prayers of 200 millions of Catholics throughout the world will daily and hourly ascend for her defeat. Of English descent, a warm admirer of many traits in the character of Englishmen, speaking the English language for our mother tongue, and nurtured from early childhood in English literature, we have personally no hostility to England, and certainly should regret to see her become a French province; but we cannot deny that we should not grieve to see her humbled, for till she is humbled we cannot hope to see her return to the bosom of Catholic unity. She is and has been the bulwark of the Protestant rebellion against the Church, and of all nations that broke the unity of faith and discipline in the sixteenth century she has been the most cruel and barbarous in her treatment of Catholics. How, then should we grieve to see her weeping in sackcloth and ashes, her apostasy and cruelty to the people of God. Sorry are we that she needs punishment, but since need it

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[1]Orestes A. Brownson, "The Catholics of England and Ireland," 1853, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 406.

> she does, we cannot be sorry to see it inflicted, and warmer sympathy than ours she need expect from no Catholic heart. . . .Not nations any more than individuals can always go on sinning with impunity. . . . [2]

In conjunction with this moral condemnation, Brownson believed that England was lost to the cause of the Catholic Church. In evaluating this situation, he concluded that the essential cause of this situation was that England had seen, or thought she had seen, the Pope as a foreign potentate whom she could not obey without sacrificing her nationality or independence. Consequently, Brownson contended, England had insisted on her Protestantism not because of any theological or conscientious religious conviction, but because she falsely imagined that the Pope threatened her civil and political order.

Because he assumed this position, Brownson was often accused of hating the English. In defending himself against these accusations, he firmly stated that he did not hate the English. In fact, because of his English ancestry, he thought he probably had more points of sympathy with the English than with any other European people. But because of his Catholicity he qualified these statements in the following manner: "But both as a Catholic, and a patriot, we do dislike English preponderance and we would rather, for the best interests of mankind, see any other European nation supreme than Great Britain."[3]

Brownson's disposition to look unfavorably upon British preponderance in international affairs was not limited to purely religious concerns, though

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[2] Ibid., pp. 398-399.

[3] Orestes A. Brownson, "British Preponderance," 1857, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 536.

they were paramount. His other major objection was based on his adamant opposition to the British industrial and mercantile system. As he wrote,

> Wherever the influence of Great Britain is felt the virtue and simplicity, the peace and the happiness of the people depart, and a fierce, bitter, all-absorbing struggle for goods and commodities of this world alone ensues. English influence has ruined Portugal, has prostrated Spain, embroiled Sardinia, demoralized to a fearful extent, the greater part of Italy, and weakened France. It corrupts morals, weakens the hold of religion on the heart, and diffuses a degrading heathenism. Her literature, her philosophy, her religion, as well as her industry and commerce, tend to materialize the nations, and to produce the conviction that man lives for this world alone. . . . We cannot, then, but dread her preponderance, and though we may admire her intense energy, we cannot but deplore its direction. [4]

With such a negative view of the effects of the modern industrial system fostered and supported by Great Britain, it is not surprising to find Brownson speculating on the international consequences which could result from the decline and fall of Great Britain. Although he desired a decline in England's preponderance, he realized that a total collapse of the British Empire would produce a universal convulsion the "effects of which would hardly be of less magnitude than the downfall of ancient Rome."[5]

This conclusion was based on Brownson's realization that anything causing Britain's far-flung financial system to collapse would bring financial disaster to all nations involved in her commercial and industrial system. Yet, Brownson also realized that Britain's complete collapse was unlikely for her industrial and commercial order dominated the Western world, and even the nations who were impoverished by it could not live without it,

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[4] Ibid., pp. 536-537.

[5] Ibid., p. 545.

thereby, being forced to conform to it. As Brownson wrote, "Her downfall would carry with it the downfall of the whole credit and funding system, that ingenious device for taxing posterity for the benefit of the present generation. Stock gambling would fall, the whole system of fictitious wealth would disappear. . . ."[6] The resulting problem, reasoned Brownson, would then be that the emancipated nations would not know what to do; therefore, even the nations most hostile to Great Britain would rather labor to sustain her than to hasten her downfall in order to prevent their own catastrophic end.

This evaluation of the political and economic structure of the British empire led Brownson to examine social conditions within England and to formulate a moral evaluation of these conditions as they were related to his speculations about the possibility of Great Britain's demise. He portrayed English society as being divided into two classes, the respectable English aristocracy and the citizens below this class who were "unwashed, sweltering in filth, pining in hopeless misery, festering in vice, or revelling in crime."[7] The problem, Brownson concluded, was that a great deal of liberty had been given to individuals within this class without it being directed to wise or noble ends. The British government had neglected this responsibility, Brownson maintained, because it was not concerned about this group of people.

In direct contrast to this, Brownson wrote that liberty in Catholic states was a great blessing for it was a condition of manliness and nobi-

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[6] Ibid., p. 545.

[7] Orestes A. Brownson, "Montalembert on England," 1856, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 502.

lity of character rather than leading to a nation of egotists and mammon worshippers such as in England or other Protestant states which left men without moral guidance. Seeing lack of moral guidance to be the pathway to perversion of liberty, Brownson wrote:

> Where Protestantism predominates liberty operates only evil for the mass, and those non-Catholic states are the wisest, who allow their subjects the least of it. . . . In a Catholic state, with a people in whom the Catholic faith is living, the more freedom the better, because there the individual has a moral and spiritual guidance, and the assistance of divine grace to control his appetites and passions, and is in a condition to exercise his liberty without abusing it. Hence, the reason why we so frequently and so earnestly insist on the necessity of the Catholic religion to sustain our republic. With the Catholic religion our liberty is safe, and will operate in securing us a high degree of material prosperity, and a noble, elevated, and manly character. [8]

This demonstration of England's perversion of liberty combined with her threatening role in international affairs often caused Brownson to write on the subject of British-American relations. This subject was of great interest to Brownson for a wide variety of reasons.

Writing in the year of Buchanan's election to the Presidency, Brownson suggested that the policy of the United States toward Great Britain was essentially kindly because of the United States government's adoption of the attitude that the world was big enough for both powers. Yet, Brownson remarked, there were geographical areas in which this kindly attitude was somewhat threatened by the British, particularly in Central America and Cuba. Brownson expressed the views of the majority of the American populace toward British imperialism in these areas when he wrote:

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[8] Ibid., p. 503.

> She wishes to surround us, so as to be able to pounce on us at any moment, on all sides at once, or at any particular point where we happen to be the least invulnerable. Her wish is, by advantage of her position, to neutralize, as much as possible, her present dependence on us for cotton, rice, tobacco, breadstuffs, and provisions. This is her American policy, which, through negligence of our government, she has well-nigh consummated, but which we must defeat at all hazards. 9

From these statements one can ascertain that Brownson regarded Great Britain as a definite rival of the United States. In another article written in the same year, he made the point that this rivalry would hopefully be one of trade and industry and not of arms. This did not mean, according to Brownson, that the United States would not fight if forced to do so. It merely meant, as Brownson said: "We do not court war with her, but we do not fear it."[10]

Another pertinent observation made by Brownson when considering the threat of war with Great Britain over Mexico or Cuba, was that Britain's existing involvements with Russia on the continent caused her to import from the United States great amounts of foodstuffs, cotton, and bullion to sustain her credit. Therefore, Brownson concluded that a war with the United States would cause one-half to two-thirds of England's trading houses to declare bankruptcy, it would stop her mills, and it would prostrate her finances. The inevitable result would be that Great Britain would be reduced to a second or third rate power in Europe.[11] Consequently, Brownson concluded that there was no immediate threat of war; however, he

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[9]Orestes A. Brownson, "Great Britain and the United States, " 1856, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 477.

[10]Ibid., p. 472.

[11]Ibid., pp. 471-472.

recognized that grave questions remained between the two governments which were not yet settled.

There was yet another aspect of Angb- American relations which greatly perplexed Brownson. He detected a definite tendency on the part of the United States government to put British interests ahead of the real interests of this country. The reason for this state of affairs he attributed to the close alliance of our mercantile interests. Yet, Brownson revolted against the idea of having the United States governed by men who would sacrifice national dignity for a "bale of cotton, a hogshead of tobacco, a bag of rice, or a box of merchandise."[12]

And shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, Brownson wrote:

> We know of no instance in which British diplomacy has failed to triumph over ours. We have fought England, but we have never since the War of the Revolution proved ourselves independent of her. The only administration we can remember since Madison's that did not consult British more than American interests was the late Pierce administration, so brutally decried by the British presses of this country. 13

Brownson recognized that much of the public support for Great Britain directly resulted from American newspapers that were pro-British. However, this did not excuse the matter for Brownson, because he felt that if the United States were ever to emerge from her colonial dependency she must no longer recognize Great Britain as the head of the industrial and mercantile world. Brownson wrote: "The United States are little less than an English farm and our trade a branch of the English house. . . .Our government, now

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[12] Orestes A. Brownson, "Politics At Home and Abroad, " 1859, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 570.

[13] Ibid.

and then, to save appearances, makes a bluster and uses big words, but is really afraid to say its soul is its own before the British government, and seldom fails to conform to its wishes."[14] Unhappily, Brownson saw that the government and the general American sentiment was controlled and smothered by the pro-British press.

In Brownson's judgment it was doubtful if the United States was any more independent of England in the 1850s than she had been in her colonial days. As a result of this situation, Brownson could see a basis of comparison between Great Britain and the United States. In the midst of the secession threats of 1860, Brownson wrote that both the United States and Great Britain were forgetful for both talked of liberty while Great Britain's statute books were filled with penal laws against the Catholics and while four million out of thirty million Americans were slaves; both countries extensively engaged in slave trade while declaring it to be piracy; and, both advocated free schools and universal education, yet kept certain classes in ignorance.[15]

In these comments on Anglo-American relations, Brownson attempted to place American interest into its proper perspective, hoping to learn from world affairs that which would be most beneficial to the United States. This dimension of Brownson's interest in international affairs on the temporal level, combined with his overriding concern for the spiritual life of the Western world, were also the essential premises upon which his observations were made concerning matters on the continent.

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[14] Orestes Brownson, "British Preponderance," The Works of Brownson, p. 540.

[15] Orestes A. Brownson, "Manahan's Triumph of the Church," 1860, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 311.

In the nineteenth century the impressive expansion of Russia alarmed and disconcerted the European nations on the continent. The goal of the czars was Constantinople and the Straits of the Bosporous and the Dardanelles for the purpose of an ice-free seaport for Russian trade. The European powers feared any expansion on the part of Russia into the continental Balkan territory. Austria was opposed to this expansion because of her geographical proximity to the Balkans, Great Britain's opposition stemmed from her Mediterranean interests, and France's opposition also centered around her interests in the Mediterranean.

In 1854, the year Commodore Perry reopened Japanese ports to Western trade, Brownson wrote that these European powers, in their provincial outlooks, were becoming unduly alarmed. He reminded these powers that there had been no overt disposition on the part of Russia to intervene in the internal affairs of any of the western states of Europe, in the sense that intervention was contrary to the law of nations. Brownson contended that Nicholas I was a very able and equitable ruler and in political matters was not to be feared. However, Nicholas was not in communion with the Church and it was this that Brownson felt should be the primary concern of the European nations. This religious threat, according to Brownson, would ultimately affect the lives of all Europeans, while the territorial threat, if it ever arose in the Balkans, would only be immediate and could be handled through the concerted efforts of the European powers.[16]

Within two years after this statement was written, Nicholas I had

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[16]Orestes A. Brownson, "Austria and Hungary," 1852, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 222.

decided that the decaying Turkish government was progressively less capable of maintaining order in her sprawling empire. As a result of these circumstances, Nicholas I felt that Turkey should be dismembered and partitioned. Generally speaking, France and England were opposed to this undertaking for they felt that Nicholas' influence in Turkey would give him too much control over the internal affairs of these partitioned areas.

Then another issue arose between these nations over the proposed partition. There was a dispute between the Roman Catholic monks of France and the Greek Orthodox monks of Russia over the control and use of the holy places in the Ottoman Empire. Though this dispute was eventually settled, the Russians further demanded a protectorate over all Orthodox Christians in Turkey. This demand led France and England to believe that Russia intended to seize a major portion of the Ottoman Empire and caused them to be unwilling to respond favorably to Nicholas' demand.

In writing about this issue, Brownson maintained that France and England had let their territorial positions be of more concern than the position of the Christian Church, while Russia had put the interests of the Church first. Therefore, Brownson wrote:

> The Christians of the Ottoman Empire have long enough been the slaves of the insolent and fanatic Turks, and religion, civilization, humanity demands their emancipation, their elevation to the status of citizens and their free and full possession of the liberty of worship; and the western powers, if they neglect their duty in this respect, have no right to interfere or prevent Russia from doing it. 17

Brownson maintained that it was in the interest of Christendom, of

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17 Orestes Brownson, "The Case of Martin Koszta," The Works Of Brownson, p. 250.

European civilization, and of common humanity that an end be put to Mohammedan power. If the powers of Western Christendom were unwilling to do this, Brownson contended that there was no alternative but for it to be undertaken by Russia. It would have been preferable otherwise; however, it was better for Russia to go to the aid of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire than for the Christians to be neglected entirely. Extremely distressed over the neglect of the western powers, Brownson wrote: "it is a scandal to find Catholic France combining with heretical and pope-hating England to uphold it (Mohammedanism) in the Ottoman Empire."[18]

Russian predominance, due to continental neglect in Turkey, would hurt the Catholic cause. Brownson recognized this yet he could not see how Russia could incur any more damage to the Church than England had in Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, and the remainder of the Italian peninsula; or than France had caused by her league with the Turks. "Be this as it may, Brownson wrote, "Russia is better than Turkey, the Greek schism preferable to Mahometanism, and Russia does not and has not favored radicalism or socialism, the two worst enemies the church has to defend herself against."[19]

This predominantly religious rather than political threat of Russia occupied Brownson's thought throughout his life as a Catholic. It was not essentially changed as he developed his thinking about the European rivalries in regard to the Turkish Empire and elsewhere. Brownson's support of Russia was based on the conviction that she was acting on behalf of Christianity, even though a schismatic branch, to halt the encroachment of

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 251.

Mohammedanism. Thus his response to the immediate situation was not a contradiction of his major interest, for the promotion of Christianity on the continent would be a necessary requisite for the acceptance and promulgation of Catholic doctrine.

Again, in response to an immediate situation that would have direct bearing on the totality of his interest in continental affairs, Brownson wrote an article in 1854 entitled "The Turkish War." In this article he questioned the motives of France and England who said they were fighting to sustain the independence of Turkey and to maintain the balance of power threatened by Russian aggression. Russia had said that she had no designs against the independence of Turkey. Therefore, Brownson decided that the assertions of France and Great Britain were merely excuses and that the real answer as to why the war was being fought was that France and England had apparently formed a league for the adjustment of the affairs of the whole world under the pretense of maintaining the balance of power. The object of this league, Brownson felt, was to secure "universal dictatorships" of both hemispheres for England and France.[20]

Because of the magnitude of this plan, it was obvious to Brownson that it could be accomplished only by controlling limited areas at a time; therefore, the immediate goals were aimed at the continent of Europe and Brownson did not predict what the fate of the United States would be. In commenting on the immediate plan, Brownson wrote:

> We may be mistaken, but we cannot help thinking that this would throw the balance altogether on one side, and we are

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[20] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Turkish War," 1854, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 412.

> not able to see how the supreme dictatorship would be more compatible with the autonomy or independence of nations in the hands of England and France than in those of Russia. The equilibrium would be as much disturbed in one case as in the other. 21

This passage again reveals Brownson's disdain for any attempt to change the established order merely on the basis of advancing one's own national interest. An act of this type was as untenable and as atheistic as revolution according to Brownson.

Not only did Brownson discredit these actions on the part of France and England, he also pointed out the impossibility of their designs. He maintained that their attempt to sustain the independence and integrity of Turkey by attempting to inculcate the spirit and ideas of European liberalism was utter folly because the empire was founded on and lived by the Koran. To detach the empire from the Koran would be to dissolve it. This could not in any respect, according to Brownson, be considered to be maintaining its independence and integrity. And, Brownson continued, what France and England wanted to do was to substitute Mohammedanism for European political atheism. Obviously, Brownson was adamantly opposed to this; whereas, he could support Russia for she was offering Christianity, though schismatic, in place of Mohammedanism.[22]

The French and English alliance was questionable from yet another standpoint, according to Brownson. The position in question was the role of the Catholic Church in this alliance. The fact that France was allied with England not only proved to Brownson that Catholic interests had not been

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[21] Ibid., p. 413.

[22] Ibid., pp. 413-414.

consulted, but also demonstrated that whenever Catholic interests were related to issues involved they had been sacrificed "on the altar of the English alliance." Brownson contended that this was extremely detrimental to the Catholic cause for he did not think that the people of Turkey were any safer under Protestant England than under schismatic Russia. And to add to this injury, Brownson maintained that the Anglo-French alliance gave Russia the enviable position of the defender of religious liberty and oppressed nationalities while the Catholics of Western Europe appeared as allies of the Protestant oppressors.[23]

These remarks brought statements of denunciation by France. In response to the French, Brownson wrote an article entitled "Russia and the Western Powers" attempting to clarify his position. He explained that a just treatment of the issue would lead him to contend that (1) British aims were centered on Protestantizing the East, which would hurt the Catholic cause more than the influence of the Greek schism, (2) that France had not supported Catholic interests at the expense of political interests; thereby, allowing atheistic liberalism to predominate, and (3) that both countries were hot-houses for the spreading of revolution. Therefore, Brownson maintained that in the Turkish War the Western Powers were more to blame than Russia. Russia merely availed herself of the advantages the European powers offered her and left the European powers "to reap the fruits of their own madness and folly."[24]

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[23] Ibid., pp. 424-425.

[24] Orestes A. Brownson, "Russia and the Western Powers," 1855, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 434, 441.

To Brownson this whole enterprise had been futile for if no territory were taken from Russia nothing would have been gained by the war. However, if she were dismembered that would make the situation even more ridiculous, for what could then be done with the provinces, Brownson asked. The Allies could not annex them to their own states for they were not contiguous with their borders; thus, making their defense more costly than they would be worth. Therefore, according to Brownson, they could be retained only if the Allies kept their fleets and armies on a continuous wartime footing. With this as his conclusion, Brownson wrote that the Western powers should not hope to contain Russia by sustaining the Ottoman Empire. Instead, they should look to Austria to safeguard any Russian advance in the east and also to construct a natural barrier between Russia in the Balkans and Central Europe.[25] Here, again, the consistency of Brownson's thought is evident, for, as was demonstrated in Chapter 3, throughout this period Brownson thought Austria was the key to the maintenance of Western Christendom the onslaughts of liberalism and the religious threat of Russia.

Even at this time Brownson saw the emergence of Russia as a great power in the future. He developed this theory more fully over the next decade as will be seen in Chapter 8. However, in 1854 this portent for Russia's future was already evident as he wrote: "France and England may prevent Russia from crossing the Balkans, may destroy her fleets, bombard a few of her towns, and injure her trade and maritime coasts, but will not subdue her, nor materially weaken her power. They won't conquer her or make her sue for peace."[26] This conclusion caused Brownson to propose that

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[25] Ibid., pp. 441-445.

[26] Orestes Brownson, "The Turkish War," The Works of Brownson, p. 426.

the United States should side with Russia, yet not make any binding alliances. Brownson thought that Russia would be a valuable ally in protecting the interests of the United States in Central America from the encroachment of the British and the French.

In regard to the moral lessons the United States could learn from these events in Europe, Brownson wrote an article in 1856 entitled "The Unholy Alliance." In this article he contended that the Anglo-French alliance could do the United States great injury. Therefore, he warned that old Europe should attend to her own affairs and leave the United States alone. In explaining this attitude, he wrote:

> We wish Europe well; we acknowledge her superiority in many things over us; but we hold our selves independent Americans, ready to take advice, and to spurn dictation; we feel that we have certain advantages which she wants and is not likely to secure. Here we are not cursed by being over-governed. Here man is man, and accustomed to rely on himself. He is not in perpetual leading-strings. He is not, as in Old Europe, impatient of authority; and yet unable to govern himself. Here he can be manly, and in proportion as he gets rid of Calvinism and his European servility, and becomes Catholic, a member of a church that gives his nature fair play, he will prove himself the admiration and envy of the world. Let Old Europe beware how she attempts to interfere with his natural development. 27

In supporting a reserved international policy as being the most suitable for the natural development of the United States, Brownson again revealed the consistency of his thought. His warning to the European powers against any overt attempts at hampering the growth of American individualism was to be morally instructive for both Europe and the United States.

Finally, after many articles were written analyzing the various as-

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27 Orestes Brownson, "Great Britain and the United States," The Works Of Brownson, pp. 470-471.

pects of the role of Russia in the Western world, and more particularly as the extensive commentary on the Near Eastern question was used as a springboard for these observations, an article entitled "The Unholy Alliance" summarized Brownson's reflections on this subject. While not knowing the outcome of the Treaty of Paris, Brownson wrote: "The Allies it seems to us have done too much or too little. They have done enough to irritate Russia, to throw her back on herself, to stimulate her to develop her resources, to consolidate her power; but not enough to weaken her effectually, and to make it difficult for her to recover from the losses she has sustained."[28]

Brownson then asked what the allies had gained? The following answers indicate Brownson's political foresight and great scope in international understanding:

(1) Turkey is recognized as a member of the European family of nations, but she is weaker, more distracted, and if possible more corrupt than at the beginning of the war. And she really counts far less in the balance of power against Russia than previously.

(2) France has secured the Napoleonic dynasty, but in the process has created a ruinous speculative spirit at home and has burdened herself with a heavy national debt.

(3) England has succeeded, for the moment, in destroying Russian power in the Black Sea; but has not destroyed Russia as a maritime threat. She did not get possession of an inland trade route to the east, nor gain additional security for her Indian Empire. She largely increased her national debt

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[28]Orestes Brownson, "The Unholy Alliance," The Works of Brownson, p. 457.

and now must levy taxes greater than her people are willing to bear.
(4) The balance of power is as far as ever from being adjusted.
(5) The Christians and the Turks each retained their own religion, making it impossible to fuse them into one social body or even to attain political homogeneity.[29]

In regards to the West, at the conclusion of the war, Brownson contended that the present peace would prove to be only a truce, for Russia believed it was her mission to drive out the Turks and would continue to try to fulfill this mission. Therefore, the war settled nothing according to Brownson. "In conclusion," Brownson wrote, "the eastern war and recent peace prove that European statesmen take no enlarged views, and act only in reference to temporary questions. Liberal and religious considerations have no weight with them; and they seek only material interests of the moment."[30]

Thus, Brownson's reaction to Russia and the Near Eastern question reflected his consistent abhorrence of revolution, his predominant concern for the future of Western Christendom, his hatred of the atheistic and materialistic emphasis of European liberalism, and his hope that the United States would learn from these European developments to avoid becoming completely enmeshed in the affairs of the continent so as to develop her own ideals individually. Combined with these attitudes, one finds Brownson's proposal that Austria would be the key to the future of Western Christendom, a proposal that he consistently held throughout this period of his Catholic conversion. His theory as to the future role of Russia in Euro-

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[29] Ibid., pp. 457-460.

[30] Ibid., p. 469.

pean and world affairs, which had its genesis in his reactions to the international affairs of the early 1850s, will be fully developed by the early 1870s, as will be seen in Chapter 8.

Brownson's occupation with the international scene continued during the Civil War years. Though he did not mention the incidents involving the Laird rams and the Alabama claims, he did allude to Napoleon III's attempt to impose a government by force on Mexico. Napoleon III was no stranger to the American people. He had visited the United States in 1836 and 1837 after his unsuccessful coup at Strasbourg. During his visit he had been pampered by the socially elite in the cities he visited and had been led to believe that the Bonapartist cause enjoyed the support of many Americans.[31]

Brownson was aware of the sympathy of this class for the aristocracy of Europe and he appreciated their support of those who represented established order. However, due to the international events which had transpired in the 1850s, Brownson did not share in this opinion of Napoleon and was gravely concerned about the possible consequences of Napoleon's efforts in Mexico, both politically and religiously. He feared that Napoleon's identification with Gallicanism would prove to be an unsettling influence on the Catholics in America.

In a letter to his son, Henry, dated January 2, 1866, Brownson wrote about the intercontinental diplomacy involved in Napoleon's designs on Mexico.

> Schofield is sent to France with a secret mission to the Emperor. So much is certain. Seward has gone to see

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[31] A.R. Tyrner-Tyrnauer, Lincoln and the Emperors. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962. p. 52.

> Maximilian. There will be no war. Seward will pledge Maximilian that he shall not be disturbed, in case the Emperor Napoleon will withdraw the French. The Monroe Doctrine will be saved in appearance and given up in reality. All Seward's diplomacy will end in surrender, which the New York Times will swear is victory. 32

The American populace was convinced that Napoleon III and Eugeine's plan was to create a league of three emperors comprised of Napoleon, Franz Joseph, and Maximilian to restore monarchy and the power of the church first in Mexico and later in the United States. Brownson disagreed. His theory concerning Napoleon's actions is found in another letter to his son Henry.

> I still doubt the withdrawal of French troops from Mexico. The key to recent events is the desire on the part of Napoleon to prevent the union of Germany under Austria with her non-German provinces, and to prepare alliances that will enable France to guard against the further advance of Russia southward, and to settle the terrible Eastern Question without an undue accession of power or territory to Russia, or sustaining the Turks to allay the fears of Great Britain for her Indian Empire. Perhaps also the Emperor has wished to guard against influence of Europe, and with the so-called Latin races on this continent, of the great and growing American Republic. Thus far his policy has been successful, but he wants two or three years of life, health, and peace to consolidate it. Will he have them? His health, they say, is giving way, and if, as they say, he has an affection of the spine and Bright's disease of the kidneys, his life may at any day be cut short. . . .33

These remarks on the Mexican Affair again reflect Brownson's hemispheric rather than provincial outlook; and, his theory of the future centrality of Austria in European affairs and the resulting actions of France and England to prevent Austria's development in order to preserve their own positions as first rate powers. They also illustrate Brownson's firm conviction that there was substantial interaction between the American and

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32 Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 480.

33 Ibid., pp. 483-484.

European continents. This interaction was not only to have an effect on the United States, but, as Brownson saw it, the opinions of the United States would and should have an increasing effect on the course of European events. This theory as to America's mission abroad was developing in Brownson's mind throughout the Civil War years. Shortly after the war, the final formulation of this theory of America's mission in the Western world was published in a book entitled The American Republic. A discussion of the major thesis of this book will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter V

ITALIAN UNIFICATION AND THE ROLE OF THE PAPACY

For Brownson too many Americans, including Catholics, were sympathetic with revolutionary developments in Europe. He thought that Americans failed to realize that the revolutionary leaders, under the banner of republicanism, were infidels seeking to destroy the papacy and the influence of the Church as the representative of the conservative element of European politics. Brownson felt it was his duty to warn Americans, and others who were not cognizant of this trend, of the "rising tide of political atheism - now wearing a popular or democratic form, as it has since worn an imperial or monarchical form," because it divorced the state from morality and religion.[1]

Brownson's desire to have religion as an integral part of a nation's political life was most clearly seen in his comments on the movement for Italian unification and the position of the Catholic Church in this developing movement. As Brownson said: "The Italian question is the center of

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[1] Orestes A. Brownson, "Christian Politics," 1860, The Works Of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 345.

European politics, for it involves two serious differences, one in upper Italy with Austria, and one in central Italy with the Pope."[2] In the article "Politics at Home and Abroad," written in 1859, Brownson devoted a great deal of attention to this two-fold aspect of the Italian question. He recognized that Louis Napoleon wanted to settle the question and saw that Napoleon had the Austrians, Mazzinians, and the papal government in his way.

> His troops occupy Rome against the will and even the protest of the papal government, and to the great discontent of the other powers of Europe. He dares not withdraw them for that would leave the field to Austria. Yet, as long as he appears to uphold the papal temporal government he can neither defeat the policy of Austria, nor conciliate either Italian party. The pope is his difficulty. 3

Louis Napoleon's solution to this situation, according to Brownson, involved the expulsion of the Austrians from upper Italy, the union of all Italy into a federative state under the king of Sardinia, and leaving the Pope his sovereignty by secularizing the administration of his government and gradually assimilating it into the government of France. Brownson objected to this solution on various grounds. He felt that the organization of a federative state was but a pretext for substituting French domination in Italy for that of Austria. Also, Brownson questioned the right of Louis Napoleon's decision concerning the Pope because the Pope was an independent temporal sovereign and a representative of the established order given by God. Therefore, Brownson wrote that he could not approve of Louis

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[2] Orestes Brownson, "Politics At Home and Abroad," The Works Of Brownson, p. 548.

[3] Ibid., pp. 550-551.

Napoleon's Italian policy which was "against the faith of treaties, the independence of sovereigns, the rights of both the Pope and the Emperor of Austria, and we see no hope at present of national independence or even of a federative union for Italy. We see nothing that is likely to be done that will not make matters worse all over Europe."[4]

In fact, Brownson maintained that Louis Napoleon always understood that he would not be able to rely on Italy as an ally forever. Napoleon's fear was that a unified Italy would be followed by the unification of the Iberian peninsula and of Germany, which, in turn, would reduce France to a second rate power. Therefore, Brownson predicted that Louis Napoleon would eventually return to his policy of permitting no great uncontrollable centralized power on the frontier of France.[5]

Shortly after this was written, even while Louis Napoleon was trying to negotiate with Italy's revolutionary leaders, Austria delivered an ultimatum to the Piedmontese government which resulted in war. The war was conducted with a lack of decisiveness on both sides and within two months Louis Napoleon began secret negotiations with the emperor of Austria and concluded an armistice with him at Villafranca on July 11, 1859.[6]

Commenting on this meeting at Villafranca in an article entitled "The Roman Question," Brownson wrote:

> In the loyal intentions and good faith of the emperor of Austria we have full confidence, and if he has really

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[4] Ibid., p. 558.

[5] Orestes A. Brownson, "Sardinia and Rome," The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 444.

[6] Gordon A. Craig, Europe Since 1815, 2nd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. pp. 212-213.

> come to the conclusion that the peninsula may be more useful to Austria as a strong and powerful ally, as a protection for her rear against France, than as a possession or dependency, which we hold to be the fact, he will do all in his power to create and sustain an independent and united Italy. We have less confidence in that man of surprises, who for the present rules the destinies of France and sports with the peace of Europe. But we think he is too solemly engaged - and it is evidently for his interests to keep his engagement - for him to desert the cause for which he professed to wage war. France, like Austria, is stronger with a free, independent, and powerful Italy as an ally, than with Italy as a possession or dependency. Moreover, if the emperor of the French now fails to sustain the cause of Italian independence and union, he gives Francis Joseph the chance to exchange parts with him to make himself the champion of a free, independent, united, and powerful Italy, and thus transfer the regards of the Italians from France to Austria. It is as much for the interests of Francis Joseph to strengthen Italy as a barrier for France against Austria. Italy should serve the same office between France and Austria that Germany does between France and Russia. Napoleon has shown judgment and tact in making peace at the opportune moment. Let us hope that in regard to Italy he will prove himself a real statesman, and justify the admiration of his friends. 6

Thus, with Villafranca, Brownson hoped for a satisfactory solution of the Italian question, for he believed that the Austrian and French emperors intended to resuscitate Italy. In fact, Brownson contended that all European statesmen saw that to elevate Italy to her proper rank and influence would require a reorganization of the state or union of states on liberal principles of government. Realizing that this would be impossible without a liberal constitution for the papal states, Brownson could see no reason, if desirable and practicable, why the Pope should not concede him temporal subjects a constitution and govern them as a constitutional

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6. Orestes Brownson, "The Roman Question," The Works Of Brownson, pp. 429-430.

monarch rather than an absolute monarch. To this statement Brownson added: "Of course such government cannot be extorted from him by force, for that would be sacrilege, and to be legal it must be a concession made, as the papal documents say, Motu proprio."[7]

In Brownson's opinion the best solution to the problem of how to unify Italy was V. Gioberti's proposal of the establishment of a federative state under the presidency of the Pope, or to unite Italy as a monarchy with the Pope as sovereign. Yet, Brownson was practical enough to realize that these suggestions were not feasible; therefore, he favored the adoption of Camillo Cavour's policy of the annexation of all of Italy to the Piedmont. Although Brownson considered Cavour to be one of the ablest ministers of state in Europe, he thought Cavour had committed a great blunder when he excluded the conservative party from the Italian Parliament. It was the conservatives who were men who loved religion, revered the Church, respected vested rights, and opposed change because of its characteristic violent nature. And Brownson maintained that Cavour would have to have the support of this element, rather than the radicals such as Garibaldi and Mazzini, if he were to have the support of the Catholic masses.[8]

In these opinions, written from 1859 through 1861, Brownson had not treated the subject of the Pope in Italian affairs in depth, for he felt matters at that time had not warranted such a discussion.

> If we believed that the interest of our religion were inseperable from the Italian political movements, they would have

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[7]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownsnn's Latter Life, p. 184.

[8]Orestes A. Brownson, "The Papal Power," 1860, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 370-371.

> more interest than even the civil war in which we are now engaged. Religion is man's supreme law and its interests take precedence over all others. Christianity is the only religion; and there is no Christianity in its unity, integrity, and efficiency without the church, and no church without the papacy. . . .9

To Brownson the loss of the Pope's temporal estates and the establishment of the unity of Italy under Victor Emmanuel or any other constitutional sovereign would deprive the Holy Father of his spiritual freedom and independence. Therefore, Brownson thought that the success of the Italian national movement would be the greatest possible calamity not only to Italy, but to the whole Christian world. Yet, he wrote: ". . . .we are not convinced this would be the fact. . . .therefore we regard the movements going on in Italy mainly as political movements in which the interests of religion are only indirectly or temporarily involved."[10]

However, as the policy of the removal of the papal lands by force was adopted by Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, the whole question of the temporal and spiritual power of the Pope became a popular and controversial issue. Brownson had written about papal powers back in the late 1840s and one or two related articles appeared in the 1850s; however, these were purely theological in character and were not related to a specific historical event. Then in 1861, when the controversy became so heated due to the unification issue, in five successive issues of the review Brownson offered his views on the relationship of temporal and spiritual powers, not only as related to the Pope but also as related to the general sphere of government. These

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[9]Orestes Brownson, "Sardinia and Rome," The Works of Brownson, p. 431.

[10]Ibid., p. 432.

articles revealed that his views about this matter were consistent throughout his life as a Catholic convert.

Brownson maintained that both temporal and spiritual powers received their authority from God, for God was the universal Lord. Consequently, Christ, as God incarnate, ruled with all power and law; and, furthermore, He established the Roman Catholic Church as the depository and judge of this law. To the Apostles and their successors was given the divine authority to teach this sovereign law to all nations and also to teach nations to observe its commandments.[11] Thus, "The Commission is to the Church, not to the state, and nowhere can it be found that our Lord has made princes, as such, guardians and judges of his law, even in the temporal order."[12] Consequently, Brownsmn thought that the temporal order was subject to the spiritual order and that every question that arose or could arise in the temporal order was indirectly a spiritual question and within the jurisdiction of the Church as the spiritual authority; and, therefore, to the Pope who is supreme leader of the Church. The Pope, therefore, judged temporal questions as they were related to spiritual matters.[13]

In regard to the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, which Brownson saw to be only nominal, he contended that the Pope was the oldest sovereign in Europe and that no sovereign held his states by a better title. However, Brownson also realized that the Pope lacked the power to vindicate his temporal rights by force whenever seriously attacked by his neighbors.

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[11] DeLapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 92.

[12] Orestes A. Brownson, "Temporal and Spiritual," 1853, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 15-16.

[13] Ibid., p. 22.

Therefore, practically speaking, the papal states were independent sovereign possessions of the Pope in theory, but in practice the Pope had to depend on the policy, diplomacy, and rivalry of the great powers of Europe to sustain his independence. Consequently, the immediate problem, according to Brownson, was that there was not a single European power that was prepared to sacrifice political interest for the sake of sustaining the temporal sovereignty of the Pope; whereas, all of the European powers were ready to use or cast him aside according to their own needs.[14]

Not only were the papal states facing a difficult situation internationally, but domestically the citizens of these states were complaining either of the neglect or the tyranny of their government. The major complaint of these citizens was that the government did not give them enough independence. Brownson contended that much of this trouble was caused by the government's paternalism and particularly by the interference of emissaries, conspirators, or disaffected persons from other Italian states, as well as from every nation of the world. Brownson did not believe any of the charges of cruelty or tyranny levelled against the papal government. He maintained that no government had ever labored more earnestly for the good of its subjects. Thus, Brownson proposed that the real problem was that the papal government was incompatible with modern politics.[15]

Yet, even with this problem, Brownson firmly held to his position, as stated in previous chapters, that the subjects in the papal states owed

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[14] Orestes Brownson, "Sardinia and Rome," The Works of Brownson, p. 433.

[15] Ibid., p. 434.

their allegiance to their legitimate ruler, in this case the Holy Father. To refuse to obey him, or any other legitimate authority, was a matter of a serious sin against God because with the temporal power being subordinate to the spiritual power which determined its legitimacy, a subject resisting the temporal ruler was ultimately disobeying God.[16]

Brownson recognized the legitimate spiritual and temporal authority of the Pope; yet, he did not believe that the temporal principality of the Pope was necessary to the exercise of his spiritual authority. Therefore, he recommended a division between the temporal and the spiritual in the Vatican, with the Church abandoning its secular power and remaining simply the spiritual Kingdom of God on earth. Furthermore, Brownson wrote that this division would facilitate the unification efforts as well as being in the political and religious interests of Europe .[17]

The American Catholic hierarchy reacted with extreme indignation toward Brownson's views, on the basis, essentially, of Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh who publicly denounced Brownson for lack of theological soundness and requested that his name, as Bishop, be withdrawn from a letter of American bishops which indicated approbation of Brownson's Review. Also, Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati censored Brownson's articles as vagaries, as did William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez.[18]

In response to Bishop Elder's accusations, Brownson wrote:

> The passage you cite as irreverent of the Holy Father does not express my feelings, but those of the Italian patriots.

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[16] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 93-94.

[17] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 199.

[18] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 94-95.

> I am only stating the fact as it exists in their mind. I am not aware of having fallen into any contradiction of myself. I maintain that the subjects of the Pope as temporal sovereign, have the same right of revolution they would have in case that their prince were not a spiritual person.[19]

In further justification of his position, he wrote:

> I have never said, I have never believed, and do not believe that the subjects of the Pope have any right to revolutionize their government, unless the Pope should become an intolerable tyrant, and as such I by no means regard him. I am as far as you or any other man from justifying them the subjects or Sardinia. I wrote to have an influence on those who imagine that the unity and independence of Italy cannot be effected without making war on the Papacy. I wished to show that it necessarily involved no war on any but the temporal rights of the Holy See - rights which cannot indeed be wrested from her without crime, but which she, if she judges proper may surrender without surrendering any spiritual right....20

Because Brownson wished to completely divorce the spiritual and temporal powers of the Pope, Archbishop Francis P. Kenrick of Baltimore, once Brownson's sincere friend and admirer, requested that Brownson no longer carry the endorsement of the American Catholic hierarchy on his magazine. As a result of these harangues by these archbishops and in order to be able to continue his writing, Brownson went to New York where he hoped he would find a more sympathetic environment.

But the environment in New York, during the Civil War years, was not as sympathetic as expected and because of his refusal to recant, Brownson was denounced to Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation of the Propaganda of the Faith, in Rome. Cardinal Barnabo wrote personally to Brownson for a detailed explanation of the charges brought against him.

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[19] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 225.

[20] Ibid., p. 226.

After receiving Brownson's answer, Rome found no heresy in Brownson's position and dismissed the charges. However, the Review lost its popularity as a result of this controversy and Brownson was forced to discontinue its publication in October of 1864, though he did continue to write for other magazines.[21]

By 1866 events in Italy had led to the temporal deposition of the Pope. Brownson wrote that it was a great loss, but that perhaps some arrangement would be entered into with the new Italian government allowing the Holy Father to reside in Rome and to exercise independently his functions as spiritual chief of Christendom. Brownson realized that the mass of thinking men, Catholics as well as non-Catholics, could not be made to believe that the interests of the Church required the sacrifice of Italian unity; therefore, the existing arrangement was the only solution to the situation. He did not see this arrangement to be a denial of papal rights, but saw it as the beginning of a valid basis of operation for the Holy See in modern civilization.[22]

However, in this realization of the importance of this new position of the Church, Brownson was not content to merely respond to the possibilities for the future. He contended that the territorial changes which had taken place in Italy could not be dismissed from a moral point of view, for the means by which they were achieved were wholly indefensible and in every sense unjustifiable. As Brownson wrote:

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[21] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 101.

[22] Orestes A. Brownson, The American Republic, 1866, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 48.

> They have been done in violation of international law, public right, and are an outrage upon every man's innate sense of justice, excusable only on that most detestable of all maxims - the end sanctifies the means. Yet, taken as facts accomplished, as points of departure for the future they may have positive influence in putting an end to the uneasiness under which all European society has labored since 1815 and the revolution movements that have kept it in a continual turmoil and rendered all government but sheer force impracticable. 23

There were other objections to the method of unification which Brownson enumerated such as the independent Italian states not being freely absorbed by Sardinia; the craft, fraud, violence, and disregard of public and private right; and, the coercion of the Pope into giving consent to the absorption of the Roman states. Furthermore, Brownson wrote:

> Sardinia, added by the arms and diplomacy of France and Prussia, by the foreign policy of the Whigs and the radicals of Great Britain, the intrigues of secret societies, the money and co-operation of Protestant propaganda, the malcontents and malefactors of all the states of Italy, and adventurers and miscreants from all nations of the earth, has succeeded without any right, without having received any offence or provocation, in the violation of every principle of international law and every precept of morality or natural justice, in absorbing every Italian state, and effecting the unification of the whole peninsula under her own royal house. 24

Thus, Brownson, though seeing the future possibilities of the results of these immoral actions, adhered consistently to his principles of the rights of the established order and the immorality of subversion and revolution. And, as is evident, he constantly held these principles throughout his life as a Catholic convert despite the growing tide of liberalism in the Western world.

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[23] Orestes A. Brownson, "Recent Events in Europe," 1866, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 467.

[24] Orestes Brownson, "Sardinia and the Holy Father," 1871, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press,

Again, as in previous discussions of revolutionary and liberal movements, Brownson was quite distressed over the attitudes and positions assumed by Americans in regard to the movement for Italian unification. In 1871 a book entitled The Unity of Italy was published. It contained the addresses, letters, and comments given at a banquet held in the United States celebrating the unity of Italy. After reading this book, Brownson was discouraged that there were so many distinguished and influential men of America - statesmen, politicians, judges, lawyers, officers of the army, ministers, journalists, poets, philosophers, scholars, professors and presidents of colleges and universities - who applauded events which he considered to have been notoriously brought about by fraud, craft, lying, and armed force. As Brownson wrote:

> It is a sad thing for our republic when so many of its respectable men, whose names are recorded in this volume, can endorse the fraud and violence by which the Sardinian king has effected what he calls the unity of Italy, and congratulate him on his successful sacrilege and spoilation in the Roman state; and the only consolation left us is that, with a solitary exception, no Catholic name appeared on the list, and all the sympathizers are Protestants, and all, or nearly all, prominent adherents of the same dominant political party. 25

These statements by Brownson are indicative of the extreme discontent which he consistently held throughout his life as a Catholic convert in regard to the American populace allying, sympathizing, and supporting the revolutionaries of Europe. To Brownson these revolutionaries were destruc-

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25 Ibid., p. 445.

tive political atheists whose actions would eventually lead to anarchy in Europe and possibly in the United States if Americans did not change their attitude and support the elements which upheld established order.

Brownson's concern for the future of the Western world is reflected in the following statement:

> We live in times when nearly all political and social arrangements are broken, or are breaking up, and throughout the world, it is clear to us, that the church is destined to lose all the rights she acquired from secular society, and be thrown back on their naked rights and resources as the spiritual kingdom of God on earth. There is no longer a Christendom and the church can no longer expect anything from civil society, but the simple legal protection she enjoys here in common with the sects. . . . we can never war, with courage and energy, against the inevitable or what seems to be the inevitable. . . .Yet, we do not believe that all is over with the victories of the Church, or that we are not to hope for her in the future days as bright and conquests as glorious as any in the past. The Popes made more conquests to Christ before they were temporal sovereigns than, being temporal sovereigns they have retained. 26

In this struggle of the established order with the prevailing liberal philosophies, Brownson could only hope that the inevitable changes that would occur would in the end result prove to be beneficial to the spiritual order, as he thought it had in the United States. In all this, Brownson felt that Americans had one great advantage over Europe. They had long since occupied the grounds toward which Europeans were tending; thus, they knew it was possible to live without old customs and usages and to still love religion and obey the Church.

Concomitantly, Brownson maintained that all of Europe was not tending

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26 Orestes A. Brownson, "The Woman Question," 1869, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 404.

toward democracy, but toward the American system of the separation of church and state. Though Brownson saw that this trend would necessarily involve many evils while it was going on, once it was accomplished he felt sure that it would be highly beneficial to the spiritual and lay society.[27] Thus, the conservative and Catholic elements become the hope for the future for Brownson. While his opposition to the radical events of the present remained constant, his hope for the future was that the conservative element would prevail and that the radical republican element would eventually prove to be the means by which, though despicable at present, this triumph would occur.

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[27] Orestes A. Brownson, "Rights of the Temporal," 1860, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 405.

Chapter VI

NATIONALISM: THE UNRELENTING ENEMY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the decade in which Brownson became a convert to Catholicism the two most notable religious developments in Europe were the reconciliation between the bourgeoisie and the Roman Catholic Church and a parallel decline in the Church's influence over the masses. Anticlericalism was strong among the middle classes of France and was reinforced by nationalists who were determined to relegate the Catholic Church to a supportive agency of the government. Thus, Brownson viewed nationalism as an unrelenting enemy of the freedom and independence of the Catholic Church.

In the second volume of the biography of his father, Henry Brownson wrote that these views of the European situation were not prominently discussed in the Review until after the upheavals of 1848. And Henry Brownson also maintained that the occurrences in France, important both in themselves and in their influence on the whole Christian world, were foremost in Brownson's mind.[1]

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[1] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 315.

As a result of his concern for the maintenance of established order, politically, socially, and religiously, Brownson was naturally quite critical of the revolutionary developments in France in 1848. In keeping with his characteristic treatment of revolution, Brownson charged the radical leaders of the revolution and the press with much of the responsibility for the course of events. Brownson contended that the real leader of the revolution was Ledru-Rollin, who was, he maintained,

> . . . .a bold reckless demagogue, not without talent of a certain kind, with a determinate end in view, which he is prepared to seek at any and every hazard. . . .Such a man, in times of disorder and confusion, is always sure to have a strong and determined party and never ceases to be dangerous so long as he lives. 2

This condemnation of Ledru-Rollin was accompanied by the charge that the revolutionary press was responsible for inciting and provoking revolution. Consequently, Brownson maintained that it was absolutely necessary to suppress the licentious press if order were desired. Thus, when the "September Laws" restraining the seditious press were issued by Louis Philippe they were heartily approved of by Brownson and were in line with official American policy as set forth by Secretary of State Livingston. And Brownson was quite pleased when the French government, in 1849, had the courage and firmness to propose and adopt similar laws.[3]

With the French government taking such action, Brownson was happy to note that his fears concerning the revolution had not been fully justified, for the party of order had proved stronger, more resolute, and more ener-

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[2] Orestes Brownson, "The Licentiousness of the Press," The Works of Brownson, p. 133.

[3] Ibid., pp. 136-137.

getic than he had hoped. Yet, Brownson warned that the red-republicans, though defeated, had not been vanquished; therefore, the party of order ought not to rest on its laurels for they had far from gained a definite victory. Concomitantly, Brownson wrote, in October of 1849, that "France seems now to be thoroughly convinced that her regeneration must come from order and liberty, not revolution and anarchy. . . .No more revolution, no more destruction, no more anarchy; but whether she will be able to maintain the very just and common sense position she has assumed remains to be seen."[4]

In this same article written in 1849, Brownson commented on the state of affairs in France, noting that the great majority of the people in France were Catholic, and, therefore, if the government were not administered in accordance with Catholic principles it could not hope to restore internal peace. Yet, he recognized the presence of those other than Catholics and wrote:

> There are but two principles in French society, - the Catholic principle and the socialistic, - and no government can live, and perform the proper functions of government, that does not make its election, and conform strictly to the one or the other of these. The French government must be Catholic or socialist. Socialist it cannot be, for socialism is incompatible even with the existence of human society. It must, then, be Catholic; and if so, frankly, if it takes care to do nothing to wound the Catholic conscience, and make its appeal boldly to the Catholic principle, it will have but little difficulty, and may easily correct the defects of its present constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty and internal peace. [5]

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[4] Ibid., p. 133.

[5] Ibid., pp. 142-143.

Although Brownson ultimately saw Catholicism and socialism as the two opposing philosophies struggling for survival, with the future of France hinging on the right decision, his immediate concern, in 1849, was the party represented by such men as Alexis de Tocqueville. To Brownson the men taking the lead from de Tocqueville were destitute of all statesmanship for they rejected and accepted a little of all parties, and passed for moderate and judicious men. But to Brownson this meant they were without any consistent principles of their own; thus, were men of compromise and utterly impotent to found the strong and stable government needed by the French. As Brownson wrote:

> The men of De Tocqueville stamp attempt to hold the balance even between them and socialists - the maddest, or rather the silliest, policy imaginable. In attempting this policy they will destroy the republic, for it will leave them without a party. It is the policy to madden the socialists, and to disgust and alienate the Catholics, without whose cordial support no government in France can stand. 6

With this idea of the future of the Church being identified with the future of France, and vice-versa, Brownson challenged Louis Napoleon, the new leader of the French republic, to prove that he was more than a name by appointing men who had fixed religious and political principles so that a viable government could be established. Brownson warned Napoleon to

> Heed not the clamor of infidels and men who affect a homage for religion in general and despise all religion in particular. The Catholic portion is the only sound portion of the population of France, and is, as it was in the time of the first consul, the only portion on which any government that wishes to be strong and stable can rely for its support. If this policy is not pursued, we think the republic will be shortlived, and what will succeed we need not undertake to conjecture. 7

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6 Ibid., p. 143.

7 Ibid., p. 144.

Reiterating this same concern in a letter written to Count de Montalembert on November 5th, 1851, Brownson said that France was essentially engaged in a war between Christianity and heathenism. To complicate matters further, Brownson contended that the forces of Christianity were at a disadvantage because the state was heathen and the majority of the Catholics were veritable pagans in political and social matters. Brownson saw this to be more than obvious due to the tendency of the republican order to assert the independence and supremacy of the secular order. However, Brownson contended that Catholic statesmen had to bear their share of the blame because they had been involved in efforts to weaken the papacy, to convert the Church from a catholic to a national church, and to subject the Church to temporal power. At this point and throughout Brownson's comments on French developments, he mainly discussed nationalism from the standpoint of its hindrance to the growth of Catholicity. And this developing relationship between church and state was for Brownson the critical issue; the issue which would determine the nature of Western Christendom in the future.[8]

With this ultimate church-state issue in mind, Brownson felt that France's pre-eminent need was to establish a wise and efficient government that would be able to protect both herself and the freedom of her subjects so that she would not be prey to extremely nationalistic leaders such as Mazzini and Ledru-Rollin. France, wrote Brownson, "needs to feel that sixty years is as much time as any nation can afford to throw away in revolutions or uncertain experiments for the organization of power, and that she must

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[8]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 336.

contemplate no new revolution; that the order now established, whether the best or not the best possible, must be final, in order that an end may be put alike to criminal hopes and tuopian dreams."[9] This stability was possible, Brownson thought, if the monarchists would support the republic and co-operate with the government to restore order.

In justifying his position and comments on the situation in France, Brownson wrote:

> It may be said we have been volunteering opinions on matters which only remotely concern us, and on which we can, of course, have only imperfect information. We cannot deny that there is truth in the charge; but the opinion of a disinterested foreigner who takes a deep interest in French politics, who has no republican prejudices, although a supporter of republican government, and who looks at all political questions mainly in their bearing on religion and morals, perhaps may not be wholly without interest, nor wholly destitute of value, to French statesmen." 10

As another justification, Brownson contended that France exerted influence on all of southern and western Europe and on the United States; therefore, meriting his attention. Brownson conceived of France as the missionary nation of the world for "her doctrines have immense weight in England; they reign supreme in this country; Germany reaches us only through France, and from France we import not only our fashions, but our tastes, our principles, our ideas, our philosophy, and our literature."[11]

Because of this realization of the impact of French ideals on the American mind, Brownson's commentary on the French political scene continued. When Louis Napoleon successfully accomplished his coup d'etat, December 1,

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[9] Orestes A. Brownson, "The French Republic," 1851, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 263.

[10] Ibid., p. 271.

1851, Brownson was delivering a course of lectures to the Young Catholic Friends. Upon the arrival of the news of Louis Napoleon's coup, Brownson changed his topic to a discussion of the past and future of Louis Napoleon. In his address he said that Louis Napoleon was perhaps the most important secular sovereign in the world because he was a "purely human instrument that God appears to have used in staying for a time the torrent of socialism, and in rendering the re-establishment of order in Europe possible."[12]

However, Napoleon's regime brought fears as well as hopes for Brownson.

> I wish that the Catholics of France before consenting to inaugurate him had taken the precaution to obtain further guaranty than his simple will against civil despotism; and I think it the part of prudence of Catholics everywhere to let it be clearly understood that they do not identify the cause of Catholicity with any king or Caesar; and that they hold themselves free to commend the new French Emperor so far as he serves the cause of religion and society, and to disown him so far as he may prove hostile to them. Catholicity cannot sustain the despot any more than it can sustain the mob. 13

Brownson feared that Napoleon might turn into a despot and that as a result there would be a new social outbreak in Europe. Hence, from the outset, Brownson was acutely aware that this new position for Napoleon could lead to extreme absolutism and that this might lead to a resurgence of Gallicanism. Not only would this be harmful to the Catholic Church on the continent, but Brownson saw that it would heighten dislike of Catholicism in the United States due to the support it would give to the prevailing opinion among non-Catholics that Catholics and absolute monarchists were natural allies. But, American Catholics refused to listen to Brownson on this matter.

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[12] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 424.

[13] Ibid., p. 428.

This refusal of the American Catholics to acknowledge or recognize such possibilities served to heighten Brownson's concern. He exchanged many letters with Montalembert on the subject. Regarding immediate events as evidence that the kind of union of Church and state that Napoleon wanted could only mean domination of the Church by the state, Brownson, in his initial correspondence with Montalembert, wrote: "The Emperor is, I believe, a sincere well-wisher to the Church, but knows little about her real interests, and is exclusively devoted to his own . . . . "[14]

As events developed on the continent, Brownson saw the Caesarism of Napoleon III grow; however, he could not see that anything would be accomplished by another revolution to forestall this trend. In another letter to Montalembert in 1856, Brownson wrote:

> I want to see no more revolutions in your country, and though I do not like Caesarism any better than you do, I think the true policy of France is to abandon the Bourbons and sustain loyally the Napoleonic dynasty. . . . As much as I dislike the Imperial policy, and as little confidence as I have in the Emperor, I wish him to be sustained on the French throne as the best thing for France, Europe, and world now practicable. Accept him, sustain him. . . .Nothing remains but Bonapartism. I do not like it, but I believe it the best thing practicable within your reach. 15

At this time Napoleon had not overtly hindered the Church. As a result, Brownson felt that even though there seemed to be an indication of a growth in Caesarism, it was better to stay with the established order. At least the Church would have grounds for operation and she would not have that if the red-republicans were in control.

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[14] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, pp. 227-228.

[15] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, pp. 46-47.

By 1857 the situation had deteriorated to the point that Brownson felt it necessary to write an article on religious liberty in France. At the first of the article he gave a general description of the anticlericalism in France. He wrote that all religions, except the Catholic religion, were free to profess and defend their peculiar beliefs. Also, the irreligious press in France was free to attack the Church and the most widely circulated journals in the empire were doing it daily. Brownson considered this situation to be quite critical for all of this was occurring "under a nominally, and, as his admirers at home and abroad pretend, a practically Catholic sovereign; eulogized by men who draw on their imagination for facts as the protector and defender of Catholic interests throughout the world."[16]

Napoleon III was also persecuting Catholic journalists by such measures as his public censure of Montalembert and other journalists. Montalembert had been laboring to put his Catholic friends on guard against any alliance of Catholicism with the existing regime, as Louis Veuillot was doing with the Catholic party. Brownson felt that Montalembert's condemnation for this action was a "condemnation of freedom, a condemnation of thought, and a condemnation of intelligence in France."[17] And Brownson questioned how Catholics could be foolish enough to regard Napoleon III as the champion of Catholic interests in light of these actions.

During these events, it is important to note that Brownson did not

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[16] Orestes A. Brownson, "Religious Liberty in France," 1857, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 520.

[17] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 170.

radically alter his opinion of Napoleon III. It will be remembered that Brownson distrusted, from the first, Napoleon's personal disposition toward religious liberty, and these events only served to give credence to his attitude of distrust. Brownson had suppported Napoleon on the premise that nothing but anarchy could be accomplished by further revolution; therefore, even though the regime was not totally acceptable to Brownson he considered it to be the lesser of two evils. Brownson decided that his error was not in his evaluation of Napoleon but in his assumption that Catholic opinion would be strong enough to prevent any gross encroachments on the rights of the Church by the state. Yet, consideration must be given to the fact that public apathy existed because the Catholic press, which was the key motivator of public opinion, had been strenuously censured.

In an article written in 1859 entitled "Napoleonic Ideas," Brownson reviewed Des Idees Napoleoniennes, a book that had been written by Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte and published in 1839 in Bruxelles. Brownson discovered that this book contained both an apology for Napoleon I and an outline of the policy Louis Napoleon would follow if he were to gain power. Brownson could not help but notice that there was a total absence of moral and religious conceptions in the book and that Napoleon thought that religion and morality were to be tolerated only when they did not interfere with the state. Had he been aware of this earlier, Brownson admitted that his concern for the stability of the French government may not have played such an important role in the position he took in regards to Louis Napoleon.

During the 1850's and the Civil War years a deepening materialism and an increasing emphasis on secular matters brought about a decline in the strength and prestige of the established church in France. During these

years Brownson's remarks were mainly directed toward diplomatic relations between the United States and France, but at the end of the Civil War he began to write again on national developments in France. His thinking before and after the war was consistently oriented toward the fate of the Church in France.

This concern for the fate of the Church is also found in Brownson's comments on the Franco-Prussian War. Although he did not write an article devoted to a discussion of this war, his thoughts about it were quite clearly revealed in a letter to his son, Henry, written November 12, 1870.

> I have been disappointed in the French. I am ashamed of them. They have become a nation of braggarts, and are meeting with deserved chastisement. I do not like Prussia any better, but I like the French less. So far as Catholic interests are concerned, Alsace and Lorraine might be annexed to Prussia without damage. Catholicity in our day prospers only in non-Catholic countries. The protection of the Church by Catholic princes only enslaves her and enfeebles the faithful. 18

Brownson was convinced that the nationalistic movements in Europe had two objectives: either to stifle the Church through national control or to eliminate the Church completely. This latter aim, according to Brownson, was the core of Bismarck's policy in Prussia. "The total destruction of the Catholic Church is unquestionably the aim of Prince von Bismarck, of the Council of Geneva, of the Swiss federative council, and of the ministers of Victor Emannuel. As it is the design of the entire revolutionary or liberal party throughout the world."[19]

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[18] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 403.

[19] Orestes A. Brownson, "Bismarck and the Church," 1873, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 385.

Brownson contended that the dream of the Germans was to form an independent national church with the eventual aim of overthrowing the papacy. He saw this to be inevitable because independent national churches necessarily excluded the idea of one Catholic church with authority to teach and govern men and nations in spiritual affairs. And Brownson was alarmed that this aim was not confined to the Germans, but also seemed to be spreading throughout Italy, Austria, and Spain.[20]

However, Brownson concluded that these plans would ultimately fail, for

> "The simple fact is that the Church is not a purely human institution; man has not made her, and man cannot unmake her. If Bismarck and his allies had studied and understood history, they would know this, and know that no weapon forged against her can prosper, that his dart will barely strike the boss of her shield, and fall harmless at her feet, or rebound and pierce his own heart. 21

In substantiating this claim, Brownson warned Bismarck of the fact that Pope Pius IX was outliving his persecutors and increasing in vigor and courage. Then he asked, "Where is Palmerston? Dead. Where is Cavour? Dead. Where is Mazzini? Dead. Where is the mock-hero, Garibaldi? Worse than dead. He has outlived his prestige, and serves only to point a jest."[22]

According to Brownson, Bismarck's efforts in his war on the Pope were supported by the German scholar, Bishop Döllinger. The Döllinger rule, as Brownson understood it, assumed that the Church was to be controlled in her creedal statements by the investigations and conclusions of the learned professors of the German universities. Brownson verbally attacked this position, saying:

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[21] Ibid., p. 395.

[22] Ibid., p. 399.

> It is at best only a reproduction of rationalism, and makes no account of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth promised her, and without which infallibility is not attainable in the supernatural order. The definitions of the church, whether made by the pope in council or by the pope alone, are infallible, not by virtue of human learning, but by supernatural assistance of the Holy Ghost. 23

In a further evaluation of Döllingerism, Brownson concluded that its rejection of papal infallibility was essentially a concession to Caesarism or nationalism and, therefore, antagonistic to Catholicity. This antagonism was unavoidable, according to Brownson, for to reject the papacy was simply to make the church Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational, which in turn would lead to the nationalization of the church and its division into a thousand and one conflicting sects. Or, as Brownson so lucidly made this point:

> A church really Catholic is inconceivable without the papacy, as always believed by the Church and defined by the Council of the Vatican. Without the Pope as the source and center of authority, the Church as the kingdom of God on earth can have no unity, and without unity it can have no Catholicity. Catholicity cannot be produced by aggregation, any more than infinity can be obtained by the addition of numbers. Only that which is essentially ONE can be Catholic. 24

In fact, Brownson maintained that Döllinger's theological movement became the foundation of Bismarck's political war on the papacy because Bismarck could use it so well for his own purposes. Döllinger and a small number of his friends, according to Brownson, had conspired against the Council of the Vatican in order to prevent it from defining the infallibility

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23 Orestes A. Brownson, "The Döllingerites, Nationalists, and the Papacy," 1873, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 365.

24 Ibid., p. 358.

of the Pope and endorsing the syllabus. After discussing the various details of this issue, Brownson pointed out that the conspiracy failed because papal infallibility was proclaimed by the Holy Father, and the syllabus, as an act of the infallible Pope, was endorsed. Brownson contended that it was because of this failure of the Döllingerites that Bismarck came forward as the political leader of the movement and pitted the empire against the Church. "As a Protestant, he felt authorized to begin a campaign against the Catholic Church in favor of the modern doctrine that rejects all law, all authority above the empire - and allows only nationaly churches to exist in the empire, or churches subject to national authority. To carry out this doctrine became his fixed purpose."[25]

Catholics needed to understand Bismarck's plan to annihilate the Church, Brownson contended, so that they would not be deceived about the momentous consequences of such a plan. Thus, Brownson wrote:

> They must see that in this controversy there can be no compromise, no halting between two opinions, no neutrality. The question is one of life or death, and the issue is the church or the world. Who is on the Lord's side must be on the side of the Pope, the vicar of Christ; and whoever takes sides against the pope, or does not take sides for him, takes sides with the prince of darkness, and serves Baal, not the Lord, the devil not God, and exposes himself to the doom pronounced against the devil and his angels. 26

While writing extensively on these developments in Prussia, Brownson continued to maintain a watchful eye on the state of affairs in France. When the insurrection in Paris occurred on March 18, 1872, Brownson remarked that

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[25]Orestes Brownson, "Bismarck and the Church," The Works of Brownson, p. 387.

[26]Ibid., p. 386.

it was only the logical continuation of the revolutionary trend in France. And viewing the suppression of the Paris commune as the revolution condemning and killing itself, Brownson, consistently adhering to his position on revolution, wrote: "No government can be founded on the revolutionary principle, for that principle is destructive and can found nothing; and hence it is that every revolution is compelled to devour itself, and to be able to reconstruct and maintain political and social order, it must deny its own principle, and as far as possible undo its own work. . . ."[27]

Seeing the lack of religion to be an intrinsic part of this catastrophe in France, Brownson wrote that the men composing the government were for the most part men who had not and could not inspire the confidence of the nation for they were men without faith or solid principle. It was men of this calibre, Brownson suggested, that plunged the nation into revolutionary abyss.[28] Yet, Brownson did not consider these events of 1872 to be a unique situation for France. He contended that ever since the revolution of 1789 France had not had a government she felt bound in conscience to obey. Or, as Brownson wrote: "No government has been able to count on the national support if it became unfortunate and ceased to gratify the national pride or vanity. The principles of 1789, avowedly accepted as the basis for his government by the emperor are destructive of the very sentiment of loyalty, and deny the obligation in the conscience of the people to obey authority any longer than it suits their convenience."[29]

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[27] Orestes A. Brownson, "Recent Events in France," 1871, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 483.

[28] Ibid., p. 482.

[29] Ibid., p. 484.

As a result of this situation Brownson felt that it would be impossible to establish a secure republican government in France. In fact, he thought a republican government such as the one in the United States was impracticable in every nation in Europe except in Switzerland because it would have no basis in the interior life of the people. Consequently, Brownson wrote: "There is in Europe no political via media practicable as yet between the absolutism of Caesar and the absolutism of the people. Either Caesar is in the place of God, or the people. . . ."[30]

And in focusing his attention on the Church as it had been affected by these events, Brownson wrote:

> Worse than all else is the fact that 1789 swept away the church as a power in the state, and left the state it wished to constitute without any moral support, or power not dependent on the nation to sustain it. It threw the management of public affairs into the hands of men and parties that had no faith in God, who hated or despised religion, and believed only in themselves and the perfectibility of the species. This was the greatest evil of all. 31

Brownson contended that the nationalistic leaders throughout Europe were still seeking to keep religion in their respective dominions subject to their will. Brownson was distressed over this situation for as he viewed it,

> The power of religion to sustain authority against the insurrection and rebellion of subjects, and liberty against the tyranny of the prince, is in her being an organic power in the nation but independent of the national will, holding from God, not from the nation or its sovereign, and free to declare and apply the

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[30] Ibid., p. 484.

[31] Ibid., p. 486.

> divine law alike to prince and people. Nationalized, she has no support outside of the nation, no power not derived from it, and can give the nation only what it already has in itself. 32

The answer to France's pitiable condition and to similar conditions in other Catholic nations, Brownson said, was to train Catholics in the virtues and habits that would enable them to dispense with the external supports of society and to assert the freedom and independence Catholics enjoy in the United States. In essence, Brownson said that Catholics must be made to understand that it was not the church that needed the state, but the state that needed the church.[33]

In collecting these thoughts into a meaningful whole, Brownson developed a theory which explained why France had reached such a deplorable state by 1871. France had fallen, according to Brownson, because:

> she has been false to her mission as the leader of modern civilization because she has led it in an anti-Catholic direction, and made it weak and frivolous, corrupt and corrupting. Providence is severely punishing her, but has not, we trust, cast her off for ever. . . .When France becomes once more a really Catholic nation the revolution will be extinguished . . . .and a reaction in favor of the church will take place, so strong, and so irresistible that the whole world will be affected by it, and the nations that have so long been alienated from unity will be brought back within the fold. 34

Thus, to Brownson, nationalism was and had always been the unrelenting enemy of the Church. However, Brownson realized that a degree of nationalism was desirable, such as preference for one's own country and family. He did not think that these characteristics were contrary to the principles of

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[32] Ibid., p. 487.

[33] Ibid., p. 499.

[34] Ibid., p. 501.

Catholicism. In fact, Brownson contended that these positive characteristics of nationalism already existed within Catholicity in the United States.[35]

Professor Ross Hoffman commented on these contentions of Brownson's in his article, "The American Republic and Western Christendom,"

> The Republic and the Church were his Brownson's great loves, and he believed that just as it was the mission of the Church to incorporate all mankind in one divinely appointed communion, so was it the destiny of the American Republic to fulfill in the political order those conditions requisite to the completion of that divine mission. 36

A more complete explanation of these views is found in Brownson's book, The American Republic. Written the year after the Civil War, Brownson reviewed the past years and concluded that the essential cause of the war had been the corrupting and degrading tendency toward vulgarism in American democracy. He thought that Jacksonian democracy was contrary to the ideals of the American constitution which, he wrote "is democratic in the sense that the people are sovereign. . . .but they are the people territorially constituted." This "territorial democracy" had been threatened by what he called "humanitarian democracy"; namely, the democracy of abolitionist radicals who were the counterpart of the Mazzinian revolutionary sects in Europe. But, Brownson thought that "in spite of all that had been done by theorists, radicals, and revolutionists. . . .to corrupt the American people in mind, heart and body, the native vigor of

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[35] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 577.

[36] Ross Hoffman, "The American Republic and Western Christendom," Catholic Historical Records and Studies, XXXV (1946), p. 7.

[37] Ibid., p. 12.

their national constitution has enabled them to come forth triumphant from the trial."[38]

The American Republic also lucidly demonstrates that Brownson was vividly conscious of the unity of Western civilization and that he believed that the American republic had been appointed by God to advance it. He urged the United States to maintain "the rank of a first class military and maritime power, and take a leading part in political movements of the civilized world, and to a great extent, hold in her hand the peace of Europe."[39] But Brownson never conceived of a community of European Atlantic states as a "great republic" for, as will be remembered, he regarded all European political constitutions and governments to be imperfect and corrupt. Believing the American constitution to be perfect caused Brownson to believe that the expansion of this perfect political form was the mission and destiny of the United States. And if this pattern were adopted as the final solution in thwarting the growth of nationalism and red-republicanism in Europe, Americans would have to accept the moral restraints of Catholicism in order to preserve their own institutions which embodied the Christian ideals of justice and equity.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., p. 13.

Chapter VII

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS FROM A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Brownson's catholicity caused him to be vitally concerned with a wide variety of the cultural endeavors of Western man, particularly as they related directly to the growth of the Catholic Church. Other than the effect that the growth of nationalism and socialism was having on the Church, as presented in earlier chapters, Brownson's discussion of European cultural developments of the mid-nineteenth century were devoted largely to the Oxford movement in England, the latest educational trends, the momentous discoveries of the natural scientists, and the relationship of literature to the teachings of the Church.

Ten years before Brownson's conversion, John Henry Newman began to publish Tracts for the Times. This publication launched what came to be known as the Oxford Movement, or the Tractarian movement, in England. Newman was the leader of this movement organized to "catholicize" the Church of England. And Newman and his followers drew vehement Protestant opposition. In 1841 when Newman wrote "Tract 90" the Protestant protest became

so strong that Newman was forced to reconsider whether or not Catholicism and Anglicanism were compatible. After retiring to a semi-monastic life his speculations led him to the conclusion that the Catholic Church was the true church of the New Testament. However, he saw that changes had occurred within the Church which somewhat modified the church of the New Testament.

To clarify his thinking on this matter, Newman wrote an article entitled "Essay On The Development of Christian Doctrine." In working out his thoughts on paper he came to the conclusion that the Catholic Church had grown, like a living organism, in a regular pattern. With this as the premise which allowed him to reconcile Catholic dogma with Catholic doctrine, on October 9, 1845, just a few months after Brownson's conversion, Newman joined the Catholic Church. In so doing he became one of a despised minority outside the mainstream of English national life.

Newman's "Essay On The Development of Christian Doctrine" was given to Brownson shortly after his conversion. After careful study, Brownson concluded that Newman's theory was false and inconsistent with Catholicism. A discussion of this conclusion with various Catholic prelates led Bishop Fitzpatrick and several others to urge Brownson to refute Newman's thesis. Brownson published his first article attacking Newman's theory in his July, 1846 issue of the Brownson Quarterly Review.[1] With this article Brownson established a pattern he was to follow for the rest of his life, for it was largely through the medium of literary criticism

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[1] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, pp. 34-35.

that Brownson's thoughts on current issues were revealed.

In this article Brownson concluded that Newman had written his essay in order to solve the problem of how to explain, in accordance with Christian truth, the variations or differences of doctrine and discipline which the Roman Catholic Church then promulgated from the doctrine and discipline of the primitive church. Brownson could sympathize with Newman's problem, but he could not agree with his solution.[2] And the fact that this developmental theory was humanly devised caused Brownson to question it on authoritative grounds as well. Also, Brownson considered the theory to be unscientific and paralogistic in its establishment of the criteria upon which development was to be distinguished from corruption; in its establishment of the probability a priori of the development of Christianity; and, in its attempt to establish its own proof through elaborate historical application of the theory to the successive ages of the Church.[3]

Brownson further argued that Newman, in undertaking this enterprise, neglected to distinguish in his own mind between Christian doctrine, which Brownson considered to be divine revelation; Christian theology, which differed from the former in that it was merely what the church taught about divine revelation; and Christian discipline, which is further distinguished as merely the speculation of the individual church fathers and doctors. The failure to distinguish between these three categories of Catholic dogma Brownson saw to be Newman's cardinal error.[4]

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[2] Orestes A. Brownson, "Newman's Development of Christian Doctrine," 1846, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 5.

[3] Ibid., p. 6.

[4] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

An essential part of Catholic doctrine, Brownson related, was that "revelation made to and through the apostles was an explicit and perfect revelation of the whole of Christian faith. . . .and that this revelation was explicitly and completely delivered over by the apostles to their successors and has been at all time explicitly held and believed by the church."[5] Consequently, Brownson maintained that if Newman held to the developmental theory he was saying that original revelation was imperfect, inchoate, and contained gaps to be counterbalanced by the uninspired action of the human mind. Concomitantly, Brownson contended that the developmental theory would of necessity have to agree that Christian doctrine was not revealed fact, but man's idea of it; and, in so doing would be reducing Christianity to the level of human philosophy.[6]

The logic of this argument led Brownson to the conclusion that Newman's theory was essentially anti-Catholic. "It is not only not necessary to the defence of the Church, but is utterly repugnant to her claims to be the authoritative and infallible Church of God."[7]

This theoretical disagreement could have been solved personally with Newman, Brownson contended, had it not already been publicly acclaimed as a Catholic work. Brownson recognized that when the essay was written Newman did not profess to be a Catholic, but merely wrote for private reasons. However, the public did not recognize this, therefore, Brownson felt "compelled to inquire whether it is or is not compatible with Catholicity,

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[5] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Dublin Review and Ourselves," 1848, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 117.

[6] Ibid., p. 118.

[7] Orestes Brownson, "Newman's Development of Christian Doctrine," The Works

for we cannot use an argument for Catholicity which involves the denial of Catholicity."[8]

And in further justification of his attack, in a letter on the same subject to the Archbishop of Westminster, Brownson wrote:

> . . . .We do not think it immediately dangerous enough to demand the official interposition of authority, especially in England, where we presume importance is attached only to the element of truth which all concede that it contains; but we did think, and so did a large number of our illustrious prelates, that some Catholic writer should undertake to refute it, and set the faithful on their guard against it, especially here, where its error was the only thing practically important, and favoring, as it could not fail to do with us, the dominant heresy of the age. 9

In another personal letter dated September 29, 1847, to W.G. Ward, a defender of Newman, Brownson reiterated his position in regard to Newman's theory and added the basic reason for his opposition to it. "If the Church tells of changing her doctrines she then confesses her own fallibility, abdicates her throne as the church of God, and you need no theory, for none can save her."[10]

In all of these articles and letters, Brownson in no way personally attacked Newman. In fact, in an article in a 1848 issue of his Review entitled "Doctrinal Developments," Brownson publicly announced that it would be an injustice to Newman and his friends to credit them with the whole responsibility for this unsound and uncatholic theory, for it had been floating about in the minds and writings of some Catholics for several years. Thus

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[8]Orestes A. Brownson, "Doctrinal Developments," 1848, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIV. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 127.

[9]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 390.

[10]Ibid., p. 54.

the publishing of Newman's essay merely brought the matter to a head and placed the theory squarely before the Catholic public.[11]

When this controversy subsided Brownson did not lose interest in Newman. In fact, he had been quite sympathetic with Newman's intellectual and spiritual plight and at various times stated that he had once held the same ideas. Therefore, after the charges and countercharges became less heated, they managed to find occasion for mutual praise. Brownson described Newman as a clear and acute thinker and a choice and exact writer. Newman thought highly of Brownson's competence as a logician and a scholar. When Newman was appointed the Rector of New Catholic University in Dublin, in 1853, he invited Brownson, by letter, to accept one of the chairs in his university.[12]

While seriously considering this flattering offer, Brownson wrote an article in his Review which eventually made it impossible for him to accept Newman's offer. This article on the Know-Nothing movement included what Brownson conceived of as a just treatment of the Irish Catholics (see Chapter 2); however, it caused such an uproar in the Catholic hierarchy in the United States and in Ireland that the prelate in Dublin advised Newman to ask Brownson to postpone his visit. Theodore Maynard, a biographer of Brownson, considers this to be quite unfortunate, for Brownson could have had access to a great number of Catholic libraries and materials and it would have been an invaluable experience for him considering his foreign interests. Yet, Maynard added: "his whole work lay in America, and if he studied European politics it was only to apply its lessons to conditions at home. . . .and all

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[11] Orestes Brownson, "Doctrinal Developments," The Works of Brownson, p. 140.

[12] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 125.

the more firmly because of this set back he was fastened to his distinctly American vocation."[13]

In studying Brownson and his concern with European affairs, this writer would contend that Brownson's vocation did entail a deep concern for America, but that it was not limited to this narrow scope. As evidenced in the material presented in these chapters, Brownson attempted to place his American interests in their proper perspective through his consideration of the Western world in general and the future of the Catholic Church in Western Christendom in particular. Brownson's vision was not so provincial as to presume that a proper perspective for the future could be held on the basis of an understanding of the events in one country. Thus, his own catholicity of thought greatly contributed to his understanding of the very nature of Catholicism in the Western world.

It is from this consistent perspective that Brownson returned to criticize Newman many years later, in 1875. The issue at hand was the question of papal infallibility - a very popular topic of discussion in the 1870s. Brownson appreciated the fact that Newman supported papal infallibility, but criticized him for laboring to show that the Pope rarely interfered with the affairs of the Church or made his power felt in temporal matters. Brownson thought that Newman was attempting to keep the Pope in the background; and, in so doing, was justifying his position more on a personal basis than from a truly Catholic point of view. Brownson warned Newman of the danger of this, in that it gave the people the impression that what Newman said was synonymous with Church policy when it was not.[14] Again,

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[13] Maynard, Orestes Brownson, p. 209.

[14] Orestes Brownson, "Newman's Reply to Gladstone," 1875, The Works of Orestes

Brownson's interest in true representations of Catholicity was evident.

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Newman's involvement with establishing a Catholic university in Ireland had greatly interested Brownson. And as a Catholic he became quite concerned over the question of whether the responsibility for educating the youth belonged to the church, as Newman contended, or to the state. In considering this issue, Brownson did not limit his interest in the subject as it concerned American Catholicism, but was interested in viewing the issue from the standpoint of all of Western Christendom.

Some of Brownson's earliest comments on education can be found in an article in his Review in 1852. In this article Brownson reviewed a book by Abbé Gaume entitled Le Ver Rongeur des Sociétés Modernes, ou le Paganisme dans l'Education. The subject of Abbé Gaume's book was the deplorable amount of paganism in the schools of his day. Brownson shared Gaume's dismay over this situation, but contended that outright secularism in the schools was not unique to those institutions but was, properly considered, a reflection of the materialism that was so prevalent in Western society. To this contention Brownson added the comment that this secularism had been especially strong in modern Europe for the last four centuries with the consequence of the modern generation growing up with heathen notions which led them to a personal devotion to things of this world.[15]

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[15]Orestes A. Brownson, "Paganism in Education," 1852, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. X. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 551.

Brownson agreed fully with Gaume's contention that the cause of this secularism in the schools was the use of irreligious books; however, Brownson did not think that this was the sole reason. Brownson tended to think that this situation was merely an outgrowth of societal conditions. Therefore Brownson believed that the prevalence of scepticism in society in general would have to be curbed before the situation in the schools could be remedied.[16]

In this same article, Brownson pointed out that education was a vital function of the Church, but he warned Catholics not to assume that the educational endeavors undertaken by the Church would be infallible. In fact, Brownson admonished the faithful to realize that the educational projects of the Church could fail even when the quality of the education furnished and those who furnished it were beyond question. The reasons for this, as Brownson saw it, were the innate differences in man and the free will of the individuals being educated. In addition to this Brownson contended that it was the corrupt nature of the individual that was at the root of materialism; and, therefore, instruction alone could not handle this situation. To Brownson nothing but God's grace could change this corrupt nature of man. Consequently, Brownson wrote that man must not rely on himself or humanly devised schemes to halt heathenism, but must rely on God and through prayer and devotion cooperate with Him.[17]

Two years later in an article entitled "School and Education," Brownson commented further on the state of education on the continent in contrast

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[16] Ibid., p. 552.

[17] Ibid., pp. 555, 562.

to education in Great Britain and the United States. He noted that there was such a glaring difference between the predominantly classical lessons of the professors and the continental political and social order under which the pupils had to live that the youth were becoming dissatisfied with the established order and were beginning to consider rebellion. This reaction, Brownson pointed out, was of an opposite nature in Great Britain and the United States because the established order in these countries already provided more liberty than revealed in the ancient classics, making rebellion unnecessary.[18]

In considering the current debate over the merits of parochial as opposed to private schools, Brownson did find that the European system of education, in general, had an advantage over the schools in the United States in that they established schools for Catholics under Catholic superintendence; and, likewise, the same policy was true for Protestants. This policy, Brownson maintained, allowed for religious differences; whereas, no allowances were made for such in the common schools of the United States. Yet, Brownson contended that this situation was not overwhelmingly injurious to the child because the child still had Church classes for religious instruction.[19]

In fact, the unique advantage of the common schools of the United States, Brownson maintained, was that they provided the foundation for cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. Therefore, from the standpoint of societal living, Brownson urged Catholics to give their children a good secular

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[18] Orestes A. Brownson, "Schools and Education," 1854, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. X. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 564.

[19] Ibid., p. 576.

education. This did not mean, Brownson added, that one should neglect religious education, for to Brownson it was the religious education that gave secular education meaning and value. Consequently, Brownson wrote: "Our children know beforehand that the common schools are under Protestant influences and that the teachers are for the most part non-Catholic. They are therefore forewarned to distrust whatever they find in these schools, or hear said by these teachers, on the subject of religion."[20]

At this stage in the development of the public education system in the United States, Brownson only had two objections to the common school system. He did not think that the state should have the right to tax for support of education because he felt that education was the duty of the parents not the state. And his other objection was that education was increasingly becoming a part of state and federal bureaucracies which, according to Brownson, allowed for too much government meddling. He also considered this to be one of the basic faults in the Prussian system of education.[21]

As a result of these statements, particularly those about the merit of a secular education, Brownson was accused, by the Archbishop of Cincinnati, of taking a "non-Catholic ground."[22] Brownson responded to this accusation in an article entitled "Public and Parochial Schools." In this article he said that he recognized the authority of the Church over the subject of education in respect to all that pertains to the moral and religious training of Catholics in any nation; but, Brownson added, in purely secular

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[20] Ibid., pp. 579-584.

[21] Ibid., p. 573.

[22] Orestes A. Brownson, "Public and Parochial Schools," 1859, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 200.

education one should have the right to educate his children as he judged best.[23]

Continuing on this same subject, Brownson felt that it was perfectly acceptable for the church to establish separate schools to instruct in both religious and secular matters. However, if these parochial schools were established with the intention of denationalizing the American Catholic, keeping Catholics as foreigners in the United States, or attempting to keep Catholics in the United States linked with "an old effete Europeanism which has always, whenever it has existed, been a drag on it, and which all that is true, good, generous, and noble in our American political and social order repudiates," Brownson wanted no part of it.[24]

In fact, Brownson told Catholics that they should have learned a lesson from the Know-Nothing movement and should do something to correct their errors which had helped to provoke this movement. And, Brownson contended, one way to do this would be through the common schools because they helped to tear down the walls of separation between Catholics and non-Catholics in a community.[25]

Being preoccupied with the political and diplomatic scene during the Civil War years, Brownson's commentary on the educational issues of the day diminished. However, shortly after the war ended he began writing on the subject again, particularly in light of the developments in education which had occurred during the war years. There had been a distinct trend toward

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[23] Ibid., p. 203.

[24] Ibid., p. 204.

[25] Ibid.

secularism in the schools. Brownson felt that this would radically alter the nature of the common schools as they had existed in the United States, for "to exclude from schools all that is distinctive or peculiar in Catholicity, is simply to exclude Catholicity itself, and to make the schools either purely Protestant or purely secular, and therefore hostile to our religion, and as such we cannot in conscience support it."[26]

Thus, Brownson's basic contention was that education divorced from faith and religious discipline was dangerous to both the individual and to society. In keeping with this sentiment, in 1870, the year of the Vatican Council, Brownson wrote: All education should be essentially religious, and intended to train the child for a religious end; not for this life only; but for eternal life; for this life is nothing if severed from that which is to come."[27]

Again warning of the danger to society if religion were to be divorced from education, Brownson attempted to substantiate his argument by illustrating that there was no comparison between the illiterate classes of Catholic nations and the corresponding classes of Protestant nations. He wrote:

> There is no comparison in personal dignity, manliness, self-respect, courtesy of manners, refined feeling, and delicate sentiment, between an unlettered Italina, French, Spanish, or Irish peasant, and an unlettered Protestant German, Englishman, or American. The one is a cultivated, a civilized man; the other is a boor, a clown, coarse and brutal, who perpetually mistakes impudence for independence, and who proves his self-respect by his indifference or insults to others. 28

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[26] Orestes A. Brownson, "The School Question," 1870, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 244-245.

[27] Ibid., p. 246.

These differences were not due to race, Brownson wrote, but to religious education and a religious culture.

Another development in education that Brownson considered to be quite dangerous was discussed in an article written in 1871 entitled "Unification and Education." This was written in response to an article written by Sen. Henry M. Wilson (R-Mass) in The Atlantic Monthly entitled "New Departure of the Republican Party." Wilson had proposed that consolidation of all powers of government and religious and social unification of the American people could be achieved by means of a system of universal and uniform compulsory education, adopted and enforced by the authority of the united or consolidated states. Brownson was vehemently opposed to this on the grounds that it violated the division of powers provided for in the Constitution, as well as violated the rights of parents and annihilated the religious liberty secured by the Constitution and the laws of the states. Again, Brownson pointed out that his primary objection was not political, rather he feared that this proposal would eliminate the moral and spiritual end of education. Concomitantly, Brownsan adhered to his view that the Church must have some direction or control over education and that the states' function was merely to support education, not control it.[29]

Three years later, Brownson made another observation about this increasingly secular trend in education. Very unhappily, Brownson found that the underlying principle of education in the Western world had come to be the very principle which he felt had undergirded the modern revolutionary

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[29] Orestes A. Brownson, "Unification and Education," 1871, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 284-285.

and social reform movements - this principle being "the natural perfectibility of man; and of his progressiveness by his own natural forces."[30]

As an ardent Catholic, this principle was completely repugnant to Brownson because an essential element of Catholic doctrine was that man could not rely on himself for his own perfectibility, but that betterment was achieved only through the grace of Christ. Consequently, to Brownson's mind, only an education based on the supernatural principle of Christianity could aid an individual in this goal. And Brownson pointed out that it was because of this very understanding that the Pope and the whole Catholic hierarchy formally rejected the educational system then in vogue.[31]

An indication of the consistency of Brownson's thought in this matter is seen in this same article. In it he reiterated his contention of twenty five years earlier that the secular emphasis in the schools existed as a result of its acceptance by a materialistic society. Brownson was dismayed over the fact that the history of Greece and Rome had not taught modern man of the impotence of a culture devoted merely to the intellect and aesthetic culture.[32] In fact, Brownson was quite concerned that the pagan classics were still the bases of the curriculum in all schools, including Catholic schools, throughout the Western world. And Brownson was quite distressed when he found that "Catholic young men graduate with a pagan substructure, merely varnished over or veneered with Catholicity, which a little contact with the world soon wears off."[33]

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[30] Orestes A. Brownson, "Education and the Republic," 1874, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 447.

[31] Ibid., p. 448.

[32] Ibid.

Also of concern to Brownson was the evidence that under the system of education in Catholic colleges the educated classes in all Catholic nations had become infidels, Gallicans, or revolutionaries. Even such anti-Catholic leaders like Cavour of Italy and Castelar of Spain were trained in Catholic schools and colleges. To Brownson this only reinforced his contention that education in itself had no reforming or progressive power; but, instead, only perpetuated the errors and the truths of the generation that educates.[34]

Consequently, Brownson felt that the only way to remedy this situation was to eliminate the emphasis on materialism in society and then eliminate it from the schools and replace it with a thoroughly Catholic education. This remedy was not to be limited to Europe, but was also to be the only way to save "our daily deteriorating republic." And, especially to save it by and for the prosperity of Catholicism. For, Brownson added:

> We believe that this country will yet be converted. Catholicity has the right to it, for it was first discovered by the Catholics, and taken possession of in the name of the cross. But our reliance for its conversion is on missions and the missionary orders, who strengthen the faithful, quicken their zeal, and recall them to duties. 35

Thus, Brownson's ideas on education developed in a pattern identical to that of his political and social concerns. He began from the standpoint of education in relation to the Church, and developed his ideas along these lines consistently. Yet, he adapted these ideas to the fluctuating current trends without changing his basic theme - that religion should not be di-

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[34] Ibid., pp. 455-458.

[35] Ibid., p. 461.

vorced from education, but should give meaning to secular studies. In his discussion of the educational trends of the mid-nineteenth century from the standpoint of Western Christendom, Brownson pointed out situations unique both the continent and the United States, as well as any similarities. Then, as with other subjects discussed, he developed his projections for the future based on his over-arching theory of the mission of the Catholic Church of the United States as Saviour of Christianity in the Western world.

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Over these same decades major controversies developed in the sciences, especially in the form of the theories of physical and biological evolution. Brownson, who loved logical debate and never shied away from controversy, delighted in challenging the theories advanced by Charles Darwin, Sir Charles Lyell, and Herbert Spencer. And, as in all other matters discussed, he approached these scientific theories not only from an intellectual interest per se but from the standpoint of their relationship to the teachings and the future of the Catholic Church.

Generally speaking, Brownson was opposed to scientists who sought to explain the origin of things without the recognition either of one God or of His creative act. In an article entitled "Philosophy of the Supernatural," Brownson outlined the following premise upon which he operated in criticizing these natural scientists:

> The world is not eternal; for what is eternal is one and immutable, and cannot of itself change in either substance

> or in form. Yet the world is multiple and constantly changing. All things change their form at least under the very eye of the spectator. There is no change without motion, and there is not motion without a first mover itself immovable; for an infinite series is an infinite absurdity. . . .The change must have a beginning, which must be the effect of a cause independent of itself. 36

Operating on this premise, in a discussion of "Science and the Sciences" Brownson wrote that the works of Sir Charles Lyell on the Antiquity of Man and Darwin's Origin of the Species show the deterioration of science. And, according to Brownson the same thing was true of Louis Agassiz's essay On Classification. Brownson did not denounce these men as enemies of religion, but merely proceeded to inform them that they would never achieve their ends because science separated from revelation and reason separated from faith could never flourish. In fact, Brownson contended that as such it could only result in gross materialism and pure selfishness, as already evidenced in the United States and Great Britain.[37]

With this understanding of Brownson's position let us examine his statements about Charles Darwin. In an article written in 1873 entitled "Darwin's Descent of Man," Brownson began his discussion by saying that although Darwin had accumulated a vast amount of facts he had in no way demonstrated that he employed the simplest elements of logical understanding in his use of these facts. To add to this, Brownson charged that Darwin apparently had no conception of what a proof was for he did not reduce facts to their principles,

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[36] Orestes A. Brownson, "Philosophy of the Supernatural," 1854, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. II. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 279.

[37] Orestes A. Brownson, "Science and the Sciences," 1863, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. II. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 266-267.

but only looked at them in the light of his own theories. Thus, Brownson concluded that Darwin "patient as an observer, is utterly imbecile as a scientific reasoner."[38]

Not only was Brownson critical of Darwin's ability as a logician, but he also charged that Darwin overlooked the fact that his theory denied the doctrine of the creation and the immutability of the species as taught in Genesis. But Brownson pointed out that in so doing Darwin did not disprove Genesis either, for to do that he would have to prove beyond question that his theory was true. And this was something which Darwin had not done, according to Brownson.[39]

In support of this statement that Darwin had not proved his theory, Brownson proposed a theory which he considered to be just as plausible and therefore as valid as Darwin's. In an article written in 1870 entitled "Hereditary Genius" Brownson countered Darwin's theory of savagery as the state of primeval man by saying that savagery was really the state of degenerate man and that:

> It is not improbable that the African-negro is the degenerate descendant of a once over civilized race, and that he owes his physical peculiarities to the fact that he has become subject, like the animal world, to the laws of nature, which are resisted and modified in their action by the superior races. 40

Brownson was not issuing this as his theory. He was merely trying to point out that this argument could accrue as much logical proof as Darwin's and that similarly to Darwin's theory it could not be proven beyond question.

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[38] Orestes A. Brownson, "Darwin's Descent of Man," 1873, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. IX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 492.

[39] Ibid.

[40] [illegible] "Hereditary Genius," 1870, The Works of Orestes A.

Yet, Brownson maintained that he did not reject Darwinism because of this shortcoming or because it directly denied the creative act of God. He rejected it because it assumed that species could originate and develop without "any created germ from which they are developed." To Brownson neither evolution nor development could operate without something to operate upon which he thought would necessarily be "the germs deposited in the matter created."[41] Seven years earlier Brownson had said that he had no quarrel with developmentists as long as they did not deny the conditions without which there could be no development; and, as is obvious, his quarrel at this point was consistent with this initial position.

In speaking about evolutionary scientists in general, Brownson wrote that they pretended to prove by their science that God is the unknowable, not that there is no God. But, Brownson concluded that they had only proved that God is incomprehensible, not that we cannot know that He is. Thus, to Brownson, they had not achieved their end, just as he had predicted.[42]

In turning to the geological controversies of the day, Brownson wrote that the theories of the geologists were not absolutely false, but that the facts and reasoning used to substantiate their theories had failed. Brownson saw this to be the case because the few facts that were known could easily be seen in a different light when more facts became known; and, as in evolution, Brownson contended that there were any number of other hypotheses which would equally explain the facts that were known.[43]

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[41] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Conflict of Science and Religion," 1875, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. IX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 559.

[42] Ibid., p. 552.

[43] Orestes Brownson, "Hereditary Genius," The Works of Brownson, p. 405.

Likewise, as in evolution, Brownson contended that the geologist Sir Charles Lyell had not accomplished anything for he had not proved that the earth and man had not been created. In fact, Brownson maintained that the only thing Lyell could claim was that the chronology of the Bible was disproved. Brownson viewed this as inconsequential because he did not know of any Christian doctrine or dogma that would be affected by carrying the date of creation back centuries. Admitting that the numbers in the Bible could easily have been miscopied in transcription, Brownson maintained that faith did not depend on arithmetic.[44]

Thus, Brownson did not see any essential conflict between geological facts and Genesis. And to add to this belief, Brownson wrote: "We are told that the earth was at first without form and void; that is it was not created in its complete or perfect state, but only in its principle elements, which gives room for its development and completion by the agency of second causes."[45] Yet, Brownson reminded his readers that the original principle must direct and limit this secondary development. However, there would still be room for all the changes and variations geology demonstrated that the earth had undergone.

And in a statement which could be termed as characteristic of Brownson's opinion of the geological developments of the nineteenth century, he wrote:

> For ourselves personally, we think geological science is as yet too recent and too imperfect for full confidence to be placed in its inductions and theories, but we see on objec-

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[44]Orestes A. Brownson, "Faith and Science," 1867, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. IX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 277.

[45]Orestes Brownson, "The Conflict of Religion and Science," The Works of Brownson, p. 555.

> tion on the side of faith to giving geologists as long a series of ages as he can ask for to explain the phenomena he discovers. . . .We are not aware that the church has ever decided that the exact age of the world is a matter of revelation, or decided authoritatively how many centuries have elapsed since the creation. [46]

In many of the same articles mentioned in relation to Brownson's comments on Darwin and Lyell, one finds a great deal of material devoted to Herbert Spencer. The following is an attempt to present the essential points of disagreement Brownson raised against Spencer, points which he would refer to again and again.

Brownson contended that Herbert Spencer completely misapprehended the relationship of religion and science. "He says they are the poles of one and the same globe. This is a mistake. Religion and science are indeed parts of one whole; but religion, while it includes science, supplements it by the analogical knowledge called faith."[47]

Though this misapprehension is quite serious in Spencer's epistemological stance, it is not Brownson's primary objection to Spencer. Brown- objected to Spencer because he denied creation, or a creator distinct from the cosmos.[48] Yet, Spencer and Fiske, his disciple, denied that they were atheists on the grounds that they recognized a real and substantial cosmos that appears in the cosmic phenomena, and that this reality may be called God or nature. Brownson regarded this denial of atheism to be ridiculous, for to him "a clearer and more decided avowal of atheism would be impossible to make," because Brownson understood atheism to mean the identification

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[46] Orestes A. Brownson, "Faith and Theology," 1863, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. VIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 17.

[47] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Cosmic Philosophy," 1872, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. IX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966.

of God with the cosmos.[49] Thus, it is clear that already, shortly before his death, Brownson was rejecting what already was becoming known as Spencerianism in social and economic thought and had he lived longer he undoubtedly would have fought against its acceptance and growth in the United States.

In conclusion, to Brownson there were no physical facts, either in the evolutionary or geological sciences, that contradicted or in the slightest degree impunged Christian theism. "The latest and the ablest representatives of the atheistical science of the age are the Positivists and the Cosmists and neither can demonstrate their science has demonstrated or can demonstrate that God is not."[50]

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It was largely through the medium of literary criticism that Brownson's views on science, religion, education, and current affairs were made public. In a period of over forty years Brownson reviewed over five hundred books by American and European authors. In these reviews his analyses and criticisms generally occassioned the formulation of his own views.

During his years as a Catholic convert, Brownson maintained a keen interest in continental literature for itself and at times concentrated on

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[49] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Conflict of Science and Religion," The Works of Brownson, p. 558.

[50] Orestes A. Brownson, "Essays in Refutation of Atheism," 1873-1874, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. II. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 10.

evaluating the work of the author being reviewed. And, in so doing, he admitted that this was probably the most difficult of all his tasks for there was no recognized standard by which to judge literary works. Therefore, quite predictably, he established religion as the standard for literary criticism, as expressed so well by Americo Lapati:

> In doctrinal matters, the standard is furnished by his Catholic faith and morals; in matters of style, by a philosophy of art based on a Christian interpretation of the nature of the world as being the handiwork of God's creation. . . .In all his literary reviews Brownson adopts as his standard of criticism the subjects, doctrines, principles, or tendencies of the books, rather than the books themselves as mere literary productions. 51

In reviewing the works of French writers, he did not consider as justified the charges of indecency and licentiousness that the American critics had made concerning all French literature. In reference to particular writers, Brownson valued Balzac's ability to portray the vices and corruptions of society, but he was dismayed over the fact that Balzac did not cause the reader to want to better the existing situation.[52]

In reviewing the works of Victor Hugo, Brownson had no sympathy for Hugo's style because it ran contrary to the Christian philosophy of art. And though he felt Alexandre Dumas' works to be inferior to those of both Hugo and Balzac, he felt they were of value for they were more in keeping with the Christian spirit. Likewise, he had a high opinion of George Sands for she also nourished the Christian hope of aspiring to something better.[53]

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[51] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 110.

[52] Ibid., p. 121.

[53] Orestes A. Brownson, "Modern French Literature," 1842, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. pp. 55-57.

In contrast to these great writers, Brownson did note that there was a popular literature in France that was highly irreligious, immoral, and cynical. Because of the wide circulation of this type of literature it had to have Catholic subscribers. Consequently, Brownson accused the French of thinking that they could be Catholic and atheistic at the same time. Yet, he did not see any semblance of such a situation in Germany. In modern Germany he found a literature with "a clear and piercing voice to utter for the poor, the friendless, and the down-trodden."[54] And, Brownson classified German Catholic literature as the most solid, erudite, and vigorous in modern times.[55] In Italy, however, this bold and vigorous quality present in the German literature was lacking. Here, "although learned and able, the writers move as men in chains." Brownson surmised that this was a result of the trend to connect any publication as a semi-official view of the Catholic church.[56]

In Brownson's opinion English literature had surpassed all modern nations in its genuineness of imagination. This, he thought, was particularly true when she was a Catholic nations. Now that she was Protestant she still surpassed the continental literature, but Brownson concluded that she was following the lot of all Protestant nations whose "epic is one long monotonous plaint of woe, or unearthly howl of despair,"[57] such as in the works of Milton and Byron.

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[54] Orestes A. Brownson, "American Literature," 1839, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 33.

[55] Orestes A. Brownson, "Etudres de Theologie," 1860, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 472.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Orestes A. Brownson, "Religious Novels," 1847, The Works of Orestes A.

Brownson did praise Wordsworth's poetical genius; however, as one might surmise, he took issue with Wordsworth's pantheism.

> His description of nature, although very true and the result of careful observation, fail to illustrate any truth, teach any lesson - all due to a false theory that the ideal which the artist must seek to realize in forms of his own creation is in the mind itself, and is projected from the soul instead of being apprehended by it. 58

It appears that Brownson was more familiar with Thomas Carlyle than with any other English author. He considered him "a thorough master of language." He acknowledged Carlyle's effort as a historian "to give the most conscientious desire of seeing things exactly as they are, and describing them with scrupulous truth," but felt that Carlyle's tendency to hero worship caused him to equate history with biography. And an even graver error, Brownson thought, was that Carlyle often reduced the supernatural to the natural.[59]

In contrast to these nations discussed, Brownson felt that the Irish would have a glorious literary future, producing the richest and purest Catholic literature the world would know. Of course, this would only be the case if in their current struggle for freedom they did not lose their faith in their loyalty to their own homeland.[60]

In comparison to these predictions of the greatness of Irish Catholic literature, Brownson could not see any such future for American Catholic literature. Since the majority of the American Catholics were illiterate

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[58] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, p. 124.

[59] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Catholic Press," 1849, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XIX. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 247.

[60] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 122-123.

laborers, Brownson felt that there was not a literary public large enough in America to give adequate encouragement to Catholic authors. Concomitantly, he contended that the general feeling of Protestants toward Catholics did not favor recognition of Catholic literary endeavors in the United States. Yet, he did think that Catholics would make an increasing contribution to American national literature and he hoped that this contribution would be in the mode of cultivating, refining, and humanizing the still barbarous nature of at least parts of the American character, as well as removing obstacles to the progress of Catholic civilization in general. He thought this could be done by such things as presenting the Christian view of marriage, in contrast to the popular love romances; and, in reducing the rebellious spirit present in much of the popular literature.[61]

Although Brownson greatly admired the American literary giants of his day, and particularly praised Ralph Waldo Emerson as the literary genius par excellence, he did not think that these men, with the exception of Walt Whitman, could be classified as truly American authors. In Brownson's opinion the works of Emerson, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James F. Cooper, and Washington Irving reflected the philosophical trends of Europe instead of reflecting the cultural ideals of Americans. And, Brownson also contended that these men consciously endeavored to develop the Romantic style of the continental writers so as to be accepted as their equals stylistically. Consequently, it was Brownson's hope that it would be American

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[61] Lapati, Orestes Brownson, pp. 118-119.

Catholics that would inaugurate a peculiarly American theme and style in their literature; and, thus, make a valuable contribution in the preparation and continuance of the American mission in the Western world. Therefore, the "golden age" of Catholic literature was to be in the future . Though Brownson did not see the United States as the literary leader of this golden age, he did feel that Americans would contribute substantially to a literature that would be in keeping with the same Christian principles that in the political realm would preserve Western Christendom.

Chapter VIII

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN INTERACTION: IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY AND IN THE FUTURE

In an article written on Orestes Brownson in American Classics Reconsidered: A Christian Appraisal one finds the following statement which gives a concise picture of Brownson's vast span of interest: "For the student of nineteenth century thought who wishes to explore cultural filiations beyond national boundaries, Brownson is a valuable mediator between Europe and an America that was just arriving at its own social,political, and literary maturity."[1]

As this paper has indicated Brownson's works contain a great deal of material that would substantiate this claim as applied to Brownson's life from his conversion to his death. As early as 1848 it is noted that in a letter to Dr. Cummings that Brownson was to deliver a series of lectures in New York on "The necessity and means, and prospects of the political and

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[1]Harold C. Gardiner, American Classics Reconsidered: A Christian Appraisal. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958. p. 99.

social regeneration of Europe." This was an extraordinary task considering the breadth of the material to be covered. However, Brownson did not pretend to make an attempt to cover this subject in an encyclopedic manner. From the beginning he stated the purposes of his lectures:

> My purpose in treating this subject will be to distinguish between the assertion of the necessity of reform in Europe and the assertion of the modern doctrine of progress, and to show that the Reform has become necessary, not in consequence of the PROGRESS of European society, but of the changes which have taken place in the political order which formerly obtained. [2]

His second lecture in this series pointed out that reform in Europe could not be accomplished "without the agency of a divinely constituted power, taking the lead, and moulding the existing chaotic elements into order, that is, the church."[3] Following this, in his third lecture, he attempted to prove that the policy and movements of Pope Pius IX indicated that this reform leadership on the part of the church had already commenced.[4]

Thus, it is evident that after his conversion Brownson's earliest public statements concerning Europe were directed toward the state of Catholicism in Europe and the broader perspective of the role of Catholicism in the future of Western Christendom. He was, therefore, by no means an entirely accurate political commentator on all phases of the European and American scene. He limited his comments mainly to those events in Europe and America which he felt were significant in the growth of Catholicism.

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[2] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, p. 130.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

Brownson's interest in Europe continued in the 1850s and 1860s. During this period he was increasingly sympathetic with European Catholic thinkers whose political views were then considered liberal by the church hierarchy. Brownson carried on an active correspondence with many of these thinkers. With the novel information these letters afforded, plus an already established European interest, Brownson's comments on the interaction between European events and those in America became more frequent. Henry F. Brownson, in his three volume biography of his father, stated that Brownson's interest was of a two-fold nature during this period. Primarily, Brownson watched the political scene from the standpoint that the political parties that were triumphant in Europe would affect the corresponding parties in the United States. He felt that a victory for the revolutionaries there would be simultaneous, or nearly so, with a similar victory here. For example, he saw a connection between the success of the red-republican movement in Europe with the success of Jacksonian democracy in the United States. Consequently, he felt it impossible to discuss the political concerns of the United States without paying attention to the movements abroad. Secondly, Brownson began to devote many pages of his Review to foreign politics because of the extensive circulation of this periodical in Europe.[5]

However, in these years Brownson ventured into a troubled state of affairs in Europe. This was just the time when in England and Ireland and on the continent Catholic reviews were involved in a great struggle between the liberal and conservative forces within the Church. The Dublin Review in Ireland, the Univers in France, and the Civilta Cattolica in Italy repre-

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[5]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 167.

sented the extreme conservative position, while Montalembert's Le Correspondant and Newman's The Rambler and The Home and Foreign Review were liberal. The liberals saw a need for reviews in which Catholic writers could address themselves freely to the philosophical, social, and political problems of of the day. As a result, their reviews were often censured or silenced by the Pope.[6] Similarly, Brownson's Review, which was open to the philosophical, religious, and political dilemmas of the day, was censured by the American Catholic hierarchy.

Being attacked by the ultra-conservatives did not silence him, however, for he continued to comment on the "revolutionism" which he felt to be such a threat to the Western world. In a letter to Montalembert in 1851, Brownson said that he felt that the United States government and Great Britain had come to an understanding to lend their indirect influence to the continental revolutionaries, mainly with purposes hostile to the papacy. Thus, he felt the only safety for Catholics in Europe was to form an intimate alliance with Austria so that a power sufficient to check the spread of red-republicanism would exist. "My opinion is," said Brownson, "that Great Britain supports our democracy, and that the two great enemies of the social order and Christian freedom are the United States backed by England and Russia."[7]

Four years later, in a letter to Montalembert, Brownson continued to write of his fear of the growth of red-republicanism; however, an additional concern was present. Brownson was worried about the political movements

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[6]Alvan S. Ryan, ed., The Brownson Reader. New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1955. pp. 20-21.

[7]Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Middle Life, pp. 337-338.

that kept "Catholics chained to the car of absolutism." He also saw this situation in the United States for he felt that the majority of the Catholics in the United States had been 'cast in the mould of absolutism and had thus confounded obedience with servility, leading them to regard all independence as heretical or schismatic."[8] This continued to be a vexing problem for Brownson and as such appeared constantly throughout his work.

In an article entitled "The Roman Question" published in 1859, Brownson continued to write of the grave situation in Europe. He could not find any evidence that would allow him to conclude that the era of revolutions would be coming to an end. He did recognize that the situation was less warlike than in 1848; however, he contended that peace could not be assured because Europe was suffering from the loss of Italy and Spain as great powers. Their existence, as such, he felt to be essential to the proper working of the European political system, for without them the system lacked balance and would continue to run away.[9]

Brownson increased his critical commentary and concern about the republican movements of the day in an article written in 1861 while war was being fought at home. He felt that the republican movements had assumed the characteristic of being hostile to the church "because they have found, or imagined they found, the power and the influence of the church directed against them and wielded in support of despotism."[10] Similarly, Brownson con-

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[8] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 32.

[9] Orestes A. Brownson, The American Republic, 1866, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 4.

[10] Orestes A. Brownson, "Sardinia and Rome, " 1861, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 440.

tended that the forces that vulgarized democracy in the United States tended to characterize the Church as being closely affiliated with absolutism.

As a result of this attitude, Brownson felt that the Church had suffered and would continue to do so. However, he maintained that this suffering was needless, for he felt that if the Church members were persuaded that republican hostility to Catholicism was only accidental and not inherent and permanent, both individuals and nations would not be lost to the Church. However, Brownson could see that it was unfortunate that the progressives fell into the error of thinking that liberty and religion were mutually destructive, for this contributed to their hostility to the Church.[11]

In this situation, Brownson drew an analogy between the Catholics in Europe and those in America. He felt that the Catholics in Europe who were resisting change and revolution were engaged in the same type of activity as the Catholics in America who were loyal to the Union. The American Catholic loyalists were also making the greatest efforts possible in defense of their traditional institutions and in the defense of their inherited government against the onslaught of revolution which the Confederacy represented.[12]

Brownson predicted that this spread of red-republicanism with its concomitant emphasis on national self-interest would wreak havoc in Europe. Thus, in the troubled 1860s, Brownson concluded that none of the major powers were fully prepared to contribute toward a permanent and Christian resolution

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[11] Orestes A. Brownson, "Conversations of Our Club," 1858-1859, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XI. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 441.

[12] Orestes Brownson, "Sardinia and Rome," The Works of Brownson, p. 442.

of international problems; partly because of their own internal affairs which demanded immediate attention. However, he did think that Russia was more prepared to act than the other countries; however, the entire diplomatic machinery of Europe was geared to prevent such action. The question Brownson then pondered was whether or not Russia would act. He concluded that she probably would not in the immediate future, but "I think when the question does come up, the whole world, not excepting ourselves, as the greatest commercial rival of Great Britain, will take part in it."[13] Then, in 1867, he conjectured that a general European war on the Eastern Question was inevitable, stating that he was on the side of Russia. And again he said that it would not be impossible to conclude that the United States government would be drawn into it due to several questions she had to settle with Great Britain and France. He even went so far as to postulate that if the United States did get involved she would fight on her own continent.[14]

When Brownson again commented at length on the general European scene in 1873, he concerned himself with demonstrating to the public how he had for seen the greater part of the events which had transpired in the intervening years, though they may have not been precisely accurate. He referred to the argument he had advanced against the Italian campaign undertaken by Louis Napoleon (see Chapter 5), saying that it would deprive the Pope of his temporal possessions, secularize the states of the Church, and that Italian unity would inevitably lead to German unity and the reduction of

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[13] Henry Brownson, Orestes Brownson's Latter Life, p. 488.

[14] Ibid.

France to a second or third rate power.[15]

Concomitantly, Brownson had forseen the hegemony of Europe pass from France to Germany, but he did think that it would be a Germany that included Austria, and a Germany in which Catholicity would predominate. He had not envisioned Prussia, with her Protestant emphasis, as being the dominant force in German unification. However, he did predict that the Franco-Prussian war would occur, but again erroneously thought it would come before Prussia had succeeded in strengthening herself militarily through her union with Germany. This ascendancy of Prussia brought ill forebodings for Brownson because of Prussia's Protestant heritage and influence - an influence that would be felt in the United States as well as on the European continent.[16]

With the future of Catholicism still in mind, in 1873, he wrote that he had discerned some indications of a reaction in favor of religion and conservatism as being on the point of commencing; however, at the time in which he was writing it was apparent to him that the status quo still remained. Being told that Italy was still thoroughly Catholic encouraged Brownson, but he remarked that the Italians had a queer way of showing it by electing a parliament of infidels and political atheists. He questioned how a country so decidely Catholic could let themselves be governed by such "sacrilegious robbers." And he insisted that this state of affairs in Italy was a scandal, and that a decent Catholic would be ashamed of this situation.[17]

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15 Orestes A. Brownson, "European Politics," 1873, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 502.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 537.

In evaluating these occurrences Brownson came to the conclusion that it was the political liberalism which had penetrated the Catholic camp that caused Catholics throughout Europe to be such imbeciles in regard to their defense of the rights and interests of their religion. He went so far as to say that it was this very imbecility on the part of Catholics which enabled the enemies of God and society to usurp the government of the once Catholic nations. In Brownson's own words: "It is accursed liberalism, so seductive in its tones, so sweet to the taste, yet so fatal in its effects on the system, that has brought the Catholic population of Europe into their present deplorable condition; persecuted the church, confiscated her goods, and despoiled and imprisoned her supreme pontiff."[18]

With the conclusion that political liberalism had injured the Church and suppressed the rights of religion, Brownson resolved that Christendom would not be fully restored in Europe until Catholics would learn to separate in their own minds the Catholic cause from the political questions. What discouraged Brownson more than anything else about this situation was that the Catholics, for the most part, wanted the restoration of Christendom but were looking to political combinations and diplomacy to accomplish it. They did not see that at best, according to Brownson, this could only maintain the status quo. This opinion of the people, as reflected in the lack of condemnation of the usurpation of papal lands and of the infamous Bismarckian law against Catholicism, could not be uprooted from the mental habits of the existing generation, according to Brownson. Thus, the only

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[18]Orestes A. Brownson, "At Home and Abroad," 1873, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 539.

hope for Catholicity was that this would be a lesson for future generations; a lesson that would be reinforced by the educational institutions in their moral obligation to society.[19]

Brownson maintained that when the educational systems of the Western world recognized the fallacy of devoting their attention to secular studies and returned to a truly religious emphasis in their educational endeavors, man and the institutions he created would again return to a Christian way of life. And, Brownson contended that the United States, with its institutions which were essentially Christian in principle, would lead the secular Western world in its return to a catholic Christian state. This Brownson considered to be America's mission - a mission that would ultimately succeed because of its reliance on and obedience to God's will as manifested in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Thus, Brownson contended that there was a vital interaction between the events in Europe and those in the United States, and this interaction would become increasingly important in the future when America, under Catholic leadership, would begin her role in leading these European nations back into the unified Christian state that had been forfeited when man rebelled materialistically, politically, and selfishly against the ordered world that had been established by God.

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[19] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Outlook At Home and Abroad," 1874, The Works of Orestes A. Brownson, Vol. XVIII. New York: American Museum Society Press, Inc., 1966. p. 565.

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