To Think for Themselves: Teaching Faith and Reason in Nineteenth-Century America

Dissertation

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By

Lisa Marie Susner, M.A.

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The Ohio State University

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Dissertation Committee:

John Brooke, Advisor

Joan E. Cashin

Harvey J. Graff

Margaret Sumner

Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between faith and reason in the nineteenth-century United States by analyzing the lives and educational philosophies of six educators of different religious backgrounds: Frederick Packard, evangelical Protestant; Horace Mann, non-evangelical Protestant; Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser, Jews; and Mother Angela and Orestes Brownson, Catholics. To varying degrees in their writings, each of these educators explored the relationship between faith and reason while expressing their hopes for how children should be taught to think in the context of their faiths. In general, they saw no conflict between faith and reason. Rather than calling for young people to obey authority slavishly, they advocated for them to develop independent reasoning skills. They also promoted the idea that young people should develop internal moral compasses, which would lead them to truthful conclusions and encourage them to act morally, even when no authority directed them.

Although all of the educators demonstrated advocacy of independent thought to some degree, the Jewish and Catholic educators showed more restraint. Their position as minorities in American society may account for this reluctance. Given the pressure to convert to Protestantism, they likely feared giving their young people too much license to think for themselves. Yet they still advocated the idea that faith and reason supported each other and that both would vindicate their chosen religions.

This dissertation primarily analyzes the writings of these six individuals, including their letters, lectures, newspaper and journal articles, and educational texts for children and adults. The analysis is set in the context of the history of the Enlightenment, especially Scottish common sense philosophy, as well as the histories of childhood, antebellum reform, and education. This dissertation contributes to nineteenth-century American educational history by providing a much-needed comparison across religious boundaries, while also exploring the unintended consequences of these educators' programs. Despite their pious intentions, the advocacy of independent thought ultimately contributed to the secularization of American society.

Acknowledgments

Throughout the journey that has led to the completion of this dissertation, I have been fortunate to have the aid and support of a tremendous number of individuals. Offering thanks for all they have done is a great pleasure and a privilege.

To Think for Themselves originated in a very different form in a research seminar at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2008. While reading didactic literature published by the American Sunday-School Union in the early to mid-nineteenth century, I was surprised to discover that many of the works did not adopt nearly as authoritative of a tone as I expected. Many sought to foster children's agency, and one was even entitled *Learning to Think.* I am grateful to Lisa Tolbert for encouraging me to set aside Jenny Lind for the time being and examine Sunday school books, as well as helping to nurture my research into a seminar paper.

At The Ohio State University, I am exceedingly grateful to my advisor, John Brooke. My understanding of early American history has been profoundly shaped by Prof. Brooke's insights, gleaned from his many book recommendations, long conversations in his office, and lively discussions in the seminars he taught. I am also deeply appreciative of Prof. Brooke's positivity and encouragement throughout my graduate program. Even when I could not, he saw the potential in this project and encouraged me to pursue it.

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Thanks are also due to the anonymous readers for the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* and especially the *History of Education Quarterly* who read a draft of an article that incorporated many of the ideas further developed here. I am grateful to them for comments that helped me refine and further contextualize my argument, as well as articulate the significance of my work.

I am deeply appreciative of the Department of History and the College of Arts & Sciences at The Ohio State University for providing me with funding for travel to conduct dissertation research. I am also especially grateful to Gary Zola, Kevin Proffitt, Dana Herman, and the entire staff of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, who awarded me a generous fellowship to research and draft Chapter Four at their beautiful facility. I can honestly say that I have never had a more pleasant experience working in an archive.

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Vita

2007	B.A. History and Anthropology/ Archaeology, Washington and Lee University
2007-2009	Graduate Assistant/Student Intern, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro, North Carolina
2009	M.A. History with a concentration in Museum Studies/Public History, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
2009-2011	Seasonal Park Ranger (Interpretation), James A. Garfield National Historic Site, Mentor, Ohio
2012-Present	Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of History, The Ohio State University

Publications

"The Assassination of President Garfield." *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective* 9, no. 10 (July 2016).

"President Lincoln Signs the Emancipation Proclamation, 150 Years Ago." *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective* 6, no. 4 (January 2013).

"Ceramic Analysis of a Middling European American Planter Site Using the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery." *Journal of Middle Atlantic Archaeology* 22 (2006): 91-102.

Fields of Study

Major Field: History

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In October of 1860, Orestes Brownson wrote: "The great problem of our age is, how to reconcile faith and reason."[1] At that time, Brownson was Catholic but he had formerly been Presbyterian, Universalist, Unitarian, Transcendentalist, atheist, and agnostic (not necessarily in that order). He had an unusual amount of experience in exploring the issue of faith's reconciliation with reason, as did his peers. Nineteenth-century Americans of all religious persuasions grappled with the question of how reason related to faith in a post-Enlightenment world. Whether they rejected traditional faith for deism or atheism or they minimized the utility of reason and embraced a faith based mainly on revelation, all who thought seriously about the meaning of their lives likely contemplated the matter. The figures examined in this dissertation were prominent among them.

Protestant evangelical Frederick A. Packard, Unitarian Horace Mann, Jews Isaac Leeser and Rebecca Gratz, and Catholics Mother Angela and Orestes Brownson each contended with reason in the contexts of their faiths. They did so not only for the purpose of their personal spiritual journeys, but also because they were spokespeople for their religions and educators of the young. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they

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[1] Orestes A. Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism (1860)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. I (Detroit: H.F. Brownson, 1898), 494.

drew upon American identity, the heritage of the Enlightenment, and even the legacy of the Reformation (the latter especially in the cases of Packard, Mann, and Brownson) to articulate philosophies explaining the relationship between faith and reason. An examination of these figures reveals that, despite vast differences in doctrine, they agreed upon the importance of teaching young people how to reason and think independently, albeit within certain boundaries. Although, with the exception of Horace Mann, all could be considered orthodox with respect to their religions, their writings reveal minimal anxiety at the possible consequences of independent thought. Leeser, Gratz, and Mother Angela did, however, demonstrate more reticence in their advocacy of reason than Packard and Mann. Such hesitation may have been due to their positions as members of minority groups trying to ensure that their congregants remained faithful in the face of aggressive Protestant evangelizing.

All of these educators favored reason as an important counterpoint to faith. In fact, they believed that reason played an integral role in the development of mature faith. For most people of a religious persuasion in the nineteenth century, the idea of faith was linked to revelation. Faith constituted belief in what God had revealed through some source of divine authority, often the Scriptures or another holy text. For Catholics, the Church also constituted a source of divine authority. God's revelation could not be proven by the use of the human mind; it simply had to be trusted because it came from God. Reason represented the tool that God had given people so that they could come to an understanding of certain (usually limited) truths on their own. Reason was more often linked to knowledge about the natural world and science, although it could help people

achieve a better understanding of God as well. The way these educators understood reason and the imperative to teach children how to think may be traced back to these ideas.

Any consideration of the place of reason in American religion must also take into account the legacy of the Enlightenment. Although the Enlightenment began in the seventeenth century and fell largely into disfavor with the rise of romanticism in the early nineteenth century, historians have acknowledged the lasting impact that it had on American thought. After 1800, the strain of Enlightenment which historian Henry May called "Didactic" proved to be of greatest influence in the United States. The Didactic Enlightenment was in large part a reaction against strains of Enlightenment thought that led to radicalism and atheism, embodied for many in the French Revolution. The Didactic Enlightenment embraced Scottish common sense philosophy, which asserted that people could rely upon the capacities of their minds to provide them with guidance as to the mysteries of the natural world, self-understanding, and ethical choice.[2]

Mark Noll identified three strains of thought that made up an American version of common sense reasoning. The first, epistemological common sense, formed the foundation for the others. Its advocates argued that one's mind and senses communicated accurate information about the world. Such a philosophy explicitly contradicted the skeptical writings of David Hume, which asserted that humans could only discern

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[2] Henry Farnham May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 342; Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 84–93; Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 92–95.

"impressions" of the world, not objective facts.[3] Advocates of epistemological common sense affirmed humans' ability to perceive objective reality on the basis of their observations.

The ideas of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Reid profoundly influenced the advocates of the second strain, ethical common sense. Hutcheson wrote that humans had a natural moral sense that would reveal to them the laws of morality, just as careful attention to the evidence of the external senses would reveal the workings of the natural world, as had been established by Newtonian scholarship. This moral sense, properly calibrated, could not lead them astray. Thus, people who obeyed its mandates did not need "the sanctions of traditional authorities or the hoary dictates of the past;" they possessed within them the means to behave morally and construct a moral society.[4]

Reid also wrote about the moral sense, but his version differed slightly from Hutcheson's. The latter's definition of the moral sense characterized it as innate and involuntary; a person should immediately be able to discern morality, without rational deliberation. Thomas Reid's moral sense, on the other hand, did involve conscious and deliberate calculation; making use of his version of the moral sense meant engaging in an act of reason. Daniel Walker Howe argued that this rational version of the moral sense was more influential in the United States than Hutcheson's version.[5] The influence of

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[3] Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1985): 220; Noll, *America's God,* 107-108; *Encyclopedia Britannica,* s.v. "Hume, David," accessed July 26, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Hume.
[4] Noll, *America's God*, 110.
[5] Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 45–49.

Reid's ideas regarding conscious ethical deliberation may be found in the calls of the educators examined here that children should learn how to think.

The science of Francis Bacon greatly influenced the third strain of common sense reasoning, methodological common sense. Its advocates called for all knowledge, whether regarding human nature, the natural world, or religion, to be surmised from "irreducible facts of experience," or the observation of the senses.[6] Only conclusions confirmed by direct empirical evidence would be accepted as valid; speculation and unprovable theories would be rejected.[7] Common sense reasoning including these three variants dominated college curriculums in the nineteenth century. It came largely to be taken for granted as an authoritative source of knowledge among those of diverse religious backgrounds, including both evangelicals and Unitarians.[8] Even after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, as American evangelical Christians split into traditionalists and modernists, the principles of common sense philosophy remained dominant in both groups.[9]

The imperative to find a philosophical basis for reconciling faith and reason, or revelation and science, has continued to be a preoccupation of many American people of faith. Into the twentieth century and even today, evangelical Christians in particular have endeavored to reconcile their faith with the dictates of reason and science. Frequently,

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[6] Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," 221–23.
[7] Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 21.
[8] May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 347–56.
[9] Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 100; for further elaboration of the influence of Scottish common sense philosophy and Baconian science on American thought, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History* 24, no. 3 (1955): 257–72; Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science.*

secular thinkers accuse them of the rejection of reason altogether, yet one historian has suggested that the dominant theme of evangelicalism in American history is not a repudiation of reason, but rather a "crisis of authority." Unlike most secular liberals who value reason above all, evangelicals recognize multiple authorities, including both reason and revelation. "It is evangelicals'…struggle to reconcile reason with revelation, heart with head, and private piety with the public square – that best explains their anxiety and their animosity toward intellectual life," argued Molly Worthen.[10] Many in the nineteenth century faced a similar challenge, and, for many, common sense philosophy provided one way to reconcile faith, revelation, and reason.

As I will argue, evangelicals were not the only ones who struggled with crises of authority in the nineteenth century. Although some personally struggled more than others in their efforts to determine on which authority to place their trust (Brownson is a particularly dramatic example), all serious American religious thinkers – Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish – had to come to terms with the question. The boundaries between faiths were not rigid either, as Brownson also illustrates. His journey from Protestantism to Catholicism hinged upon questions of both authority and reason.

The question of how to reconcile faith and reason was a deeply personal one. For the educators examined here, it had a much larger significance as well. These men and women devoted themselves, at least in part, to education, working to ensure that young people gained a correct understanding of their particular faiths and grew up to be godly individuals. This goal proved to be particularly imperative in light of changing

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[10] Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–2.

philosophies about childhood. In the wake of Philippe Ariès' argument that the concept of childhood did not exist until the sixteenth century, historians and sociologists have repeatedly demonstrated the flaws of his thesis and shortcomings of his evidence.[11] In the process, they examined the profound changes that have occurred in the understanding of childhood over the centuries. According to Puritan New Englanders, children were sinful, inheritors of the transgression of Adam. Parents' duty was to drive the devil out of them by breaking their wills. Although Puritans had a definite concept of childhood and did not view their children as "little adults," they did not view them with the sentimentality that would become popular later in the nineteenth century.[12] John Locke's writings about the child who was both malleable and a blank slate gained wide acceptance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. No longer were children viewed as repositories of sin, but rather as sources of good and bad potential. As a result, education came to have increasing importance as the best way to ensure that children developed morally. Eventually, the view of children as positively good, not just morally neutral, gained credence, further increasing the imperative to ensure that children did not slip away into evil behavior.[13] With fear and authoritative discipline no longer in vogue, parents turned to love and guilt to regulate behavior, facilitated through the development

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[11] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 128–33; Adrian Wilson, "The Infancy of the History of Childhood: An Appraisal of Philippe Aries," *History & Theory* 19, no. 2 (1980): 132-153; Richard T. Vann, "The Youth of Centuries of Childhood," *History and Theory* 21, no. 2 (1982): 279–97.
[12] Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 3.
[13] Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 58, 76–77, 81.

of children's consciences. Mothers gained increased importance, becoming primarily responsible for the moral education of the young.[14]

The transition was a major one, representing a move away from reliance upon authority in disciplining children and towards the acceptability of some degree of independent autonomy on the part of young people paired with development of the conscience. Yet, for some time, the historical literature suggested that this supposed autonomy was sharply curtailed, especially in the realm of the mind. According to many accounts, rote memorization and recitation dominated learning in schools, and teachers discouraged any intellectual creativity on the part of children. The essence of Ruth Miller Elson's analysis of early American schoolbooks dominated the literature: schoolbooks – and schools – were "guardians of tradition" that discouraged independent thought.[15] Similarly, Priscilla Clement has argued that "most children did not learn to think for themselves" in nineteenth-century schools.[16] Rote memorization was certainly ubiquitous in American schools, and perhaps many did not learn to think for themselves. But some did, developing into the inventors, political and legal theorists, religious innovators, authors, and poets of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Historians' frequent dismissal of nineteenth-century schools as bastions of mindless memorization has some truth to it, but it is overly simplistic and does a disservice to the complexities of the histories of American childhood and education.

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[14] Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 158–61.
[15] Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).
[16] Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 88.

Within the last fifty years, historians have begun to recognize that nineteenth-century educators' goals stretched far beyond creating mindless automatons and that many of their most innovative methods reflected progressive goals. For example, in her study of American Sunday schools, Anne Boylan wrote that Sunday school curricula "undercut the traditional goals of Protestant schooling," and allowed "initiative" and "spontaneity."[17] Harvey Graff observed that advocates for Canadian working people called for them to learn to "think for themselves."[18] Daniel Calhoun argued that the methods taught in nineteenth-century normal schools "broke away from the formal rote methods of the traditional schoolmasters."[19] Perhaps educators and educational advocates were not always successful in implementing strategies that allowed the educated more mental agency, but more innovative concepts were certainly being discussed and advocated.[20] The figures in this study were among those who called for more inventive teaching techniques, although most of them have not been previously recognized as such.

The question of American educators' motivations and goals has a long historiography which is linked to the topic of the goals and motivations of American reformers in general. The historical figures in this dissertation may all in some sense be classified as reformers. Packard alone could be unequivocally considered a member of

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[17] Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 139.
[18] Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 211, 300.
[19] Daniel Calhoun, *The Intelligence of a People* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 66.
[20] William J. Reese acknowledges the limits of the new educational ideas that were circulating and how educational practice did not change that dramatically in the nineteenth century. See William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2003): 11.

the "Benevolent Empire," the multifaceted group of reformers most studied by historians, but each figure examined – Packard, Mann, Gratz, Leeser, Mother Angela, and Brownson – shared the desire to reform society by means of religious education.

But what did reform mean to these six educators and their fellow reformers? Did they view it as a form of social control? The social control thesis has been the central concept that has most influenced the conversation about reformers' motives. In the mid-twentieth century, historians such as Clifford S. Griffin argued that reformers were predominantly members of the social elite who felt their influence threatened by the democratization of American society. They sought to use reform movements to exercise control over the working classes and shape working-class mores to match those of the emerging middle class.[21]

Despite its dominance and the frequency it has been invoked, historians have long found fault with the social control thesis. Lois W. Banner suggested that antebellum reformers were not primarily motivated by the desire to dominate and influence those

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[21] For examples of the "social control thesis," see Charles C. Cole, Jr., *The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); Clifford S. Griffin, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control, 1815-1860," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (1957): 423–44; Timothy Lawrence Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957); Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1960); Charles I. Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960); John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," *American Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (1965): 656–81; Clifford S. Griffin, *The Ferment of Reform, 1830-1860* (New York: Crowell, 1967); M. J. Heale, "Humanitarianism in the Early Republic: The Moral Reformers of New York, 1776–1825," *Journal of American Studies* 2, no. 2 (1968): 161-175; W. David Lewis, "The Reformer as Conservative: Protestant Counter-Subversion in the Early Republic," in *The Development of an American Culture*, ed. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); for a useful summary of the historiographical trend, see Ralph E. Luker, "Religion and Social Control in the Nineteenth-Century American City," *Journal of Urban History* 2, no. 3 (1976): 363–68; For an important secular version of the social control thesis, see David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

around them: "rather than trying to control the steady growth of egalitarianism in America, the men of the older order were trying to adjust to it."[22] Lawrence Kohl challenged the usefulness of the concept of social control, observing that scholars, historians in particular, used the concept without definition to describe a variety of conscious and unconscious social mechanisms. He also observed that they frequently used "social control" as a sort of condemnation, applying it to reformers that they did not like, but not to those they did like, although the latter might have exercised similar influence in society. The concept of social control, Kohl observed, also polarized historians into two camps – those believing that reformers had good intentions and those believing that reformers had self-serving intentions, which greatly oversimplified reformers' motivations.[23]

Recently, historians have continued to grapple with this interpretive legacy. Although few scholars advocate the social control thesis in its original formulation, the notion of social control remains present in the conversation.[24] Steven Mintz discussed the social control thesis and then explained his own modification of it, writing that reformers were paradoxically conservative and modern – conservative in their desire to

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[22] Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," *The Journal of American History* 60, no. 1 (1973): 25.
[23] Lawrence Frederick Kohl, "The Concept of Social Control and the History of Jacksonian America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 1 (1985): 21–34.
[24] For several of the most recent historical works that discuss the social control thesis, see Mary Babson Fuhrer, *A Crisis of Community : The Trials and Transformation of a New England Town, 1815-1848* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 8, 269; Tom Glynn, *Reading Publics : New York City's Public Libraries, 1754-1911* (New York: Empire State Editions, an imprint of Fordham University Press, 2015), 102–3.

infuse society with religion, but surprisingly modern in their methods and values.[25] Daniel Walker Howe explained that reform usually began with self-discipline rather than efforts to control others and that reformers sought "to substitute for external constraint the inner discipline of responsible morality," making both "liberation and control" important components of reform.[26] Gregory Eiselein rejected both the social control interpretation and its opposite formulation, the uncritical celebration of reformers, because both explanations fail to accurately portray the relationships between those engaging in reform and those they sought to help. The social control and the celebratory schools of thought portray reformers and reformed as distinct and separate, with agency possessed solely by the reformers, which was not always the case.[27]

Susan Ryan has offered perhaps the most sophisticated approach to understanding reformers' motivations, beyond the black/white dichotomy that Kohl and Eiselein lamented. She suggested that historians have a tendency to judge antebellum reformers by modern-day values. They accuse reformers of being hypocritical because they asserted the desire to make a positive impact while simultaneously reaping social benefits from their projects. For Ryan, it is problematic that "the only intentions that count as good are those that twenty-first-century readers and scholars can endorse." Instead of

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[25] Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), xix.
[26] Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 116.
[27] Gregory Eiselein, *Literature and Humanitarian Reform in the Civil War Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 11–12, 175–176; For another criticism of the faulty dualism produced by the social control thesis, see John Stauffer, "Beyond Social Control: The Example of Gerrit Smith, Romantic Radical," *ATQ* 11, no. 3 (1997): 233-259; for evidence that early nineteenth-century Massachusetts reformers did not primarily desire to exert social control, see Johann N. Neem, *Creating a Nation of Joiners: Democracy and Civil Society in Early National Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 116.

endlessly debating whether or not reformers had "good" motives, Ryan suggested that their desire to help the subjects of their efforts was sincere, but they did not operate in a vacuum: their preconceived notions about race, class, and culture influenced the results of their efforts.[28] Taking such an approach to the issue of reformers' motivations "reconstitutes moral earnestness as a problematic rather than an object of derision" and allows us to move "beyond the question of whether benevolence was progressive or retrograde."[29] This dissertation also seeks to complicate the question of reformers' motives, arguing that their religious beliefs allowed them to advocate a reconciliation of reason and religion that, in some cases, could be viewed as anticipating the liberal religion of the post-Civil War era. Yet, in most cases, their religious worldview blinded them to the possibly radical implications of their advocacy of critical reasoning. As in Ryan's formulation, their sincere intentions combined with their beliefs about God and the nature of faith significantly altered the practical results of their reform efforts. In this case, the lessons they sought to teach had the potential to be more transformative than they intended.

The historiography of education, especially public education, in the United States has followed a similar trajectory to the historiography of antebellum reformers. Mid-twentieth century historians such as Bernard Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin wrote whiggish educational histories, arguing that the American educational system gradually became more democratic and egalitarian. Beginning with Michael Katz in 1968,

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[28] Susan M. Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4–5. For her explicit discussion of the social control thesis, see Ryan, *Grammar of Good Intentions,* 193.
[29] Ryan, *Grammar of Good Intentions*, 4-5.

revisionist historians contested this interpretation, arguing that public schools often perpetuated and entrenched social inequality and that "social leaders, status-anxious parents, and status-hungry educators…impose[d] educational innovation…upon a reluctant community."[30] This revisionist thesis in education history bore some similarities to the social control thesis.

As with the reaction to the social control thesis, subsequent educational historians rejected both extremes – solely celebratory and solely critical. Carl Kaestle pointed out that, in the United States at least, working-class people generally favored school reform; therefore it could not entirely have been foisted upon them as a mechanism of class control.[31] Others sought to reconcile the sincere intentions of educational reformers with negative consequences of their reforms. David Tyack found it unhelpful to accuse educational reformers of being interested in social control – of course they were, he wrote. More importantly, he asked, what were "the intent, methods, and effects of the social control or imposition"?[32] He separated intentions from consequences in his analysis of nineteenth-century educational reformers. I seek to do the same. At the most basic level, as Tyack observes, all educators are interested in social control, including those examined here. Yet they may also genuinely seek the good of their charges, and

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[30] Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 218; see also Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 349–350; libertarians have long made similar arguments, as explored in Milton Gaither, "The Revisionists Revived: The Libertarian Historiography of Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2012): 488–505.
[31] Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 137–41; Graff, *The Literacy Myth*, 209–13.
[32] David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 10.

their actions may also have a variety of unintended effects – good or bad, progressive or conservative – as a result of the preconceptions and prejudices they bring to their work, as Susan Ryan observed.[33]

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I take a comparative approach to the question of the motivations of American reformers and educators, as well as the question of how they reconciled faith and reason. In the religious marketplace of the mid-nineteenth century, Americans could choose from a variety of Protestant denominations, including the establishment vanguards of American Protestantism, as well as brand new and sometimes radical variants. A small, but steadily increasing, fraction of the population practiced Catholicism or Judaism as well. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews lived in the same communities and sometimes attended the same schools, yet historians have usually examined each group in isolation from the others, making it difficult to compare them and determine if the trends or influences identified were the products of religion, American identity, or some other factor. Historians have called for comparative studies in American religious education, and the structure and goals of this dissertation explicitly answer that call.[34]

Using a case study approach, each chapter of this dissertation explores the views of one or two educators from a common religion, explaining their spiritual beliefs, their broader philosophies of education, and the role that they believed reason should play in

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[33] For a helpful overview of the historiography of education, see John L. Rury, "The Curious Status of the History of Education: A Parallel Perspective," *History of Education Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (2007): 571–598.
[34] For examples of calls for historians to engage in comparative studies of American religious education, see Jonathan Sarna, "American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Jewish Education* 64, no. 1–2 (1998): 19; F. Michael Perko, "Religious Schooling in America: An Historiographic Reflection," *History of Education Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 337–38.

the education of children. I have chosen these figures because each represents an educational leader within the context of his or her particular religious background. In addition, many of them knew each other or at least knew each other's work. This provides the opportunity to understand how they positioned themselves within the broader communities of Protestantism, Judaism, and Catholicism, and even how they related to each other across religious boundaries. For example, Frederick Packard and Horace Mann corresponded and met on at least one occasion, an acquaintance which turned into an open conflict between the two men. Isaac Leeser and Rebecca Gratz worked together closely in Philadelphia's Jewish community. Mother Angela greatly admired Orestes Brownson, consulting him while writing her series of Catholic textbooks. And Packard at least knew of Leeser, writing to him on one occasion to ask his opinion about a recent convert from Judaism to Christianity. An examination of these particular figures also reveals unique geographical patterns. Packard, Leeser, and Gratz did most of their work in Philadelphia, while Packard, Mann, and Brownson had roots in New England, especially Massachusetts. Mother Angela was born in Ohio and worked in Indiana, while Mann ended his career as president of an Ohio college. Both Philadelphia and Massachusetts, especially Boston, were hubs of educational innovation in the mid-nineteenth century, but these figures indicate that the work of education also took place in many different locations across the country, including the West.

The first case-study chapter (Chapter Two) examines evangelical Protestant Frederick A. Packard, Secretary of the American Sunday-School Union and editor and author of dozens of books for young people and their teachers. Packard's religious

beliefs were largely orthodox, although even his theology reveals changes sweeping through American religion as the definition of Protestant orthodoxy changed in the early nineteenth century. Despite his anxieties about children straying from evangelical Christianity, Packard's writings reveal the surprising degree of confidence that he placed in children's own judgment and reasoning – a position reflective of the popular variant of Scottish common sense reasoning that prevailed in antebellum America.

Chapter Three discusses the man often considered the father of American public education, Horace Mann. Mann served as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education and later President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In these positions he called for "non-sectarian" education that would be widely available to everyone, including men and women. Yet the non-sectarianism that Mann advocated was more non-evangelical than strictly non-sectarian: it was distinctly Protestant. Mann, a Unitarian, had been raised a Calvinist, a theology he rejected with horror later in life. Yet, although his theological beliefs diverged sharply from Packard's, Mann shared with his peer a belief in the place of reason in American education.

The narrowly Protestant educational visions of both Packard and Mann were objectionable to both Catholic and Jewish Americans who sought to sustain their own religious traditions. In the nineteenth century, Catholics and Jews created educational institutions to combat, or in some cases, complement Protestant schools. Chapter Four examines two Jewish educators, Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser. With Leeser's support, Gratz founded and served as superintendent of the Hebrew Sunday School in Philadelphia, and Leeser, *hazan* of the synagogue Mikveh Israel, also in Philadelphia,

wrote extensively about Jewish education, emerging as a strong advocate of Jewish day schools. He also wrote thoughtfully about the role of reason in Judaism, particularly in the American context. Although both Gratz and Leeser called for Jewish children to be taught how to reason, they demonstrated less surety than Packard and Mann that such reason would unequivocally lead them to the right faith – in their minds, Judaism. Thus they called for careful instruction in the foundation of the faith before children should be encouraged to think independently.

Chapter Five explores the lives and perspectives of two very different American Catholics. Mother Angela of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, born Eliza Gillespie, served in a variety of positions of leadership at St. Mary's Academy in Notre Dame, Indiana, emerging as a prominent advocate for Catholic women's education. Mother Angela also authored a series of Catholic textbooks, the Metropolitan Readers. Her writings demonstrate the ambivalence that some Catholics felt about authorizing the use of personal judgment and reason in matters of morality; she also did not display the overwhelming confidence in reason that Packard and Mann demonstrated. Rather, she emphasized the moral surety of relying upon confirmed authorities. The second subject of Chapter Four, Orestes Brownson, was a deep thinker who delved into the relationship between faith and reason more extensively than any other figure analyzed here. As he wrestled with his faith and transitioned through nearly every shade of religious belief available to him in nineteenth-century America, he proclaimed a deep-seated confidence in human reason. His reason ultimately led him to belief in the authority of the Catholic

Church, and such was his confidence in the truth of his faith that he had no fear of critical inquiry on his own part or on the part of anyone else.

The fact that each of these educators advocated a version of common sense reasoning did not necessarily mean that teachers actually taught it or that children actually learned it. Yet these religious educators possessed sincere motives to help children learn to think independently and hoped that the basic ideas of common sense reasoning would become accessible to all Americans. Popular common sense ideology, as formulated by these educators, also had potentially radical implications, which have yet to be sufficiently explored in the literature. Regardless of the limits placed on the conclusions at which one may arrive, an ideology that places ultimate authority upon individual reason exposes itself to attack. Most of these educators, certain in their faiths, apparently did not consider the possibly destructive implications of the kind of reasoning they supported. Had they lived to see the secularization of American society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perhaps they would have reconsidered the nature of the ideology they advocated so enthusiastically.

Chapter 2: Frederick A. Packard and Common Sense Reasoning in Protestant Evangelical Education

In 1837, the American Sunday-School Union published *The Sunday-school Teacher's Dream* by Frederick A. Packard. In this fanciful story, a Sunday school teacher who is weary of his work falls asleep and dreams he is transported to the gates of heaven, where he sees his own old Sunday school teacher waiting to enter paradise. His former teacher's prospects to enter seem dim, however, as former pupils bring charges against him. One recalls that he became terrified of "death and judgment" after the passing of a friend, but the teacher never asked him what was wrong and thus lost the chance to convert one of his pupils.[1] Another student accuses the teacher of teaching poorly: "for months and months, you heard us repeat questions to which we attached little meaning and no importance. You read, or told us a story once in a while, and sometimes explained to us the meaning of words and the reason we should do this thing and avoid that; but it was a dull and heartless round of preaching…."[2] Others whose ruined lives could have been saved by the good influence of the Sunday school teacher also come forward to condemn him. At the end of the story, the dreamer awakens in horror and returns to his Sunday-school classes with new enthusiasm and consciousness of the

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[1] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Sunday-school Teacher's Dream* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1837), 23–28.
[2] Ibid., 36–37.

importance of his work. This didactic story reveals the priorities of its author, Frederick A. Packard, who devoted much of his life to developing a system of interdenominational evangelical Sunday schools. He especially advocated teaching that would ensure that students attached both meaning and importance to their Sunday school lessons, unlike the students who accused the former Sunday school teacher in the dream.

A product of the Second Great Awakening, Frederick Packard was influenced both by revivalism and the currents of educational reform as he used his position of Secretary of the American Sunday-School Union to advocate his vision for American Sunday school education – a vision that was decidedly evangelical and largely orthodox.[3] Packard was a life-long member of the Congregational Church, which derived from Puritanism. In New England, Congregationalists had been instrumental in defining American Protestant orthodoxy for generations. By the early nineteenth century, however, orthodoxy existed along a continuum of belief. The most orthodox subscribed to traditional Calvinism, including belief in predestination, in contrast to Arminianism, which affirmed that humans had a choice in their own salvation.[4] Packard generally subscribed to Calvinist orthodoxy, but his writings imply that he did see some kind of human agency existing in the process of salvation. Other "orthodox" Protestants in the

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[3] Following the definition of David W. Bebbington, Mark Noll defines evangelicalism as emphasizing "biblicism (or reliance on the Bible as ultimate religious authority), conversionism (or an emphasis on the new birth), activism (or energetic, individualistic engagement in personal and social duties), and crucicentrism (or focus on Christ's redeeming work as the heart of true religion)." See Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

[4] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 403–4.

early nineteenth century similarly stretched the definition of orthodoxy, incorporating some elements of Arminianism.

In his work as an advocate of Sunday schools, Packard rejected thoughtless indoctrination; Sunday schooling ought to appeal to children's minds. American children first should be taught to comprehend their lessons fully, then they needed to learn to think according to the principles of the American version of common sense reasoning. This included using the moral sense and becoming skilled in the use of Baconian evidentiary reasoning, especially with respect to interpretation of the Bible. Packard believed that the use of reason was an essential tool, one of many, which young people needed to learn in order to become good Christians and productive members of society.

As Secretary of the American Sunday-School Union, Packard exerted immense influence. In 1825, just a few years before Packard began his affiliation with the organization, the ASSU offered 75 different publications for children. In 1863, just a few years before his death, the ASSU published 953 different titles. ASSU income from sales of the books similarly bloomed during his tenure as Secretary, from $10,000 in 1826 to $235,000 in 1860.[5] In the books that he published and edited while serving as Secretary, Packard consistently promoted his educational agenda, believing that only by following its tenets could Americans repair social ills and hold fast to morality in the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization.

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[5] Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 71, 85. After 1860, sales plunged because of the war, through no fault of Packard's.

The Second Great Awakening and the American Sunday-School Union

The religious revivals of the Second Great Awakening powerfully shaped Frederick Packard's career path and his views on education. The revivals arose in large part as the result of economic anxiety. As industrialization and the development of a market economy led to factory goods being made more quickly and more cheaply than they could be made by hand, the traditional family economy broke down. The severing of economic ties among apprentices, journeymen, and masters also fractured social ties, particularly those of obedience and obligation. Some who experienced displacement as a result of these changes turned to religion to make sense of the change and regain what they hoped would be a sure place in society.[6] New or newly invigorated religious movements like the Methodists, Baptists, and various restorationist groups challenged the authority of the educated clergy and called for the spiritual empowerment of ordinary Americans. As Americans' religious options multiplied, new and old churches fought fiercely for congregants, creating a competitive and diverse religious culture.[7]

The majority of American evangelicals in the early nineteenth century believed in postmillennialism, which asserted that they were currently living through the millennium as mentioned in Revelation 20 and that Christ would come again at its end. They believed that this millennium was characterized by an epic battle between God and Satan, and resolved to do battle themselves for God's cause in order to hasten the coming of

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[6] Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 64–65; Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 140.
[7] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9–11, 63, 67.

Christ.[8] These zealous activists dedicated themselves to a variety of reform causes, among them temperance, distributing Bibles across the land, and even ending slavery. Increasingly, many of those concerned about these and other social problems turned to institutional solutions, creating not only reform organizations like the American Bible Society and the American Sunday-School Union, but schools, workhouses, and asylums to address poverty and crime.[9]

Despite increasing theological options available in the early nineteenth century, Packard remained a Congregationalist as the surge of interest in religion propelled him towards reform. He demonstrated interest in several causes, including public education and prison reform, but devoted his life's work to the Sunday school. When Packard became Secretary of the American Sunday-School Union in 1829, Sunday schools had already been in existence for nearly fifty years. The first Sunday schools appeared in England in the 1780s, spreading to the United States about a decade later. Initially, they provided instruction in reading and writing to poor working children who could not attend school on any other day of the week. By the 1820s and 1830s, many more children had the opportunity to gain a basic education in the public schools, and the focus of Sunday schools shifted to religious instruction. Sunday schools came to be a religiously specific supplement to the public schools. In many areas, the organization of Sunday schools preceded the organization of churches. Existing churches also started

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[8] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49.
[9] David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum; Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 351–52, 357.

their own Sunday schools for congregants, and, thus many middle-class, as well as poor, children began to attend. In addition to instruction in the tenets of early to mid-nineteenth-century Protestant evangelicalism, Sunday schools also provided children with access to moral and religious books in the form of Sunday school libraries.[10]

Beginning in 1791 with the First Day Society in Philadelphia, like-minded reformers created societies to start, promote, and support Sunday schools in their communities.[11] Many of these organizations, such the First Day Society and the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union, dedicated themselves to serving particular communities. But in 1824, the members of the Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union voted to change the name of their society to the American Sunday-School Union and form a national organization. The ASSU also emerged in part from the agreement that had been reached in 1801 between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, who both affirmed the Westminster Confession and agreed to work together to evangelize the West.[12] The ASSU was therefore an interdenominational organization, but narrowly so. Most administrators were Presbyterians or Episcopalians, but, because of the Plan of Union of 1801, Packard, a Congregationalist, fit comfortably into the organization.[13]

The Board of the ASSU planned "'to concentrate the efforts of Sabbath-School Societies in the different sections of our country; to strengthen the hands of the friends of

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[10] Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Donald G. Davis, Jr., "'Bread Upon The Waters:' The Printed Word in Sunday Schools in 19th-Century England and the United States," in *Reading for Moral Progress: 19th Century Institutions Promoting Social Change* (Urbana-Champaign: The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1997), 7; Boylan, *Sunday School*, 6, 11–13, 16–17, 34; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 110.
[11] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 7.
[12] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 456–58.
[13] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 62–63.

religious instruction on the Lord's Day; to disseminate useful information, circulate moral and religious publications in every part of the land, and to endeavor to plant a Sunday-school wherever there is a population.'"[14] More specifically, the ASSU sought to found Sunday schools by means of missionaries dispatched to distant communities, particularly in the Mississippi Valley. The organization's founders and agents also worked to establish a network of local and regional Sunday school unions affiliated with the ASSU. Finally, the ASSU undertook a massive publishing operation, with the goals of providing American children with wholesome evangelical books and periodicals. The ASSU also worked to produce curriculum for Sunday school teachers across the country, as well as "definite information upon principles and methods of teaching."[15] In order to achieve these latter two goals, the organization relied upon the latest printing technology, stereotyping, becoming one of the most cutting-edge publishers in the early nineteenth-century United States.[16] As early as 1830, the ASSU had already printed and distributed over 6,000,000 copies of children's books.[17]

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[14] Constitution of the American Sunday-School Union, quoted in Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement, 1780-1917, and the American Sunday-School Union, 1817-1917* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), 79.
[15] Ibid., 90.
[16] David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 81. Other organizations interested in spreading the gospel, such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, also turned to print as a primary mechanism for dispensing their message in the early nineteenth century. See David Paul Nord, "Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840,* ed. Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Paul C. Gutjahr, "Diversification in American Religious Publishing," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880,* ed. Scott E. Casper, et al. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Mark S. Schantz, "Religious Tracts, Evangelical Reform, and the Market Revolution in Antebellum America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 3 (1997): 425-266; David Paul Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835," *Journalism Monographs* 88 (May 1984): 6-39.
[17] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 146.

In their efforts to publish and distribute quality publications, ASSU evangelicals drew upon familiar practices from the post-Reformation Christian tradition. Reading had long held a central place in the religious practice of reformed Christians who insisted on the centrality of Scripture in discerning the will of God and asserted that everyone should therefore have the opportunity to read the Bible in his or her own language. In Puritan New England, "literacy and religion were inseparable;" children learned to read using religious books, namely the Bible, the primer, and the catechism.[18] Reading conditioned and mediated Puritans' religious experiences as adults as well, and emphasis on the practice persisted among eighteenth-century evangelicals.[19] Early nineteenth-century evangelicals retained belief in the spiritually edifying effects of reading. Thus voluntary associations like the American Sunday-School Union, dedicated to spreading the Word of God, often did so through the distribution of godly books.[20] These books were designed to combat what evangelicals viewed as the immoral "cart-loads of printed trash" that circulated the country.[21]

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[18] David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 31–43.

[19] The conversion narrative was a particularly important form for Puritans, as well as eighteenth-century evangelicals. The latter group also voraciously read sermons, essays, and news about the revivals happening around the Atlantic World. See D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 321; Susan O'Brien, "Eighteenth-Century Publishing Networks in the First Years of Transatlantic Evangelicalism," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 38–57.

[20] Barbara Sicherman, "Ideologies and Practices of Reading," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880* ed. Scott E. Casper, et al. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 283–84.

[21] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Higher Rock* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1864), 324–25; for evangelicals, immoral literature consisted of the immensely popular dime novels and inexpensive story papers which often featured "true" crime and lurid sexuality. See Sicherman, "Ideologies and Practices of Reading," 282, 289–91; Margaret Cassidy, "'Concerning Printed Poison:' 19th Century American Adults' Ambivalence about Children's Interactions with Cheap Fiction," *The Journal of the History of Childhood*

The American Sunday-School Union chose its books carefully, establishing an interdenominational Committee of Publication to revise works that had already been published, in addition to soliciting new contributions from authors.[22] As ASSU Secretary, Packard worked with the Committee of Publication to edit up to two thousand books over the course of his career. He also authored a number of books himself (possibly up to fifty), therein revealing the doctrines, principles, and skills he believed children ought to learn. Although many of these books were published anonymously, *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* published a partial list of his publications in its index in 1871, making it possible to recover Packard's beliefs and priorities in a way that would be otherwise impossible.[23]

The Life of Frederick Adolphus Packard

Frederick Packard's life and career offer essential context for understanding his beliefs and priorities later in life. Despite his prominence in the nineteenth century, Packard has never received extensive biographical treatment, probably due in part to the lack of surviving manuscript material related to his personal life.[24] The basic outlines of

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and Youth 8, no. 2 (2015): 211–28; Paul J. Erickson, "Judging Books by Their Covers: Format, the Implied Reader, and the 'Degeneration' of the Dime Novel," *The American Transcendental Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1998): 247–62.

[22] *The Hall and the Hovel; Or, The Unequal Yoke* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, n.d.), 4.

[23] *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review: Index Volume from 1825 to 1868* (Philadelphia: Peter Walker, 1871), 266, 271.

[24] Other than his professional correspondence in the papers of the American Sunday-School Union and a very small collection of items, most of them not by Packard himself, at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, no substantial collection of his papers appears to have been preserved. Several historians studying the American Sunday school movement provided brief biographies, including Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*; Boylan, *Sunday School*; As a result of his correspondence with Horace Mann, Packard received cursory treatment in several Mann biographies, but such examinations tend to be dismissive and incomplete. Raymond Culver portrayed Packard as an unprincipled antagonist picking a fight with Mann

his career are readily discernable because of his professional prominence, but a lack of surviving personal papers makes the recovery of his personal life and his motivations challenging.

On September 26, 1794, he was born Adolphus Frederick Packard in Marlborough, Massachusetts to a minister, Reverend Asa Packard, and his wife, Nancy Quincy.[25] On both sides of his family, he traced his ancestry back to some of the first Puritan families to settle in New England.[26] Frederick Packard's father, Asa, had graduated from Harvard in 1783 and entered the ministry in Marlborough two years later. Throughout Asa Packard's career, which spanned the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, the Congregational establishment in Massachusetts became increasingly divided. Orthodox Calvinists believed in predestination, while liberal Arminians thought that salvation resulted from both human choice and God's grace.[27] On some issues, apparently, Asa Packard's theology had liberal, even Arminian, tendencies, although he

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for the selfish purpose of selling ASSU books. See Raymond B. Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools* (1929; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 55-82; Louise Hall Tharp unfairly characterized Packard as "one of the most persistent, unscrupulous and sharp-dealing book agents that ever lived!" who acted "with all the virulence of a madmen." See Louise Hall Tharp, *Until Victory: Horace Mann and Mary Peabody* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 147, 149.

[25] "Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011), Original Data: Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Vital and Town Records (Provo, UT: Holbrook Research Institute [Jay and Delene Holbrook]), www.ancestry.com.

[26] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 174.

[27] Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25; Nathan S. Rives, "'Is Not This a Paradox?' Public Morality and the Unitarian Defense of State-Supported Religion in Massachusetts, 1806–1833," *The New England Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 237; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 127–56.

seems to have become more orthodox as he aged.[28] At times, both Arminians and orthodox considered him one of their own.[29]

After attending an uncle's school in Wiscasset, Maine, Frederick Packard, like his father, attended Harvard, graduating in 1814.[30] Harvard had been founded by orthodox Puritans, but, by the early nineteenth century, had become divided between Trinitarians, often orthodox Calvinists, and Unitarians, who had Arminian sympathies. The death of Professor David Tappan, an orthodox Trinitarian, and the appointment of Henry Ware, a Unitarian, in his place meant that the Unitarians triumphed in gaining control of the institution.[31] According to the minister who memorialized his life, Frederick Packard found himself attracted to Arminian theology as a young man, perhaps due to his father's influences as well as his time at Harvard.[32] The fundamentals of Scottish common sense philosophy, especially the ideas of Thomas Reid, which formed the basis of Harvard's curriculum in moral philosophy, also clearly had a lasting effect upon Packard.[33] These two influences – common sense philosophy and Arminianism – seem to have influenced his views on the extent to which young people ought to be allowed to reason independently. By combining obedience and memorization with an emphasis on understanding and common sense reasoning, the educational theory Packard later

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[28] Bradford Kingman, *History of North Bridgewater: Plymouth County, Massachusetts, from Its First Settlement to the Present Time, with Family Registers* (Boston: Bradford Kingman, 1866), 142–44.
[29] Ibid., 144.
[30] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 174.
[31] Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 4; Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1955), 274–80.
[32] Rev. George H. Griffin, *Frederick A. Packard: A Memorial Discourse Given in the First Church, Springfield, Sunday Evening, October 19, 1890* (Philadelphia: Collins Printing House, 1890), 6–7.
[33] Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 27–36.

developed reflected the tension between orthodox and liberal views that he experienced firsthand in his youth. His advocacy of reasoning autonomy on the part of young people within the bounds of orthodoxy represented an accommodation of the two perspectives.

Ultimately, Packard did not follow the path of his father to the ministry, but instead studied law in Northampton, Massachusetts with Ashmun and Strong, passed the bar, and opened a professional legal practice in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1817, where he pledged to carry out his clients' business "with fidelity and promptness."[34] In February 1818, he received approval to legally change his name to Frederick Adolphus Packard, although he appears to have been using that name rather than his birth name for at least several years prior.[35]

In October 1819, Packard became editor of the *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal* in Springfield.[36] About a month afterwards, he commented at some length on education. Like many other Americans of his class and professional status at that time, he felt compelled to participate in the improvement of society. Packard appeared to have believed that the betterment of society would speed the coming of Christ – he viewed

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[34] Ibid., 175; *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review: Index Volume*, 265; "Notice," *Hampden Federalist*, September 4, 1817; Frederick A. Packard, "Notice," *Hampden Federalist*, September 11, 1817; Frederick Packard had only one brother who might have followed in his father's footsteps, but he, named Asa like his father, apparently did not become a minister either. An Asa Packard, who appears to be Frederick's brother based on his age and location, was listed as a "laborer" in the 1850 census. See "1850 United States Federal Census" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009), Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C., www.ancestry.com

[35] "Massachusetts Name Changes, 1780-1892" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 1998), Original data: Massachusetts State Government List of Persons Whose Names Have Been Changed in Massachusetts, 1780-1892 (Boston, 1893), www.ancestry.com.

[36] "New Arrangements," *Hampden Patriot*, October 7, 1819; Griffin, *Frederick A. Packard: A Memorial Discourse*, 6.

reform efforts as "the harbinger of millennial glory."[37] Packard revealed as early as 1819 that he was cognizant of the importance of shaping children's characters at a very young age: "It is on the play-green and at the school-bench that the germ of character is set into the mind…Here the existence and tendency of qualities may be observed – habits fixed, changed, or eradicated – praiseworthy conduct applauded and vicious acts reproved – and thus the whole character, so far as human means can affect it, may be completely re-formed."[38] Packard also explained that children ought to be taught to be obedient so that they would reap the positive benefits of school attendance and grow up to be virtuous individuals.

In December 1819, Packard's editorial in the *Hampden Federalist* consisted of end-of-year reflections on the current state of society. Among other developments, he mentioned an increase in Sunday schools by which "a herd of neglected and perishing children have been rescued from ignorance and wretchedness and furnished with the means of eternal life."[39] In May 1820, Packard announced the reopening of the Sunday school in Springfield and used the occasion as an opportunity to expound upon the virtues of Sunday schools and address some of the objections critics leveled against them. He concluded that "we feel that every effort to impart soundness and vigor to the moral constitution of society is virtuous and laudable – that such efforts when directed to the

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[37] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, December 29, 1819. Like many of his evangelical contemporaries, Packard is probably speaking literally here, referring to living in the midst of the millennium as foretold in the book of Revelation.
[38] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, November 10, 1819.
[39] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, December 29, 1819. Sunday schools were multiplying rapidly across the nation in the early nineteenth century. See Boylan, *Sunday School*; Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 44–47.

docile and susceptible mind of a child are most permanent and most sensibly felt."[40] When Springfield's Sunday school needed to be re-established two years later, Packard wrote in wholehearted support that "the advantages resulting from these institutions are too obvious for recital and too well attested to require evidence."[41] Clearly, starting in 1819 at the latest, Packard believed passionately in the benefits of Sunday schools.[42]

Yet he had not always felt that way. In 1826, he wrote that, although he currently supported Sunday schools, "within a very few years," his opinions had been "as strong and inveterate against this mode of instruction as those of any of its present opponents."[43] Packard did not chronicle the reasons for his change of heart, but he may have subscribed to the belief, as did many in the early nineteenth century, that young children could not experience conversion or have real spiritual encounters. If Packard did hold this view, he clearly changed his mind, as did many Americans faced with evidence amassed by Sunday school advocates. They affirmed that children did have religious experiences, and indeed might be even more susceptible to religion than adults.[44] In his advocacy of Sunday schools, Packard might also have been influenced by his future wife, Elizabeth Hooker, and her father, Judge John Hooker, who was active in evangelical reform, including promoting and teaching at Sunday schools.[45]

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[40] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, May 24, 1820.
[41] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, May 15, 1822.
[42] For additional commentary by Packard on matters related to Sunday schools, see *Hampden Journal & Advertiser,* June 8, 1825, April 18, 1827, August 1, 1827, June 25, 1828, and July 23, 1828.
[43] *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, April 26, 1826.
[44] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 142–43; Anne M. Boylan, "Sunday Schools and Changing Evangelical Views of Children in the 1820s," *Church History* 48, no. 3 (1979): 320–33.
[45] "Memoir of the Hon. John Hooker, of Springfield, Mass.," in *The Quarterly Christian Spectator*, vol. I (New Haven: A.H. Maltby, 1829), 307–12. Hooker, who served as a Trustee of the Massachusetts Domestic Missionary Society and on the Board of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign

Packard's first editorship of the *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal* was brief. He gave up the position of editor at the end of 1822. The paper passed into the hands of William Wood and Edwin Lyman as *The Federalist and Journal*.[46] This venture failed; Packard resumed editorship of the paper, now called the *Hampden Journal & Advertiser,* by August 1823.[47] In his second term as editor, Packard demonstrated an even greater interest in education, sustaining his interest in Sunday schools and beginning to comment extensively on public schools as well.[48] He left the paper permanently at the end of 1828.[49] In his last comment to his readers, he wrote that he was glad he had been able "to awaken publick [sic] attention to the deficiencies of popular education" during his tenure as editor.[50] Throughout his career, Packard's interest in education would not be limited to Sunday schools, although they absorbed most of his attention.

As Packard practiced law and edited a newspaper, he also started a family and joined a church. In May 1822, Packard married Elizabeth Dwight Hooker in Springfield.[51] The Packards' first child, John Hooker, was born there on January 20,

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Missions, may have facilitated his son-in-law's entrée into the world of reform. See *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1828…* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, and James Loring, n.d.), 150; "Memoir of the Hon. John Hooker, of Springfield, Mass.," 307–12.

[46] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, December 25, 1822.

[47] Library of Congress, "About Hampden Journal," n.d., http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83020696/.

[48] *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, April 21, 1824; *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, December 1, 1824; *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, December 15, 1824. For other instances in which Packard discussed public education in his paper, see *Hampden Journal & Advertiser,* November 28, 1821, February 20, 1822, November 24, 1824, December 1, 1824, December 8, 1824, June 19, 1825, July 27, 1825, August 24, 1825, December 14, 1825, December 21, 1825, May 17, 1826, August 2, 1826, February 21, 1827, and May 7, 1828.

[49] *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, August 28, 1828.

[50] *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, December 31, 1828.

[51] Charles Wells Chapin, *Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield of the Present Century, And Its Historic Mansions of "Ye Olden Tyme"* (Springfield, MA: Press of Springfield Printing and Binding Company, 1893), 295.

1827, but died tragically two years later.[52] Son Frederick Packard was born in 1828 in Springfield, while the latter three children, Mary Hooker, John Hooker (named after his deceased brother), and Lewis Richard, were born in Philadelphia.[53]

Although Packard apparently regarded "*the religion of Christ*" highly at least from the beginning of his tenure at the *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal,* he hesitated to place his membership with a local congregation.[54] He arrived in Springfield in 1817, but waited until May of 1826 to join the First Congregational Church.[55] Rev. Dr. Samuel Osgood, who would become a noted abolitionist, served as pastor of the congregation. Several years before Packard joined, Osgood precipitated a split between orthodox and Unitarian members, finalized in 1820 when some former members of the First Congregational Church (including Packard's future wife's mother's family, the Dwights) started a Unitarian society. As justification, they claimed that "the tenor of [Osgood's] ministrations had changed since he preached as a candidate."[56] This suggests that, like Packard, Osgood had Unitarian leanings, but later returned to orthodoxy.

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[52] Benjamin Woodbridge Dwight, *The History of the Descendants of John Dwight, of Dedham, Mass* (New York: J. F. Trow & Son, 1874), 847.

[53] Mary, John, and Lewis were born in 1830, 1832, and 1836, respectively. Edmund West, "Family Data Collection - Births" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2001), www.ancestry.com; "1860 U.S. Census, Philadelphia, PA, Ward 8 Roll: M653_1158; Page: 6; Image: 10; Family History Library Film: 805158, 1860 United States Federal Census" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009), Original Data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d., www.ancestry.com; "New York, Find A Grave Index, 1660-2012" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012), Original Data: Find A Grave, http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi, www.ancestry.com.

[54] *Hampden Federalist & Public Journal*, October 6, 1819.

[55] Packard joined the church with his wife. He had apparently not been a member of any church prior to 1826. *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review: Index Volume*, 269; Chapin, *Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield of the Present Century*, 294; Frederick A. Packard, "To My Children," Papers Concerning His Illness and Death, n.d., Ms. P12, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[56] Chapin, *Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield of the Present Century*, 291–94.

Osgood may have been a significant theological influence on Packard, especially if, as he probably did, Packard attended First Congregational Church services well before he joined the congregation. Packard remained a member of the First Congregational Church of Springfield for the rest of his life, even after he relocated to Philadelphia.[57]

While in Springfield, Packard also served briefly in the Massachusetts state legislature (1828-29).[58] He would have traveled to Boston for sessions between May 28 and June 12, 1828, and between January 7 and March 4, 1829, although he may have been suddenly called back to Springfield at the death of his son in January 1829.[59] By the time Packard was elected, Federalist influence had declined precipitously in Massachusetts politics; he would most likely have been a National Republican who supported John Quincy Adams in 1824 and 1828, as were many former Federalists.[60] Given the fact that a significant majority of Springfield's voters supported the Adams/National Republican candidate for governor in 1828, 1829, and 1830, Packard likely could have been re-elected to the General Court had he chosen to run again.[61] So he probably decided on his own to abandon his nascent career in law and politics.

Packard's turn from law and politics to education was neither abrupt nor unexpected. He had long demonstrated interest in the Christian education of young

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[57] Packard, "To My Children," Papers Concerning His Illness and Death.
[58] Francis S. Drake, *Dictionary of American Biography* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Company, 1872), 680; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1829…* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, and James Loring, n.d.), 27.
[59] Dwight, *The History of the Descendants of John Dwight*, 847.
[60] Paul Goodman, *Towards a Christian Republic: Antimasonry and the Great Transition in New England, 1826-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 152.
[61] Election returns for governor's race in Springfield in 1827, 1828, and 1829, Edward Thomas Massachusetts Political Database, State Library of Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts. The percentages in favor of Adams/National Republican Levi Lincoln were 78.3% (1828), 86.2% (1829), and 62.2% (1830).

people, as evidenced by his musings in the *Federalist.* In 1827, he became superintendent of the Springfield Congregational Sunday school and visited Philadelphia in May of the next year for the anniversary meeting of the American Sunday-School Union.[62] There Packard met the men who ran the organization. Its president, Alexander Henry, was a well-off Irish Presbyterian immigrant who had made his money in mercantile pursuits.[63] Other social and political leaders served as vice presidents of the organization, including Charles Chauncey, prominent Philadelphia attorney, Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, attorney, future senator, and future vice presidential candidate, Stephen Van Rensselaer, wealthy New York landlord and politician, Gerrit Smith, New York philanthropist and future abolitionist, Bushrod Washington, nephew of the former President and U.S. Supreme Court justice, and Nicholas Brown, Rhode Island merchant and patron of higher education.[64] A total of twenty-nine men served the organization as Vice Presidents, and thirty-six more acted as managers.[65] Most of the men, like Packard, were at least middling in economic status, if not wealthy. Most of them practiced either the Presbyterian or Episcopalian faith, joined the Whig party once it formed, and volunteered their time for other reform activities in the community as well.[66] They also likely had a basic understanding of the American version of common sense

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[62] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 175; *The Fourth Report of the American Sunday-School Union* (Philadelphia: I. Ashmead, 1828), xiii.
[63] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 96.
[64] On Chauncey and Frelinghuysen, see Drake, *Dictionary of American Biography*, 179, 341; on Van Rensselaer, see John L. Brooke, *Columbia Rising: Civil Life on the Upper Hudson from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early America History and Culture, 2010), 85–86, 88, 291; on Smith, see Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 132; on Washington, see Drake, *Dictionary of American Biography*, 959; on Brown, see ibid., 132–133.
[65] *The Fourth Report of the American Sunday-School Union*, xxx–xxxi.
[66] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 62–64.

reasoning, which they had probably picked up at college, where Scottish common sense philosophy dominated reading lists.[67]

Frederick Packard apparently impressed the benevolence-minded men who led the American Sunday-School Union. They sent manager Joseph H. Dulles to offer him the position of recording secretary and publications editor.[68] Packard's reform-minded father-in-law, John Hooker, might also have put in a good word for him with the Officers and Managers of ASSU. At least five members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, of which Hooker was also an active member, served as officers or managers of the ASSU in 1828.[69] An early historian of the Sunday school movement wrote that Packard had to devote "thoughtful and prayerful" consideration to the decision to abandon "bright prospects and an assured income as a lawyer" in favor of "an untried work, on a limited income." Although Packard himself did not leave a record of his thoughts as he made the decision, he seems to have resolved that the opportunity had come from God.[70] He accepted the position in 1828, and Rev. George H. Griffin later wrote that Packard engaged in this new endeavor "in the consciousness of a divine commission."[71]

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[67] Henry Farnham May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 347–48.
[68] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 98.
[69] The five common members of both organizations were John Tappan, Theodore Frelinghuysen, Stephen Van Rensselaer, William Reed, and Charles Marsh. See *The Fourth Report of the American Sunday-School Union*, xxx–xxxi; *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, 5th ed. (Boston: The Board, 1862), 408–13.
[70] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 175.
[71] Griffin, *Frederick A. Packard: A Memorial Discourse*, 8. In his final editorial in the *Hampden Journal & Advertiser* in December of 1828, Packard observed that in a few months he would "enter upon a course of labor" involving education, although he did not state specifically that he was referring to the position with the American Sunday-School Union. See *Hampden Journal & Advertiser,* December 31, 1828.

Early in 1829, Packard moved to Philadelphia. His wife joined him in the autumn, perhaps remaining in Springfield to take care of family affairs following the death of her father, John Hooker, in March.[72] In May, Frederick Packard was listed as "Recording Secretary" in the Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union.[73] Packard joined the ASSU's other full-time employee, Frederick W. Porter, the "Corresponding Secretary," who was a former New York merchant and newspaper editor also with roots in Massachusetts. Packard and Porter conducted most of the ASSU's business until 1857 when administrators realized that Porter had embezzled $88,000 from ASSU accounts. Packard was not involved in the illicit financial dealings, but he suffered indirectly from the effects of the scandal, which precipitated conflict in the organization. New administrators fired him in 1860, but they soon rehired him as "Corresponding Secretary," Porter's old position, which Packard held almost until his death in 1867.[74]

Like many nineteenth-century reformers, Packard did not limit his benevolent efforts to the American Sunday-School Union. He also served on the Board of Directors of Girard College, a philanthropic institution dedicated to the education of destitute boys in Philadelphia.[75] Due to Packard's "ripe experience and genial personality,"

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[72] Packard, "To My Children," Papers Concerning His Illness and Death; Chapin, *Sketches of the Old Inhabitants and Other Citizens of Old Springfield of the Present Century*, 220, 223.
[73] *The Fifth Report of the American Sunday-School Union* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1829).
[74] Ibid.; Boylan, *Sunday School*, 62, 67, 84; *The Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1861), 5; Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 174–77; Frederick A. Packard, Papers Concerning His Illness and Death, n.d., Ms. P12, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
[75] "U.S. School Catalogs, 1765-1935" (Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012), Original Data: Educational Institutions, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, www.ancestry.com.

representatives of Girard College twice invited him to become its President, but he declined both times in order to continue his work with the ASSU.[76] Packard also took an interest in public education and prison reform. He published several articles and pamphlets on the topics, as well as editing the *Journal of Prison Discipline*.[77] Packard shared this interest in both preventative and correctional means of improving society with many other nineteenth-century reformers.

Also like many of his fellow reformers, Packard was a member of an active trans-Atlantic Protestant evangelical network. He traded ideas with European reformers and traveled to Britain in 1840.[78] Packard met with Sunday school administrators in Britain, giving a number of addresses "on Sunday school subjects" and even preaching in several churches.[79] He corresponded with at least one of the friends he made in Britain, W. H. Watson, almost until his own death in 1867.[80] Perpetually interested in advancing the cause of reform, Packard also visited hospitals and prisons in England, Scotland, and France during his time in Europe and produced a pamphlet of his observations.[81]

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[76] Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 176.
[77] [Frederick A. Packard], *A Vindication of the Separate System of Prison Discipline from the Misrepresentations of the North American Review, July, 1839* (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1839); [Frederick A. Packard], *The Daily Public School in the United States* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1866); [Frederick A. Packard], *Thoughts on the Condition and Prospects of Popular Education in the United States* (Philadelphia: A. Waldie, 1836); *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review: Index Volume*, 267.
[78] The Progressive transatlantic reform network Daniel T. Rodgers describes in *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998) was nothing new. Packard was one of many reformers with transatlantic connections. See also Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 223, 278.
[79] *The Sunday School Teacher: A Magazine of Essays, Lessons, Illustrative Material, Educational Notes, and Intelligence, Vol. I* (London: Sunday School Union, 1868), 55–56.
[80] Ibid., 58.
[81] [Frederick A. Packard], *Memorandum of a Late Visit to Some of the Principal Hospitals, Prisons, &c. in France, Scotland, and England: Embraced in a Letter to the Acting Committee of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons* (Philadelphia: E. G. Dorsey, 1840).

The later years of Packard's life brought trials. Both his wife and eldest son, Frederick, died of tuberculosis within a few days of each other in July of 1862.[82] In August of 1866, Packard underwent surgery to remove a cancerous tumor from his lip, which did not heal. He suffered discomfort when speaking and eating over the course of the next year, as the cancer persisted, and most likely spread.[83] During his final illness, he dictated a letter to his son Lewis intended for the Board of Officers and Managers of the ASSU, requesting that upon his death "they will kindly omit any public proceedings or other external testimonies of regard." He desired to "pass to my burial place among the dead without any other tokens of respect than would be paid to the humblest and most obscure citizen."[84]

During his final illness, Packard also wrote or dictated a letter to a former Sunday school pupil named Mary. He told her that he considered her "in some sense a child of mine" and asked her to communicate a message to the other members of their class:

> I wish them to understand thro' you that my views of truth & duty into which I attempted to lead you are unchanged and now that I am drawing very near to the Eternal world of whose scenes & occupations we have often spoken. The Infinite value of the Christian hope assumes importance that it never had before & if I had

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[82] "Death Certificate of Eliz. D Packard, 15 July 1862," "Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803-1915," index and images, FamilySearch, accessed October 27, 2014, https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/JKSZ-BML; "Death Certificate of Frederick Packard," July 18, 1862, "Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803-1915," index and images, FamilySearch, https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/JKSZ-BML; "Registration of Death of Frederick Packard," July 18, 1862, "Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803-1915," index and images, FamilySearch, https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/VKDM-T8Z.

[83] Frederick A. Packard to W.H. Watson, May 29, 1867, in *The Sunday School Teacher: A Magazine of Essays, Lessons, Illustrative Material, Educational Notes, and Intelligence, Vol. I* (London: Sunday School Union, 1868), 58.

[84] Frederick A. Packard to the Board of Officers and Managers of the American Sunday-School Union, July 6, 1867, quoted in "Obituary for Frederick A. Packard," *Sunday-School World* 7, no. 12 (December 1867): 1.

> my Class around me at this moment I should say I pray you to determine each one for herself to know nothing but Jesus Christ & him crucified.[85]

Frederick Adolphus Packard died on November 11, 1867.[86] After his death, the obituaries highlighted his best qualities, characterizing him as "much respected" and one of "God's dear servants."[87] A number of his peers also noted that he possessed great "modesty and humility," traits which are evident in the fact that he was very reluctant to allow his name to appear on his publications.[88] The *New York Times* observed that "no one has exerted a larger or more beneficial influence on the juvenile literature and the children of the country."[89] Packard's immense influence on Sunday school education – and his advocacy of common sense reasoning – may be traced through the books he wrote for Sunday school teachers and pupils.

Views on Education and Theology

The publications of the American Sunday-School Union reflected the assumptions about religion and education held by its officers and employees, including Frederick Packard. These assumptions shaped the type of reasoning skills Packard advocated. Although the focus here, and in Packard's life work, remains Sunday school education, Packard's writings about public education also reveal that he believed nearly identical educational strategies should be employed in public schools as well. Both his books for

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[85] Frederick A. Packard to Mary, n.d., Ms. P12, Papers Concerning His Illness and Death, Presbyterian Historial Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
[86] "Obituary for Frederick A. Packard," *Sunday-School World* 7, no. 12 (December 1867): 1.
[87] "Obituary for Frederick A. Packard," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 12, 1867; Griffin, *Frederick A. Packard: A Memorial Discourse*, 6.
[88] "Obituary for Frederick A. Packard," *Sunday-School World* 7, no. 12 (December 1867): 1.
[89] "Obituary for Frederick A. Packard," *New York Times*, November 12, 1867.

children and his books for teachers also demonstrate consistency with regards to his theology and the educational strategies he promoted.

The American Sunday-School Union's Committee of Publication was dedicated to ensuring that its publications were compatible with the teachings of all evangelical denominations.[90] As evangelicals, the administrators of the ASSU believed that the Bible provided the foundation for their faith, that individuals should undergo an experience of conversion in their spiritual journeys, that the redemption offered by Christ's death on the cross ought to be the primary message of faith, and that God had called them to spread the gospel in their communities.[91] The formal doctrinal basis of the ASSU also called for belief in "the lost state of man by nature, and his exposure to endless punishment in a future world," as well as salvation "only by the free, sovereign and sustaining grace of God, through the atonement and merits of a divine Redeemer, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit."[92]

Packard shared these views. Basic to his understanding of the human condition was the idea that all people were depraved and sinful by nature: "The little stranger-child brings into the world with him a moral nature alienated from the will and government of a holy God," he wrote.[93] He also believed that Sunday school teachers should not minimize or conceal this truth from their students: "spread before Sunday-school children…the extreme, untold sin, wretchedness and degradation of the great mass of

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[90] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 62–63.
[91] Noll, *America's God*, 564–65.
[92] American Sunday-School Union Acts of Incorporation, Section 2, quoted in Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement*, 80.
[93] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Teacher Teaching: A Practical View of the Relations and Duties of the Sunday-School Teacher* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1861), 24.

mankind."[94] In order to understand the extent of God's mercy, children needed first to comprehend their own depravity.

Yet Packard cautioned teachers to refrain from terrifying students. They needed to understand how sinful they were, but they also needed to be offered hope in the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ: "There must be a warm and tender sympathy mingled with our instructions of children."[95] He did not provide concrete advice as to how to avoid frightening children with the consciousness of their own sin and punishment if they did not repent, but firmly stated that the emphasis ought to be on "the abounding mercy of God in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ."[96] Reconciling such a dichotomy in a way that would be encouraging to children might seem challenging, but Packard conceived of suffering and redemption as two necessary components of the relationship of God with humanity. According to Packard, salvation could not be attained without a consciousness of one's undeserving and errant nature.[97] Packard stood by this old understanding of original sin and infant depravity in spite of some educators who were beginning to abandon it in the early nineteenth century. These liberal Christians held that children were in fact born innocent and good, or at least morally neutral.[98]

Frederick Packard remained steadfast in the belief in infant depravity. But, with respect to another issue, his theology drifted away from orthodoxy. His Puritan ancestors

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[94] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Great Aim of the Sunday-School Teacher* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1843), 116.
[95] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 272.
[96] Ibid.
[97] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 234.
[98] Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 76–77, 81.

believed in predestination – that God had preordained each individual to be either saved or damned and that nothing a person did could change his fate. But in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, more evangelicals, including Packard, began to acknowledge that human choice played a crucial role in salvation.[99] Packard believed that children had the ability to choose evil or goodness – sin or salvation – and that their decisions would determine their eternal fates. Packard advised Sunday school teachers, when approaching a pupil, to think, "Here is a creature before me, fearfully and wonderfully made…Two paths are before him, - one narrow but safe, and leading to life eternal; the other attractive and broad, ending in a fathomless abyss of darkness. I am to <u>persuade</u> him, if possible, to enter upon the former and shun the latter…"[100] For a strict Calvinist, no amount of persuasion on the part of a religious teacher could change the fate of a pupil. For Packard, a child's fate was not predetermined; her own actions and choice of whether to accept or reject salvation would determine her experience in eternity. As Packard told a stubborn student in an imaginary dialogue, "It is [God's] pleasure that you should love and serve him, and so be happy, but *he leaves it to your choice*."[101] Packard did acknowledge that an individual could not facilitate salvation alone, either in oneself or in others; God's grace was still necessary. Yet his appeals to Sunday-school teachers reveal

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[99] A prominent example of a Calvinist who adopted a theology incorporating human agency was Lyman Beecher. See James W. Fraser, *Pedagogue for God's Kingdom: Lyman Beecher and the Second Great Awakening* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 56, 61–62; in addition, one historiographical school argues that Congregationalists were able to persist in New England "only because they surrendered their Edwardsean Calvinist principles and became as Arminian as their foes." See Richard Rabinowitz, *The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life: The Transformation of Personal Religious Experience in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), xxvi. See also Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class,* 69.

[100] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 175.

[101] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 74.

that he believed so strongly in the possibility of human efforts to prompt conversion that he suggested teachers should think about their efforts as if they *could* singlehandedly prompt such spiritual changes in their pupils. "Thus the teacher…must teach the truth which he discerns…with as much diligence and effort as if he was the *agent* instead of the *instrument* by which it is made effectual to the salvation of dying souls."[102] Children had the power to choose, and teachers had the power to lead them to favor one choice over the other. This emphasis on individual agency would prove influential to Packard's interest in encouraging comprehension and common sense reasoning in the Sunday school.

Frederick Packard was an administrator and advocate of Sunday school and public school education, but he also served in the ranks of Sunday-school teachers. He dedicated much of his energy to encouraging fellow Christians to serve as Sunday-school teachers and to improving the quality of instruction. In his didactic stories for children and books of advice for Sunday-school teachers, Frederick Packard combined both conservative and liberal impulses with no sense of incongruity. He advocated the cultivation of children's understanding even while using traditional methods like memorization and recitation, and he also supported the development of children's moral sense and, for older students, Baconian evidential reasoning.

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[102] [Packard], *The Great Aim of the Sunday-School Teacher*, 58–59.

Comprehension

In June 1825, thirty-year-old Frederick A. Packard, still lawyer and newspaper editor in Springfield, Massachusetts, offered his musings on education in the editorial column of his paper, the *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*. He observed that, rather than forcing children to memorize rules that they did not understand, "the *earliest* efforts should be directed to the *understanding*…The mere committing to memory an additional rule of grammar or arithmetic, does not increase a child's knowledge; it is like committing the same number of words in an unknown tongue."[103] Even before he became an educator himself, Packard recognized that comprehension, not rote memorization, ought to be the goal of education

Packard did continue to value the traditional practice of the memorization of Scripture, a practice that had long been considered important. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England youth often listened to, memorized, and recited texts before they were able to read them for themselves.[104] Packard enthusiastically advocated memorization and suggested that Sunday school teachers should assign appropriate passages of Scripture to children. Yet he was quick to affirm that Scriptures should not only be memorized; they should also be understood.[105] According to Packard, when a student recited Scripture from memory with mistakes revealing misunderstanding, "the child is profaning the day and word of God by the worse than useless employment of his

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[103] *Hampden Journal & Advertiser*, June 19, 1825.
[104] Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 55–59.
[105] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Teacher Taught: An Humble Attempt to Make the Path of the Sunday-School Teacher Straight and Plain*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1861), 262.

time and breath."[106] Packard was likely writing in opposition to some nineteenth-century educators who fixated on memorization, believing that it helped instill mental discipline, sometimes to the detriment of students' ability to comprehend the texts that they "read" and recited. A British observer, James Fraser, commented in the 1860s that American children tended to learn to read mechanically, without much attention to meaning.[107] Packard recognized this tendency, observing that "a good reader," by which he meant one who fully comprehended the words he read, "is almost as rare as an honest politician."[108]

Packard acknowledged that teachers were often to blame for their students' lack of understanding. He pointed out that the difficulties in reading the Bible were not limited to young people: "The great difficulty with most people in reading the Bible is, that they do not inquire. Their ideas are so vague, their vision is so dim and so obscured by mists, that they can see no objects distinctly, much less state their ideas; and if difficulties occur to them they cannot say exactly what they are."[109] In cases like these, when teachers themselves did not display the "ingenuity or confidence" to teach Scripture lessons in ways that made them understandable to their pupils, Packard recommended that children be asked to repeat the passage back in their own words.[110] Such an exercise

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[106] Ibid., 293.
[107] As cited in Daniel Calhoun, *The Intelligence of a People* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), 81; For more on the problems with rote memorization in the nineteenth-century U.S. and its effects on children's intelligence, see Calhoun, *Intelligence of a People*, 70-133 and Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 269–324.
[108] [Packard], *The Daily Public School in the United States*, 133; See also [Packard], *Thoughts on the Condition and Prospects of Popular Education in the United States*, 13.
[109] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 290.
[110] Ibid., 301–2, 277.

would at least initiate the process of helping young people discern meaning in words that otherwise would be blindly memorized and recited.

Packard also maintained tradition in his advocacy of the use of the catechism. Catechizing in the Protestant tradition had a long history in England and on the Continent, beginning just after the Reformation. In its simplest form, catechizing was the act of instructing another in the basics of the faith, typically using questions and answers.[111] Puritan reformers brought the practice to New England in the seventeenth century, often requiring children to memorize answers to catechetical questions before they could understand what they meant.[112]

Packard agreed that the catechism was an effective way to teach religious truth. The catechism "addressed the mind," "engaged the heart," and "unfolded the whole plan of salvation."[113] It provided children with essential knowledge about the history of their faith and their relationship to God and fellow human beings. As with memorization of Scripture, Packard firmly asserted that children needed to gain an understanding of the questions and answers in the catechism, not just memorize them. The catechism did "not exhaust itself in words and phrases said by rote."[114] In fact, a catechism or question book was "inadequate" for truly fostering a student's understanding.[115] Teachers should ask their students questions beyond the catechism, while still retaining the question-and-answer style of instruction. These additional questions should "arrest attention and lead

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[111] Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1–2, 13.
[112] Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 37.
[113] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 279–80.
[114] Ibid.
[115] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 207.

to something more than an effort of memory."[116] Packard offered an example. A child might be able to tell her teacher who Adam's wife was, but if she could not identify Eve's husband then the meaning of that particular lesson was lost on her. With judicious questioning, a good teacher ought to be able to supplement catechisms in order to develop understanding in his or her pupils.

In *The Teacher Teaching*, Packard included specific guidelines for these additional questions that teachers should ask as supplements to the catechism. Teachers should not use words identical to those used in the Scripture passage, presumably because that would encourage children to simply parrot back the answer based on their memory of the passage. They also should not reveal information in their questions; if a particular point was necessary to understand the question, then it should first be established by inquiring of the class. Questions ought to be specific. By no means should teachers encourage guessing. According to Packard, guessing was a "mischievous practice" because it encouraged children to attempt to answer without thinking.[117] He also suggested that teachers avoid yes or no questions because they were difficult to ask without leading the student to one answer or the other. In general, questions should make children reflect upon and ponder the answers: "A question which challenges no mental exertion whatever, and does not make the learner think, is worth nothing."[118] Although historians have sometimes characterized learning the catechism as repetitive and tedious – indeed, as worse than useless in developing thinking skills – Packard viewed

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[116] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 281.
[117] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 217–19.
[118] Ibid., 220–21.

catechetical questioning as an exercise that would prompt young people to think and eventually lead to more advanced reasoning.[119]

Although Packard advocated the use of catechisms, he recommended that teachers not use catechetical books themselves during the lesson. The teacher might use them ahead of time to prepare for class, but their use during lessons had "a chilling and depressing effect" and gave "a sluggish, mechanical look to the whole proceeding."[120] The teacher ought to ask questions of the students from his or her own mind, adapting them according to the direction of the conversation and the needs of the class. Such a strategy required substantial preparation on the part of the instructor, but Packard believed that it was necessary to achieve his goal for questioning in the Sunday school classroom. He wrote that "it ought to set the learners thinking…promote activity and energy on their parts, and…arouse the whole mental faculty into action, instead of blindly cultivating the memory at the expense of the higher intellectual powers."[121] Packard believed that such intellectual activity on the part of students would enable them to seek and find truth for themselves rather than simply absorbing it from their teacher. He acknowledged that it might be difficult to motivate children to engage with their teachers in this way and put forth the necessary additional effort, but he repeated a strategy from

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[119] Packard's explanation of the ideal use of catechism in the Sunday school classroom powerfully belies the historiographical argument that nineteenth-century educators encouraged rote memorization without any attention to meaning. Individual instructors may have found it difficult to foster student thinking by means of the catechism, but Packard clearly valued such an end and believed that it could be done.

[120] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 223–24; Packard criticized textbooks used in public schools for similar reasons. "They leave scarcely an opening for his [the teacher's] ingenuity…instead of leaving upon the teacher, where it belongs, the task of framing questions and adapting them to the constantly shifting attitudes of the pupil's mind, it is all mechanically arranged, so that the teacher's duty is discharged when he has done what *his* teacher - the author - tells him to do." See [Packard], *The Daily Public School in the United States*, 36–37.

[121] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 228.

an unnamed educator: "'I find it necessary…to use many inducements to overcome this reluctance to thinking…I succeed best by asking questions which they are sure to answer, and then proceeding gradually to questions of greater difficulty…if they will but think for themselves, I always encourage them, - being persuaded that they will improve their minds by exercise, and that this early habit of reflection is the basis of all future improvement.'"[122] Such a spirit was at the heart of Packard's belief in the importance of comprehension, which was the first step in developing common sense reasoning.

Affections and the Moral Sense

Frederick Packard called for teachers to help children develop a moral sense much like that called for by Scottish common sense philosophers Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Reid.[123] According to their formulations, the moral sense existed in every individual as a guide to right and wrong. As Packard constructed it, the moral sense also demonstrated the influence of sensibility, or "the affections," in nineteenth-century terminology.[124] Discerning morality was not only about thinking, but it was also about

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[122] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 270–71.
[123] Noll, *America's God*, 108; Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 45–49; May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 344; Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1985): 221–22. Most scholars who have written about the influence of Scottish common sense philosophy in America have focused on highbrow intellectual debates and the writings of theologians. They have also argued that such ideas were often transmitted to minds in formation by means of America's colleges. See May, *Enlightenment in America*, 347-348. The fact that Packard was college-educated supports this thesis, but Packard was not a theologian and his familiarity with the principles of common sense reasoning indicates a mechanism by which the principles also circulated widely in less exalted academic circles. The fact that he expounded these ideas in manuals designed for Sunday-school teachers also suggests one way in which the ideas may have gained credence among women, who less frequently attended college, but who made up a majority of the ranks of Sunday school teachers.
[124] On sensibility, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early

feeling; indeed, it needed to begin with emotion. As Packard put it, "education [which in Packard's mind was always religious] has certainly no less to do with the conscience and heart, than with the understanding."[125] In his insistence on the centrality of the affections, as well as reason, in religious experience, Packard expressed ideas that had grown influential during the revivals of the eighteenth century.[126]

Not only could the affections lead one to faith, but Packard also believed that religion served to balance and check one's emotions, keeping the believer in a state of "quiet, submissive, satisfied repose."[127] Christianity also cultivated emotions of kindness and sympathy with one's fellow human beings; Packard attributes the coming of the French Revolution to the loss of such a sentiment among the French people.[128] At her core, a Christian ought to be "cheerful, buoyant, and happy," emotionally balanced, safe from extremes of both manic joy and deep despair.[129]

Packard emphatically affirmed that children had the ability to experience deep emotions, including feelings associated with religion. He (and his colleagues who shared

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American History and Culture, 2009); see also Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 100–101.

[125] [Frederick A. Packard], "Review of the Life of Horace Mann," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* (January 1866), 6; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 171; Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World*.

[126] George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were two of the most influential preachers of the Great Awakening to advocate for the important role that the affections played in spirituality. See Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 187, 199, 203, 205–7.

[127] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 288.

[128] [Packard], *Thoughts on the Condition and Prospects of Popular Education in the United States*, 30; This sentiment places Packard among the ranks of anti-Jacobin reformers who feared the influence of the revolutionary ideology of the French Revolution and sought to shape an educational system that would combat it. See Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195-196.

[129] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 289.

such ideas) sought to change widespread notions that children could not experience consciousness of their depravity or an emotional understanding of the grace and love of God. In fact, many early to mid-nineteenth century evangelicals began to argue that children could experience the emotional aspects of religion just as profoundly as adults.[130] Packard viewed the potential of children for religious emotion as rooted in their susceptibility to feeling in general: "they love very warmly, they trust very implicitly, they yield (when their will is opposed) very reluctantly."[131] Packard also believed that children were more attracted than adults "towards what is pure and good" and that their "natural affections," as well as their minds, were at their most "pliable."[132] Children's attraction towards what was good made them perfect candidates for the development of the moral sense. Although Packard would not be swayed from his belief that children came into the world as sinful beings, he was here meeting partway other mid-nineteenth-century educators who were increasingly insisting on children's goodness and innocence.

As evidence for the ability of children to experience religious emotions, Packard cited the children's crusades in France and Germany in the thirteenth century. According to his interpretation, when children felt compelled to journey to the Holy Land after hearing the preaching of Etienne or another young "ambassador from Christ," they would not be swayed from their purpose. "Were they hindered, they wept day and night, - pined

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[130] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 142–44.
[131] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 267.
[132] Ibid.

with sorrow: so that at last necessity was laid upon their parents to let them go."[133] Although Packard acknowledged that the children's crusades were "superstitious, and even ridiculous," he called for his readers to note the depth of religious feeling that impelled the children. "Why are we so slow to recognise [sic] their susceptibility of religious emotions that spring from a purer source and impel to higher and holier enterprises?"[134] Educators ought to concede that children's capacity for loving goodness was very great and, in the classroom, seek to cultivate those feelings towards positive ends.

Packard had favorable views regarding children's capacity for experiencing religious emotion and believed that children possessed a natural attraction to the good. Such beliefs would seem to lead naturally to the idea that children were capable of making good moral decisions. Yet, characteristically, given his position as a transitional figure, Packard's advocacy of the moral sense begins with his advocacy of one of the most important qualities his ancestors believed children could possess: obedience. New England Puritans believed that young children's wills needed to be broken through trauma; they strove to ensure that young people would learn early in life to submit to their parents and social superiors.[135] Packard did not subscribe to the necessity of will-breaking, but he believed that "the family is the embryo of the republic. The subordination of children to parents is a natural dictate, and is enforced by

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[133] Ibid., 346.
[134] Ibid., 347.
[135] Philip J. Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 28, 32–43; Joseph E. Illick, *American Childhoods* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 26–27.

dependence."[136] "Submission to authority is, or should be, a much earlier lesson than A, B, C."[137] In other words, obedience to God was essential to being a good Christian, and obedience to parents and superiors was necessary for a peaceful society.[138]

Yet Packard recognized that many American youth did not obey this dictate. At an early age, both young men and young women decided for themselves how they wanted to spend their time, even gaining financial independence from their parents by earning wages. This allowed them to become, "to all intents and purposes, their own masters and mistresses."[139] In this expression of concern over the social and economic order of the mid-nineteenth century, Packard demonstrated unease with the changes wrought by the Market Revolution.[140] Like many other reformers, he saw a variety of social ills as stemming from industrialization and urbanization.[141]

Despite his anxiety regarding the developments taking place in society, Packard did not seek to stop the pace of change: "it is idle to croak about all this. It belongs to the age and state in which we live."[142] Yet he believed that the ills accompanying social and economic change were not inevitable: "our aim must be to employ all legitimate means to correct what we can, and, as far as possible, to mitigate evils which are irremediable."[143] Packard believed strongly in correctional, as well as preventative, solutions to social

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[136] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 234.
[137] [Packard], *The Daily Public School in the United States*, 65.
[138] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 40–41.
[139] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 234.
[140] Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 64–65; Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, 140.
[141] The existence of such unease on Packard's part seems at first glance to support the interpretations of the social control historians who argued that reformers were motivated by anxiety about modernization and desire to maintain the traditional social order. Yet I will argue that Packard's response to his concerns was anything but reactionary.
[142] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 235.
[143] Ibid.

problems, given his work as a prison reformer. When traditional family structures broke down, sometimes institutions modeled on the family could replace them in the role of correcting the paths of delinquents.[144]

But Packard did not believe that institutional solutions were possible or necessary for everyone, particularly if proper moral education began at a very young age. The breakdown of traditional social ties could be ameliorated by teaching young people to direct their own behavior, which included both aiding young people in choosing good advisors and ensuring that they themselves could use their moral sense to navigate the temptations of the modern world.

In one of his books for children, Packard used the biblical story of Esther to illustrate the importance of young people choosing good advisors and listening to their advice. In his retelling of the story, Packard observed that Esther still obeyed her relative Mordecai, even after she became queen: "nothing is more amiable and praiseworthy in young persons than this childlike submission to those in whose piety and wisdom they may safely trust."[145] Deference to those in authority *that they could trust* was a crucial part of Packard's conception of the importance of obedience. Packard realized that youth encountered a variety of people who sought to fill the positions of advisors as they ventured into the urban world of the mid-nineteenth century, and they did not always give good advice.

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[144] Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*; Katz, Doucet, and Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism*, 351–52, 357.
[145] [Frederick A. Packard], *Hadassah, the Jewish Orphan* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1834), 28.

Packard also wrote: "A child is not bound to believe as his parents do, nor to receive their opinions as the wax takes the impression of the seal."[146] He recognized that even parents did not always suitably guide young people. Thus Packard believed that children needed to use their moral sense in order to make godly decisions even when no good advisor directed them to do so. If children could learn to weigh the consequences of their actions and make wise decisions based on their reasoning, then it would not matter if filial bonds had been prematurely sundered because young people had to enter the work force. They would still be able to make virtuous choices, even without the guidance of their parents or other elders. As Packard wrote to a young friend in a letter printed in *The Higher Rock,* "you have your own conscience, which…will give true answers to all important questions of right and wrong."[147] Packard believed that children's obedience was important, but only if the authority in question could be trusted. And the enhancement and right direction of individual conscience – or moral sense – ought properly to complement this obedience.

Baconian Evidentiary Reasoning

Packard wrote that Sunday schools taught both "subordination and obedience" to trusted authorities and "habits of thinking and inquiring."[148] Packard's vision of what "thinking and inquiring" entailed bears a striking resemblance to one component of the American variant of common sense reasoning. Packard's educational strategy for older

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[146] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 334.
[147] Ibid., 271.
[148] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 40–41.

students was in fact founded upon the principles of the version of Baconianism popular in the United States at the time. This viewpoint affirmed "that truths about consciousness, the world, or religion must be built by a strict induction from irreducible facts of experience."[149] To nineteenth-century theologians and philosophers, induction was a mental process which sometimes simply meant classification of observable phenomena. The term was also invoked to identify the process of making observations and using them to construct general laws about the workings of the world. Advocates of induction emphasized observable fact and avoided abstract theorizing.[150] Packard's writings indicate that he believed that the ability to engage in inductive reasoning was a crucial skill that young people ought to learn. In calling for young people to draw conclusions on the basis of evidence, Packard was not only appropriating the Enlightenment, but he was also appropriating a version of the idea, popular among eighteenth-century evangelicals, that one could amass evidence to discern one's standing with God.[151]

Packard demonstrated that he believed in the importance of reasoning from concrete fact to generalizations, an important part of inductive reasoning. He argued that the education of children should begin with specific, concrete observations rather than sweeping, abstract concepts. He acknowledged that the human mind had immense potential for comprehending abstract generalizations, but cautioned teachers against trying to impart generalities too soon. Children were not born with the ability to understand great, abstract truths. Instead, they developed the skill slowly over time.

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[149] Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," 222–23.
[150] Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 60–64.
[151] Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World*, 98–100.

Teachers, he cautioned, needed to remember what it was like when they were young and were learning difficult concepts for the first time. Only "a gradual and harmonious induction of particulars" and "minuteness…and simplicity of thought and of illustration" would ensure that children learned complex concepts successfully.[152] These recommendations by Packard do not only evoke a Baconian emphasis on starting a chain of reasoning with observable fact, but may also suggest his familiarity with the philosophy of Swiss educator Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and others of like mind. According to Pestalozzi's teaching strategy, instructors should build each piece of knowledge upon another, not teaching a new piece of knowledge until the lesser ideas informing it had been firmly established.[153] Pestalozzi, like Packard, advocated an education firmly rooted in understanding.

Packard believed that young people should be introduced to the use of inductive reasoning, but he did not find it suitable for the very youngest. Regarding infant schools specifically, he said, "very little [reliance] can be placed on the pupil's powers of thought or reflection."[154] It was among the oldest students, in Bible classes, that he believed instruction in reasoning should have the most prominent place. Bible classes developed as another level of religious instruction for those students who had outgrown regular Sunday school, usually those thirteen or fourteen years of age and older. They functioned

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[152] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 217.
[153] Michael Heafford, *Pestalozzi: His Thought and Its Relevance Today* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967), 45–49; Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 58; Joy Palmer, Liora Bresler, and David Edward Cooper, *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education from Confucius to Dewey* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 64.
[154] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 296.

as the precursor to former Sunday school pupils teaching classes of their own.[155] In these classes, Packard wrote, students should be taught about evidence and the rational considerations behind Christianity. He did not quite go so far as to say that teachers should openly discuss lines of reasoning contrary to Christianity and how to refute them. Rather, he called for instruction simply explaining "the reason of the hope that is in us, leaving them to learn from other sources (if it must be) what reasons can be given for rejecting it."[156] Packard saw no reason to present arguments that he believed were false, especially when students would inevitably come across them in magazines and newspapers.[157] But he believed that children should not have to accept Christianity blindly because an authority figure said so; they ought to accept it because they understood the factual evidence supporting it.

In particular, Packard believed that much of this factual evidence ought to come from the Bible, as did many of his contemporaries in the early republic. The Revolution led many Americans to reject traditions such as monarchy, social deference, and the establishment church, but the Bible emerged unscathed from the revolutionary assault on authority. Early American evangelicals like Packard assumed that its contents were true. The Bible, in their view, contained a body of facts, which could be comprehended if approached scientifically, using common sense philosophy. No outside assistance beyond simple common sense was necessary to understand the Bible, which led early American evangelicals to reject both tradition and history in their efforts to understand its

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[155] Boylan, *Sunday School*, 109.
[156] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 312.
[157] Ibid.

contents.[158] As Packard wrote, "[the Bible] is its own interpreter, its own witness, its own sanction. The comparison of scripture with scripture, and the trial of every saying and principle by this perfect standard, is the only safe course."[159] Packard believed that young people should be taught the general principles of evidential reasoning with the ultimate goal of biblical application.

In *The Teacher Teaching,* Packard quoted Rev. George Fiske at length on the importance of teaching children about evidential reasoning. Fiske wrote that teachers should explain to children "'the various modes in which matters of fact may be proved, and to show them what evidence is. '" Then they ought to learn to "'distinguish between mere inferences and assumptions and positive proofs.'" Such a statement suggests that Fiske (and Packard) had the aversion to theories and abstractions shared by many Americans who advocated Baconian evidential reasoning. Once children understood how evidential reasoning worked, then they should be encouraged to apply it to the study of the Bible. To objections that using evidence to study the Bible would make "'our faith…too rationalizing,'" Fiske responded, "'we cannot believe sincerely what we do not know truly; and in this view of the matter it does not appear quite enough for us to receive the Bible as an inspired revelation from God just and only because others have

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[158] Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," 229–32; George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter?: The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 86–87.
[159] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Teacher's Harvest* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1842), 22.

told us that it is so.'"[160] The Bible ought not to be taken solely on faith, but rather on the basis of reason.

In 1835, Packard published a book for children titled *The Infidel Class,* featuring Archibald Thompson as a reformed delinquent trying to learn how to live a more upstanding life at a House of Refuge for boys. The narrator of the book, a Sunday school teacher, relates how he found out that a number of the boys at the institution, including Thompson, "*entirely disbelieved the Bible*."[161] He proposes a Bible class "for the purpose of talking about the truth of the Bible, and of finding out what evidence there may be to support it."[162] The teacher asks his pupils a series of questions, most of which demonstrate his predisposition to believe in the Bible's truth. For example, he asks, "'How came we by such a book as the Bible, if it is not true?'" and "'What is the influence of the religion of the Bible? What good does it do to those who believe and obey it?'"[163] By means of questions and answers, the teacher helps his students amass a chain of reasoning that affirms the truth of the Old Testament. For example, the class asserts that its accurate prophecies could not have been written after the events they describe because Jews would not have allowed their Scriptures to be changed. Then, with the help of the class, the narrating teacher reasons that the New Testament must be true for a variety of reasons. If the events it depicted were not true, there would have been plenty of opportunities for the specific people involved to deny them, which did not

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[160] [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 313.
[161] [Frederick A. Packard], *The Infidel Class; Or, the Second Part of the Story of Archibald Thompson* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1835), 11.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid., 14, 24.

happen. In addition, there is more evidence to support the events of the New Testament than the siege of Troy. And, every copy of the New Testament known to exist has the same content with no mistakes or differences of any consequence.[164]

The book's significance lies not in the narrator's reasoning, which is flawed, but in the fact that the narrator does not require the boys in his class to accept the truth of the Bible on faith; he wants them to accept it on the grounds of reason. And he is willing to accept their doubts as legitimate if they can give logical reasons for their disbelief. After the discussion about the veracity of the Old Testament, he asks, "'Have you, then, any doubt that the Old Testament, containing these prophecies, is a true book? If you have, you need not be afraid to say so. I shall not think any the worse for you for not believing in it, so long as you can give a good reason for not believing it.'"[165] Clearly, this depiction should not be taken as a true account of what went on in a typical Sunday school class, even one taught by Packard, but the narrator's attitude represents the belief that evidential reasoning ought to be at the heart of the evangelical Christian faith. He respects student's doubts as long as they were informed by their reason. Packard's own belief in Christianity was not based on blind faith. He found Christianity reasonable, writing that the resurrection was "a very rational and credible event." As a result, he did not expect his students to accept all he said blindly.[166]

Yet students could only extend their reasoning so far. Packard trusted in the inerrancy of the Bible, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the dead.

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[164] Ibid., 48, 51–52.
[165] Ibid., 43.
[166] [Frederick A. Packard], *History of Susan Ellmaker; Or, An Answer to the Question, "If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?"* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1836), 3.

Because of these beliefs, he could not give any credence to any properly conducted critical examination of the Bible that did not affirm them. In his mind, the only possible conclusion to which one could come upon reading the Bible was belief in its truth. In another of Packard's books for children, a Sunday school class examines biblical evidence for the resurrection. Hearing the class affirm the truth of resurrection of the dead, Packard's fictional Sunday school teacher declares, "That is the only answer that can be given."[167] Such surety marks Packard's version of critical reasoning as very different from modern formulations. It represented free use of reason, but only within certain concrete epistemological boundaries.

Yet, as a result of this profound trust in the truth of the Christian gospel, Packard did not fear young people exercising the use of evidential reason; from his point of view, it could only aid them in finding salvation. In fact, he did not fear science or philosophy or critical inquiry of any kind. In *The Higher Rock,* Packard wrote, "The supposed discrepancies between the theories of philosophy and speculation and the Scripture account of the creation…have been found to have no real existence. Whenever science has vaunted itself upon some new discovery which seems to involve the credibility of sacred history, it has so turned out that another step…has furnished new evidence from itself to confirm or elucidate the inspired record."[168] In this belief in the harmony of religion and science, he agreed with many of his fellow evangelicals.[169] Packard followed this statement with a quotation from a British theologian, William Lee,

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[167] Ibid., 94.
[168] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 28–29.
[169] Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter?," 86–87; Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 44.

affirming that the true threat to faith was not reason, but rather "'superficial or partial knowledge.'"[170] Those who possessed limited information would be susceptible to "the propagators of error," of whom there were many, according to Packard, including liberal Protestants, Catholics, and members of various other sects.[171] Packard hoped that by teaching children how to reason he would ensure that they would encounter the scientific and philosophical arguments of the world and remain steadfast in their faith. If they learned the lessons he called for schools to teach, then, in his mind, there was no question that young people would become staunch advocates for evangelical Christianity.

Packard filled his manuals for Sunday-school teachers with exhortations that they ensure that their pupils were thinking. "The pupils must be led to reason upon, as well as understand, what is taught."[172] Students' minds ought to be "called into action" and "exercised."[173] His definition of thinking included cultivation of understanding, activation of and obedience to the moral sense, and, eventually, the use of inductive reasoning, or Baconianism. Such mental activity, Packard believed, was crucial to enabling young people to make moral choices when they found themselves out on their own in the world. And, he hoped, not only would they act virtuously, they would also seek God and the salvation he offered to those who chose it.

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Frederick A. Packard represents an early to mid-nineteenth-century evangelical deeply devoted to encouraging children to embrace evangelicalism. He believed that the

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[170] [Packard], *The Higher Rock*, 28–29.
[171] Ibid., 108–9.
[172] [Packard], *The Teacher Taught*, 270.
[173] Ibid.; [Packard], *The Teacher Teaching*, 309.

orthodox Protestant faith ought to be the foundation of children's education, and, to him, the Sunday school appeared to be one of the best ways to ensure that children gained the fundamentals of the faith. His writings for Sunday-school children and teachers reveal both traditional and liberal impulses. In some ways, Packard represents a strictly orthodox evangelical; he had faith in the truth of the Bible, the reality of the Trinity, and a future state of rewards and punishments. He also believed that all humans were born with sin and thought that children ought to be taught the substance of orthodox belief through the memorization of Scripture and the catechism. Good children were also obedient, Packard affirmed.

Yet Packard did not subscribe to one belief of his Puritan ancestors, predestination. He believed that each individual had the choice of whether or not to accept salvation, and his main goal for Sunday-school education was to give children the tools to make that choice correctly. Young people needed to be able assess the morality of potential advisors and obey only those who had their best interests and spiritual welfare at heart. Children needed to understand the Scriptures and catechism questions that they memorized. When they were old enough, they needed to learn to reason inductively, according to the principles of Baconianism, and gain a rational understanding of why they should believe in the truth of the Bible, not just accept it on faith. Otherwise, they might become "dupes of the wicked and designing."[174] Such skill at reasoning would also give them the tools to combat freethinkers and atheists, the groups whose influence Packard probably most feared.

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[174] [Packard], *Thoughts on the Condition and Prospects of Popular Education in the United States*, 7.

Packard understood there to be limits on the conclusions reached by means of common sense reasoning. Yet he did not view himself or any other person as imposing those limits. They simply existed, ordained by God, circumscribing the bounds of truth and reality. Therefore, the proper use of reason could not and would not change them. No amount of questioning or analysis could alter truth. In his affirmation that common sense reasoning was not a threat, but rather a useful support for religion, Packard came much closer to the views of liberal Protestant educators, like Horace Mann, than his contemporaries, including Mann, recognized – and perhaps much closer than he himself cared to admit.

Chapter 3: Horace Mann and Free Thought in "Nonsectarian" Public Education

In 1838, Frederick Packard wrote to Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, hoping that he would endorse American Sunday-School Union books for use in Massachusetts public schools. Mann responded, and the two men exchanged a number of letters, which grew increasingly acrimonious after Packard nearly publicly revealed one letter's contents.

Packard initiated the correspondence with a request for Mann to review *The Child at Home* by John S.C. Abbott. Mann privately "condemn[ed] [*The Child at Home*] in total so far as the views of a great portion of our people are concerned." He confessed in his journal that he would rather have no library associated with the Massachusetts schools at all than have a library that consisted of books like *The Child at Home.*[1] Mann set forth his objections in a letter to Packard. He judged the book "offensive" to Unitarians and Universalists because of its Calvinist content and maintained that endorsing it would violate the Massachusetts law of 1827, which stated that school committees could not endorse sectarian books for use in public schools.[2]Packard admitted that he had already

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[1] Horace Mann, Journal, March 18, 1838, Reel 33, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[2] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, March 18, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts; "'An Act to Provide for the Instruction of Youth,' Chap. 143, Sec. 3," in *Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Passed at the Several Sessions of the General Court, Beginning May, 1825 and Ending March, 1828*, vol. 10 (Boston: Dutton & Wentworth, 1828), 563.

come to the conclusion that certain passages in *The Child at Home* would be objectionable to Universalists. Yet he confessed his perplexity at how one could teach children what the law required, the "principles of piety," without instruction regarding the nature of God, as well as how one could teach the nature of God without reference to beliefs held by certain sects.[3] Mann condemned Packard's reasoning regarding what was necessary to inculcate "principles of piety," appalled at the suggestion that only those who held Abbott's views were pious. "Is no Universalist pious?" he asked.[4]

Mann also objected to *The Child at Home* because he believed it did not present God as a loving figure.[5] Packard agreed with Mann that God should be presented as loving and merciful, but also thought that children needed to learn about his "holiness & justice." To Packard, cultivation of "the fear of God" was the beginning of true faith and piety.[6] According to Mann, *The Child at Home* also emphasized "blind obedience" at the expense of obedience based on knowledge and the desire to act rightly.[7] As Packard's own writings indicate, as analyzed in Chapter Two, he would have agreed that the advocacy of blind obedience was less than desirable. Yet he did not articulate this area of common ground to Mann in their correspondence.

The two men met in Boston during the course of their exchange of letters and continued their conversation on religion and education. Packard characterized it as a

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[3] "An Act to Provide for the Instruction of Youth," 559; Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, March 28, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[4] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, June 23, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[5] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, March 18, 1838.
[6] Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, March 28, 1838.
[7] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, March 18, 1838.

"free & full interchange of views," but Mann later judged this assessment as "wholly [misrepresenting]" their dialogue.[8] Regardless, it set the stage for the public eruption of their conflict.

On the day after his meeting with Mann, Packard traveled to New Bedford for the meeting of the Massachusetts General Association, a conference of orthodox Congregationalist ministers. In his presentation to those gathered, he warned that the Massachusetts Board of Education was hostile to evangelical books. A member of the Board of Education, Thomas Robbins, an orthodox Congregationalist, was attending the convention but missed Packard's speech. When he returned to the hall and heard about Packard's accusation, he defended the Board's position and maintained that its members had not yet decided what books to recommend for Massachusetts schools. Packard responded by attempting to read aloud Mann's most recent letter in the assembly, but the audience protested when he revealed that Mann had not intended the letter for public disclosure. Packard also apparently asked for his words and actions at the conference to remain confidential. Later, perhaps regretting his haste, Packard denied that he had planned ahead of time to reveal the private communication in his speech; rather, "it was the result of the moment."[9]

Packard's willingness to reveal a private letter publicly marked a shift in the disagreement between the two men from polite to antagonistic. Mann learned about

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[8] Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, July 9, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts; Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, July 22, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts; quoted in Raymond B. Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools* (1929; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 258.

[9] Raymond B. Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools* (1929; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 49, 65–66; Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, July 9, 1838.

Packard's actions from several friends and wrote to him indignantly, requesting clarification as to what Packard actually said at the conference, as well as requesting the original copy of the letter in question.[10] According to Mann, the incident "violated any tie of Confidence" between the two men.[11] Mann had "never known so scandalous an outrage amongst men, pretending to decency" and accused Packard of behaving in such a manner solely to promote his own books.[12] Mann also reproached Packard for "hideously [misrepresenting]" his views.[13]

In his responses, Packard defended his interpretations and laid out the evidence for his claim that Mann and the Board of Education planned to exclude Christianity from the public schools, calling Mann's views on the subject "*erroneous…dangerous & corrupt*" and accusing him of aiding "freethinkers, atheists & infidels." Their correspondence ended with this letter from Packard on September 19, 1838.[14]

Most historians who have examined the conflict between Packard and Mann have used it to point out differences between the two men.[15] Historians frequently characterize

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[10] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, July 5, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[11] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, July 22, 1838.
[12] Horace Mann to Rev. E. Davis, July 10, 1838, Straker Collection of Mann and Peabody Letters, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.
[13] Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, July 22, 1838.
[14] Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, July 9, 1838; Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, September 19, 1838, Letterbook, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[15] Raymond Culver analyzed the controversy in his book on Mann and religion in the public schools. Although his treatment is helpful in establishing the basic facts about what happened between the two men, Culver unquestioningly took the side of Horace Mann and portrayed Packard as an unprincipled antagonist picking a fight for the selfish purpose of selling his books. Louise Hall Tharp similarly vilified Packard. See Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 55–82; Louise Hall Tharp, *Until Victory: Horace Mann and Mary Peabody* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 147, 149; for more balanced, but brief accounts of the controversy, see Jonathan Messerli, *Horace Mann: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 315; Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 54–57.

Mann as representing "an environmentalist, optimistic viewpoint, while his opponents, including Packard, represented "a more Calvinistic, pessimistic, and conservative approach."[16] The Packard-Mann correspondence and public controversy do reveal significant differences in the personal religious beliefs of the two men, as well as disparities in their understandings of what constituted sectarianism. Yet the lines of battles were not so sharply drawn. I argue here that Packard's and Mann's broad views on the purposes of education were more alike than they might at first appear. Both believed that education ought to be founded upon Protestantism and include principles of common sense reasoning, although Mann's conception of the proper use of reason, what he called "free thought," was more expansive than Packard's. But free thought was still not entirely free. Mann believed that natural and moral laws still bound free thinkers. Unitarianism also mediated Mann's perception of those laws. Yet, like Packard, Mann's certainty regarding the absolute truth of his assumptions blinded him to the reality of the limitations he placed on reason.

Religion and Public Education in Massachusetts

Horace Mann pursued his career as an educator in the same state in which Packard spent his youth and formative years, although the two men do not seem to have had substantive contact until after Packard moved to Philadelphia. In the early nineteenth century, Massachusetts was divided on matters related to both religion and education. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, a significant number of ministers serving

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[16] Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 151.

Massachusetts Congregationalist churches called for revisions to traditional Calvinism. These Arminian ministers rejected original sin and predestination, proclaiming that all individuals had the opportunity to experience grace and salvation if they sought God and underwent a conversion experience. Some of them even rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and minimized the need for a conversion experience, instead emphasizing the gradual development of a virtuous character. Trinitarians and Unitarians fought for decades over doctrine and the allocation of church resources in previously orthodox congregations.[17] By the early 1830s, Unitarians had gained control over a substantial number of the most powerful and wealthy Congregationalist churches in New England. Because Unitarians tended to emphasize the supremacy of the individual conscience, they might have been expected to have supported the abolition of an established church, but their control of so many Congregationalist churches allowed them to benefit greatly from the government's support of the denomination. Thus many Unitarians called for Massachusetts's religious establishment to continue while the orthodox (and other dissenting groups) sought to end it. Massachusetts legislators finally voted to end the establishment in 1833.[18]

As the citizens of Massachusetts fought over the existence of the religious establishment, they also sought to establish and reform schools. During the first few

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[17] Robert Baird, *Religion in America; Or, an Account of the Origin, Progress, Relation to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 275–77.

[18] Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145–63; Nathan S. Rives, "'Is Not This a Paradox?' Public Morality and the Unitarian Defense of State-Supported Religion in Massachusetts, 1806–1833," *The New England Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 232-265; Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 3–18. Horace Mann, although a Unitarian, voted in favor of ending the religious establishment on the basis of his belief in religious freedom. See *Trumpet and Universalist Magazine*, February 18, 1832, 134.

decades of the nineteenth century, the number of schools multiplied both in Massachusetts and across the country. In particular, free schools, like the charity schools established in many cities, expanded their reach. Newly independent Americans viewed education as important in forming the good republican citizens necessary for the survival of the new nation. Many Americans also increasingly valued the education of women, for its own sake, and also for the purpose of creating republican mothers to raise virtuous republican children.[19] The economic development of the early nineteenth century also contributed to the imperative for education. Americans believed that a landowner or skilled craftsman possessed virtue as a result of his economic independence; he could make decisions on the basis of the common good, not on the basis of the interests of his employer. But opportunities for such independence declined with the growth of industry and the market economy in the early nineteenth century. Americans more frequently had to work for others, and observers worried that this loss of independence would lead to a decline in morals. More Americans also flocked to cities, where there lurked a host of dangers unknown in the countryside.[20]

Educational reformers like Horace Mann believed that common schools could prepare young Americans to face these new challenges and emerge with their virtue intact. They specifically sought state-funded public schools instead of private schools. Reformers generally agreed that these institutions would promote "republicanism,

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[19] Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 5, 25–26; Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 32.
[20] William J. Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 14–16.

Protestantism, and capitalism, three sources of social belief that were intertwined and mutually supporting," although as Packard and Mann's correspondence indicated, reformers often disagreed on what principles of Protestantism should be taught.[21] Reformers also generally believed that common schooling would prevent social disorder, redirect vulnerable youth from lives of crime, and teach children how to make moral judgments on the basis of their own consciences, rather than authority figures. Some hoped that common schools would provide equal opportunity to all and allow the most gifted to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds. But they did not plan for education to entirely eliminate social difference, as reformers were quick to reassure skeptics who feared the prospect of social leveling.[22]

In Massachusetts, formal school reform began in the late 1820s. In 1826, the General Court passed a law, slightly revised in 1827, that required towns to form school committees which would examine schoolteachers and choose books to be used in the schools. It also stipulated that towns should tax residents to raise money for schools. The law reiterated a previous requirement that schools teach children "the principles of piety, justice, and sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, and frugality, chastity, moderation, and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society." Such instruction would enable them to "preserve and perfect a Republican Constitution" and would "promote

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[21] Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 76.
[22] Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 350–51, 370–72; Reese, *America's Public Schools*, 22, 27.

their future happiness."[23] The law also mandated that the books chosen for schools by the town school committees not "favour [sic] any particular religious sect or tenet."[24] The legislature created a school fund in 1834. If towns desired to receive funding from the state, they were required to levy taxes of at least one dollar per child for the support of schools and submit statistics on their schools to the state each year.[25]

In 1837, the General Court authorized the creation of a state Board of Education, which would consist of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and eight additional individuals. The Board would present a summary of the state of Massachusetts schools each year. It would also make recommendations for their improvement, although it was not authorized to mandate or require any changes. Most of the members of the Board would serve without pay, but the legislature authorized the employment of one as Secretary – the position that Horace Mann would fill.[26] Mann thus became the figurehead for public school education in a state that had been engaged in school reform for ten years, but that also was bitterly divided between orthodox and liberal Protestants. Such religious divisions would profoundly affect his views regarding education, especially free thought.

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[23] Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 20–22; "An Act to Provide for the Instruction of Youth," 559. Although Packard served in the legislature around this time, he was elected the year after the revised law passed, so he did not have the opportunity to vote on it.
[24] "An Act to Provide for the Instruction of Youth," 563.
[25] Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 29.
[26] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 240–41.

The Life of Horace Mann

The scholarly literature on Horace Mann is vast, including numerous biographies and treatment in a number of histories of American education. In contrast to the details of Packard's life, the basic facts of the life of Horace Mann are well known and have been often recorded by historians.[27] Yet a brief summary will be helpful in providing context for re-examining his educational philosophy.

Mann was born in 1796 in Franklin, Massachusetts, where he grew up in moderately humble economic circumstances. His family attended the Congregationalist church in Franklin, presided over by Reverend Nathanael Emmons. Mann described Emmons as a "hyper-Calvinist" with a strong intellect. Emmons proved that although his powers of reasoning were strong, he lacked both tact and compassion. In his sermons, Emmons emphasized human sinfulness and the horrors of hell rather than the love of God. As a child, Mann believed what Emmons preached – that some human souls would be lost to hell. When Mann's young imagination ran wild, hell was "a living reality." He "heard the shrieks of the tormented" and struggled to clutch "their burning souls," somehow hoping that he could save them. As a child, Mann hoped that he might be one of the saved, but found it difficult to believe that he could be happy in heaven without his loved ones and friends there as well. Sometimes, while in bed at night, young Horace

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[27] To name just a few examples, Mary Peabody Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891); Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*; Edward Irwin Franklin Williams, *Horace Mann: Educational Statesman* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937); Messerli, *Horace Mann*; Robert B. Downs, *Horace Mann: Champion of Public Schools* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974); Tharp, *Until Victory*; Barbara Finkelstein, "'Perfecting Childhood: Horace Mann and the Origins of Public Education in the United States,'" *Biography* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 6–20.

Mann would be driven to tears as he imagined his friends and relatives being sent to hell.[28]

At the age of twelve, Mann later recalled, "I broke the spell that had bound me." He began to develop a theology with a loving God at its center, which would in time lead him to Unitarianism. A childhood trauma proved especially influential on his spiritual journey and contributed to his turmoil. On July 22, 1810, a Sunday, Mann's older brother Stephen drowned after he skipped church services to fish in a local pond. As Mann struggled with grief, he attended church on the following Sunday only to hear Emmons use Stephen's life and death as a warning to the negligent and unconverted. Stephen had died disrespecting the Sabbath and had never demonstrated that he had experienced conversion; therefore, Emmons concluded, he was condemned to hell.[29] As a young man, Mann struggled against such a conclusion, not desiring to believe it, but fearing that it was true.

According to his own testimony, Mann did not receive "more than 10 weeks schooling in a year till I was 16 years old."[30] He did not attend an academy or preparatory school, but gained enough knowledge while studying with an "itinerant teacher of Latin & Greek" to pass the entrance exam at Brown University in 1816.[31] There he studied with Asa Messer, the college president. Although he was a Baptist

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[28] The quotations in this paragraph are Mann's own words as quoted in Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:13–14; on Nathanael Emmons, see Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 282.
[29] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:15; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 21–22.
[30] Horace Mann to Nahum Capen, June 13, 1850, photocopy, Straker Collection of Mann and Peabody Letters, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, original at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.
[31] Ibid.; Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:21.

minister, Messer shared Mann's Unitarian sympathies. Messer's beliefs led to a simmering conflict between himself and Brown's orthodox staff and students, which forced him to resign in 1826.[32] The experience of watching his mentor defend himself against the attacks of the orthodox must have further entrenched Mann's distaste for Calvinism. Mann may also have developed his ideology of free thought in part due to Messer's influence. One of Messer's students wrote that "as [Messer] was independent himself, so he wished his pupils to be…the many eminent men educated under him had no other resemblance to each other, than freedom from authority."[33] Mann graduated from Brown in 1819, giving an oration at graduation entitled "Progressive Character of the Human Race."[34] This belief in human progress characterized his entire life and career.

Following graduation, Mann served as a tutor of Latin and Greek at Brown. In 1821, he began to study law with James Gould at Litchfield Law School.[35] From Gould, Mann learned about the law as a series of principles which served to organize human society.[36] He later applied this perspective to life beyond the legal profession, as he advocated the importance of knowing and following natural and moral as well as civil laws. The curriculum at Litchfield also allowed students to form their own opinions

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[32] Walter Cochrane Bronson, *The History of Brown University, 1764-1914* (Providence: Brown University, 1914), 186–92; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 99.
[33] Bronson, *The History of Brown University*, 196.
[34] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:28.
[35] Ibid., I:29–30; At Litchfield, Mann also gained access to an extensive social network that provided benefits to its members long after they finished school. See Mark Boonshoft, "The Litchfield Network: Education, Social Capital, and the Rise and Fall of a Political Dynasty, 1784-1833," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 561–95; see also Andrew M. Siegel, "'To Learn and Make Respectable Hereafter': The Litchfield Law School in Cultural Context," *New York University Law Review* 73 (December 1998): 1978–2028.
[36] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 70.

about debated cases. Gould or his assistant presented both sides of the disagreement with supporting evidence for each. Only then would he reveal his own stance on the issue.[37] Mann later used a similar strategy in the Bible classes he taught at Antioch College, although his concern for allowing his students to develop their own opinions was so great that he refrained entirely from revealing his own position on the matter in question.

After finishing the course of study at Litchfield Law School, Mann practiced law in Dedham, Massachusetts from 1823 until 1837. From 1827-1832, he served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.[38] As a new representative, he gave a speech opposing a petition submitted by the First Religious Society of Blandford, Massachusetts. The orthodox members of the Society sought to ensure that its endowment would never be able to fall into Unitarian hands. Mann argued that such a measure would prevent the exercise of personal religious liberty and conscience.[39] His position carried the day, and the legislation did not pass. In 1832, Mann also voted with the majority in favor of the elimination of an officially established state church.[40] During his time as a legislator, he argued in favor of internal improvements and state support for manufacturing, and

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Mann was listed as a representative in the General Court from May of 1827 through 1832. *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1828…* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, and James Loring, n.d.), 25; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1829…* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, and James Loring, n.d.), 26; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1830…* (Boston: Richard, Lord & Holbrook, and James Loring, n.d.), 26; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year of Our Lord 1831…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 26; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For the Year 1832…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 28; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 198–99.
[39] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 100–101. Not surprisingly, Packard disagreed with Mann, favoring allowing a donor to place restrictions on the use of his donation. See *Hampden Journal & Advertiser,* October 10, 1827.
[40] *Trumpet and Universalist Magazine*, February 18, 1832, 134.

against the system of state lotteries.[41] Mann ventured into the realm of social reform by calling for measures to promote temperance.[42] He was also instrumental in the founding of a state institution for the care of the mentally ill – the first one in the United States.[43] Despite his strong principles, Mann's party loyalties were lukewarm; he was not primarily a party man. He began his career as a National Republican and became a Whig, although he demonstrated distaste for overtly partisan activities.[44]

In 1830, Horace Mann successfully sought the hand of Charlotte Messer, the youngest daughter of his mentor at Brown. Tragically, Charlotte died less than two years after their marriage, plunging Mann into a deep and long-lasting depression.[45] Just when it seemed that he had achieved some degree of acceptance and peace, the anniversary of Charlotte's death would arrive, and Mann would descend into deep melancholy again. During this bleak period of several years, he continued his private law practice, but did not serve in the legislature in 1833 and 1834.[46]

With the encouragement of his close friends the Peabody sisters, especially Elizabeth, Mann finally consented to run for a seat in the Massachusetts State Senate, which he won in November of 1834.[47] As a senator, his political success continued. In

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[41] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 105, 107–8, 109.
[42] Ibid., 117.
[43] Ibid., 126–28.
[44] Ibid., 97, 188–89.
[45] Ibid., 141, 143, 160–62.
[46] Mann was not listed as a member of the General Court in 1833 and 1834. *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For 1833…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 28; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For 1834…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 33–34, 40.
[47] Mann was listed as a senator beginning in January of 1835. *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar; For 1835…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 33; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 190–94.

1836 and 1837, he served as President of the Senate and was widely considered a likely candidate for governor.[48]

But, in 1837, the founding members of the Massachusetts Board of Education, led by Edmund Dwight, Boston businessman and Whig reformer, sought Mann for the position of Secretary of the Board.[49] Mann decided to resign his Senate seat and end his law practice in order to take the position, which he held until 1848. Like Packard, he seems to have given up politics and the law for reasons of conscience. Mann believed wholeheartedly in the importance of education and may have relished self-denial, even martyrdom, for the cause. After determining that he would accept the Secretaryship, he wrote in his journal: "I can now conscientiously say that here stands my purpose, ready to undergo the hardships and privations to which I must be subjected, and to encounter the jealousy, the misrepresentation, and the prejudice almost certain to arise; here stands my mind, ready to meet them in the spirit of a martyr."[50] Perhaps his rhetorical flourishes exaggerated his willingness for martyrdom, but he clearly did not expect the road ahead to be easy. He joined the other members of the Board, which included Unitarian and orthodox ministers and laypeople. Like Mann, most of them were Whigs.[51]

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[48] *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar, for 1836…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 32; *The Massachusetts Register, and United States Calendar, for 1837…* (Boston: James Loring, n.d.), 33–34; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 242.

[49] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 241–42.

[50] Horace Mann, Journal, June 28, 1837, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 79.

[51] The other members of the Board were Rev. Jared Sparks (Unitarian), Edmund Dwight (Unitarian), Rev. Emerson Davis (Congregationalist), Edward A. Newton (Episcopalian), Rev. Thomas Robbins (Congregationalist), Robert Rantoul, Jr. (Unitarian and the only Democrat on the Board), and James G. Carter (Unitarian). See Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 241; Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 31–32. Although some of the orthodox opposed Mann and the Board of Education, Mann actually received a great deal of support from many orthodox citizens of Massachusetts. See Messerli, *Horace Mann,* 332-334.

During his tenure as Secretary, Mann advocated for comfortable and safe public school buildings, improved teacher training, and Protestant yet nonsectarian training for children. He believed that public education should not incorporate doctrines on which the various Protestant denominations disagreed. Mann recognized that differences of opinion among Christians could not be eliminated, but hoped that they might be minimized, with more attention paid to cultivating "unity of spirit:" "I cannot but think that there is far more of true Christianity in striving to promote this unity of heart, than in making all men subscribe to the same creed."[52] Education, according to Mann, ought not to "indoctrinate…students into special denominational tenets" but rather should "[establish] the great principles of practical morality and [secure] obedience to them."[53] Ultimately, he believed that religion should primarily foster attention to the needs of one's fellow human beings. A person who worked for the welfare of others "though his communion with his Maker may be feeble and interrupted" ranked higher in Mann's estimation than another person devoted to God who ignored the needy.[54]

Despite his advocacy of nonsectarianism, Mann could not see beyond a broadly inclusive Protestantism. He deeply valued the Protestant Bible and advocated its use in Massachusetts common schools. For Mann, there were many reasons to read the Bible in schools: "The venerableness of its antiquity…the sublimity of its eloquence…the splendor of its poetry…its touching pathos…its precepts and examples of wisdom and

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[52] Horace Mann to Messrs. Greene, Dale, et al., May 27, 1848, Straker Collection of Mann and Peabody Letters, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.
[53] Horace Mann, "Baccalaureate Address Delivered at Antioch College, 1857," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 488–89.
[54] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:18, 50.

truth, and its inspirations of devotion and love." Most of all, "it is a book which contains the truths that are able to make men wise unto salvation."[55] Although Mann's view of salvation differed from the traditional orthodox view, as I will discuss, he had no doubt that the Protestant Bible was a sacred book and wholeheartedly promoted its use in schools.[56] Ultimately, his veneration for the Bible contributed to the limits which he placed on the appropriate use of reason.

About six years after he started his tenure as Secretary of the Board of Education, in 1843, Mann married his second wife, Mary Peabody (sister of Elizabeth), who had loved him for roughly ten years.[57] With Mary, he had three sons: Horace Mann, Jr., George Combe Mann, and Benjamin Pickman Mann. Horace Mann was a conscientious father, dedicated to giving his children the same moral education that he hoped all children would receive in the Massachusetts public schools. After the conclusion of his tenure as Secretary, Mann served briefly in the United States House of Representatives, filling the seat that John Quincy Adams had occupied before his death.

Early in 1852, Mann began speaking to Rev. Eli Fay, a minister of the Christian Connexion, about the possibility of becoming the President of a new college to be founded by the denomination in Ohio. Mann found the prospect attractive because its

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[55] Horace Mann, "Proceedings at the Dedication of Antioch College: Mr. Mann's Reply," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 310.

[56] Mann shared this belief in the importance of keeping religion in the public schools with many middle-class Protestant Americans in the nineteenth century. As David B. Tyack argues, this preoccupation was a response to an "increasingly pluralistic" society and possessed "immense symbolic importance" to its advocates. See David B. Tyack, "Onward Christian Soldiers: Religion in the American Common School," in *History and Education: The Educational Uses of the Past*, ed. Paul Nash (New York: Random House, 1970), 214, 218–19.

[57] Megan Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2005), 248.

founders planned that the school would be coeducational and religious but nonsectarian. Mann refrained from committing to the project immediately, however, and the Free Soil Party nominated him for governor of Massachusetts in 1852. After Mann lost the election, he took Fay's offer, becoming founding President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where he sought to implement his ideals of nonsectarian education at the postgraduate level. Mann continued his lifelong habit of dedicating himself entirely to his work, until, during the hot summer of 1859, he caught a severe fever. Surrounded by friends and family, he died in the afternoon of August 2.[58]

Mann's Views on Theology

Throughout his life, Mann's religious beliefs influenced his goals as an educator and thus a deeper understanding of his theological views is essential to understanding how and what he thought children should be taught. As previously mentioned, Mann rejected Calvinism, especially original sin. He wrote, "Men are not responsible for the evils they have not caused, and cannot cure; *but they are responsible for the evils they consciously cause, or have power to cure*."[59] In other words, he believed that humans did not bear the burden of the sin of Adam, but that they could sin themselves, by acts of commission or by omission.

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[58] Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 428–29, 533–34, 538–39, 585–88; Downs, *Horace Mann*, 9–10; Fay's religious views seem to have coincided closely with Mann's own. After Mann's death, Fay became pastor of a Unitarian church. See "Rev. Eli Fay," *The Christian Register* 78, no. 35 (August 31, 1899): 991.
[59] Horace Mann, "Baccalaureate Address Delivered at Antioch College, 1859," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 512.

Mann believed that God's fundamental attribute was love – a perspective markedly at odds with what Emmons had preached from the pulpit when Mann was a child. Mary Peabody Mann related that her husband delayed as long as possible in broaching the subject of God with his children because of his own childhood fear, instilled by Emmons. When he could delay the discussion no longer, he strove to communicate to his children the notion of a "loving heavenly Parent" rather than the wrathful God he knew from childhood. In a letter to a friend, Mann explained that one of the reasons he valued the man's companionship was that he supplied the consciousness of God's love that he lacked in his own religious life. Mann understood God's love "intellectually" but still could not rid himself entirely of the "grim old Calvinistic spectre." He viewed an upbringing according to Calvinist tenets as "an unspeakable calamity." Such sentiments motivated Mann's deeply held conviction against religious instruction that invoked God's judgment rather than His love.[60]

Mann found the notion of God's love very difficult to reconcile with the idea of hell. According to his wife Mary, Mann viewed "everlasting punishment" as "unworthy of God."[61] In a letter to his sister, Mann wrote, "my nature revolts at the idea of belonging to a universe in which there is to be never-ending anguish," explaining that eternal joy would not compensate him for the knowledge that even one "*sentient* thing" suffered in eternal torment.[62] Such ideas seem to bring Mann very near to the theology of

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[60] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:258–59; Horace Mann to Austin Craig, January 1856, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 480, 479.
[61] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:vi–vii.
[62] Horace Mann to Lydia Mann, July 1838, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 49.

Universalists, who believed that all would be saved. Indeed, Mann looked kindly upon Universalism in an era when the orthodox marginalized the sect. His wife recorded that a Universalist lived near Mann, pursuing an exemplary life that exhibited a deep love for his fellow man. "To a bold thinker [Mann] it was a nucleus around which thoughts *would* cluster."[63]

Perhaps he found himself drawn towards Universalism, but ultimately Mann seems to have rejected its fundamental tenet, writing: "without the doctrine of a retributive immortality, I look upon all the divinest aspirations after excellence, and the most enduring moral heroism, as only a fleeting pageantry…I look upon this midnight concave of starry worlds around us…as no better than a game of marbles."[64] If Mann struggled to believe in hell yet still believed in a "retributive immortality," what exactly did he believe about the fate of the soul? Biographer Jonathan Messerli suggests that perhaps Mann believed that punishment came to those who broke moral or physical laws not by means of an angry God, but rather through the pernicious consequences that followed from their actions.[65]

Mann's distaste for orthodoxy was so intense that it likely clouded his judgment at times, especially in the conflict with Packard. Mann believed that the orthodox often possessed misplaced priorities. In his diary, he wrote that he favored the religion of those who would "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" and "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." The orthodox, according to Mann, had "quite

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[63] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:82.
[64] Mann, "Baccalaureate Address Delivered at Antioch College, 1857," 476.
[65] Messerli, *Horace Mann,* 171.

outgrown these obsolete notions, and have got a religion which can at once gratify their self-esteem and destructiveness."[66] In 1840, he attended a lecture on geology, also attended by many of the orthodox. Mann silently rejoiced when the speaker proceeded to argue, using geological evidence, that God could not have created the world in six days and that Noah's flood simply could not have occurred the way it was described in the Book of Genesis. "He reduced the Deluge to a mere puddle," Mann wrote triumphantly to his friend George Combe.[67]

On another occasion, a Sunday, Mann found himself in Edgartown, Massachusetts, located on Martha's Vineyard. Faced with the prospect of attending a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or a Methodist church – "all Orthodox" – he opted instead to visit the settlement of the Christian Chappaquiddick Indians. Mann faced criticism for his choice, one minister who heard about it suggesting that he might have attended all three churches if he had not wanted to show favoritism. Mann confided to his journal that this would have given him "the alternative to hear three Orthodox sermons in one day, or be burned. I confess I had rather be burned; at least, a little."[68]

Despite his wholehearted rejection of Calvinism and all of its tenets, Mann found it challenging to shake the hold that the belief system had over him. Perhaps he would have been less hostile to orthodox Calvinists had he been able to eradicate its impulses from his own being. His wife wrote that Mann "could have said with another remarkable

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[66] Horace Mann, Journal, October 27, 1838, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 107. Mann quotes James 1:27 and Micah 6:8 here.
[67] Horace Mann to George Combe, February 22, 1840, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 124.
[68] Horace Mann, Journal, October 8, 1837, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 88–89.

man who emerged from the gloom of Orthodoxy into the light and life of religious liberty, 'My heart is Unitarian; but my nerves are still Calvinistic.' "[69] Mann spent his life fighting against this part of himself.

Yet his religion was not only defined by that to which he objected; he also held firm positive views about human nature and the relationship of humans with God. While Packard and other orthodox Protestants believed that children were born sinful with the potential to make good or evil choices in the world, Mann believed that children were born morally neutral with the capacity to make choices for good or ill. According to Mann, "each one has the capacity of immeasurable virtue or vice."[70] The mind of a child was "a sheet of white paper on which the philosopher can write his wisdom, or the fool besmear with his folly."[71] But virtue would not "spring up spontaneously;" it had to be nurtured and developed, hence Mann's belief that education was essential in a progressive society.[72]

The idea of free will was an important corollary to Mann's understanding of the moral neutrality with which humans entered the world. "We are born into free and open space…Morally, we can go downwards as well as upwards…free agency necessitates the

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[69] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:vii.
[70] Horace Mann, "Special Preparation a Prerequisite to Teaching," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1837-1838...To Which Are Prefixed Lectures on Education*, vol. II, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 108–9.
[71] "Address of Hon. Horace Mann," *Toledo Blade*, November 7, 1845, 1, Folder 9, Box 2, Benjamin Pickman Mann Papers, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.
[72] Horace Mann, *Go Forth and Teach: An Oration Delivered before the Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1842* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on the Horace Mann Centennial, National Education Association, 1937), 11–12.

possibility of perdition."[73] Like Packard, Mann rejected the notion that some were predestined for salvation while others were doomed to hell. Humans were fundamentally free beings, and this freedom offered the possibility of salvation or ruination, depending upon the choices made. Also like Packard, Mann recognized that young people faced great challenges in the prospect of making moral choices in the nineteenth century. He addressed parents: "you have not a son nor a daughter who, in this world of temptation, is not destined to encounter perils more dangerous than to walk a bridge of a single plank, over a dark and sweeping torrent beneath."[74] On another occasion, Mann identified the city as an especially perilous place for young people because of its many temptations to ruin.[75] Yet, with free will, "moral vision," "that light of knowledge and that omnipotence of virtue," even youth in cities could live morally.[76]

Mann defined a moral life as one lived in obedience to the laws of the universe. These laws were "as fixed, as immutable, as eternal, as the Being who created them."[77] They included the laws that governed the natural world, the human body, and the intangible realm of the relationships of humans with God and each other. According to Mann, success in this world consisted of comprehending and obeying all of these laws – and such was the purpose of education: "To know these laws, and to be animated with a

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[73] Horace Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man: A Lecture, Delivered Before the Boston Mercantile Library Association, on Its 29th Anniversary* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1850), 44–45.
[74] Horace Mann, *Lecture on Education* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon and Webb, 1840), 61–62.
[75] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 7–8.
[76] Mann, *Lecture on Education*, 61–62.
[77] Horace Mann, "Introduction to Volume V of the Common-School Journal, 1843," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 59.

disposition voluntarily and lovingly to obey them, is to be educated."[78] Obedience to natural and moral law allowed "a rational and free being [to] fulfil [sic] his destiny."[79] "Calamities & suffering" would result if humans did not obey the laws "impressed upon our being by our Creator."[80] Mann believed in the importance of salvation as much as Packard did, but where Packard saw salvation as following from acceptance of Jesus's atoning sacrifice, Mann viewed salvation – individual and societal – as resulting from humans living in harmony with the laws God had established.

Obedience to God's laws would inevitably result in progress. Horace Mann believed in human progress as "the beneficent law of the race."[81] "An ever-upward ascension in the scale of being" in the realms of society and morality was necessary. "The race can be made happier and better than it is."[82] Not only was progress desirable, but it was inevitable: "the party of Progress is sure to triumph."[83]

Mann also believed that there was no end to the potential for improvement. "The soul will never be so bright & glorious, but that it may be made to radiate still purer & brighter splendors." Human beings were "always susceptible of further perfection."[84] A small child was "a potential universe" whose intelligence and character could grow and

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Mann, *Go Forth and Teach*, 16–17.
[80] Horace Mann to Lydia Mann, November 9, 1838, Reel 5, Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
[81] Horace Mann, "Practice Against Theory, Theory and Practice," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 284.
[82] Horace Mann, "Introduction to Volume IV of the Common-School Journal, 1842," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 50.
[83] Mann, "Practice Against Theory, Theory and Practice," 284.
[84] Horace Mann to M. Brewer, June 21, 1848, Straker Collection of Mann and Peabody Letters, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

expand to infinite proportions.[85] In Packard's worldview, humankind could never be completely perfected on this earth because of the inescapable presence of sin; for Mann, humankind could never be completely perfected because the continuum of progress extended infinitely.

Due to its emphasis on perfection and lack of emphasis on sin, Mann's worldview at first appears more optimistic than Packard's. In his account of the Mann-Packard conflict, Raymond Culver wrote casually about Mann's "Unitarian optimism" and Packard's "Calvinistic pessimism."[86] But closer analysis reveals that Packard's understanding of the world actually allowed for a great deal of optimism too. His understanding of human depravity was inescapably linked to his hopes for American children. His hopes that they could become pious and productive citizens *in spite of* the burden of sin they carried at birth could be construed as even more sanguine than Mann's view.

Mann himself recognized this argument. In his Eleventh Annual Report as Secretary of the Board of Education (1847), Mann reported the results of a circular letter he had mailed to a variety of prominent educators across the nation. The letter asked, "under the soundest and most vigorous system of education which we can now command, what proportion, or percentage, of all the children who are born, can be made useful and exemplary men…?"[87] The educators responded resoundingly that all or nearly all of the

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[85] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 41.
[86] Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion*, 64. Culver portrayed Mann as a progressive, noble hero and Packard as a villain stuck in the past and his own prejudices.
[87] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1847," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1845-1848 and Oration Delivered Before the*

children educated under such a system would become productive members of society.[88] In reporting his results, Mann purposely chose letters from orthodox Protestants who believed in human depravity. If they believed that an improved school system could work such good even in their naturally wicked charges, then who could argue against them? Mann believed that a "rational community," faced with such evidence, could only support his reform agenda.[89] "In fine, if the natural dispositions are all evil, how great is the necessity of education to counteract them; and if good, why should they not be aided by the best possible culture?"[90] Mann recognized that the worldview of someone like Packard held the potential for more dramatic social and moral change than a worldview that assumed that people were essentially morally neutral. And both views supported the importance of education for all.

Mann's Educational Philosophy – A Three-Fold View

Mann's educational philosophy reflected the widely accepted nineteenth-century understanding of the way to create a "balanced character," based on faculty psychology. According to its tenets, the human being was made up of various aspects, each associated either with the "understanding," which meant "powers of awareness," or the "will," which referred to "powers of action." The "will" included unconscious processes like

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Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1842, vol. IV, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 158.

[88] This view is reflective of the popular notion of the time regarding a "moral economy" of literacy. See Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 25.

[89] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1847," 173.

[90] Horace Mann, "Introduction to Volume VI of the Common-School Journal, 1844," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 99.

breathing and digestion, as well as emotion and reason. The latter two processes could be submitted to human control. Too much of either could be detrimental to the human character, and therefore an individual should strive for a balance in his or her self.[91]

Mann's own version of this system divided human activity into two realms – physical and mental, with mental further subdividing into moral and intellectual. These three components – physical, moral, and intellectual – provided the foundation for the system of education he advocated.[92] Cultivation of each element was necessary to create a balanced human being, and the development of one faculty at the expense of others would create a disparity that would result in the disobedience of natural and moral laws. Mann recognized that some of the faculties that humans naturally possessed would lead them to defy these laws, but he did not condone crushing those impulses, as his Puritan forebears might have done with their practice of breaking the will. "If Luther had had his mind broken in youth, we never should have heard of the Reformation of 1517," he observed.[93] In order to ensure that independent thought like that of Luther was not stifled, Mann advocated strengthening positive attributes instead of beating negative attributes out of young people. "For high achievements, we want men of high spirit!"[94] The ideal man (or woman) according to Mann should be physically sound, virtuous, and

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[91] Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 5–6.
[92] "Address of Hon. Horace Mann," 1.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

mentally astute.[95] These qualities were "the foundation and the superstructure of human happiness" and one could not find true contentment without them.[96]

Physical Education

Mann believed that God intended humans to develop sound bodies and good health. Humankind itself had brought disease and debility into the world by indulging in bad habits that contradicted the laws that God had established to govern the human body. "Every drunkard who rears his children from his inflamed and corrupted blood; every licentious man who transmits his weakness and his wickedness as an inheritance of suffering, is another repetition of the fall of man."[97] Mann knew that disregard for the laws of the physical form produced degradation, disease, and death in humankind.[98] Indeed it already had. Compared to their ancestors, Mann claimed, nineteenth century Americans were "short in length, deficient in size and weight, and sleazy in texture."[99] He thought they would "soon be a bed-rid people" if things progressed as they had been.[100] In order to combat these trends, Mann believed that Americans should work to strengthen their bodies physically through exercise, as well as gain a comprehensive

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[95] Mann believed strongly that women's education should be "advanced to an equality with that of males" and advocated coeducation, although he viewed men and women as having different capacities and thus different roles in society. See Horace Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 389–90, 400.
[96] Horace Mann, "Introduction to Volume IX of the Common-School Journal, 1847," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 164.
[97] Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," 338.
[98] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 26.
[99] Mann, "Introduction to Volume IV of the Common-School Journal, 1842," 46.
[100] Ibid., 47.

understanding of how natural laws affected the body so that they could maintain a nourishing diet and healthful habits.

Mann believed that physical weakness affected the moral and intellectual faculties as well; a person could not ascend to true greatness in any realm without attending to all of them.[101] And, as he pointed out, the human mind and soul – which housed the intellectual and moral capabilities – could not exist without the body to house them. "Mental power is so dependent for its manifestation on physical powers."[102] Thus physical education was a fundamental prerequisite to moral and intellectual education.

Moral Education

Mann did not rank the three components of his educational system equally. Moral education superseded physical and intellectual in importance: "the highest and noblest office of education, pertains to our moral nature."[103] Education in morality was "a primal necessity of social existence."[104] God had ordained it so; his "Moral Glories" were greater than any others.[105]

Mann had a very precise definition of what constituted morality. He believed that it was not synonymous with religion. He defined morality and religion as distinct and

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[101] A.H. Tufts, "Scraps and Recollections," *The Antiochian*, May 1887, 6.
[102] Horace Mann, "Prospectus of the Common-School Journal," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1837-1838...To Which Are Prefixed Lectures on Education*, vol. II, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 21–22.
[103] Mann, "Introduction to Volume V of the Common-School Journal, 1843," 73.
[104] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1848," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1845-1848 and Oration Delivered Before the Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1842*, vol. IV, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 283.
[105] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 37.

separate: "morality consists primarily in the performance of our duties to our fellow men; religion in the performance of our duties to God."[106] Mann associated religion with the plethora of creeds and the squabbling amongst sects that he so despised. Morality transcended such concerns; it was the performance of God's commands with respect to fellow men and women in the true spirit in which those commands had been given.

Mann judged nineteenth-century Americans harshly on their upholding of morality. As with the care of their physical bodies, they refused to obey God's moral laws. They did not love their neighbors as themselves and they did not exhibit religious tolerance to those of different creeds; in fact, in the moral realm, argued Mann, the United States was not even a civilized country.[107] Yet he believed that the cultivation of moral virtue was essential to progress.[108]

Such ideas about the importance of virtue have much in common with the Scottish common sense concept of the moral sense, articulated by Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Reid and advocated by Packard.[109] Yet Mann did not appear to subscribe to Hutcheson's view of the moral sense as an innate, unconscious impulse that prompted one towards the good without rational consideration. Mann's conception of the moral

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[106] Horace Mann to Worthy Putnam, July 27, 1846, in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 271.
[107] Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," 371–72.
[108] Mann shared this preoccupation with moral virtue with other nineteenth-century educators, such as Henry Barnard. In fact, they viewed good moral character as the most important attribute of a successful teacher and tried to cultivate it at teachers' institutes. See Paul H. Mattingly, "Educational Revivals in Ante-Bellum New England," *History of Education Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 45–47; Paul H. Mattingly, *The Classless Profession: American Schoolmen in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 44–45.
[109] Ethical common sense reasoning, or the idea of the moral sense, was influential among evangelicals, Unitarians, and Transcendentalists in nineteenth-century America. See Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1985): 221–22; Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 45–54.

sense was much more similar to Reid's.[110] Mann believed that moral decisions must be carefully and deliberately considered. Even more importantly, individuals must be taught how to make them. He believed that people who made immoral decisions usually did so because they were not fully aware of the disastrous consequences that would ensue. Once they understood this cause and effect, they would not do wrong. "The law of right is incorruptible and eternal, and children can be taught this law as they can be taught geography or astronomy." But if they were not taught the law of morality, "then the moral nature does not enjoy an equality of privilege with the intellectual nature," and they could not be expected to behave morally.[111] "Virtuous education" alone could create "a mind able to perceive what is right, prompt to defend it, or, if need be, to die for it."[112]

Mann recognized that compelling obedience to authority was another way to ensure that young people behaved morally. Courts and police forces might impose severe punitive measures upon people in order to deter immoral acts, but such steps could only be taken after the acts themselves had been committed. Mann also acknowledged that social institutions designed to punish crime could only pursue actions, not thoughts: "The members of society may commit, daily, *in their hearts,* all the crimes prohibited in the decalogue [sic]" and yet remain unpunished.[113] And it was with these impure intentions and desires that Mann was concerned. He also worried about the evil consequences of the acts that first had to be committed in order to be punished. The only way to truly

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[110] Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 45–49.
[111] Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," 383–84.
[112] Mann, *Lecture on Education*, 13.
[113] Horace Mann, "Normal Schools," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 208.

address the problem, according to Mann, was to cultivate the development of "internal restraints" in young people; these moral compasses within each individual would replace "force and fear" to regulate behavior.[114] The language of "internal restraints" might seem to reinforce the argument of some historians that Mann and educators like him sought to exert social control on those they attempted to educate. In the sense that they wished to ensure that they behaved morally, such an argument is true, but, as Mann's writings reveal, he conceived of these "internal restraints" as ultimately more freeing than confining.[115]

Morality did not only consist of performing the right actions; it also referred to the cultivation of appropriate feelings and sentiments. Mann's ideas about cultivating emotional sympathy in children hearken back to eighteenth-century notions of sensibility as the quality of perception and sensitivity that made one aware of one's own feelings and the feelings of others. According to eighteenth-century theory, sensibility bound the individual to society and could prompt social action.[116] In the nineteenth century, many Unitarians subscribed to a similar idea, inspired by the Scottish common sense philosophers. They believed that individuals should govern themselves on the basis of reason, not emotion, but that the emotions were often more powerful than reason.

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[114] Horace Mann, "A Historical View of Education; Showing Its Dignity and Its Degradation," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1837-1838...To Which Are Prefixed Lectures on Education*, vol. II, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 242.
[115] Mann shared this view with other prominent Unitarians. See Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 60.
[116] Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2009), 1–22; G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Sometimes, therefore, in order to give reason a helping hand, the individual could draw upon the emotions that prompted one to do good, also known as the "sentiments."[117]

When his son Horace was young, Mann chronicled the child's development in a diary and demonstrated much concern with displays of young Horace's sentiments. In 1845, when he was just over a year old, Horace, Jr. often indulged in "paroxysms of passion" of which his father disapproved.[118] Mann considered such unrestrained emotion as reflecting the "lower sentiments" and longed for his son to develop the "higher sentiments." But he recognized that he and his wife, Mary, could only do so much to restrain the boy: "it may be that nature has not left that to our control, but only to his own control, when he shall wake up to a consciousness of what is within him."[119] Mann hoped that Horace, Jr. would develop internal restraints, not relying on parental or any other external authority for curbing these "lower sentiments."

It was possible to indulge in the wrong kind of emotion; it was also possible to lack sentiment altogether. Mann's childhood minister Nathanael Emmons provided the perfect example of an intellectual giant lacking in sympathy and compassion. In order to prevent children from developing into adults like Emmons, Mann called for the refinement of sympathetic feelings. When he visited schools in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1843, he found students of high intellectual caliber who lacked sympathy towards the subjects they studied. Mann wrote in his diary that when the students read about

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[117] Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience*, 61–63.
[118] Horace Mann, Diary of Horace Mann, Relating Chiefly to His Son, Horace, July 27, 1845, photocopy, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, original at Houghton Library, Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
[119] Mann, Diary of Horace Mann, Relating Chiefly to His Son, Horace, June 25, 1845, photocopy, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, original at Houghton Library, Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

circumstances that should have excited their compassion and brought tears to their eyes, they responded as if they were studying multiplication tables. According to Mann, focusing solely on abstract theology and doctrine in the classroom was "like teaching anatomy without physiology." Students also needed to be taught how to feel and then how to allow these feelings to guide them in feeling rightly and making moral decisions in life.[120]

As physical education was linked to moral and intellectual education, the latter two components also intermingled and supported each other. Mann argued that a person needed "a virtuous and reverent heart" in order to fully comprehend an intellectual truth "in the full majesty of its proportions."[121] In other words, an upright moral nature and obedience to God's moral laws had to precede any correct exercise in intellectual reasoning. Otherwise, morality and intellect "often become foes." [122] Either a strong and crafty intellect would overpower weak morals, leading one to commit evil acts, or immorality in one's nature would prevent the acquisition of true knowledge, leading to stupidity and dullness.

In arguing his point, Mann referred to the saying ascribed to Francis Bacon, "Knowledge is Power." Mann said that "mankind" had taken the statement to heart and pursued knowledge doggedly, but now another maxim ought to supplement it: "'Virtue and Religion are Power.' This aphorism has regard to the use we make of the power we

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[120] Horace Mann, Journal, June 18, 1843, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 193.
[121] Horace Mann, "Demands of the Age on Colleges," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 423–24.
[122] Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," 380.

possess…In Bacon's time, the grand inquiry was, how to obtain power; in our time, the grand inquiry is, how to use the power we have obtained."[123] Mann believed that people ought not to exercise knowledge without the restraints of morality upon them.

By the time he became president of Antioch College, Mann took such a sentiment to its logical conclusion: those who were immoral ought to be denied higher education, or at least denied a diploma, the symbol of their education. Everyone should have the opportunity to be educated in the common schools, where teachers would seek to cultivate virtue, but if young people did not learn to live out the morality they were taught, they should not be allowed to continue beyond the common school: "the power of knowledge should not be added to the power of vice." Sinful acts that Mann considered disqualifications for higher education included "intemperance, lasciviousness, gaming, or blasphemy, profanity & obscenity."[124] Mann believed deeply in the benefits of both higher education, for both men and women, but those benefits could not make up for the degradation that would result if moral living and compassion had not first been established in those being educated.

Intellectual Education: "Free Thought"

Horace Mann believed that children ought to be taught how to reason critically. In Mann's view, what he called free thought began with comprehension. Free thinkers should be able to transfer and use knowledge outside of the context in which it was

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[123] Mann, "Demands of the Age on Colleges," 425–246.
[124] Horace Mann to Samuel Gridley Howe, July 4, 1857, photocopy, Straker Collection of Mann and Peabody Letters, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, original in Horace Mann Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

learned. They ought to question what they learned and read. If they learned something that contradicted preexisting beliefs, then they should be open to reexamining those beliefs, weighing the relevant evidence, and altering their beliefs if the evidence justified it. Unlike Packard, Mann welcomed challenges to orthodoxy as part of the exercise of free thought, but he still believed in inherent limitations on the use of reason – moral and natural law circumscribed the extent of the conclusions that practitioners of free thought could reach.

Mann held strong opinions about the history of free thought. From its early days, he wrote, Christianity attempted to enforce "conformity" upon its followers, punishing those who disagreed with the tenets of orthodoxy. "A following out of conscientious trains of thought… [has] furnished more tenants for the dungeon, more victims for the executioner, than all other causes combined." [125] Religious authorities established institutions designed to indoctrinate students "with the prejudices of their instructors' minds, for the purpose of having their intellectual frame distorted and weakened [sic]."[126] The Protestant Reformation represented a victory for the advocates of freedom of thought, according to Mann. Catholicism dictated that "men could not think for themselves," while Protestantism maintained the contrary supposition. Yet almost as soon as Protestants came to power, they forbade anyone from protesting against them, denying the principles upon which their faith had been founded. Protestant authorities attempted to uphold "a faith prejudicated to be true," which Mann viewed as a "nefarious

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[125] Horace Mann, "Introduction to Volume III of the Common-School Journal, 1841," in *Educational Writings of Horace Mann*, vol. V, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1891), 12–13.
[126] Ibid., 17–19. Mann particularly blamed the Jesuits for founding such institutions.

wrong."[127] Throughout history, Mann recognized, that there had been some, like Galileo, who thought for themselves and sought truth heedless of dogma. But, for each free thinker, there were many more "bigot-smotherer[s] of free thought" who trampled on the truth.[128] According to Mann, this conflicted history of free thought had ultimately led the American Protestant educational system to where it stood in the early nineteenth-century – superior in many ways to other systems (namely, the Catholic system), but failing to live up to its highest ideals regarding free thought.[129]

Mann viewed free thought as serving a number of important purposes in society, both secular and religious. It allowed people to analyze causes and effects of past events and decisions, however remote in time, and use such knowledge to affect the future.[130] Free thought also facilitated the triumph of truth over myths and legends such as "krakens, phoenixes, unicorns, and vampires" and the "terrors and follies of astrology."[131] It modified the input of the senses; without it, Mann wrote, humans would find themselves "in a world of illusions, each one leading us astray."[132] It enabled people to make better decisions as voters in a republican country as they could then "[discern] between the right and the wrong in the parties which beset and would inveigle them."[133] Finally, free thought made human society more efficient and ultimately more profitable.

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[127] Ibid., 12–13.
[128] Mann, "Demands of the Age on Colleges," 435–36.
[129] Mann, "Prospectus of the Common-School Journal," 3.
[130] Mann, *Lecture on Education*, 11–12.
[131] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 53–54.
[132] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1845," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1845-1848 and Oration Delivered Before the Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1842*, vol. IV, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 78.
[133] Mann, *Go Forth and Teach*, 99.

Educated, thinking workers performed their jobs better than ignorant ones; education was thus "the most prolific parent of material riches."[134] The secular benefits of a reasoning, educated people were plentiful.

Mann also believed that free thought was crucial to the development of religious faith. He was aware of the debates among theologians in the early nineteenth century about the merits of revealed versus natural religion. Revealed religion referred to spiritual beliefs rooted in direct revelation from God; in American Protestantism, the Scriptures represented the heart of revelation. Practitioners of natural religion, in contrast, used reason to learn about God from his creation.[135] Mann came down decidedly on the side of natural religion; compared to revealed religion, it was "the deepest experience over the lightest hearsay."[136] Contemplation of the divine in the world around him fired Mann's imagination and enthusiasm: "It is here that the Creator speaks to our senses, not less than to our souls, of his immensity. Here he teaches his infinite attributes by illustration, making them not only spiritually intelligible, but visible, tangible, palpable."[137] The application of reason revealed to humans "the solid framework of the universe" and all of its secrets.[138] Not only did God make his traits concrete by means of nature, the development of humans' mental powers crafted them in

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[134] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1841," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1839-1844*, vol. III, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 109; ibid., 93–95; Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1848," 254; Mann, "Introduction to Volume V of the Common-School Journal, 1843," 64–65.
[135] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 5.
[136] Horace Mann, Journal, May 8, 1837, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 68.
[137] Mann, "Introduction to Volume V of the Common-School Journal, 1843," 62.
[138] Mann, *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man*, 31–32.

the image of God.[139] God also used contemplation of his creation to encourage human minds to stretch themselves further: "He trains the inquiring mind to the habit of expecting more as it sees more, and thus the revelation of our own expanding capacities, and of the inexhaustibleness of the Creator's works, becomes the daily lesson of our lives."[140] To Mann, the contemplation of God's creation by means of reason – natural theology – helped men and women see God more clearly and even become more like the divine themselves.

Mann's exhortations regarding the development of reason and free thought found their source in his understanding of how the mind worked. Mann's ideas owed a great deal to the theories of George Combe, a close friend and a "great man," in Mann's estimation.[141] Combe was a Scottish-born phrenologist who believed that the bumps and depressions of one's skull corresponded to different areas of the brain, which controlled the development of thirty-five specific faculties, including such attributes as Destructiveness, Adhesiveness, or Benevolence. Combe believed that knowledge about the way these faculties interacted in each individual would enable him or her to better obey natural and moral laws in a way that would lead to the progress of society. Combe was also an advocate of educational reform based on his phrenological theories. He believed that knowledge regarding children's strong and weak traits, based on their

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[139] Mann, *Go Forth and Teach*, 104.
[140] Mann, "Introduction to Volume V of the Common-School Journal, 1843," 62.
[141] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:59, 138; Horace Mann to Lydia Mann, November 9, 1838.

phrenological profile, would allow teachers to tailor lessons in ways that would help to strengthen the positive traits and minimize the negative ones.[142]

After reading Combe's *The Constitution of Man* (1841), Mann wrote to his sister, "I know of no book written for hundreds of years which does so much to 'vindicate the ways of God to man'…Its philosophy is the only practical basis of education."[143] Mann did not only admire Combe's philosophy; he also admired his "impartial view to the discovery of truth. This is the greatest of human attainments – an impartial mind – he has it, & owes his eminence to it."[144] Horace Mann admired his friend so much that he named one of his own sons after him. Combe's influence may be seen in Mann's ideas about comprehension and free thought.

Mann asserted that the development of the highest forms of reasoning must be grounded in basic comprehension. The most evident manifestation of this problem could be found in the way American children learned to read, an issue which also preoccupied Packard. According to Mann, good reading included three components – "the *mechanical*…the *intellectual*…and the *rhetorical*" yet the typical child in an American school learned only the mechanical, making him or her "a mere grinder of words."[145] To students' detriment, parents and teachers focused on the amount of time spent reading

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[142] Combe's educational theories were very similar to Mann's. Both men also found a great deal of inspiration in Pestalozzi and desired to jettison memorization for activities that would engage all of children's faculties in turn. See Stephen Tomlinson, "Phrenology, Education and the Politics of Human Nature: The Thought and Influence of George Combe," *History of Education* 26, no. 1 (March 1997): 4–5, 8–9, 11–16; Stephen Tomlinson, *Head Masters: Phrenology, Secular Education, and Nineteenth-Century Social Thought* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2005); David Stack, *Queen Victoria's Skull: George Combe and the Mid-Victorian Mind* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2008).

[143] Horace Mann to Lydia Mann, November 9, 1838.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Horace Mann, "On District-School Libraries," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1837-1838...To Which Are Prefixed Lectures on Education*, vol. II, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 304–5, 307.

and the number of pages read rather than ensuring that students comprehended what they read.[146] Based on his investigation of Massachusetts schools, Mann estimated that 11 out of 12 students frequently did not understand the meaning of the words they read aloud in class. "Unless pupils…can read intelligently any good English book, and understand any speech or discourse expressed in good English words, they cannot, with any propriety, be said to have learned to read."[147] According to Mann's definition, American schools produced a largely illiterate population. And reading was only symptomatic of a larger educational problem. American schools displayed "a want of thoroughness, - a proneness to be satisfied with a verbal memory of rules, instead of a comprehension of principles, with a knowledge of the names of things, instead of a knowledge of the things themselves."[148] Children memorized facts, but they did not attain mastery of the foundational knowledge necessary to understand those facts, nor did they understand the relationships among the facts they could recite.

The lack of comprehension and thinking in American schools contrasted sharply with what Mann observed in Prussia when he traveled to Europe in 1843. Although he frowned upon the Prussians' advocacy of "passive obedience to government" and "blind adherence to the articles of a church," he greatly favored their methods of instruction and believed that they could produce even more beneficial results in a free society like the

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[146] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1838," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1837-1838...To Which Are Prefixed Lectures on Education*, vol. II, Life and Works of Horace Mann (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 509, also see 506-507.
[147] Mann, "On District-School Libraries," 311.
[148] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1840," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1839-1844*, vol. III, Life and Works of Horace Mann (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 59.

United States.[149] The Prussian schools utilized the "phonic" method of teaching children to read, which taught children sounds and words, not letters, fostering their understanding from the very beginning.[150] This method stood in sharp contrast to forcing children to memorize the alphabet first.[151] The mindless drills the latter method required meant that "the time which passes during this lesson is the only part of the day when [the child] does not think."[152] Prussian teachers also taught arithmetic "less by rule, more by an understanding of the subject," making it much more likely that children would remember what they learned.[153] Some Prussian schools even reserved instruction time for "Exercises in Thinking." When Mann asked one instructor, Dr. Vogel, why "Exercises in Thinking" did not appear in his particular curriculum, the man replied, "'No; for I consider it a sin in any teacher not to lead his pupils to think in regard to all the subjects he teachers.'" In response, Mann mourned, "'Alas!...what expiation will be sufficient for many of us who have had charge of the young!'"[154] He considered the American system of education deficient in many ways to the Prussian, particularly regarding its instruction (or lack thereof) in comprehension and thinking.

Mann's *Seventh Annual Report,* which discussed his observations of Prussian schools, drew the ire of thirty-one Boston schoolmasters. The ensuing conflict revealed

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[149] Horace Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1843," in *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1839-1844*, vol. III, Life and Works of Horace Mann (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 241.
[150] Ibid., 318.
[151] The thirty-one Boston schoolmasters who published *Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann* believed that children ought to be taught the alphabet first (the "abcderian" approach). See Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 414.
[152] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1843," 308–9.
[153] Ibid., 323.
[154] Ibid., 337–38.

that Packard definitely did not stand alone in objecting to the Board of Education and its Secretary. In a publication called *Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann*, the schoolmasters affirmed the efficacy of teaching children to learn how to read by teaching the alphabet first, rather than entire words. They also defended memorization and recitation as instructional techniques and attacked Mann's call for teachers to engage the interest and understanding of their pupils. Despite their differences, however, Mann and the schoolmasters, like Packard, shared a similar goal: the desire for young people to develop powerful internal motivation rather than relying upon external incentives. They simply disagreed on the best methods to achieve those goals.[155]

Mann objected to schools like those in which the Boston schoolmasters taught because he believed that teachers there stifled students' original ideas. When Mann was growing up, questions or concerns that extended beyond the textbook were "contraband articles, which the teacher confiscated, or rather flung overboard."[156] The situation was much the same in American schools of the 1830s and 1840s. According to Mann, some educators sought to eliminate free thought in the adult by eliminating free thought in the child: "They expect to find it easier to subdue the free agency of children by binding them in fetters of bigotry than to subdue the free agency of men by binding them in fetters of iron."[157] Mann vehemently opposed such bondage. The development of

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[155] Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform*, 139–45; Messerli, *Horace Mann*, 412–20.
[156] Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:11–12.
[157] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1848," 334.

children's minds, not just their memories, would create "thought-producing, instead of thought-repeating men."[158]

Young people should be able to recall accurately the facts they read. They should also be capable of "re-arranging them into new forms, and of adding something to, or removing something from, the original perceptions" in order to make the knowledge useful to them.[159] Most importantly, children should read with "an open and inquiring mind." As they proceeded, they ought to compare what they were reading with what they had read elsewhere, which would "prevent them from blindly adopting whatever is communicated to them by others" and leading to "a power…of expanded views and…thorough investigation."[160] When they found positions that contradicted each other, young people should assess them "with conscientious impartiality" in order to refine their own viewpoints, if incorrect.[161] This was free thought in its essence.

Mann viewed blind obedience as working against the development of free-thinking young people. He certainly favored obedience to God's natural and moral laws, but that obedience ought to be "voluntary" and based upon knowledge of the laws – a "rational obedience" towards which understanding was the first step.[162] "Blind obedience" to authority wrote Mann, was valueless. Obedience on the basis of fear was also without value, as well as being ineffective: "as soon as the fear is removed, the restrained impulses will break out, and demand the arrears of indulgence as a long-

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[158] Mann, "Dedicatory and Inaugural Address at Antioch College," 349. Although he did not believe that men and women ought to fill the same roles in society, Mann was an advocate of women's education, so he presumably means the universal "man" in this instance.
[159] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1841," 115.
[160] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1838," 548.
[161] Ibid., 547–48.
[162] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1845," 36.

delayed debt."[163] Young people ought to obey natural laws, but not because an external force compelled them to do so; rather, they ought to rely on their own "self-government" to regulate their behavior.[164] Mann called for the same standard for his own son, writing in his journal that the boy's "conscience must be cultivated that he may have not only a higher standard, but a standard within himself."[165] Mann's version of reasoning thus rejected adherence to authority for its own sake, as did Packard's. Conclusions ought to be formed through the direction of an internal guide, not on the basis of authority.

Most importantly of all, Mann believed that teaching free thought in the education of children and young people should provide them with the opportunity to choose their religious creeds for themselves. Thus he resolutely defended Protestant nonsectarianism in the public schools. Although schools ought to teach the fundamentals of Protestant morality, "what all Christians hold to be right," "those points of doctrine, or faith, upon which good, and great Men differ" should be excluded.[166]

Mann compared religion to politics, observing that a child was not taught about the American political system in order to indoctrinate him into a particular political party. Therefore, he posited, a child should not be taught about religion in order to inculcate him with particular doctrines, but rather to equip him "to judge for himself, according to the dictates of his own reason and conscience," what religious avenue he should

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[163] Ibid., 38.
[164] Ibid., 36; Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:48.
[165] Horace Mann, Diary of Horace Mann, Relating Chiefly to His Son, Horace, February 25, 1847, photocopy, Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, original at Houghton Library, Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
[166] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1847," 177; Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, July 22, 1838.

pursue.[167] Imposing sectarian views upon an impressionable child was "a profanation of all the holiest instincts of the soul; this is sacrilege!"[168] Mann recognized that his position taken to the extreme would result in nothing being taught at all, for fear that it was being taught in error. Thus, he recommended that teachers "teach as truth" matters upon which "the great body of accredited scientific expounders agree." If authorities disagreed, however, instructors ought to present both positions and the evidence supporting each of them, allowing students to decide for themselves which was true.[169]

Mann had the opportunity to put his ideals of religious freedom to work beginning in 1853 when he became President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In the letter he wrote to the chairman of the committee recruiting him, Mann expressed his fervent belief that the "most important of all duties" of humankind was the process of establishing one's own religious beliefs for oneself.[170] He found a congenial home for his beliefs at Antioch, which was founded by the Christian Connexion. This religious body was one among several concurrent restorationist movements in American Christianity which sought to return the faith to the religion of the apostles in the New Testament, abandoning the creeds and doctrines that divided denominations.[171] According to a mid-nineteenth-century "Historical Sketch of Antioch College," the Christian Connexion "assumed no name but 'Christians;' adopted, or required assent to

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[167] Mann, "Annual Report to the Board of Education, 1848," 312–13. I use the masculine pronoun here because Mann did so. Although Mann may be using the term in the sense of the human universal particularly with regards to religion, such a distinction is not clear from this passage.
[168] Mann, "Baccalaureate Address Delivered at Antioch College, 1857," 491–92.
[169] Ibid., 494.
[170] Horace Mann to Rev. E. Fay, May 13, 1852, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 366.
[171] Holifield, *Theology in America*, 291; Baird, *Religion in America*, 280–81.

no creed but the Bible, allowing each man his own judgment in interpreting its teachings; and made the evidence of Christian life and character the only requisite to admission to their fellowship."[172] Such an emphasis on unity and the supremacy of personal conscience aligned with Mann's views perfectly.

The regulations governing student life at Antioch College further emphasized the importance of personal conscience and internal regulation. Although a number of specific guidelines were given in "Laws and Regulations of Antioch College," the author of the document also added that Antioch administrators and faculty desired more that students obey the "spirit" of the rules, rather than the "letter." When evaluating their conduct to determine if it would align with the expectations of the college, the author instructed students to ask "What would the consequence be if all were to do or omit the thing in question?"[173] Such an admonition encouraged students to reason critically about their behavior and act accordingly, not to obey authority slavishly for its own sake.

Mann himself taught a Sunday school class to Antioch students based not on one interpretation of the Bible, but rather on the presentation of different interpretations of the texts in question, with the ultimate goal of allowing his pupils to choose which most seemed to represent truth to them.[174] An alumna of his class, Mrs. A.H. Tufts, recalled that one evening "a disputed question arose, and after giving the opinions of several noted persons, some one said, 'But, President Mann, we wish to know your opinion[']];

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[172] "Historical Sketch of Antioch College," n.d., Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Horace Mann to Rev. D. Austin, August 25, 1856, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 494–95; Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*, I:435.

when he quietly replied, 'Choose for yourselves.'"[175] Another student recalled a similar incident. Mann's students asked him to give his own opinion on "one of those perplexing mystical orthodox questions." Mann replied that he might have presumed to answer the question "to my own satisfaction" twenty years ago, but now he left it to his students to answer: "'I want you to think that out for yourselves. Each one must be his own judge.'"[176] Mann felt that it would have been presumptuous to offer his own viewpoint, which he knew would carry great weight with his students. He sought to allow them the freedom to shape their own beliefs without even the benefit of his personal opinion.

Such instruction in the methodical exercise of their reason would keep his students from allowing their enthusiasms, religious or otherwise, from running away with them. When observers questioned Mann as to why there had been no revivals at Antioch, Mann replied that the absence of revival did not mean that his students had not thought about religious matters. Because they had constantly been meditating on spiritual matters, they could not be frightened into an uproar: "they do not receive religious excitements like savages, but like men of intelligence and morals, and generally pure and correct purposes."[177] Young people trained in such a way would not be buffeted by religious passions, but would be able to use free thought to discern truth and morality in all aspects of life.

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[175] Tufts, "Scraps and Recollections," 5.
[176] H.N. Wheeler, "Recollections of Horace Mann at Antioch," *Unity*, August 8, 1901, 357.
[177] Horace Mann to Rev. O.J. Wait, September 22, 1858, in *Life of Horace Mann*, ed. Mary Peabody Mann, vol. I, *Life and Works of Horace Mann* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1891), 539.

Horace Mann rejected many of the tenets that Frederick Packard held dear, including original sin, the conversion experience, and a conventional future state of rewards and punishments. Yet he viewed the development of morality and reason just as highly as Packard. Like his orthodox counterpart, Mann believed that children's understanding needed to be cultivated from early in their educations. They ought to internalize the moral and natural laws established by God and use them as a foundation upon which to exercise their reason. Young people should not accept anything simply on authority, especially religious creeds, but should analyze the evidence and make decisions of faith for themselves. In Mann's words, young people should exercise free thought, even if it led them to reject orthodoxy.

Because of his goal of removing divisive religious creeds from the common schools, Mann is often viewed as the father of nonsectarian, even secular, public education. Yet, with respect to Roman Catholics and non-Christians, Mann's position was quite sectarian, considering the fact that he promoted the reading of the Protestant Bible in schools. Taking such a position on education placed him much closer to Packard than to Catholic or Jewish educators of the nineteenth century, who had their own opinions about the proper training of young people.

Chapter 4: "A Reason for the Faith:" Rebecca Gratz, Isaac Leeser, and Jewish Education

In a letter to her niece Miriam Cohen, Rebecca Gratz, founder of the Hebrew Sunday School in Philadelphia, remarked in 1838, "I hope the next generation of Jew Children will be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them."[1] Like early American Protestant educators, early American Jewish educators, namely Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser, hoped that their charges would learn to defend their faith using reason.

The early American Jewish community, although small compared to the general population, expanded on a massive scale in the early to mid-nineteenth century. In 1820, fewer than 3,000 Jews lived in the United States, but the Jewish population had climbed to 150,000 by 1860.[2] Only a fraction of the overall population, American Jews developed a sophisticated network of synagogues and educational institutions. They strove to sustain Jewish religious practices in an environment characterized by the massive mobilization of Protestant evangelicals with the goal of converting the entire nation, including Jews.

Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser, both Philadelphians, stood at the forefront of the movement to provide American Jewish children with a solid education in their faith.

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[1] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, October 7, 1838, Ms. 236, box 1, folder 1, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[2] Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654-1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 107–8; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 63–64.

Philadelphia proved an especially hospitable environment for their efforts on behalf of American Jewish education. The city boasted a significant Jewish population. Though it could no longer be considered primarily a Quaker community, the Quaker tradition of religious tolerance persisted. Late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Philadelphians also stood at the forefront of educational and philanthropic innovation, leading the nation in the creation of a variety of charities and schools, some secular and others sponsored by religious organizations.[3]

One of these religious schools, Rebecca Gratz's Hebrew Sunday School, inspired similar institutions across the country. The Sunday School served as a Jewish supplement to the secular education which children received in the public schools. Although Isaac Leeser supported the Hebrew Sunday School as an improvement over no Jewish education at all, he believed that day schools would better accomplish the purpose of shaping the minds of young Jews and encouraging them to remain faithful to Jewish law. Although Gratz and Leeser disagreed on the best way to accomplish their goal, they agreed on the importance of Jewish education and the need to teach Jewish children not simply to follow the faith blindly, but to do so in a reasoning way.

Their position as minorities in an overwhelmingly Christian society did foster a sense of caution in Gratz's and Leeser's advocacy of reason. Although Gratz hoped children would learn the "reason for the faith," she adhered to a traditional curriculum based on memorization and recitation in the Hebrew Sunday School. Leeser did not trust young children to recognize the truth of Judaism amidst an onslaught of Christian

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[3] Russell F. Weigley, ed., *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 224–26, 254, 292–93, 297, 340–41.

messages, hence his advocacy of Jewish day schools. He was certain that Jews who reasoned about the truth of their faith without any negative influences would arrive at accurate conclusions, but he feared that the enticements of evangelists, especially when directed at the young, would cause confusion and misdirection. Although Packard and Mann also demonstrated some ambivalence regarding the use of reason, Gratz and Leeser revealed it to an even greater degree in their work and writings.

Judaism in Early America

Five sizeable Jewish communities developed in the British mainland colonies by the eighteenth century: New York, Philadelphia, Newport, Charleston, and Savannah.[4] Most of the first Jewish immigrants in what is now the United States were Sephardim, who traced their ancestry to Spain and Portugal. While early American Jews faced legal restrictions in the colonies, the law permitted them to worship privately.[5] Thus the first Jews in the British colonies in America had more religious freedom than they would have found in most other countries in the world.

In the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of Ashkenazic Jews, tracing their roots to what is now Germany, migrated to the colonies. The overall Jewish population in the mainland British colonies remained small – only 2,500 individuals in 1776 – but it

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[4] Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 26–28; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 19; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, vol. I (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 30.
[5] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 1, 5–6, 11; Howard Morley Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 12; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 14–15.

became increasingly diverse with the arrival of the Ashkenazim, who practiced slightly different religious rituals and pronounced Hebrew differently than the Sephardim.[6]

The oldest American congregations met in private homes for decades, until changes in law permitted Jews to worship publicly and Jewish communities could raise enough financial support to construct synagogue buildings. The Jewish community in Philadelphia, home of Gratz and Leeser, purchased land for a cemetery in 1738 and began to meet privately for services in 1747. They began to call themselves Mikveh Israel, "the Hope of Israel," in 1761 and constructed their own building in 1782.[7] Rebecca Gratz's uncle, Bernard Gratz, served as one of the founding members of the congregation's board and even enjoyed the momentous duty of bringing the Torah scroll into the new building for the first time.[8] Like many synagogues, Mikveh Israel followed the Sephardic rite but counted many Ashkenazim, such as the Gratzes, among its members.[9]

Mikveh Israel, like most synagogues in America in the colonial and early republican periods, did not employ a rabbi; there were none in America before about 1840. Instead, synagogues employed a *hazan,* a "cantor-reader" or "cantor-minister."[10] The *hazan* was responsible for reading or chanting prayers, interpreting Jewish law, and

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[6] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 40; Faber, *A Time for Planting*, 58–62.
[7] David Uriah Todes, *The History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia, 1782-1873, From the Erection of the First Synagogue to the Closing of the Maimonides College* (Washington, D.C.: D.U. Todes, 1990), 1, 3.
[8] Dianne Ashton, "Expanding Jewish Life in America, 1826-1901," in *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America*, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 34.
[9] Robert Tabak, "Orthodox Judaism in Transition," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: ISHI Publications, 1983), 49; William Pencak, "Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 126, no. 3 (July 2002): 369, 374; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 29–31.
[10] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 15; Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America*, 36.

sometimes offering religious instruction to male youth in the congregation.[11] But the establishment of a school was a relatively low priority in most Jewish communities, considered only after the founding of a Jewish cemetery, congregation, synagogue building, and ritual bath.[12] If these prerequisites were met, the *hazan* might instruct boys in the basics of Jewish ritual and the Hebrew language in preparation for their Bar Mitzvahs. Parents usually paid for such schooling, but boys whose parents could not pay attended for free. These schools initially excluded girls, but around the time of the Revolution, some began permitting girls' attendance.[13] Some American Jewish children also had the opportunity to learn about their faith through a private school or tutor.[14]

The tradition of religious freedom, especially in Pennsylvania, fostered a relatively hospitable environment for the practice of American Judaism in the eighteenth century. In this era, most white American Protestants viewed Catholics as much more threatening than Jews.[15] In Philadelphia, some Jews "of sufficient gentility" entered the elite, associating with the most prominent Protestant families and joining together in membership in organizations such as the Library Company and local Masonic lodges. The Gratzes were among these elite Jewish Philadelphians. Several prominent non-Jewish residents, including Benjamin Franklin, looked favorably upon Mikveh Israel, as

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[11] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 14.
[12] Melissa R. Klapper, "The History of Jewish Education in America, 1700-2000," in *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America*, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 189–90.
[13] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:379–80.
[14] Seymour Fromer, "In the Colonial Period," in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: The National Curriculum Research Institute of the American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 12–13; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 36.
[15] Pencak, "Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania," 366; Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America*, 18–20; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 24–25.

demonstrated by their generous responses when the synagogue requested financial help from the community to finish its building.[16] But anti-semitism did exist. In 1782, when Mikveh Israel purchased a tract of land in preparation for building a synagogue, the neighboring German Reformed church raised objections, which led Mikveh Israel's leaders to sell their property and purchase another piece of land.[17]

The American Revolution brought about a number of changes within Jewish synagogues. Many congregations instituted reforms to make their procedures more democratic and rewrote their constitutions.[18] American Jewish congregations were relatively successful in instituting these reforms because they operated independently and did not have to answer to a hierarchy of external authority, as American Catholics did.[19] Seating arrangements in synagogues were now less likely to be based upon status and rank and more likely to be based simply upon the ability of congregants to pay for benches. Synagogues expanded seating galleries for women, often making them more visible during services in the process, and sometimes permitting them to participate actively in the service by singing in a mixed-gender choir.[20] The result was increased attendance of Jewish women at synagogue.[21] Together with their greater involvement in religion, some Jewish women seemed to have internalized the rhetoric of freedom and

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[16] Pencak, "Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania," 371–72.
[17] Ibid., 387–88; E. Digby Baltzell, "The Development of a Jewish Upper Class in Philadelphia," in *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group*, ed. Marshall Sklare (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), 275.
[18] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 42–43; William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654-1800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 266–67.
[19] Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America*, 263.
[20] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 47.
[21] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 132–33; Ashton, "Expanding Jewish Life in America, 1826-1901," 58–59.

rejected traditions that they found unnecessary or restrictive. In Philadelphia in 1784, one rabbi lamented that Jewish women had been neglecting the practice of bathing in a *mikveh,* or ritual bath, for seven days after the end of menstruation, as Jewish law dictated. He suggested that the construction of a communal *mikveh* in Philadelphia might encourage women to be more diligent, but, once it was built, relatively few women made use of it.[22] Such attitudes would eventually encourage the growth of Reform Judaism in the 1840s.

European Jews had long held the belief that there should be no distinction between the religious and secular realms of life. As a result, European synagogues had taken upon themselves the responsibility to care for the Jewish poor in their communities. In the early nineteenth century, however, American Jews began to formulate an understanding of Jewish religion as separate from the rest of life, a distinction like that long made between American Protestantism and the secular world. Partly as a result of this separation between the spiritual and secular, early nineteenth-century American synagogues left that responsibility of caring for the poor to newly forming voluntary associations.[23] Synagogues became like other American voluntary organizations and churches: "membership in any congregation [grew] out of personal choice rather than communal obligation."[24] American synagogues began to resemble Protestant churches in another way as well; the typical *hazan* came to resemble the Protestant minister, often

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[22] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 50–51.
[23] Ibid., 20–22; Faber, *A Time for Planting*, 123; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 64–66.
[24] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 62–63.

being addressed as Reverend and occasionally giving sermons.[25] As *hazan* of Mikveh Israel, Isaac Leeser was at the forefront of this shift.

In this climate of voluntarism, synagogues thrived in several major American cities. Despite the growth of synagogues, a significant number, perhaps half or more, of American Jews did not maintain active affiliation with a congregation, although some made the effort to attend services at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.[26] Historian Jonathan Sarna estimates that, between 1776 and 1840, 28.7% of marriages in which at least one partner was Jewish were between a Jew and a Christian, a dramatic increase from the 10-15% rate of intermarriage during the colonial period.[27] Such statistics, as well as anecdotal evidence in their congregations of Jews falling away from traditional practice, concerned American Jewish leaders. They began to worry about "Jewish continuity" – how would the American Jewish community sustain itself and pass its traditions on to the next generation?[28]

In the early nineteenth century, the evangelical Protestant community also caused Jewish leaders some concern with ambitious (albeit fairly unsuccessful) attempts to convert American Jews. The enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening led to renewed interest in the idea that Christian activism could speed the second coming of Christ, or the millennium. Some millenarians believed that the conversion of the Jews was an

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[25] Faber, *A Time for Planting*, 118–19.
[26] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 131–32; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 73.
[27] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 45, 27.
[28] Ibid., 54.

important precursor to Christ's second coming.[29] In 1816, enthusiastic reformers founded the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews, later known as the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews.[30] The Society dissolved several times over the years, but, until 1860, it always managed to reconstitute itself, despite the fact that it could demonstrate very little success in achieving conversions among American Jews.[31] Instead, it probably had a much greater impact motivating Jews to remain steadfast in their faith and encouraging others to do the same.[32]

Another trend complicated the efforts of American Jewish leaders. In the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of Central European Jews (most from Bavaria, Western Prussia, and Posen) immigrated to the United States, leading to a tremendous and unprecedented spike in the American Jewish population.[33] Isaac Leeser was among the immigrants, arriving from Westphalia in 1824.[34] Between 1820 and 1840, the number of American Jews grew from 3,000 to 15,000. From 1840 to 1860, the American Jewish population grew by a factor of 10 (15,000 to 150,000). Certainly a portion of this increase may be attributed to natural growth, but immigration played an even more important role. A significant majority of the immigrants came alone, without family, and often lacked skills and financial resources.[35] Most settled in cities, contributing to the

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[29] George L. Berlin, "Joseph S.C.F. Frey, the Jews, and Early Nineteenth Century Millenarianism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 1, no. 1 (1981): 27–29; Lorman Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews and Pre-Civil War Reform," *American Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1961): 44.
[30] Berlin, "Joseph S.C.F. Frey, the Jews, and Early Nineteenth Century Millenarianism," 31.
[31] Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews and Pre-Civil War Reform," 50–53.
[32] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:356.
[33] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 63–64.
[34] Lance Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 28.
[35] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 63–64.

urban population boom of the mid-nineteenth century. Established, well-to-do American Jews viewed these impoverished new immigrants with concern, fearing that they would inflame the anti-semitic prejudices of Christian Americans. The growing, diversifying American Jewish population challenged American Jewish leaders in other ways too: how could they both ensure the integration of new immigrants into American culture while providing support for the continuance of the practice of the Jewish religion? Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Leeser attempted to answer that question with the Hebrew Sunday School and the Jewish day school, respectively.

The Life of Rebecca Gratz

Rebecca Gratz was born to Michael Gratz and Miriam Simon on March 4, 1781 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, although she spent most of her life in Philadelphia.[36] She was one of ten children who survived to adulthood.[37] The evidence regarding her childhood education is scanty, but the Gratz household contained an extensive library including the classics, Jewish religious books, works of history and philosophy, and Shakespeare's plays. Gratz probably attended the Young Ladies Academy in Philadelphia. Regardless, her writings reveal her skill in composition, as well as the fact that she read extensively.[38] Her niece recalled that "my aunt was conversant with Burns, and Pope, and Milton, and even to her last days would repeat the 'Universal Prayer,' 'Edwin and Angelina,' Scott's

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[36] Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 27, 39.
[37] Ibid., "Gratz Family Tree."
[38] Ibid., 36–38.

Ellen in the *Lady of the Lake*, and many other poems."[39] The Gratz family carefully observed orthodox Jewish law and participated actively in the synagogue Mikveh Israel. From a young age, Rebecca Gratz learned what it meant to be a faithful Jewish woman.[40]

Gratz's father, Michael, made a substantial income as a merchant in partnership with his brother Barnard.[41] Thus the Gratz family moved in the circles of the Philadelphia elite, developing close relationships with both Jews and Gentiles. Gratz followed her family's lead. Given the fact that she never married, her relationship with Samuel Ewing, a Christian attorney, especially sparked historians' curiosity; the two spent time together at social events and corresponded about the books they were reading and other intellectual topics.[42] Some chroniclers of Gratz's life have characterized her relationship with Ewing as the great love affair of her life, which did not lead to marriage only because of religion.[43] Certainly, their religious differences would have been problematic for Gratz, who disapproved of Jews marrying outside of the faith. In a letter to her niece, Gratz wrote about several Jewish acquaintances who were engaged to Christians: "I always feel sorry for such sacrifices – sacrifices on both sides for in so important a subject, those who are united for time and eternity ought to agree."[44] The

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[39] Sara Hays Mordecai, "Recollections of My Aunt, Rebecca Gratz by 'One of Her Nieces'" (n.p., 1893), 11.
[40] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 40.
[41] Ibid., 31.
[42] Ibid., 68–69.
[43] Rollin G. Osterweis, *Rebecca Gratz: A Study in Charm* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 105.
[44] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, November 4, n.d., Ms. 236, box 2, folder 1, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy). Many of Gratz's extent letters are undated, or at least missing a notation of the year in which they were written. Therefore, it is difficult to use her letters to chart changes in her attitudes and beliefs over time.

evidence suggests a degree of attachment between Gratz and Ewing, perhaps more ardent on his part, but she likely never seriously considered marrying him.[45]

Despite Gratz's disapproval of intermarriage, she had many Christian friends and cultivated friendships with her siblings' non-Jewish spouses. She exchanged long, affectionate letters with her brother Benjamin's wife Maria, a Christian, who lived in Lexington, Kentucky. On one occasion, she wrote to Maria that "had I not been born a Jewess I should be what you are – a seeker after the faith which could bring me nearest to the pure worship of the Most high God, creator of heaven & earth! And dearest Sister, in the precious book from which we both draw one light, we both find warrant to love as brothers and sisters all the human family who with sincerity of heart worship God."[46] Gratz could firmly disagree with the Christians surrounding her, yet do so without animosity or prejudice. After Maria died, Gratz also wrote to Benjamin's second wife Ann, also a Christian.[47]

Gratz's singleness and devotion to her faith has fueled speculation about her connection, if any, with the character of Rebecca in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe.* Over the years, historians have repeated the story that Washington Irving (who was indeed a friend of Gratz) told Scott about her, who then wrote her into the novel as the Jewess who forswears the love of Ivanhoe to remain true to her faith.[48] Although concrete evidence for this connection does not appear to exist, there is evidence that

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[45] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 67.
[46] Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gratz, November 24, n.d., Ms. 236, box 3, folder 8, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[47] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 126–27, 196–97.
[48] Judith Lewin, "Legends of Rebecca: Ivanhoe, Dynamic Identification, and the Portraits of Rebecca Gratz," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, no. 10 (Fall 2005): 182–83; Osterweis, *Rebecca Gratz: A Study in Charm*, 17–33.

Gratz read *Ivanhoe* and may have identified with the character who shared her name, perhaps using the fictional Jewess to shape her own character and validate her decision to remain single.[49]

Without a husband and children of her own, Gratz found benevolent activities an appropriate social outlet for her education and organizational skills, as did many other well-to-do early American women, both married and single. In 1801, she was among the founding members of the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances, a nonsectarian organization that provided material aid to women and children who suddenly lost their source of support. In 1815, Gratz helped to found the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum; she served as its secretary for nearly four decades.[50] Gratz made her first foray into Jewish education in 1818 when she hired Solomon I. Cohen to give Hebrew lessons to herself and some family members.[51] In 1819, Gratz and other well-to-do Jewish women in Philadelphia organized the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, a Jewish charity unaffiliated with a particular synagogue. When they learned of a Jewish family who might need aid, representatives of the society visited their home and ensured that they were moral and hardworking before providing them with the basic necessities they needed.[52]

After her mother died in 1808 and her father died in 1811, Gratz continued to keep house for her unmarried brothers. In 1823, her family duties increased significantly

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[49] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 107–8; Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:388–89; Lewin, "Legends of Rebecca," 178–79, 185–86.
[50] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 61–62, 92.
[51] Ibid., 96; Hasia R. Diner and Beryl Lieff Benderly, *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 118.
[52] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 100–101.

after her sister Rachel died. Gratz took on many of the responsibilities of raising Rachel's children, acting as a mother to them.[53] In 1852, she still viewed the children, now grown, as "almost my own."[54] The family experienced another shock in July of 1826 when Rebecca's brothers Simon and Hyman Gratz, who made most of their money through shipping and supplying goods to the west, went bankrupt. The family moved to a smaller home, but retained their elite status in Philadelphia, despite their decrease in income.[55]

The status of the Gratz family perhaps remained stable in part because of the many connections with elite Jewish and Gentile women that Gratz had made through her benevolent work. In 1838, she began a new project – the Hebrew Sunday School. Until recently, historians discounted Gratz's initiative in founding the school. They claimed that "while Rebecca Gratz was the director of the school the person who helped it become a reality was Isaac Leeser" or "Isaac Leeser influenced Rebecca Gratz" to open the school.[56] While Isaac Leeser unquestionably provided a great deal of support for the Hebrew Sunday School, he wrote on various occasions about his preference for Jewish day schools, describing the Sunday school as insufficient. More recent works have rightly acknowledged Gratz as the true impetus behind the founding and success of the Hebrew Sunday School. She singlehandedly prompted the Female Hebrew Benevolent

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[53] Ibid., 112.
[54] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, November 15, 1852, Ms. 236, box 1, folder 4, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[55] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 119–20.
[56] Milton Feierstein, "Isaac Leeser (1806-1868): Founder of Jewish Education in the United States" (Ed.D. diss., SUNY-Buffalo, 1971), 84; Diane A. King, "Jewish Education in Philadelphia," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940* (Philadelphia: ISHI Publications, 1983), 238–39.

Society to form the school and served as superintendent and secretary of the Hebrew Sunday School Society for roughly thirty years.[57]

Even as she devoted herself to Jewish education, Gratz continued her benevolent activities on behalf of the whole community of Philadelphia. In July 1845, she was the first signatory on an "Appeal to friends to support the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts." The Academy had been "visited by a destructive fire," and its "gentleman stockholders" requested assistance from Philadelphia's women. Gratz and others organized a "Grand Bazaar" at which they sold handmade items to provide money for "the grand scheme of raising up and adorning the walls of their beloved Academy." The "Appeal" illustrates Gratz's characteristic deference to men, as well as her tendency to minimize her own contributions: "If the master spirits of the human race, the Lords of this fair creation, are willing in an hour of need, to confess the value of assistance from the feebler sex, there will be nothing intrusive or indelicate in the acceptance of so flattering an invitation, a tribute at once so unusual and agreeable."[58] Gratz exerted a great deal of influence as superintendent of the Hebrew Sunday School, and, indeed, historians have acknowledged the broader importance of women to Jewish education in the United States in general. Yet Gratz herself viewed her contributions as minor.[59] Or, perhaps, she simply framed them in such a way in order to conform to the gender norms of the time.

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[57] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 20, 145.
[58] Rebecca Gratz, et al., "Appeal to Friends to Support the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts," July 30, 1845, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[59] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 144.

In her sixties in 1855, Rebecca Gratz assisted in founding the Jewish Foster Home and served as the vice president of the affiliated society.[60] She reluctantly retired from her work with the Hebrew Sunday School in 1864 and the Jewish Foster Home in 1865, writing to the Hebrew Sunday School Society's Vice President that she was "unable now to perform the duties" the position required.[61] Rev. Sabato Morais, who succeeded Leeser as *hazan* of Mikveh Israel, remembered that it had been difficult to convince Gratz to retire: "the adoption of almost forcible measures occasioned her final withdrawal from the field of her activity, since the expostulations urged by affection could not prevail."[62] Rebecca Gratz died on August 27, 1869.[63] She was eulogized before the Hebrew Sunday School by Rev. Morais as "a noble type of a Jewess" and "a bright ornament to the Congregation of Israel," which secured and reinforced her reputation as preeminent among American Jewish women. Rev. Morais told the children gathered for Sunday school that Gratz "desired to avert from you the most grievous of all evils. The sin of apostasy; and she arose to your protection."[64] Gratz also left behind a strong tradition of American Jewish institutional life which would continue to influence Jewish philanthropists and educators into the twentieth century.[65]

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[60] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 214.
[61] Ibid., 231; Rebecca Gratz to L.B. Hart, October 31, 1864, Mss.Ms.Coll.72, Series III, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
[62] Rev. S. Morais, "Address Delivered Before the Managers and Pupils of the Hebrew Sunday School, on the Life and Character of Miss Rebecca Gratz, Its Founder and First Directress" (Philadelphia: Hebrew Sunday School Society, 5630), 7–8.
[63] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 232.
[64] Morais, "Address Delivered Before the Managers and Pupils of the Hebrew Sunday School, on the Life and Character of Miss Rebecca Gratz, Its Founder and First Directress," 4, 10.
[65] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 232.

The Hebrew Sunday School

A number of factors influenced Rebecca Gratz to found the Hebrew Sunday School. The evangelizing of the ASSU and other Protestant organizations impelled Gratz to provide Jewish children with education in their faith so that they could defend it intelligently in conversations with Christians – "to give a reason for the faith that is in them."[66] Several historians have argued that the Protestant Sunday school did not influence Gratz in her development of a Jewish school, but such claims seem unlikely, given Gratz's involvement in benevolence in Philadelphia and the prominence of the American Sunday-School Union in that realm.[67] Gratz recognized the success of Sunday schools with respect to increasing the knowledge and morality of Christian children – advantages that could be provided to Jewish children if a Jewish school existed. She wrote, "with respect to the Sunday school – (a benefit so long enjoyed by the Christian community around us) we may only observe that we felt the deep necessity that existed among us for Religious instruction."[68] Gratz's biographer also suggests that the increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants arriving in the United States motivated her subject to found the Sunday school. Gratz viewed it as an opportunity to help immigrants adapt to American life while retaining their faith and upholding the practice of Jewish

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[66] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, October 7, 1838.
[67] Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:390–91; Todes, *The History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia*, 22.
[68] Rebecca Gratz to J.M. Wise, n.d., Mss.Ms.Coll.72, Series III, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

law.[69] She sought to "Americanize Jewish children while educating them in Judaism in a way that would protect them against evangelists."[70]

In her secretary's report in 1835, Gratz lobbied the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society to start a Sunday school. Under Gratz's leadership, the society organized the school in February of 1838 and opened it in March, with six teachers and as many as seventy pupils. Significantly, given the Jewish tradition of educating only boys, all of the teachers were women, and they welcomed female pupils on an equal basis to boys.[71]

Each Sunday, classes ran from 10:00 until noon. Promptly at 10:00, after the ringing of a bell, the students listened while the Superintendent (Gratz) read a prayer. They repeated part of it together after her. They sang a hymn, split into small groups of about ten students each, and worked through the day's lesson with their teachers. At 11:45, the bell rang again. The students gathered in a large group, and Gratz asked questions about the previous week's lesson. She closed each week's Sunday school session with a reading from scripture. The students then sang two hymns and recited a prayer before being "dismissed in an orderly manner."[72]

Although Gratz sought to instruct Jewish children to defend their faith intelligently, most of the instruction that took place in the Hebrew Sunday school appears to have been based upon recitation and memorization. Gratz was familiar with the Pestalozzian method of instruction, writing in a letter to her sister-in-law that she

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[69] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 142.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 145; Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, March 1, 1838, Ms. 236, box 1, folder 1, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[72] Rebecca Gratz, The Sunday School, n.d., SCRC 50, box 1, folder 3, Special Collections Research Center, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, July 29, n.d., Ms. 236, box 1, folder 1, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).

remembered "being delighted with the Pestalozzian system," but acknowledging that "those who have attempted it…have not succeeded. Perhaps the want of encouragement may have induced them to combine other plans with it, and in attempting too much they have failed."[73] Perhaps Gratz herself was afraid of attempting too much and thus adhered to instructional methods that she believed had been successful in the past. She appeared unwilling to take much risk in implementing innovative teaching methods at the Hebrew Sunday School, given that failure would mean that Jewish children might abandon the faith. Thus, she used traditional instructional methods, but did not seem to believe that these strategies would prevent children from being able to describe the "reason for the faith that is in them." In Gratz's view, traditional methods were fully compatible with a reasoned defense of Judaism.

The Hebrew Sunday School taught little to no Hebrew language, mainly due to time restrictions. Teachers based their religious instruction primarily on traditional texts translated into English, and they often used a catechetical method to teach them. The youngest children learned the Ten Commandments, while slightly older students memorized a more detailed Jewish catechism. The most advanced students were responsible for answering questions on entire books of the Hebrew Bible, such as Exodus, Ruth, and Esther.[74]

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[73] Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gratz, March 22, n.d., Ms. 236, box 3, folder 6, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).

[74] At first, the teachers taught from Protestant catechisms after covering up objectionable questions and answers. Later, Rachel Peixotto Pyke, one of the teachers, and Isaac Leeser, wrote Jewish catechisms. See Hyman B. Grinstein, "In the Course of the 19th Century," in *A History of Jewish Education in America*, ed. Judah Pilch (New York: The National Curriculum Research Institute of the American Association for Jewish Education, 1969), 35; Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 152–53; Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, July 29, n.d.

Gratz and the other teachers assessed students' progress each week in the course of the Sunday school lesson. Pupils also had the opportunity to display what they had learned to an audience during the Annual Examination, which was very much like the examinations hosted by Protestant Sunday schools. The Hebrew Sunday School Annual Examination usually took place the Sunday after Purim.[75] A typical examination might include the reading of a prayer followed by the singing of a hymn and a group repetition of another prayer. The Superintendent and Treasurer of the Sunday school would present their reports. Then the pupils would be questioned on the lessons they had learned over the past year. Most of the examination proceedings suggested that children had very little opportunity to express their creativity or venture beyond the prescribed, memorized answers that they had learned. For example, in 1860, some of the younger children recited pieces "which their teachers had selected." But, in at the Annual Examination in 1864, "several [scholars] recited pieces original & selected."[76] Perhaps young people who had mastered the basics – the Ten Commandments, the catechism, and the Torah – had the opportunity to express their own thoughts to the audience gathered, although certainly what they wrote must have been circumscribed to some degree by social convention and the expectations of their teachers.

The children who did especially well at the examination received "premiums." In 1839, Gratz wrote that she planned to give prizes to two children in each class. Among

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[75] Gratz, The Sunday School.
[76] "22nd Annual Examination of the Hebrew Sunday School," March 18, 1860, SCRC 50, box 1, folder 4, 2nd Minute Book of the Hebrew Sunday School Society 1858, Special Collections Research Center, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; "Annual Examination of the Hebrew Sunday School," May 1, 1864, SCRC 50, box 1, folder 4, 2nd Minute Book of the Hebrew Sunday School Society 1858, Special Collections Research Center, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

the rewards that year were pieces of white satin with the Ten Commandments printed on them. The examination would be followed by a "Purim feast," and, at least in 1839, every child received cake and a small gift, "to encourage them to earn a premium next time."[77] The custom of giving away prizes to the best scholars in each class represents another practice which the Hebrew Sunday School had in common with Protestant Sunday schools.

One of the most formidable challenges Rebecca Gratz faced when she founded the Hebrew Sunday School in 1838 was the paucity of schoolbooks in English designed for Jewish children. Soon after the school opened, Gratz wrote that she used Isaac Leeser's *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion,* along with the Bible itself and alphabet and Ten Commandment cards. For the catechism, she resorted to books published by the American Sunday-School Union, with the portions related to the New Testament excised or pasted over. "School books undergoing a little mutilation serve us…until there are schools enough established to share the expense of printing what will be better adapted to our views," Gratz wrote to her niece, Miriam Cohen.[78] Another niece, Rosa Mordecai, suggested that the Jewish children attending Hebrew Sunday School did not placidly accept what their instructors deemed fit for their lessons: "many were the fruitless efforts of those children to read through, over, or under the hidden lines."[79] Mordecai's

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[77] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, February 24, 1839, Ms. 236, box 1, folder 1, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[78] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, October 7, 1838.
[79] Rosa Mordecai, "Recollections of the First Hebrew Sunday School," *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society* XLII, no. 4 (June 1953): 400.

remembrance serves as a reminder that even while memorizing and reciting, children did not necessarily stop thinking or acting in an independent manner.

The late 1830s and 1840s witnessed the publication of numerous American Jewish schoolbooks. In 1839, Isaac Leeser wrote *Catechism for Younger Children, Designed as a Familiar Exposition of the Jewish Religion*.[80] In 1840, Simha Peixotto, one of the teachers at the Hebrew Sunday School, published *Elementary Introduction to the Scriptures, for the Use of Hebrew Children.*[81] Also in that year, Moses M. Nathan published his translation of Henri Loeb's *The Road to Faith.*[82] A few years later, Rachel Peixotto Pyke, another Hebrew Sunday School teacher, wrote *Scriptural Questions, for the Use of Sunday Schools for the Instruction of Israelites.*[83] "An American Jewess," who may have been Rebecca Gratz herself, wrote *The Teachers' and Parents' Assistant; or, Thirteen Lessons Conveying to Uninformed Minds the First Ideas of God and His Attributes* in 1845.[84] Thus, by the mid-1840s, the library of American Jewish schoolbooks had significantly expanded.

After these books became available, Gratz made use of them in the Hebrew Sunday School, but she also continued to spend funds to purchase books from the

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[80] Isaac Leeser, *Catechism for Younger Children, Designed as a Familiar Exposition of the Jewish Religion* (Philadelphia: Adam Waldie, 5599); Dov Rappel, "A Bibliography of American Jewish Textbooks, 1766-1919," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 18 (1993): 40.
[81] Simha C. Peixotto, *Elementary Introduction to the Scriptures, for the Use of Hebrew Children*, 4th edition (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, 5620); Rappel, "A Bibliography of American Jewish Textbooks, 1766-1919," 43.
[82] Rappel, "A Bibliography of American Jewish Textbooks, 1766-1919," 40.
[83] [Mrs.] E. Pyke, *Scriptural Question, for the Use of Sunday Schools for the Instruction of Israelites* (Philadelphia: L.R. Bailey, 1849); Rappel, "A Bibliography of American Jewish Textbooks, 1766-1919," 44.
[84] "An American Jewess," *The Teachers' and Parents' Assistant; Or, Thirteen Lessons Conveying to Uninformed Minds the First Ideas of God and His Attributes* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 5605); Rappel, "A Bibliography of American Jewish Textbooks, 1766-1919," 35.

Sunday-School Union, including $5.86 on July 13, 1848 and $3.36 on January 9, 1850, the latter specifically for "*Child's Scripture Questions,*" a popular catechism published by the ASSU.[85] Although Gratz apparently left no record of why she continued to buy Christian books when Jewish editions were available, the fact that she did so indicates her comfort with moving in Christian intellectual circles and confronting Christian ideas – although she disagreed with many of them, she did not find them totally incompatible with her own. She also must not have viewed these Christian books as especially dangerous to her pupils. As her benevolent work indicates, she believed that Christians and Jews could work together and that differing religious beliefs did not preclude mutual aid and the achievement of mutual goals.

Thanks in part to the friends and relatives across the country with whom Rebecca Gratz corresponded, the idea of the Hebrew Sunday school spread quickly. Jewish women founded schools in New York City, Baltimore, Charleston, and Richmond, among other cities.[86] Gratz frequently corresponded about Sunday school matters with her niece Miriam Cohen, who started a school in Savannah, Georgia. Cohen and Gratz described their Sunday school's examinations to each other and commiserated over the difficulties of finding "practical & intelligent Teachers."[87] Gratz welcomed the involvement of others in her efforts to educate Jewish children. When she heard that

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[85] Gratz, The Sunday School.
[86] Ashton, "Expanding Jewish Life in America, 1826-1901," 59–60; Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:395–96.
[87] Miriam Cohen to Rebecca Gratz, May 4, 1856, Mss.Ms.Coll.72, Series III, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, April 15, 1855, Ms. 236, box 1, folder 4, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).

Charleston women planned to open Hebrew Sunday School, Gratz remarked, in her self-effacing way, that "I have no doubt they will be able to improve on ours."[88]

Isaac Leeser believed strongly that he had a plan for Jewish education in America that would indeed improve upon the model that Rebecca Gratz pioneered. Yet, despite their positions as advocates for different forms of Jewish education, Gratz and Leeser maintained a close relationship, supporting each other's endeavors and viewing each other as fellow enthusiasts for Jewish education in America. Leeser dedicated his catechism for Jewish children to Gratz, writing, "As this little book has been undertaken to assist your efforts, which have so far been crowned with signal success, to form an institution where whence the waters of life might flow alike to the rich and the poor: permit me to inscribe it to you."[89] In a letter, Gratz thanked Leeser "for the trouble you have kindly taken, and the interest you have always shown in the success of the Sunday School."[90] When Leeser left the position of *hazan* at Mikveh Israel after a long and bitter dispute with its governing body, Gratz wrote regretfully, "he has been a benefactor…of the Jewish community and is one of the ablest men of his day. Besides the indignation I feel for the ungrateful & unjust treatment he has received I shall lament the loss of a personal friend."[91] Gratz had supported Leeser throughout the controversy at Mikveh Israel. Despite their different educational strategies, both wholeheartedly advocated Jewish education and called for children to be taught the reason for their faith. Yet

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[88] Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, July 29, n.d.
[89] Leeser, *Catechism for Younger Children, Designed as a Familiar Exposition of the Jewish Religion*, v.
[90] Rebecca Gratz to Isaac Leeser, May 5, n.d., Gershwind-Bennett Isaac Leeser Digital Repository, http://leeser.library.upenn.edu/ilproject.php.
[91] Rebecca Gratz to Solomon Cohen, n.d. 1850, Ms. 236, box 2, folder 2, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).

Leeser, like Gratz, demonstrated some degree of discomfort with giving children too much freedom to think independently.

Isaac Leeser and the Jewish Day School

The man who became one of the most prominent activists in nineteenth-century American Judaism was not born in the United States, but in Neuenkirchen, Westphalia, on December 12, 1806.[92] Leeser's father, Uri Lippman, moved the family, including an older sister and younger brother, to Dulmen when Leeser was four years old. In 1814, his mother Sarah died, and his grandmother stepped in to raise him. Young Leeser attended Jewish school from a young age, where he received a traditional Jewish education, studying the Torah, or written law, and its commentators, and the Talmud, an explication of the oral law of Judaism.[93]

In 1820, both Leeser's father and his grandmother passed away. Soon after, the fourteen-year-old moved to Münster, where he entered the university and studied secular subjects such as Latin, Greek, history, geography, and physics.[94] In 1824, Leeser decided to join his mother's brother Zalma Rehine in Richmond, Virginia, where the latter had been living since 1788.[95] There he gained access to a network of American Jewish leaders. Isaac B. Seixas, the *hazan* of Richmond's synagogue, Beth Shalome, taught Leeser the Sephardic liturgy and allowed him to help during services. As he furthered his

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[92] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 15.
[93] Ibid., 19–22.
[94] Ibid., 24–26.
[95] Ibid., 28.

religious education, Leeser assisted Rehine in his dry goods business and quickly mastered English.[96]

In response to an anti-semitic essay written by Joseph Wolff that appeared in the *London Quarterly Review*, Leeser published a defense of Judaism in a Richmond newspaper, the *Constitutional Whig,* in 1828. The essay was widely read in the American Jewish community and offered Leeser an entrance onto the national stage. It also represented his first foray into Jewish apologetics, the reasoned defense of Judaism, a form to which he would return many times throughout his career.[97]

As a result of Leeser's essay and his subsequent follow-up pieces, representatives from the synagogue Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia invited him to become their *hazan* in 1829. He accepted.[98] During his twenty-one years at Mikveh Israel, Leeser sought limited reforms to the role of *hazan.* Namely, he hoped to make the practice of the *hazan* giving sermons in English more common in synagogues, as it was in Protestant churches. In his efforts to give more sermons and make other reforms, he often found himself in conflict with the president and governing board of Mikveh Israel. This chronic struggle led Leeser to resign in 1850, after twenty-one years in the position.[99] In 1857, he again took a job as *hazan,* this time with Philadelphia's Beth El Emeth.[100]

During his time at Mikveh Israel and Beth El Emeth, Leeser engaged in ventures which would occupy his attention for the rest of his life, including promoting Jewish

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[96] Ibid., 39–42.
[97] Ibid., 42–46; Maxwell Whiteman, "The Legacy of Isaac Leeser," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940* (Philadelphia: ISHI Publications, 1983), 26–27; Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, I:403.
[98] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 49, 54–55, 57.
[99] Ibid., 58–66.
[100] Ibid., 207–8.

education. The letter initially offering him the position of *hazan* at Mikveh Israel mentioned that he would be asked to teach Hebrew to the young people of the congregation, although this did not appear to be a priority for the leaders of the synagogue.[101] Leeser himself proposed a congregational school in March of 1830, but failed to gain the support of the board. He tried to open a school himself about a year later, but it did not succeed without the financial support of Mikveh Israel.[102]

Leeser achieved his first success in the opening of a Jewish day school in 1835. He rallied support for the school and explained his plan in a circular titled "To the Jewish Inhabitants of Philadelphia." Leeser planned to teach his pupils Hebrew pronunciation (both Sephardic and Ashkenazic), Hebrew translation, "the Principles of the Jewish Religion, English Grammar, Geography, History, Arithmetic, and Writing."[103] He set tuition at ten dollars per quarter for children older than five, but acknowledged his willingness to accept pupils gratis if their parents could not pay.[104] If the school proved successful, he hoped to add "Latin, Greek, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Drawing, [and] Singing" to the curriculum.[105] Only boys

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[101] Ibid., 49.
[102] Ibid., 67.
[103] In addition to the fact that he instructed students in secular subjects, the major difference between Leeser's day school and Gratz's Sunday school was that Leeser made the study of Hebrew an important part of the curriculum. Since the Sunday school only met for a few hours each week, there was simply not enough time to include Hebrew in the curriculum. See Isaac Leeser, "To the Jewish Inhabitants of Philadelphia," in *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 150.
[104] Ibid., 152.
[105] Ibid., 150.

would be admitted, but he proposed to add a school for girls if there proved to be demand for it.[106]

He opened the school on March 31, 1835 with seven pupils. Eventually sixteen boys registered, but many could not pay the tuition. Leeser still accepted them into the school, but he could not personally bear the costs of a disproportionate number of nonpaying pupils for very long. He asked Mikveh Israel if the synagogue could provide some financial support for the school, but its leaders refused. After about a year and a half, Leeser disbanded his first Jewish day school venture.[107]

He achieved more success in 1847 when he played a crucial role in founding the Hebrew Education Society, which opened its own day school in 1851.[108] In a speech delivered on the occasion of the opening of the school, Leeser explained that goal of the school was "to imbue the mind early with true conceptions of the Godhead" and ensure that "Judaism may become a part of the very nature of our pupils, without which they could not exist, even if they should at a future day be tempted to cast it off for the glare and allurement of the hostile world beyond." The school included "elementary" and later "scientific education," along with instruction in Hebrew and the Jewish religion.[109] In 1854, the HES school purchased a permanent building. In a speech he delivered on that occasion, Leeser recalled that the school had opened with fifteen pupils and two teachers,

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[106] Ibid., 152.
[107] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 83–84.
[108] Ibid., 157.
[109] Isaac Leeser, "The Testimony: An Address, Delivered at the Schoolhouse of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, at the First Opening of Their School, on Sunday, the 4th of Nissan, 5611, (April 6th, 1851)" (Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1851), 7, 12.

while just three years later, it had over one hundred students and five teachers.[110] Like his earlier school, the HES school offered scholarships for students who could not pay, and, this time, Mikveh Israel did provide financial support. Community fundraisers also drew substantial contributions.[111]

The HES school proved a success due in part to increasing numbers of German Jews who immigrated to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Numerous other Jewish communities established day schools in the 1840s and 1850s on the initiative or with the support of German immigrants.[112] Most of these schools flourished for a decade or two, then closed in the 1860s or 1870s, by which time the Jewish day school movement had largely died out. By that time, most Jewish parents felt comfortable sending their children to the public schools, which had improved in quality overall and displayed a less blatant sectarianism by the late nineteenth century. In addition, their increasing desire to Americanize led many immigrants to discount the importance of German education. Finally, Jews of German heritage began to emphasize secular achievements more than education in the realm of Judaism. The public schools provided the best place to ensure that their children excelled in the secular world.[113] Believing that sporadic education in Judaism was sufficient, American Jews sent their children to weekly Jewish schools, like the Hebrew Sunday schools which continued to

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[110] Isaac Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. X (Philadelphia: C. Sherman & Co., 5628), 117–18.
[111] Ibid., 121–23.
[112] Grinstein, "In the Course of the 19th Century," 31–32, 34; Michael Zeldin, "The Promise of Historical Inquiry: Nineteenth-Century Jewish Day Schools and Twentieth-Century Policy," *Religious Education* 83, no. 3 (1988): 441–42; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, vol. II (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 250–51.
[113] Zeldin, "The Promise of Historical Inquiry," 441–42, 446–47, 448–49, 450–51.

flourish in the late nineteenth century.[114] Leeser approved of the Sunday schools, maintaining that some Jewish education was better than none, but he still affirmed that Jewish children ought to be educated exclusively at Jewish day schools.[115]

Leeser also supported Jewish higher education. In 1867, he was instrumental in establishing the short-lived Maimonides College. Despite the fact that it survived for just five years after his death, it may have helped set a precedent for a permanent Jewish institution of higher learning, which came to fruition at Hebrew Union College, established by Isaac Mayer Wise in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1875.[116]

In addition to his efforts on behalf of Jewish education, Leeser also was a prolific writer, editor, and translator. He translated Joseph Johlson's *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion* (1830), Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* (1852), the Sephardic liturgy (1838), the Pentateuch (1845), and the entire Hebrew Bible (1853).[117] He published dozens of his sermons in a series of ten volumes entitled *Discourses on the Jewish Religion.*[118] He created a periodical in 1843, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate,* which he continued publishing until his death in 1868.[119] Leeser was also instrumental in founding the American Jewish Publication Society in 1845, which represented an important step forward in making Jewish publications available to Americans.[120]

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[114] Grinstein, "In the Course of the 19th Century," 30–31; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 145.
[115] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 81–82, 99–100; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 80–81; Walter Ackerman, "Some Uses of Justification in Jewish Education," in *Jewish Education - for What? And Other Essays* (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2008), 169–71.
[116] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 204–5, 234–39; King, "Jewish Education in Philadelphia," 243–44.
[117] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 70, 94, 150–151, 185–86.
[118] Ibid., 100–101.
[119] Ibid., 136–37.
[120] Ibid., 152–53; Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985*, II:269–70.

Over the course of his career, Leeser became one of the foremost advocates for what was coming to be called Orthodox Judaism. Prior to the early nineteenth century, worldwide Judaism had experienced no such dramatic theological division; all variants of Judaism could, more or less, be considered Orthodox. By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, the Reform movement in Judaism appeared in Germany and gained ground quickly in the United States.[121] As American Protestantism split between orthodox and liberal or Unitarian, American Judaism diverged into Orthodox and Reform. Supporters of Reform, like German-born rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, called for Jewish leaders to craft a version of Judaism better accommodated to modern American society. They called for changes such as prayers in English rather than Hebrew and alterations to the creed of Maimonides.[122]

For hundreds of years, Jews had looked to Maimonides' Thirteen Principles for an articulation of the core of their faith. In his creed, the medieval rabbi included precepts such as the affirmation of God as creator, the assertion that God was one and indivisible, the pronouncement that a personal Messiah would come at some time in the future, and the belief that those who had died would experience bodily resurrection. Wise flatly denied both the existence of a personal messiah and the reality of bodily resurrection, which horrified Leeser.[123] He affirmed that "every separate article [in the Maimonidean creed] could be proved from Scripture."[124] More broadly, Leeser defended the

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[121] Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America*, 106–7; Ashton, "Expanding Jewish Life in America, 1826-1901," 60.
[122] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 82–83, 85, 91, 96.
[123] Ibid., 96.
[124] Isaac Leeser, "Instruction for All," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. X (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 5628), 302.

importance of tradition in Judaism to a much greater degree than advocates of Reform like Wise. Leeser wrote, "I believe the traditions of our fathers of vital importance in elucidating the words of Scripture and regulating our course of action…they are…entitled to be listened to with profound respect and to be obeyed as holy ancestral customs, unless indeed they flatly contradict the text of Scripture and the legitimate common-sense deductions therefrom."[125] Leeser believed that Jewish religious traditions should be affirmed, unless, by means of human reason, they could be found to contradict the teachings of the Bible.

Yet Leeser did not fear change, and, indeed, he sometimes advocated it. Moderate reforms, such as changes in synagogue seating or more frequent preaching on the part of the *hazan*, might be permitted as long as they did not challenged Jewish theology. Leeser's distaste for Reform "was doctrinal and not practical in nature."[126] Despite the openness of Jewish leaders like Leeser to some practical reforms, he and others of like mind came to be called "Orthodox" in contrast to those who embraced more radical "Reform."[127] Yet, Leeser's views do not entirely correspond with modern Jewish Orthodoxy; rather, "he represented an accommodationist mode of Orthodoxy that did not survive the nineteenth century." After about 1881, a version of Orthodoxy brought and perpetuated by Eastern European immigrants largely supplanted Leeser's

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[125] Grace Aguilar, *The Spirit of Judaism*, ed. Isaac Leeser, Third Edition (Philadelphia: n.p., 5624), 6–7.
[126] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 253.
[127] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 86–87.

view of Orthodox Judaism.[128] In the fact that he favored traditional theology but embraced innovative methods, Leeser greatly resembled Frederick Packard.

Leeser died of cancer and a lung infection on February 1, 1868.[129] He left his library to the Hebrew Education Society and *The Occident* to his friend Mayer Sulzberger. He authorized the trustees of his estate to pay his debts and several small bequests to family and then to use the rest of his estate to continue the publication of the "works of which I have the stereotype plates."[130] Even after his death, Leeser hoped his legacy of supporting Jewish education in America would continue. He viewed his role as educator as one of the most important of his life, writing in his *Catechism for Jewish Children,*

> if any event in my life can afford me some degree of satisfaction, it is the consciousness of having added one contribution...to satisfy the demand for information in the ways of the law of God. And it will be to me a far greater gratification than any public applause, could I be convinced that the thoughts offered in this guide to the young Isaelites [sic] have led a few as sincere worshippers to the house of our God, and fortified them with those holy feelings of devotion which will induce them to serve their Maker in early youth and in mature years, so as to be faithful amidst temptations and obedient even in difficulties which try man's constancy.[131]

Leeser's Educational Philosophy

Isaac Leeser believed that education was the most important factor in determining one's religious beliefs. Only Jewish education would ensure continuance of the faith. Sunday schools provided a good introduction to Judaism for young Jews, but two hours

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[128] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*, 246–47, 14.
[129] Ibid., 241–42.
[130] Isaac Leeser, Will, December 25, 1867, MS-197, Box 2, Folder 6, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (copy).
[131] Isaac Leeser, *Catechism for Jewish Children, Designed as a Religious Manual for House and School* (Philadelphia: L. Johnson & Co., 5629), x.

of instruction per week simply could not teach them all that they needed to know to sustain their religious practice in a largely Protestant society. Jewish day schools in which pupils could study Judaism in depth, especially the Hebrew language, were essential. Broadly, Leeser hoped that young people would learn obedience to the law of God, develop accurate internal gauges of right and wrong, and learn to engage successfully in debate with Christians in defense of their faith. He linked each of these attributes and skills to the use of reason.

Leeser's educational philosophy developed from the belief that individuals were not born with a particular religious faith. Rather, faith developed through education and exposure. People developed beliefs that were "not of their own invention, but those which they have made their own by the slow but sure progress of daily acquisition through instruction, friendly intercourse, and the equally efficacious method of observation."[132] Leeser argued that individuals did not easily abandon their acquired beliefs, even when the ideas in question appeared ridiculous to others.[133] Because most people did not have "the power of instituting and conducting investigations independently of extraneous influences," they typically could not or would not "throw off the shackles of early education and youthful training."[134] Education was crucial in shaping people's beliefs, and attachment to these beliefs remained powerful throughout life, even if they proved to be false.

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[132] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, December 1, 1843, 2.
[133] Ibid., 1.
[134] Ibid., 2.

In light of his argument that education was paramount in determining one's beliefs, Leeser asked, "what then constitutes the differences between Jews and gentiles?" Primarily their education, he answered, although he did grant that perhaps "the seed of Abraham" possessed a slight advantage with respect to understanding the unity of God.[135] Yet, in the development of people's religious sensibilities, he believed education held much greater power than such slight inclinations. Education thus became essential to the maintenance of Jewish culture and upholding of Jewish law, especially in a country with a dominant evangelical Protestant culture like the United States. Rebecca Gratz also wholeheartedly shared this belief.

Leeser firmly believed in the logical extension of his argument about religious belief and education: those who were educated as Christians would become Christians, even if they were Jewish by birth. When Jewish children attended Christian schools where they heard prayers "in which the name of a mediator is invoked" and read the New Testament "as an authority equal if not superior to the received word of God," their ideas about religion would become "confused and uncertain," often leading to "infidelity."[136] A young Jew taught among Christians, with little exposure to other Jews, would likely become "a thorough believer in the Trinity, the supremacy of the Pope…or any other notion which we as a people reject."[137] Even if Jewish children later became dissatisfied with the Christian ideas they had learned in school, Leeser doubted that they would be able to intuit the truths of the Jewish faith. Despite his belief that Jews had an advantage

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[135] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, October 1, 1844, 8.
[136] Leeser, *The Occident,* December 1, 1843, 3.
[137] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, September 1, 1864, 20.

with respect to understanding the unity of God, he was incredulous that even an ancestral Jew could pull such an idea out of his own mind, with no outside influence: "Do you imagine that he could discover it by his own reflection?"[138] Jewish education was essential for propagating even the most basic components of Judaism.

Leeser also based his argument for Jewish education on certain characteristics of most mid-nineteenth century American public schools. Leeser observed that "no sectarian doctrines as such" were taught in the public schools, but school administrators and teachers were almost exclusively Protestant.[139] And, as Horace Mann was so determined to ensure, children read the Protestant Bible in most public schools. Leeser disapproved of the Bible being read, even without comment. He maintained that the choice of which Bible to read was a sectarian decision. The Protestant Bible, which included the New Testament, was inappropriate for Jewish children. By choosing a particular version of the Bible, those in power were influencing "a question in which the consciences of many are concerned, a prerogative not granted by any lawful authority existing in the state."[140] Thus, the requirement of reading the Protestant Bible in school represented a violation of religious freedom. Most nineteenth-century American Catholics would also have agreed with this argument.

In addition, Leeser doubted that the Bible would actually be read without comment, even if mandated so. He admitted that would not blame "a conscientious teacher…if he carried out his religious convictions, since to an honest man his faith is the

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[138] Ibid.
[139] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, May 1, 1846, 2.
[140] Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," 140–41.

highest principle."[141] The result of such a teacher's hints about Christianity would create in the Jewish child "a species of conviction of non-admitted and inadmissible doctrines…which will materially affect the due observance of our religious rites."[142] In Judaism, a religion where ritual and observance were crucially important, this situation could be fatal to young people's convictions.

In public schools, Leeser also feared that young people might hear Judaism "reviled" and "sneered at, while their souls are yet tender and shrink from rudeness."[143] He feared that impressionable children who had not yet been taught to take pride in their heritage would imbibe the negative attitudes of their peers and feel ashamed about their faith. Leeser also recognized that children too could proselytize and those who were "imbued with a missionary spirit" might seek to convert their school companions to Christianity.[144] Leeser's concern about young children acting as missionaries would have pleased Packard and the authors of ASSU books, who openly encouraged children to influence others on behalf of their faith.

But even a nonsectarian school, if it could have existed in the nineteenth-century United States, would not have been sufficient for the education of Jewish children, according to Leeser. He rallied his readers "not to be content with a mere negative education; there is nothing negative in virtue, all at length depends upon the performance

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[141] Ibid., 142.
[142] Isaac Leeser, "Religious Education, III," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. III (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 5627), 310.
[143] Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," 131–32.
[144] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, April 1, 1847, 6.

of certain acts."[145] Children needed to be actively taught about the Torah and the Talmud and instructed in the rituals and festivals that made up Jewish community life.

Leeser recognized that the Hebrew Sunday School might provide a good beginning to such education, but he maintained that two hours of instruction a week was not sufficient.[146] Instruction in religion "must be constant, not casual; it must be energetic, not slothful; it must be a primary, not a secondary consideration; it must be the service of God first, and at an humble distance should follow mere sciences and accomplishments."[147] According to Leeser, such constant and energetic education could not occur in a Sunday school. Yet he supported Sunday schools because he was "not of those who, because they cannot obtain all, will therefore take nothing." He hoped that the success of Sunday schools would ultimately motivate Jewish educators and families to call for day schools.[148]

One aspect of good Jewish education, according to Leeser, could not realistically occur in a Sunday school, simply because of lack of time. Leeser believed that all Jews should study Hebrew. The language was "one of the links in that great chain which has ever firmly bound Israel together as one people" and thus should continue to be used in worship, even in services that incorporated Americanized reforms like the English-language sermon.[149] Without knowledge of the language, Jews had no understanding of

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[145] Leeser, "Religious Education, III," 310.
[146] Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," 135; Leeser, "The Testimony: An Address, Delivered at the Schoolhouse of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, at the First Opening of Their School, on Sunday, the 4th of Nissan, 5611, (April 6th, 1851)," 10–11.
[147] Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," 138.
[148] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, December 1, 1844, 7–8.
[149] Isaac Leeser, "Religious Education," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. II (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 5627), 167.

what they were saying and hearing when they recited and heard prayers. Gratz shared Leeser's belief in the importance of Hebrew, but she did not seem to view it as quite as essential as he did. She hired a private tutor to teach Hebrew to herself and her family, but she did not view her limited skills in the language as making her any less of a devout Jew.[150] In contrast to Leeser with the Jewish day school, she did not prioritize instruction in the language in the Hebrew Sunday school.

Leeser wrote and published a Hebrew grammar textbook to aid children in studying the language; prior to its publication, he claimed, English-speaking Jews had no such text. "Hence, the acquisition of the Hebrew had in it something very mechanical, entirely unsatisfactory to an inquiring child."[151] Thus Leeser implied that his textbook promoted the development of understanding and taught the meaning of words, rather than simply providing instruction in the memorization of Hebrew pronunciation. In this conviction, Leeser demonstrated a concern with comprehension not unlike that of his fellow educators, Packard and Mann.

In addition to its purpose in promoting unity in worship, knowledge of Hebrew would eventually enable fluent adult Jews to return to the original Scriptures and cross-check for errors in whatever translation they might be reading, especially Christian translations like the King James Bible, ubiquitous in early America. The ability to read Hebrew would allow them to think independently from their Christian neighbors: "with the Hebrew text in our hands we can meet and overcome all the erroneous interpretations

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[150] Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 96–97.
[151] Isaac Leeser, *The Hebrew Reader Designed as an Easy Guide to the Hebrew Tongue, for Jewish Children and Self-Instruction: No. 1, The Spelling Book*, Fourth Edition (Philadelphia: John Fagan, 5625), iii.

attempted to be grafted on the word of God; without it, we are in danger of accepting, like our neighbors do, the most absurd errors as based on Scripture."[152] Knowledge of the language in which the Hebrew Bible had been originally written would ensure the truth of Jews' own beliefs and would also give Jews a critical edge when discussing religious matters with Christians. It would prevent them from succumbing to the errors so prevalent in the dominant Christian culture in which they lived.

In Leeser's vision of the Jewish day school, children would devote ample time to the study of Hebrew; they would also learn about the Jewish faith more broadly, as well as secular subjects. Perhaps just as importantly, they would meet and become friends with other Jews. Such friendships would minimize or eliminate any prejudice against their heritage which young Jews might absorb from the surrounding culture; they also would create a network of American Jews who could later work together "for the general welfare of Israel, in which they are interested alike."[153] In light of potential objections that Jewish schools would offer education of poor quality, Leeser affirmed that Jewish schools would "do all that is done elsewhere in the business of education" and observing that the teacher-student ratio would likely be lower in Jewish institutions than in public schools.[154]

In addition to affirming the benefits of Jewish day schools, Leeser's writings also present a comprehensive plan for what the Jewish day school ought to teach in terms of behavior and ways of thinking. His plan bears many similarities to the educational

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[152] Leeser, "Instruction for All," 305; *The Spirit of Judaism*, 87, 120.
[153] Leeser, "A Plea for Religious Education," 133.
[154] Ibid., 139–40.

philosophies of Mann and Packard, especially in its combination of both conservative and progressive components and its links to understanding and reason.

In *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion,* Leeser established his definition of reason. Although the book is a translation from the original by J. Johlson, Leeser observed that, as translator, he made "considerable additions and alterations," so the final product likely reflects Leeser's own views more than Johlson's.[155] In the text, Leeser recognized "Man" as unique among living creatures because of "his reason, and freedom of will, which make him a rational being."[156] Packard and Mann would have agreed with this assessment. For Leeser, reason was "the power or capacity of the human soul to judge and decide; to discover the connection between causes and effect; and to distinguish between the true and the false; and between that, which is right and good, and the wrong and evil."[157] Leeser's word choice of "soul" rather than "mind" is illuminating, and his definition further develops the link between reason and morality. Reason not only allowed one to discern cause and effect, or truth and falsity, but also right and wrong. For Leeser, true morality could not exist without reason, and the use of reason outside of a moral framework would lead to pernicious consequences. In establishing this crucial link between religion and morality, Leeser agreed with both Packard and Mann.[158]

Leeser believed that reason was essential to Judaism, maintaining that many beliefs, such as the existence of God, could be revealed through reason. Yet the religion

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[155] Isaac Leeser, *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion, Translated from the German of J. Johlson* (Philadelphia: Adam Waldie, 5590), v.
[156] Ibid., 1.
[157] Ibid.
[158] This outlook resonates with the idea of the moral economy of literacy as described in Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 24–26.

also consisted of "historical facts and doctrines" that reason could not reveal – hence the importance of Jewish tradition.[159] In addition, Leeser believed in revelation and thought it a mistake to rely only upon reason when one approached the Bible. Reason could only take a person so far in faith; he or she had to read the Bible with "the simplicity of a childlike faith and trust" and a "mistrust [of] our own wisdom."[160] Only this attitude could eliminate doubt and produce faith in the reader.

Yet Leeser did not call for Jews to abandon reason altogether in their acceptance of revelation. In his *Catechism for Younger Children,* he drew the distinction between natural religion, "religious knowledge and faith derived from a study of the Creator's works," and revealed religion, the instructions that God communicated to the Israelites in the "Holy Writ." Yet, he argued, despite their differences, "both [natural and revealed religion] are addressed to our reason, and can therefore not contradict each other."[161] According to Leeser, reason and revelation worked together to reveal God's truth and acceptance of neither required the suspension of reason.

In advocating such a balance between using reason and embracing faith in God's revelation, Leeser brings to mind Packard's very similar views. Such a similarity is unsurprising given the fact that both were orthodox in relation to their respective faiths. Mann, who abandoned orthodoxy, took a more expansive view of the role of reason than either Leeser or Packard.

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[159] Leeser, *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion*, 11.
[160] *The Spirit of Judaism*, 49.
[161] Leeser, *Catechism for Younger Children, Designed as a Familiar Exposition of the Jewish Religion*, 4-5.

Like Packard and Mann, Leeser believed that young people needed to be taught to be obedient, but not blindly so. Leeser looked back to early Jewish history to explain the importance of obedience, arguing that it was because the Jews were disobedient that they were conquered and scattered from Palestine.[162] Judaism valued obedience to the Law of Moses more than faith and belief, and thus Leeser wrote about obeying God with a deeper urgency than either Packard or Mann. All Jewish instruction "should have but one tendency and one object, to wit, to impress upon the young heart the absolute necessity of obedience." Leeser immediately followed this statement with a softer restatement of his meaning with respect to obedience – that it meant "being guided by the revealed will of God."[163] This restatement suggests the position that Leeser expounds elsewhere in his writings – that "blind obedience" was both undesirable and ineffective.[164] Ideally, a young Jew would become a "willing, understanding, but not a blind, follower of the Mosaic code."[165] Such a goal bears much similarity to Gratz's desire that children gain a "reason for the faith that is in them." As did the Protestant educators as well, Leeser closely linked obedience to reason, believing that obedience should be based upon understanding.

To facilitate this informed obedience, Leeser advised parents to tell children the reasons God instituted specific laws. Even when they could find no explanation in Scripture, parents should explain to children the broader reasoning behind God's

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[162] Isaac Leeser, "On Obedience," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. VI (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 5627), 40.
[163] Ibid., 42.
[164] *The Spirit of Judaism*, 180.
[165] Isaac Leeser, "Religious Education, II," in *Discourses on the Jewish Religion*, vol. III (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 5627), 294.

commandments, which was "to preserve Israel a distinct people among all other nations of the earth, to be consecrated to his service."[166] Parents ought to "enforce obedience by persuasion" and use corporal punishment only in the event that all other efforts failed. Even when they had to resort to the "infliction of the rod," parents should first reason with their child, explaining to him why what he did was wrong and why he must be punished.[167] If they did so, the punishment would be much more effective.

Leeser believed that Jews needed to have knowledge of God's laws and the reasons they were instituted in order to successfully obey them. But they also needed morality. As his contemporary Mann also recognized, Leeser knew that knowledge alone did little to deter evil behavior: "mere embellishments, such as reading, writing, a knowledge of languages, practical sciences, and the arts, do not reach the heart, however they may improve the understanding." In fact, "such knowledge in the reach of an unprincipled person enables him the more readily to prey on his neighbor."[168] A person expert in worldly matters, but without morality or religion was an "elegant savage."[169] Therefore, children must be taught "a correct mode of thinking" – moral thinking – which would lead them to obey God's laws.[170]

The mode of thinking which Leeser advocated was in part based on feeling and sensibility.[171] Time spent day after day in class together would "excite a community of

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[166] Ibid., 293.
[167] Ibid., 297–98.
[168] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, October 1, 1845, 2–3.
[169] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, March 1, 1864, 5.
[170] Leeser, *The Occident,* October 1, 1845, 4.
[171] On the historical context of sensibility, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Sarah Knott,

feelings" among students and teachers, and later "the ties of school-years' friendship" and "the bond of love for some revered teacher" would hopefully check the behavior of one tempted to do evil.[172] These shared feelings would build the foundation for instruction in religion. Morality alone would not compel young people to behave well. The next step beyond morality – religion – allowed Jews "to disregard our own mere selfish ends" and act altruistically and according to God's will.[173] Leeser shared this notion of the difference between morality and religion with Horace Mann.

Although certain sentiments could provide an impetus towards religion, Leeser believed that one could indulge some sentiments too much. Thus reason was essential in enabling a person to "govern his desires," or ensure that he had what he needed for survival, but not indulge beyond the limits of what was healthy or moral.[174] Such ability was not innate, but had to be developed, a process which educators could facilitate. A well-balanced individual had developed reason to the point that it could overcome the "passions," or the powerful impulses that prevented the exercise of free will.[175] Such concerns on the part of Leeser echo those of both Packard and Mann, who also believed that reason ought to moderate passion.

Shared sensibility and instruction regarding morality and religion would ultimately nurture in young people the development of "such sentiments…which should act as a check upon them, when they are alone or far removed from those whom they

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Sensibility and the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2009).
[172] Leeser, *The Occident,* December 1, 1844, 9.
[173] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, July 1, 1862, 4.
[174] Leeser, *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion*, 2.
[175] Ibid., 2–3.

have to fear or whom they love."[176] In other words, they would develop an internal moral compass. Ideally, "piety [will] entwine itself with their soul," making it irrelevant whether they were being watched over by moral parents or teachers.[177] Regardless of the actions of those around them, these ethically sure young people would act in obedience to Jewish law and morality. Both Packard and Mann had a similar goal for their Protestant charges.

But, as Leeser well knew, in the context of the nineteenth-century United States, the performance of one's duty as a Jew was not enough. Although most Americans demonstrated a reasonably tolerant attitude towards Jews, Leeser warned that "under this very guise of friendship and peace there lurks danger."[178] Representatives of the American Bible Society, American Tract Society, and American Sunday-School Union engaged in efforts on a massive scale to spread their messages by means of cheap publications scattered across the country. Organizations like the Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews specifically targeted Jews for conversion and trumpeted their successes on the rare occasions they actually achieved them. Leeser despised organizations with the goal of converting the Jews, calling one a "little monster" and characterizing their employees as "odious apostates" who were "too contemptible even to be hated."[179] In the pages of the *Occident,* he called upon Jews to avoid going to

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[176] Leeser, "Religious Education, III," 302–3.
[177] Ibid., 324.
[178] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, July 1, 1856, 34.
[179] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, January 1, 1864, 26; Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, July 1, 1849, 44; Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, December 1, 1858, 27.

Christian churches and to refuse the printed materials that evangelicals tried to give them.[180]

Leeser also did not hesitate to call evangelists to task for misrepresenting the effects of their endeavors. In response to a report that the "Association for the Promotion of Religion Among the Jews" planned to preach to thirteen thousand Jews in Philadelphia, Leeser wrote to the *Enquirer* that there were no more than eight thousand Jews in the city, according to his calculations. He also suggested that the society had probably not achieved any conversions that year, despite a budget of over one thousand dollars being allocated to it. When the "apostate missionary" responded in the newspaper with a list of exactly how many baptisms had occurred on which specific dates, Leeser remained doubtful about most of them, with the exception of the conversion of "two worthless fellows" about which he had heard. Leeser especially relished the opportunity to point out that no one could have been baptized on the "*thirty-first* of February" as the missionary claimed.[181]

It was an alleged conversion that provided the impetus for Frederick Packard to write to Leeser in March of 1849. Packard had been asked to arrange for Mr. Berk, "said to be a Polish Jew converted to Christianity," to give a lecture, and he did not want to promote the man "if his <u>moral character</u> & standing are not irreproachable." Perhaps already knowing Leeser's position on Jews converting to Christianity, Packard did not request his opinion on Berk's conversion, but asked if Leeser knew "any thing to his

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[180] Leeser, *The Occident,* December 1, 1858, 30; Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, January 3, 1859, 11.
[181] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, March 1, 1863, 9–14.

prejudice apart from this."[182] Although Leeser's response is unknown, he likely questioned Berk's conversion or attributed it to ignorance or convenience.

Leeser recognized that conversions from Judaism to Christianity were rare in the United States, especially conversions of "conviction" in which those converting could provide logical, reasoning explanations for their conversions.[183] More often than not, Leeser wrote, Jews converted for reasons of personal convenience or because they could not hold their own in debates with Christians.[184] "We need not fear conversions as much as hypocrisy or indifference…we have yet to learn that persons acquainted with Scripture, who have enjoyed the benefits of a Jewish education in ever so moderate a degree, could by any possibility be induced to adopt the doctrine of a trinity with the accessory belief in a mediator."[185] Those trained in the reasonableness of Judaism could staunchly withstand "the insidious or open attacks of the enemies of our blessed faith" – Christian missionaries.[186] Such was also the goal of Rebecca Gratz with her Hebrew Sunday school.

Leeser trusted that reason was on his side. In his words, Christians believed in "tenets which require a sacrifice of human reason to adopt them," but "the religion of Israel" was "true," "confirmed by the course of history" and "based pre-eminently on common sense."[187] Uneducated Jews would likely submit to evangelical arguments, if

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[182] "Frederick A. Packard to Isaac Leeser," March 3, 1849, Gershwind-Bennett Isaac Leeser Digital Repository, http://leeser.library.upenn.edu/ilproject.php.
[183] *The Spirit of Judaism*, 52, 133.
[184] Ibid., 7, 180.
[185] Ibid., 133.
[186] Leeser, *The Occident,* December 1, 1843, 6.
[187] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, August 1, 1862, 6; Leeser, "Instruction for All," 304.

presented in a convincing manner, "without examining for themselves."[188] Yet those who had been taught obedience on the basis of reason and had developed the ability to evaluate situations and arguments on the basis of God's commands would remain faithful. They would not be "blind believers merely," but would be able to give a "reason for the faith that is in them."[189]

Evidence suggests that Leeser and Gratz were not alone in their views among American, or indeed European, Jews. Isaac Mayer Wise, advocate of Reform Judaism, also prioritized teaching children how to reason. In his newspaper, *The Israelite,* Wise wrote with pride about his own school, Talmid Yelodim of Cincinnati: it was "the first school of the young who are prepared therein to think for themselves, and learn chiefly how to study and think. It is eminently calculated to rescue the youth from the iron grasp of pedantry and the machine-like recitations of the most of the modern schools."[190] Graduates of the Talmid Yelodim, according to Wise, were "used to…think for themselves."[191] As their opinions and beliefs diverged, Wise and Leeser could at least agree on the importance of teaching children how to reason for themselves.

Leeser believed that reason would ultimately vindicate Judaism, and he called for children to be instructed in the "superior reasonableness" of the faith.[192] Yet Leeser condemned the idea that "an imperfect knowledge of [Jewish] doctrines and duties can be

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[188] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, December 1, 1867, 8–9.
[189] Leeser, *The Occident,* January 3, 1859, 17; Rebecca Gratz to Miriam Cohen, October 7, 1838.
[190] Isaac Mayer Wise, "Examination of Talmid Yelodim Classes in Cincinnati," *The Israelite*, July 11, 1856, 4.
[191] Isaac Mayer Wise, "The Examination of the Talmid Yelodim Institute," *The Israelite*, January 16, 1857, 222.
[192] Leeser, *The Occident,* May 1, 1846, 6.

sufficient to render us consistent and pious Israelites."[193] He also demonstrated a marked distrust in the ability of ordinary Jews to make correct religious judgments in a world in which Christians saturated them with Christian messages. If Leeser's faith in reason had been absolute, he might have felt comfortable with the idea of Jews attending public schools, but his advocacy of Jewish day schools belies such an idea. Leeser did not trust Jewish children to find their way to the faith of their fathers unless they received specific instruction in the tenets of Judaism and were sheltered from evangelism when they were young: "our children require teachers of their own persuasion."[194] If children read Christian books or received Christian instruction before their minds were "ripe enough to judge between good and evil," they would lose their "Jewish, manly independence of thought."[195] "When reason has become matured by hard study and a familiar intercourse with men," young people could be exposed to Christian thought without the risk of harm, but not before.[196] Leeser found himself in a defensive position with regard to religion in mid-nineteenth-century America. He thus advocated the use of reason, but did so with much more caution than either Packard or Mann.

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The approaches of Gratz and Leeser to Jewish education differed greatly. Gratz favored the weekly Hebrew Sunday school, while Leeser believed that Jewish day schools would better serve the cause of Jewish education. Yet both valued the instruction

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., 7.
[195] Isaac Leeser, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, May 17, 1860, 3; Leeser, *The Occident,* August 1, 1862, 10.
[196] Leeser, *The Occident,* August 1, 1862, 6.

of Jewish children in the faith so that they would know themselves why they believed certain tenets and also so that they could explain their beliefs to others. They deeply valued the use of reason in the classroom. But, despite her progressive goals, the record of instruction in Gratz's Hebrew Sunday school suggests that her pedagogy remained traditional and raises the question of whether the pedagogy in other Jewish schools ever ventured beyond rote memorization. Clearly, though, Gratz did not see these instructional methods as precluding her students from learning how to defend Judaism in a reasoning way. Although he advocated the reasonableness of the Jewish faith, Leeser did not entirely trust Jewish youth to properly exercise reason amidst the barrage of Christian messages they faced in society, at least not until they had been thoroughly inculcated in Judaism. Reason, correctly exercised, would always lead Jewish children back to the faith of Abraham. But the risk was high that Jewish youth would succumb to the persuasions of evangelists in the meantime, and thus Gratz and Leeser advocated independent reasoning with a great deal of restraint. They valued it as an abstract goal, but hesitated to encourage it with the energy of Packard and Mann.

Chapter 5: Mother Angela, Orestes Brownson, and Faith and Reason in Catholic Education

On October 22, 1859, Mother Angela of the Sisters of the Holy Cross wrote to Orestes Brownson, a philosopher and prominent Catholic apologist, with whom she was not yet acquainted. "The fact that we are both deeply interested in one great question namely Catholic education," she wrote, "makes me feel, though an entire stranger no diffidence in addressing you and soliciting your assistance on a work at which I am at present engaged."[1] Mother Angela was compiling a series of Catholic textbooks, the Metropolitan Readers. She requested Brownson's assistance in choosing literary selections for one of the more advanced readers, as well as his help in revising the proofs of the books. She worried that young people, even those well-educated, did not truly "form an idea of what is Literature" in the course of their schooling.[2] In a culture dominated by Protestants, Catholic youth also did not have the opportunity to read many works by respected Catholic authors, a deficit which she hoped her new readers would correct.[3]

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[1] Mother Angela to Orestes Brownson, October 22, 1859, I-3-o, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Mother Angela, The Metropolitan Readers Arranged for Catholic Schools & Academies, December 1859, II-4-o, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Brownson must have seen potential in the young nun's project because he agreed to assist her.[4] As Mother Angela recognized, both of them sought the education of Catholic youth so that they would develop into pious adults with the capacity to influence the nation on the basis of Catholic ideals, a goal that was especially important given that Protestantism dominated the country. Like American Jews, American Catholics like Mother Angela and Orestes Brownson found themselves in a defensive position in the nineteenth-century United States.

In nearly all of the British colonies in America, Catholics had faced significant prejudice. This anti-Catholic attitude among Protestants had deep roots in the English experience and served to unite American colonists as Englishmen and Englishwomen, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.[5] The number of Catholics gradually increased in the new United States as anti-Catholicism temporarily subsided in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[6] In the 1830s and 1840s, anti-Catholic sentiment resurged, evidenced most dramatically in the arson attack on an Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1834.[7] Anti-popery dovetailed with the nativist movement as Catholic immigration began to surge dramatically, in part due to the potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s. One historian estimates that there were

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[4] Mother Angela to Orestes Brownson, April 24, 1860, I-3-o, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.

[5] Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 49–50; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 22–25; Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

[6] Jay P. Dolan, "Catholic Attitudes toward Protestants," in *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America*, ed. Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 73–74.

[7] Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 269, 284; Daniel A. Cohen, "Passing the Torch: Boston Firemen, 'Tea Party' Patriots, and the Burning of the Charlestown Convent," *Journal of the Early Republic* 24 (2004): 561–68; Daniel A. Cohen, "Miss Reed and the Superiors: The Contradictions of Convent Life in Antebellum America," *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 1 (1996): 149–84.

195,000 American Catholics in 1820. By 1860, the number of Catholics in the United States had jumped to 3 million.[8] Nativists who feared the newcomers formed the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner in 1850. The order came to be known as the Know-Nothing party and called for restrictions on the rights and political privileges of immigrants.[9]

Mother Angela was born to a Catholic family in this climate of anti-popery; Orestes Brownson converted at the apex of anti-Catholic sentiment. They shared the concerns of many American Catholics who sought to ensure that immigrants would assimilate to American culture while still continuing to practice their Catholic faith.[10] Both defended Catholicism against Protestant attacks, and Brownson in particular embraced his role as ardent defender of the faith. Mother Angela dedicated her life to the practical matter of Catholic education, writing little about the philosophy behind her actions, while Brownson's efforts were largely philosophical and theoretical, not practical. Yet both Mother Angela and Brownson believed in the rightness of their faith, certain that both reason and faith would lead true seekers to Catholicism. Brownson's writings and the schoolbooks Mother Angela compiled demonstrate a more decided emphasis on external authority than the writings of either the Protestant or Jewish educators examined. Yet Brownson's trust in the authority of the Church was based upon reason. In identifying reason as a crucial component of the formation of religious faith, Brownson followed the intellectual tradition of previous Catholic thinkers who sought to

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[8] Chester Gillis, *Roman Catholicism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 60; Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56–59.
[9] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 826–27.
[10] Timothy Walch, *Catholicism in America: A Social History* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1989), 50.

harmonize the Church's teachings with the Enlightenment. Despite often being identified first and foremost as a romantic, Brownson's writings also reveal him to be a rationalist. He embodied the "tensions [that existed] among church people as they sought to express their faith in the midst of a changing world."[11] In their attempts to negotiate these tensions, Brownson offered a comprehensive philosophy for harmonizing reason and faith, while Mother Angela preferred to encourage deference to authority rather than independent thought.

The Life of Mother Angela

Mother Angela was a woman of faith, a teacher, a trainer of teachers, a skilled administrator, and a textbook author. Despite her prominence as a Catholic educator in the mid- to late nineteenth century, most modern historians have largely ignored her life. Exceptions include historians of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and historians who limit themselves to a discussion of her work as a nurse during the Civil War.[12] Although many accounts tend to minimize her less glamorous work as an educator in favor of acts of self-

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[11] Patrick W. Carey, *Catholics in America: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 30, 39–41; Margaret Mary Reher, *Catholic Intellectual Life in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 2, 30.

[12] For an example of a scholar who only mentions Mother Angela's Civil War service see Margaret M. McGuinness, *Called to Serve: A History of Nuns in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 96. Most of the comprehensive sources available on Mother Angela's life date from the mid-twentieth century or earlier and were produced by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, including Anna Shannon McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness: Life and Letters of Mother Angela Gillespie, C.S.C., 1824-1887, American Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Cross* (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1944) and *A Story of Fifty Years, From the Annals of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross* (Notre Dame, IN: The Ave Maria, 1905). The most recent history of the order discussing Mother Angela was published in 1994. Although Mother Angela appears frequently, the work deals largely with the administrative and institutional history of the order, not its efforts in education. See Sister M. Georgia Costin, *Priceless Spirit: A History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1893* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

sacrificial heroism during the Civil War, it is her work as an educator that places Mother Angela in the context of her time and brings to her life a complexity absent in accounts of her wartime service.

Fortunately for biographers, handwritten reminiscences of Mother Angela's life exist in the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. At least one, and probably more, of these manuscripts were written at the request of the Mother General in 1894, by those who knew Mother Angela.[13] The following biographical sketch draws heavily upon these memoirs.

Mother Angela was born Eliza Maria Gillespie on February 21, 1824 in Pike Run Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania.[14] Her father, John Purcell Gillespie, a native of Pennsylvania, descended from Irish or Scottish stock.[15] Her mother, Mary Madeleine Miers, had Rhenish ancestry on her father's side and English and Irish ancestry on her mother's.[16] John Gillespie was Catholic, but Mary Miers was not, although she converted not long after they married.[17] Gillespie and Miers married in

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[13] The Mother General hoped that "future sisters of Holy Cross shall possess a truthful account, and record of the arduous labors and edifying life of their departed and beloved Mother Mary of St. Angela." See "Items to Assist Whoever Shall Compile a 'Life of Mother Mary Angela of Holy Cross,'" 1894, E 4.8, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana. This source was written by "one who knew Mother Angela as a youthful companion, a very dear friend, and in after years under her guidance, both as Directress and Superior of the members of the Holy Cross."

[14] Ibid., 7.

[15] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 1. It seems most likely that Gillespie's family originated in Ireland, given their Catholic heritage.

[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] "Items to Assist Whoever Shall Compile a 'Life of Mother Mary Angela of Holy Cross,'" 1, 3–4.

Lancaster, Ohio, but the couple soon moved back to the Gillespie family farm in Pennsylvania.[18]

The community in which Eliza grew up was religiously diverse, including Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Catholics.[19] The Gillespies lived in a double house on their Pennsylvania farm with the Blaines: John's sister, her husband, and their children Eliza and James Gillespie Blaine.[20] According to anecdotal evidence, Eliza Gillespie demonstrated great precocity, teaching herself to read at a very young age.[21] She attended a common school or dame school in Brownsville, Pennsylvania starting at the age of five.[22] Eliza continued her education in Somerset, Ohio, attending a school run by the Dominican Sisters, where she took her first communion.[23] Judging by the typical curriculum of Catholic young ladies' academies, here she probably studied religion and acquired ladylike accomplishments.[24]

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[18] "Certification of Marriage of John P. Gillespie and Mary M. Myers, 12 Feb. 1821," "Ohio, County Marriages, 1789-2013," database with images, FamilySearch, accessed April 13, 2016, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XZ5Q-P9N.
[19] Boyd Crumrine, *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1882), 786–88, 990–92.
[20] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 6.
[21] "Items to Assist Whoever Shall Compile a 'Life of Mother Mary Angela of Holy Cross'" 8–10; Ellen Ewing Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," n.d., 2, E 4.8, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana. Ellen Ewing Brown was a cousin of Mother Angela (the daughter of Mother Angela's first cousin Philemon Ewing). See Carl R. Schenker, "'My Father . . . Named Me William Tecumseh:' Rebutting the Charge That General Sherman Lied About His Name," *Ohio History* 115, no. 1 (2008): 69.
[22] "Items to Assist Whoever Shall Compile a 'Life of Mother Mary Angela of Holy Cross,'" 11.
[23] Ibid., 20.
[24] Kathleen A. Mahoney, "American Catholic Colleges for Women: Historical Origins," in *Catholic Women's Colleges in America,* ed. Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 38, 42.

Eliza's father died in 1836, probably from pneumonia, when she was twelve years old.[25] The family, which also included Eliza's younger siblings Mary and Neal, soon moved back to Lancaster, Ohio, where Mary Miers Gillespie had grown up.[26] As in Pennsylvania, they lived near Gillespie relatives, among them John Gillespie's cousin Maria, who had married Senator Thomas Ewing, also Catholic.[27] Fairfield County, which included Lancaster, was even more religiously diverse than Pike Run Township. Eliza might have interacted with Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mennonites, Brethren (Dunkers), and members of the German Reformed church, in addition to Catholics.[28]

In the early 1840s, accompanied by her cousin Ellen Ewing and their friend Maria Hunter, Eliza traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend Georgetown Visitation Academy, operated by the Visitandines. There she would have continued her study of the basics: reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and composition (English), geography, and history. She would also have had the opportunity to refine her feminine accomplishments such as drawing, music, painting on velvet, and more practical pursuits like dressmaking, pastry, and laundry. Georgetown Visitation also offered subjects akin to those offered in men's academies: algebra, elocution, astronomy, logic, ethics, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and Latin. The school also owned expensive "philosophical and chemical apparatus" for

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[25] "Items to Assist Whoever Shall Compile a 'Life of Mother Mary Angela of Holy Cross,'" 19; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 9–12.
[26] Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 4.
[27] Ibid., 5.
[28] Hervey Scott, *A Complete History of Fairfield County, Ohio* (Columbus, OH: Siebert & Lilley, 1877), 122–44, 155–56.

the use of its students. In addition to studying subjects like these, Eliza would have learned the strict, almost military discipline with which the school was ordered.[29]

The future Mother Angela cherished her time in Georgetown and apparently drew inspiration for her own teaching from the nuns there. A friend recalled, "I can see how Mother Angela carried out the Georgetown methods of tuition and careful training, modified by the demands of Western life. She loved all pertaining to their strict discipline and unwearied charity."[30] After graduating with honors, Eliza returned to Lancaster, where she may have briefly taught school, although available sources disagree as to the nature of her employment.[31]

In 1851, Eliza accepted a job as teacher at St. Mary's, a private school in Maryland. The school required its head teacher to be Episcopalian, but Eliza's Catholic faith apparently presented no obstacle to her receiving a teaching position.[32] Her friends remembered that Eliza adjusted well to upper-class Maryland society, but was also drawn to those less fortunate, teaching the catechism to slaves after church and once comforting a dying slave woman.[33] After a year at St. Mary's, the administrators of the school offered Eliza a promotion to principal teacher, "assuring her that being a Roman Catholic

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[29] Eleanore C. Sullivan, *Georgetown Visitation Since 1799* (Baltimore: French-Bray Printing Company, 1975), 73–76; Edward J. Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1972), 295; Karen Kennelly, "Faculties and What They Taught," in *Catholic Women's Colleges in America*, ed. Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 98–99.
[30] "Mother Mary of St. Angela, Jottings of Her Early Life," n.d., E 4.8, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[31] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 44–45; Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 12.
[32] Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 8–9; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 54.
[33] "Mother Mary of St. Angela, Jottings of Her Early Life."

would make no difference, as all the teachers would be glad to act under her direction." But Eliza declined the appointment.[34]

Meanwhile, Eliza's younger brother Neal made the decision to attend the Catholic college at Notre Dame, Indiana. After graduation in 1849, he taught at the school and entered the novitiate of the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1851.[35] Eliza Gillespie decided that she too desired to take religious orders, deciding upon the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago. They accepted her application, and she prepared to journey to Chicago to join them.[36] On the way, Eliza and her mother traveled through Notre Dame to visit Neal. There she met Father Sorin, Notre Dame's president and founder, a man with "a stubborn persistence of bulldog proportions."[37] Although Neal had apparently been trying to convince Eliza to join the Sisters of the Holy Cross for some time, it was Father Sorin's persuasiveness that ultimately shook her resolve to join the Sisters of Mercy. After a brief retreat during which she sought divine guidance for her decision, Eliza Gillespie decided to become a Sister of the Holy Cross.[38]

The Congregation of the Holy Cross traced its roots to France in 1834, when Father Basil Moreau first organized a religious community of men in Le Mans, France. The first women joined the order in 1841, originally to serve the domestic needs of the priests. In the same year, several priests, including Father Sorin, journeyed across the

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 13–14; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 40–41, 46; "Death of Rev. N.H. Gillespie, C.S.C.," 1874, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[36] "Mother Mary of St. Angela, Jottings of Her Early Life"; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 63–64.
[37] Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 90.
[38] Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 16; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 66–67.

Atlantic to Indiana. They were joined by several sisters in 1843.[39] These women founded a secondary school for girls, St. Mary's Academy, in Bertrand, Michigan, not far from Notre Dame. The academy prospered, with 50 students attending by 1850 and a charter from the state authorized in 1851.[40]

Eliza Gillespie entered the novitiate of the Sisters of the Holy Cross as Sister Mary of St. Angela in the spring of 1853. She took her vows at the order's motherhouse in France in December of 1853 and returned to Bertrand early in 1854.[41] Presumably because of her experience in teaching, she immediately was made Directress of Studies at St. Mary's Academy and soon after took the position of Superior at Bertrand, later becoming Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Cross.[42] She oversaw tremendous changes in the academy, most notably its move, buildings and all, from Bertrand to Notre Dame in 1854 or 1855.[43] In 1855, St. Mary's Academy received formal permission to grant degrees.[44]

With her efforts on behalf of education, Mother Angela continued the tradition of generations of American nuns. The first women religious in the United States, the Ursulines, opened a school in New Orleans in 1727. By 1830, at least five more orders

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[39] *A Story of Fifty Years*, 7–9, 12, 16, 20; Mahoney, "American Catholic Colleges for Women: Historical Origins," 37.
[40] *A Story of Fifty Years*, 43–44. St. Mary's Academy would later become St. Mary's College.
[41] Chronological Diary Account by Holy Cross Sister, n.d., Collection 1970-3, Box 1, Folder 4, U.S. Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, Indiana; Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 74, 76–77; *A Story of Fifty Years*, 45; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 94, 96, 98–101.
[42] *A Story of Fifty Years*, 45; Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 78–79. For the sake of consistency and simplicity, Eliza Gillespie will be referred to as Mother Angela after she took her vows, although she was known as Sister Angela for some of that time and did not immediately take on the position of Mother Superior. At different periods of time, Mother Angela also held the positions of Provincial Superior and Mistress of Novices.
[43] Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 78; *A Story of Fifty Years*, 45, 49; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 120–21.
[44] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 126.

had established schools to teach children, and that number would continue to grow as Catholic immigration to the United States increased.[45] Many of these institutions taught only women, establishing their Catholic teachers and administrators as leaders in American women's education. Some Protestant young women even attended Catholic schools to gain an education in the accomplishments thought important for young ladies at the time, as well as subjects traditionally considered masculine, such as Latin and Greek.[46] While in Austin, Texas, where the Sisters planned to open a school, Mother Angela wrote that "we have been most cordially received by the most influential Catholics & by many liberal Protestants" who desired a "fine large school that will take the place of all the petty schools."[47] Catholic educational institutions influenced many who were not themselves Catholic.

For the rest of her life, Mother Angela dedicated herself to education. She taught a variety of subjects at St. Mary's, at one point simultaneously teaching algebra, rhetoric, and astronomy.[48] She also traveled the country aiding in the establishment of other institutions. By one count, Mother Angela was involved in the foundation of thirty-six different institutions throughout her lifetime, including schools, hospitals, and asylums.[49]

The demand for Holy Cross sisters as teachers at schools across the nation prompted Mother Angela to work towards the institution of formal teacher training programs. As part of their training, Holy Cross novices underwent a special period of

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[45] McGuinness, *Called to Serve*, 18, 68–71.
[46] Mahoney, "American Catholic Colleges for Women: Historical Origins," 37–39, 42.
[47] Mother Angela to C.J. Dubuis, April 11, 1874, Collection 1970-2, Box 1, Folder 26, U.S. Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[48] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 129–30.
[49] Ibid., 326.

study leading up to their final vows, called the "scholasticate" and dedicated to learning the "science and art of teaching."[50] Mother Angela influenced the founding of a training school for Catholic teachers in Baltimore, St. Catherine's Normal Institute, which opened in 1875.[51] She also advocated the general postgraduate education of women; under her direction, St. Mary's accepted two female postgraduate students in 1870.[52]

Mother Angela was an author and editor, although she was infrequently recognized by name for her efforts. She compiled a series of Catholic textbooks, the Metropolitan Readers, and worked on some volumes of a revised series of the books, called the Excelsior Readers. In 1855, she wrote a brief biography of François Cointet, a Holy Cross priest.[53] Mother Angela also worked on the editorial team of the *Ave Maria*, a journal founded in May 1865 at Notre Dame and dedicated to the veneration of the Virgin Mary.[54] She wrote to Archbishop Purcell in 1865 that "personally I have but little to do with the 'Ave Maria,' " but the fact that she was writing to him to obtain his approbation of the journal suggests otherwise.[55] According to Ellen Ewing Brown, "Father Sorin of course was at the head of the concern but Mother Angela did most of the

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[50] *A Story of Fifty Years*, 120–21; "In Memoriam, Mother Mary of St. Angela, or A Tribute of Affection and Gratitude to the Memory of Mother Mary of St. Angela, (Eliza Maria Gillespie,) Who Departed This Life, Friday, March 4, 1887" (Notre Dame, IN, 1887), 70.
[51] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 285–86, 296; Sister M. Anastasia, "Rough Notes for Sr. Elizabeth (Harriet Redman Lilly, Widow)," n.d., 2, E 4.7, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[52] Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 213; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 268–69.
[53] [Mother Angela], "The Life of Rev. Francis Cointet, C.S.C.," 1855, Congregation of Holy Cross Brothers Collection (PSCB v.21), University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[54] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 229–32.
[55] Mother Angela to Archbishop Purcell, May 1865, Collection 1970-2, Box 1, Folder 25, U.S. Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, Indiana.

work."[56] After 1866, when Eliza's brother Neal took the position of editor of the *Ave Maria*, Mother Angela may have continued to work with him as assistant editor.[57]

Around 1875, Mother Angela started to experience bouts of ill health, but she continued her duties, including traveling to found and oversee Holy Cross schools.[58] The nature of her sickness is unclear. Apparently it was some kind of "trouble of the digestive organs."[59] The illness continued to plague her periodically for the next twelve years. A flare-up in the winter of 1886-1887 put her in bed for months, but no one at the time seemed to think that it would be a fatal illness. To everyone's surprise, Mother Angela passed away on March 4, 1887.[60] The *Catholic Universe*, among many other periodicals, eulogized her, proclaiming that "a great woman has died" and "a busy brain is at rest."[61]

Former students remembered Mother Angela fondly, and many of them wrote sympathetic letters to Father Sorin. One who graduated in 1865, Julia Mahon Cannon Andrews, remembered a "<u>life</u> lesson" imparted by Mother Angela, who told her students: "'Remember, young ladies, that when you graduate from St. Mary's, you are only considered capable of pursuing your studies without the aid of a teacher.'" Andrews recalled, "time and again I have answered the question, 'What should be the

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[56] Brown, "Memoir of Mother Angela or Lida Gillespie," 22.
[57] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 240–41; "Death of Rev. N.H. Gillespie, C.S.C."; "A Valiant Woman," *The Notre Dame Scholastic*, October 15, 1887.
[58] Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 221–22.
[59] "In Memoriam, Mother Mary of St. Angela, or A Tribute of Affection and Gratitude to the Memory of Mother Mary of St. Angela, (Eliza Maria Gillespie,) Who Departed This Life, Friday, March 4, 1887," 73–74.
[60] Costin, *Priceless Spirit*, 225, 227; McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 335–36.
[61] "In Memoriam, Mother Mary of St. Angela, or A Tribute of Affection and Gratitude to the Memory of Mother Mary of St. Angela, (Eliza Maria Gillespie,) Who Departed This Life, Friday, March 4, 1887," 53.

qualifications of a graduate?' by giving the above quotation."[62] Andrews' memory of the lesson she learned at St. Mary's suggests that, above all, Mother Angela sought to provide her students with the tools to become self-directed in their future educational endeavors. Although she believed that her students should cultivate obedience to authority, she also believed that they should develop some degree of individual autonomy as well.

The Metropolitan Readers

Although Mother Angela left few documents articulating her own teaching philosophy, Holy Cross historians deemed Mother Angela's teaching strategies innovative. A chronicler of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1905 characterized Mother Angela as "ahead of her time in matters pertaining to the education of young women," but had little to say about why the author believed she was ahead of her time.[63] Perhaps it was simply because she advocated women's higher education at all. Unfortunately, the author provides little evidence for her claim. Mother Angela's views on education must be ultimately sought in the series of textbooks that she compiled.

Sometime in the mid-1850s, Mother Angela began to work on the series of Catholic schoolbooks called the Metropolitan Readers. By her own admission, she had no "desire to increase the No of Text Books" but felt that the need for improved Catholic

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[62] Julia McMahon Cannon Andrews to Father Sorin, March 19, 1887, E 4.7, "Memorial Tributes," Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[63] *A Story of Fifty Years*, 73.

books was so urgent that the task had come to her "as a necessity."[64] American Catholic textbooks did exist, but Mother Angela believed in the need for books "of a higher tone than those we now use – the best of such Readers from non-Catholic Sources gives no idea of Catholic Literature."[65] Her desire to familiarize students with "eminent Authors," especially Catholic ones, motivated her work on the books.[66]

Mother Angela initially conceived of a series comprised of five volumes. In a prospectus for the series she sent to Archbishop Purcell, she explained that the first two would contain short reading lessons and many "attractive engravings" which would spark children's senses and help them "to develop the sense of the beautiful and to cultivate the fancy." The Third Reader would be developed with similar goals in mind. The Fourth Reader, for "advanced classes," would be a "Key to true Literature," designed to introduce young people to great authors and discourage them from reading "the silly yellow hacked ~~Literature~~ of the day." Mother Angela included a list of the authors who would be featured in this Fourth Reader. Many were Catholic, including Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker, while others were simply prominent Americans, such as George Bancroft, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Greenleaf Whittier, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe. The Fifth, and final, Reader in the series would be designed as an aid in teaching elocution, "devoted exclusively to declamative articles."[67] Although Mother Angela planned for the original series to consist of five

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[64] Mother Angela, The Metropolitan Readers Arranged for Catholic Schools & Academies.
[65] Mother Angela to Archbishop Purcell, December 3, 1859, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[66] Mother Angela, The Metropolitan Readers Arranged for Catholic Schools & Academies.
[67] Ibid.

books, by 1872, she had added another reader between the original second and third books due to complaints that the third was disproportionately more difficult than the second.[68]

As she worked on compiling the readers, Mother Angela asked for support from American Catholic leaders and other female religious orders that might use the textbooks in their schools.[69] The initial response was favorable. After Archbishop Purcell did not respond to her first letter, Mother Angela wrote him again, expressing her pleasure that she had received "many encouraging letters" in support of the Metropolitan Readers. By that time, 1857, she had also gained the support of several religious orders that planned to adopt them in their schools.[70]

By 1860, Mother Angela had nearly completed the first edition of the Readers. She also signed a contract for the series with William H. Sadlier, a Catholic publisher based in New York. Sadlier agreed to pay for publication of the works and give Mother Angela ten percent of the sales, to be paid each February 1st. Mother Angela agreed that Sadlier would have "the right & exclusive privilege" to publish the Metropolitan Readers. The parties renewed the same contract in 1870.[71] Although it is not clear from the contract that Sadlier and Mother Angela signed, the proceeds from the books did not go

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[68] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Third Reader: Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse for the Use of Schools* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1872), 5.
[69] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 150–51.
[70] Mother Angela to Archbishop Purcell, December 24, 1857, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[71] Articles of Agreement between Sister Mary Angela of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, and Sadlier & Co, Publishers of New York City, March 7, 1870, Materials related to Sadlier and textbooks, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.

to Mother Angela herself; rather, they were split between Notre Dame and St. Mary's.[72] In 1875, Mother Angela made another agreement with Sadlier to work on the Excelsior Readers, which would include material from the "Independent Readers of J. Madison Watson" that Sadlier had acquired. In this agreement, Sadlier agreed to pay Mother Angela a five percent royalty, and Mother Angela agreed to promote the books in Holy Cross schools.[73] Mother Angela appears to have worked on the first few readers in the Excelsior series, but sought to limit her involvement in the later readers.[74] In the late 1870s and 1880s, Sister (later Mother) Colette gradually took over most of the correspondence with the publisher, suggesting that Mother Angela's involvement with the Excelsior textbook series at the end of her life was limited.[75] Thus the Metropolitan Readers provide the most accurate information regarding what Mother Angela believed children ought to learn.

The Metropolitan Readers are very much like the books for children published by Protestant organizations like the American Sunday-School Union and the American Tract Society. Only references to the saints and the sacraments mark them as Catholic books. Like evangelical Protestant books, the readers call on children to cultivate virtues, such as

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[72] Agreement between Very Rev. E. Sorin and Mother M. Angela, October 19, 1869, Materials related to Sadlier and textbooks, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, IN.
[73] Agreement between Eliza A. Gillespie and William H. Sadlier, July 30, 1875, Materials related to Sadlier and textbooks, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, IN; Mother Angela to Father Sorin, April 26, 1875, E 4.4, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[74] William H. Sadlier to Mother Angela, November 18, 1876, Materials related to Sadlier and textbooks, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[75] Sister Colette to William H. Sadlier, January 2, 1877, Materials related to Sadlier and textbooks, E 4.6, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana.

charity, kindness, and obedience, and avoid vices, such as lying.[76] The first two Metropolitan Readers in particular emphasize obedience as a virtue for younger children by relating a series of stories about children who disobey their parents and suffer unpleasant consequences as a result. For example, several boys disregard their father's warning about skating on the ice, and they fall in: "thus you see that nothing good will come to those who disobey their parents."[77] Emma's mother warns her not to go near a beehive, but Emma disobeys and suffers many painful bee stings: "thus she was punished for going near the beehive, after her mother told her not to do."[78] Edward disdains his parents' advice and falls in the water, only narrowly escaping drowning by the quick action of his dog.[79] In the Second Reader, Mother Angela related the biblical story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command, drawing from it the lesson that children should not only obey God directly, but should obey Him "who speaks

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[76] Timothy Walch, *The Diverse Origins of American Catholic Education: Chicago, Milwaukee and the Nation* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 174–75; David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 81. Other organizations interested in spreading the gospel, such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, also turned to print as a primary mechanism for dispensing their message in the early nineteenth century. See David Paul Nord, "Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Paul C. Gutjahr, "Diversification in American Religious Publishing," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880,* ed. Scott E. Casper, et al. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Mark S. Schantz, "Religious Tracts, Evangelical Reform, and the Market Revolution in Antebellum America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 3 (1997), 434–38, 448–51; Anne Scott MacLeod, *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820-1860* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 10, 12–13, 16–17, 24, 48–50, 71, 93–116, 148–49; Mary Lystad, *From Dr. Mather to Dr. Seuss: 200 Years of American Books for Children* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1980), 50–65, 72, 83; Monica Kiefer, *American Children Through Their Books: 1700-1835* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), 11–15, 21.

[77] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan First Reader: Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse, for the Use of Schools* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1867), 71.

[78] Ibid., 92–94.

[79] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Second Reader Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse, for the Use of Schools* (Toronto: Wm. Warwick, n.d.), 196–97.

to them through their parents and superiors, without murmuring or hesitation; and without stopping to inquire the reasons why they are required to do what they are desired."[80] These first two readers, designed for younger children, have little discussion of reason and emphasize the value of blind obedience, suggesting that Mother Angela believed that reason was a trait one should develop later in life, after he or she had mastered the simpler virtues of kindness, honesty, obedience, and love of God.

In the introduction to the First Reader, Mother Angela called for the child to have "lessons which may accustom him to *think* of what he sees and hears, but so interwoven with the truths of faith that the seen and the unseen may have equal hold of his understanding."[81] According to Mother Angela, thinking and reflecting were beneficial, but only if they were rooted in religious belief. Such a philosophy parallels the ideas expressed by Packard and Mann that knowledge was dangerous without the prior acquisition of piety.

Later volumes of the Metropolitan Series reinforce Mother Angela's philosophy that, once children were taught piety and obedience, they might be encouraged to reflect upon and question the world around them. Both versions of the Third Reader and the Fourth Reader demonstrate concern with young people's comprehension, a preoccupation shared by Packard, Mann, Leeser, and Gratz. For instance, Mother Angela encouraged teachers to ensure that children fully understood the meanings of words given as vocabulary before each lesson by asking them "to give in their *own* language, their *own*

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[80] Ibid., 116–17.
[81] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan First Reader: Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse, for the Use of Schools*, 6.

ideas of every unusual or important word which occurs in their *reading lesson.*"[82] In the Fourth Reader, the author of the section on "Principles of Elocution," who was probably not Mother Angela, called on the child to practice the techniques with exercises that were "penetrable to his understanding." But the author of this section did not seem to be concerned about children's understanding for its own sake, but rather so that they would be more successful in oration; comprehension was necessary for "expressive delivery," "good articulation," and appropriate "emphasis and intonation."[83]

Several of the readers include anecdotes or exhortations that move beyond basic comprehension into the realm of reasoning. Yet these comments are tempered with others which seem to indicate a distrust of individual reason. In one story, a mother teaches her daughter what an object lesson is: "'Object lessons teach us to use our senses; to observe, and compare, and reflect.'" After demonstrating what she means by an object lesson using items on the breakfast table, the mother advises her child "'to form a habit of reflecting as well as of observing; that is, I want you to think about what you see, and hear, and read.'"[84] In advocating this practice, the mother moves one step beyond the blind obedience called for in the first two readers, although she does not explain how she hoped her daughter might make use of her reflections. If Packard or Mann had been

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[82] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Third Reader: Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse for the Use of Schools*, 94.
[83] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Fourth Reader: Compiled for the Use of Colleges, Academies, and the Higher Classes of Select and Parish Schools.* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1861), 10, 22; On the pervasive educational emphasis on reading aloud in this era, see Daniel Calhoun, *The Intelligence of a People* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), 79–84; Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 288–289.
[84] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Third Reader: Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse for the Use of Schools*, 265, 276.

relating the story, they might have advanced the discussion further, suggesting that she should use her reason to evaluate conclusions and guide decision-making.

There is one apparent exception to this trend in the first two readers which ultimately still reinforces Mother Angela's emphasis on the importance of faith and piety before all else. In a story called "A New Game for Children," Agnes asks her siblings to think of "*the best thing you can, that begins very small or trifling, and ends in something very large, great, or beautiful.*" She turns it into a contest, with herself as judge. Her brothers and sisters think of a variety of possibilities, including ascending a ladder, the acorn and the oak, a brick and a house, and a letter of the alphabet and "all the hard names in the Bible." But Agnes selects as the winner the child who thinks of the process of "asking Jesus to forgive us, and trusting in His mercy, and end[ing] with living forever with Him in heaven." Agnes turns a game of reason into a game that reinforces piety, while also indicating that the author believed that the appropriate end of the use of reason was glorifying God and saving one's own soul.[85] The story indicates that the author believed that reason should reinforce faith.

Later lessons in the Metropolitan Readers indicate similar qualifications regarding the use of reason. "The Journey of Life" cautioned readers that there were many people they would encounter throughout life who would try to lead them morally astray, and it was "scarcely possible" to distinguish good companions from bad ones. Where Packard and Mann might have suggested that young people should develop discernment and the ability to navigate moral perplexities, the author of this passage simply indicated that they

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[85] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Second Reader Carefully Arranged in Prose and Verse, for the Use of Schools*, 93, 95, 96–97.

should keep themselves pure and help others to do the same. There was no mention of learning to distinguish right from wrong.[86] Thus the author did not place as much store in the efficacy or desirability of an internal moral compass as Packard and Mann did.

In the Fourth Reader, "Anon.," who may be Mother Angela herself, cautioned readers about the dangers of novels, although she granted that some novels might provide acceptable reading material on a very limited basis. Yet, rather than encouraging readers to learn to discern for themselves what they should read and what they ought not to read, the author affirmed that "the selection of such works should always be left to a religious parent, or a pious and intelligent friend." One particular danger in reading novels was that good Catholics might encounter works "impregnated with the venom of anti-catholic maxims." Yet the only foolproof protection against this too was apparently to be directed by "a pious, experienced guide."[87] In a similar essay in the same volume, "Books as Sources of Self-Cultivation," the author, Stapf, advised teachers to make sure that students understood the need to call upon "a well-informed and conscientious friend" for advice in book choices and "neither read nor purchase a book of which he disapproves."[88] The authors of these essays did not place much trust in readers' own discernment, despite the fact that this volume of the Metropolitan Readers was designed for college and academy students.

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[86] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Third Reader, Arranged for the Use of Schools* (Toronto: Wm. Warwick, 1878), 154–55.
[87] "A Member of the Order of the Holy Cross," *The Metropolitan Fourth Reader: Compiled for the Use of Colleges, Academies, and the Higher Classes of Select and Parish Schools.*, 136–37.
[88] Ibid., 429–30.

The differences between the principles suggested by Packard and Mann and those advocated by Mother Angela in the Metropolitan Readers are likely reflective of the position of Catholics as minorities in a sometime hostile Protestant culture. To a much greater degree than Jewish Americans, Catholic Americans faced active persecution, and graphic anti-Catholic propaganda was widely distributed in mid-nineteenth century America.[89] The consequences of allowing children to choose their own reading material opened the way for them to choose books like the lurid, anti-Catholic *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* by Maria Monk. And the consequences of good Catholic children reading something like *that* could be fatal to their faith.

Mother Angela may also have overemphasized obedience and submission since she herself may have been caught in the paradox of American convent life, as identified by Daniel A. Cohen. Cohen argued that the opportunities of convent life often attracted intelligent, ambitious, and proud women, yet, by definition, taking vows meant embracing "lives of self-abnegation and selfless submission to religious authority."[90] The organization of the Catholic Church was decidedly patriarchal, and even when Mother Angela acted as Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, she had to submit to Father Sorin. Submission must have been especially difficult after she made plans and began to raise money for a church dedicated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at St. Mary's,

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[89] Lucy E. Bailey, "Fair Protestant Maidens and Menacing Nuns: Gender and Education in 19th Century Anti-Catholic Tracts," *American Educational History Journal* 38, no. 2 (2011): 459–77; Marie Anne Pagliarini, "The Pure American Woman and the Wicked Catholic Priest: An Analysis of Anti-Catholic Literature in Antebellum America," *Religion and American Culture* 9, no. 1 (1999): 97–128; Barbara Welter, "From Maria Monk to Paul Blanshard: A Century of Protestant Anti-Catholicism," in *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America*, ed. Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 48–49; Ray Allen Billington, "Tentative Bibliography of Anti-Catholic Propaganda in the United States (1800-1860)," *The Catholic Historical Review* 18, no. 4 (1933): 492–513.
[90] Cohen, "Miss Reed and the Superiors," 150–51.

subsequently discovering that Father Sorin planned to build such a church at Notre Dame. With reluctance, Mother Angela conceded that the church would be built at Notre Dame and even forwarded the $1400 raised by the Sisters of the Holy Cross to support Sorin's project.[91] Perhaps her own experiences with submission and obedience as a woman in an intensely patriarchal organization colored her exhortations to children.

The Metropolitan Readers suggest that their compiler had a very cautious attitude towards the encouragement of independent thinking in pupils. She believed that piety, love of God, and cultivation of virtue ought to precede all other instruction. Once these traits had been mastered, students could be encouraged to start thinking, reflecting, and questioning for themselves. Yet, in a world of many temptations – and virulent anti-Catholic sentiment – it was still best to rely upon the wisdom and experience of a godly, Catholic authority figure when making important choices.

The Life of Orestes Brownson

For Mother Angela, Orestes Brownson proved to be a wise consultant. Her letters indicate how highly she valued his opinion, specifically with regards to education. According to the publisher of the Metropolitan Readers, Mother Angela was nervous about submitting the books for Brownson's approval because "her highest ambition" was to gain his endorsement.[92] She believed Brownson possessed "rare intellectual gifts, and

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[91] McAllister, *Flame in the Wilderness*, 248–252; For another example of Mother Angela submitting to Father Sorin's authority after an incident in which she dared to express her own opinions, see *A Story of Fifty Years*, 144–145.

[92] James Sadlier to Orestes Brownson, September 20, 1860, I-3-o, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.

a great, generous, warm heart." She prayed for him often: "when I think of the powers with which our Blessed Lord has gifted you & of the great good you can effect with them I cannot help dropping many 'a bead' and offering many an aspiration that you may faithfully & zealously use those rare gifts as God designed they should be when he bestowed them upon you."[93] On another occasion, she wrote to him that "I am confident that your own ideas on education are just what we need in our schools."[94] Mother Angela greatly admired and respected Brownson's opinion, and it seems that the feeling was mutual. In 1872, Brownson wrote to Father Sorin, asking him to send his regards to Mother Angela, who had reassured him when he was "almost despondent," perhaps as a result of the death of his wife earlier that year. He recalled that Mother Angela had spoken to him "words which perhaps saved me from spiritual ruin."[95]

Brownson's life was certainly spiritually tumultuous. He altered his religious views with remarkable frequency and thus appeared (and still appears) fickle. But each change represented a step on a genuine spiritual journey, which ultimately ended in Roman Catholicism. Orestes Augustus Brownson and his twin sister Daphne were born on September 16, 1803 in Stockbridge, Vermont. His father, Sylvester Augustus Brownson, may have been a Presbyterian, but, if so, he does not appear to have been very involved in his local church. His mother, Relief Metcalf, favored Universalism. Sylvester Brownson died when Orestes and Daphne were only two years old, leaving

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[93] Mother Angela/Father Sorin to Orestes Brownson, December 3, 1865, I-4-c, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana; Mother Angela to Orestes Brownson, March 19, 1862, I-4-b, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[94] Mother Angela to Orestes Brownson, February 17, 1861, Collection 1970-2, Box 1, Folder 35, U.S. Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, Indiana.
[95] Orestes Brownson to Father Sorin, May 23, 1872, I-4-e, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Relief with five children to support. When Orestes was six, his mother sent him to live with a couple in Royalton, Vermont.[96] Their religious affiliation was Congregationalist, but they do not appear to have been very observant and attended church infrequently, although they did teach Brownson Congregationalist prayers and the catechism.[97]

Relief Brownson reunited the family in Ballston Spa, New York in 1817. There Orestes worked for a printer and came into contact with a variety of religious ideas.[98] He dabbled in Universalism, Restorationist Universalism (which taught that all people eventually went to Heaven, although perhaps not before a stay in Purgatory), Deism, and Atheism. In 1822, he returned to religious faith and joined a Presbyterian church, but soon grew discontented and left the church in 1823 or 1824. For the rest of his life, he harbored much bitterness towards Calvinists, and Presbyterians in particular. Brownson's break with the Presbyterians has puzzled his biographers. Most have interpreted his later writings about this period in his life as indicating that he had felt he had to abandon reason when he joined the Presbyterian Church. Instead of reason, he had embraced revelation on the basis of authority. But he found no source of real authority in Presbyterianism since Presbyterians called for church members to submit moral questions to the tests of their own consciences. The rejection of reason combined with the lack of a

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[96] Americo D. Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1965), 22–23; Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson: American Religious Weathervane* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 1–4.
[97] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 6.
[98] Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 24.

centralized authority to dictate morality in its place created a paradox that Brownson could not abide.[99]

After he left the Presbyterian Church, Brownson again found himself drawn to Universalism. After a period of apprenticeship with a Universalist minister, he was ordained in June of 1826. During this period of his life, he traveled and moved frequently, preaching in Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York and editing the Universalist *Gospel Advocate.* [100] He married Sally Healy on June 19, 1827.[101] With regard to his faith, Brownson turned fully to reason as the criterion for belief and found that it drew him further and further away from evangelical Christianity. He questioned divine inspiration of the Bible, arguing that its contents had to be subjected to the dictates of reason. With such radical, non-evangelical ideas, Brownson increasingly alienated his fellow Universalists. During this period, he even seriously considered the freethinking, anti-religious views of Fanny Wright. Brownson left the Universalists in November of 1829, a split that appears to have been mutually agreeable to both parties.[102]

Brownson entered another period of unbelief, but he continued writing and speaking, calling for measures to alleviate the suffering of the working class. Although he entertained the radical views of Fanny Wright and Robert Owen for a time, he eventually distanced himself from them as he moved back towards religion.[103] Brownson began preaching again in February of 1831. Although at first unaffiliated with any

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[99] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 8, 9, 11; Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 24; Theodore Maynard, *Orestes Brownson: Yankee, Radical, Catholic* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1971), 7–10.
[100] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 13, 15; Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 25–27.
[101] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 16.
[102] Ibid., 26–27, 29.
[103] Ibid., 30–34; Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 53–54.

denomination, he explored the writings of William Ellery Channing and others and converted to Unitarianism.[104] In 1836, he moved with his family to Boston to spread the Unitarian message among the working class.

Brownson was a staunch Democrat and became more active in the party while in Boston, being appointed to the position of administrator of the Chelsea Marine Hospital for his loyalty.[105] In January of 1838, he founded and published the first edition of the *Boston Quarterly Review*.[106] That venture ended after about four years, after which Brownson tried unsuccessfully to write under the editorial supervision of John L. O'Sullivan at the *Democratic Review*. But he found that he needed his own periodical to express his changing and at times controversial views, which led him in 1844 to found *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, the primary outlet for his writing for the rest of his life.[107]

With regard to his own beliefs, Brownson's Unitarian period was a time of intense intellectual and spiritual development. He began to move away from the idea that reason alone represented the ultimate criterion for faith, joining the Transcendentalist Club, whose members argued for the existence of a spiritual component to the self.[108] In his own writings, he expressed the belief that religious sentiment was true and innate – all human beings in all eras experienced it. Religious institutions simply represented humans' flawed attempts to actualize religion, and none of those existing at the present time truly represented the reconciliation of the spiritual and the material which Brownson

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[104] Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 30–31; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 38.
[105] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 80.
[106] Ibid., 67.
[107] Ibid., 97–98.
[108] Ibid., 58–62; Mary Kupiec Cayton, *Emerson's Emergence: Self and Society in the Transformation of New England, 1800-1845* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 202–3.

believed was essential. Brownson called for a new church which would temper what he believed was the overly spiritual nature of the Catholic Church and the overly material nature of Protestantism.[109]

Brownson also began to advocate for the idea that sin was not innate, but rather passed from one generation to the next. In order for humans to commune with God and absolve themselves of sin, they needed some kind of mediator. Brownson believed that Christ filled this role and that it was the church itself which God had authorized to serve as the conduit for mediation. The practices of the church were not just meaningless ritual; rather, they served to bring humans into communion with God (doctrine of communion). This idea essentially brought Brownson to "Catholicism without the papacy."[110]

After a lengthy examination regarding which church had the rightful claim to be the true body of Christ, Brownson finally admitted that it had to be the Catholic Church because of "the unbroken existence of the church founded by the apostles from their day to ours, and the uniform testimony she has universally and uninterruptedly borne to the fact." This reasoned conclusion led him to acceptance of the church's claims with respect to divine revelation, although he would later claim that it was entirely God's grace rather than reason that led him to Catholicism.[111] If the Catholic Church were the only true institution in which Christ acted as mediator between church members and God, then it was the only church in which salvation could be assured. According to

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[109] Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 31–34; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 70.
[110] Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 34–39; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 112, 116.
[111] Orestes A. Brownson, "Rome or Reason (1867)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. III (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1883), 316, 313; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 164.

Brownson's reasoning, if his salvation were at all important to him, then he had to become Catholic. He officially joined the Catholic Church in October of 1844. Later that year his wife Sally and six of their seven children at the time also became Catholic (the seventh converted later).[112] Along with grace and reason, Brownson credited his friend Isaac Hecker with providing much of the impetus for him to join the Church. Hecker, future founder of the Paulist Fathers, converted around the same time.[113]

As a Catholic, Brownson could no longer continue preaching or officiating as a minister, but he corresponded closely with Catholic clergy and acted as a very outspoken apologist for Catholicism. Perhaps because anti-Catholicism ran rampant in the United States of the 1840s and perhaps because of his own pugnacious disposition, Brownson defended his new faith doggedly without concern that he might be causing offense. As a result, many of his previous associates spurned him.[114] Under the guidance of Bishop John Fitzpatrick of Boston, Brownson wrote that only Catholics in full communion with the church would be saved. He rejected some of the ideas that had led him to Catholicism in the first place, including the doctrine of communion. He also took a more conservative position with regards to social problems. Instead of calling for social change as the surest way of improving society, as he did during his Unitarian period, Brownson emphasized the importance of the spiritual renewal of individuals.[115]

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[112] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 142.
[113] David J. O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 64.
[114] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 155, 160, 165, 169, 171.
[115] Ibid., 156, 169, 175, 183; Brownson's argument, shared by some conservative Catholics, that salvation lay only within the Catholic church contradicted the idea, formerly adhered to by John Carroll and popular among some Catholics at that time, that salvation was potentially open to those outside of the formal institution of the Roman Catholic church. See Dolan, "Catholic Attitudes toward Protestants," 74, 76, 78.

This conservative period in Brownson's Catholic life lasted until roughly 1855 when disagreements with Fitzpatrick led him to reject the bishop's oversight by moving to New York City, out of his diocese. At this time, Brownson re-adopted the doctrine of communion.[116] His thoughts took a more liberal turn with respect to the relationship between Catholicism and American society as he began to advocate the adoption of American ideals by Catholic immigrants and called for the Catholic church to adapt itself to American society, although he did not go so far as to say that it should alter doctrine in order to do so. Yet his views on accommodating Catholicism to modern society still alarmed conservative Catholics, some of whom wrote letters to the pope calling upon him to censure Brownson for the ideas he propagated. But the Holy See took no formal measures against the convert.[117]

During the Civil War, Brownson abandoned his previous sympathy for states' rights and left the Democratic Party. He advocated Union, joined the Republican Party, and called for emancipation, even though he had previously written very critically about abolitionists.[118] After the war, Brownson again grew more conservative regarding the relationship between Catholicism and American society, calling for Catholics to remain apart from mainstream American culture and to avoid compromising with modernity. This view placed him in line with Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus Errorum*, issued in 1864.[119] Brownson also came into conflict with more liberal Catholic theologians, including Isaac

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[116] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 193, 232–33.
[117] Ibid., 234, 254, 258–59, 261.
[118] Ibid., 263–68.
[119] Ibid., 282, 289.

Hecker, who had been a close friend prior to their divergence.[120] During this period, Brownson wrote his magnum opus, *The American Republic,* designed to provide a new, Catholic theory of political democracy in the wake of the Civil War.[121]

The postwar period brought a variety of personal, as well as professional, challenges for Brownson. He and his wife Sarah had eight children, seven sons and one daughter. Three of his sons died before the war, in 1849, 1851, and 1858, and two more died during the war, one in battle and the other in an accident.[122] From 1866 to 1868, Brownson suffered intensely from gout, a disease that continued to plague him for the rest of his life. In 1872, his wife Sarah died. Several years later, he moved to Detroit, Michigan to live with his son Henry, where he died on the day after Easter in 1876. Although initially buried in Detroit, his remains were later moved to Notre Dame, Indiana, where they rest today.[123]

During his lifetime, Brownson provided nearly all of the content for his own journals, the *Boston Quarterly Review* and *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, and wrote prolifically for many other publications. The diverse topics he discussed included religious and secular education and the place of reason and revelation in the Catholic faith. Although he operated on a very high intellectual level and had little to say about how his ideas ought to be practically implemented, his musings provide a comprehensive look at the philosophical questions that preoccupied American religious educators, including Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. In many ways, Brownson's ideas also

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[120] Ibid., 328–29; O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic*, 242–44, 293–94.
[121] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 338.
[122] Lapati, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 12–13; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 280–81.
[123] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 380–85.

anticipate the arguments that American religious educators make today regarding the reconciliation of faith and reason, although few, then or now, probably examined the issue with the depth, focus, and perception that Brownson demonstrated.

"Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science"[124]

In 1839, about five years before he became Catholic, Brownson elaborated upon his definition of a proper education in his review of Horace Mann's *Second Annual Report* (1838). Education ought to involve "the fitting of the individual man for fulfilling his destiny, of attaining to the end, accomplishing the purposes, for which God hath made him." It should teach him "to comprehend the end for which he was made, and the surest and speediest means of attaining to it."[125] Thus "education…must be religious."[126] Without religion, education was "a solemn mockery."[127]

After converting to Catholicism, Brownson defined reason in a way that closely linked it both to education and religion. His writings also suggested that he continued to hold a similar definition of education. By reason, he meant "the faculty of apprehending and acting voluntarily from the principle of our existence, and of apprehending and acting for…the end for which we exist."[128] By "the principle of our existence," Brownson

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[124] Orestes A. Brownson, "Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science (1863)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. III (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1883).
[125] Orestes A. Brownson, "Review of the Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, Together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board," in *The Boston Quarterly Review*, vol. II (Boston: Benjamin H. Greene, 1839), 394.
[126] Ibid., 402.
[127] Ibid., 399.
[128] Orestes A. Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 1," *Ave Maria* II (1866): 756; Orestes A. Brownson, "Knowledge & Piety," n.d., Reel 16, Orestes Augustus Brownson Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.

probably meant humankind's creation by God in his "image and likeness." By "the end for which we exist," Brownson referred to "eternal salvation, the principal end for which man was created," according to the Catechism of the Council of Trent.[129] Reason inextricably linked man and God, making the former "kindred with the angels" and "in some sense with the Supreme Intelligence," and enabled salvation.[130] According to Brownson, the ultimate aim of both reason and education was to develop a person's relationship with God, as well as to aid in understanding how one could fulfill his or her divine destiny. Therefore, the development of reason was a crucial component of a proper education.

Brownson deemed the reconciliation of faith and reason "the great problem of our age."[131] Although reason and religion were inextricably linked, he thought that many who abandoned faith did so because they felt "that to accept grace we must annihilate nature, or to accept revelation we must forego reason."[132] Such a necessity was far from the truth, Brownson maintained; in fact, any religion that required one to disregard nature and reason "cannot be from God."[133] In Brownson's view, Protestantism was a religious system that required one to suspend reason; only Catholicism correctly brought faith and reason into harmony with each other.

Packard and Mann would likely have taken the exact opposite view, arguing that it was Catholicism that was unreasonable. Brownson lamented that Protestant critics

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[129] Very Rev. J. Donovan, D.D., *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1867), 17.
[130] Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 1," 756; Brownson, "Knowledge & Piety."
[131] Orestes A. Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism (1860)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. I (Detroit: H.F. Brownson, 1898), 494; Brownson, "Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science," 570.
[132] Orestes A. Brownson, "What Human Reason Can Do (1855)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. I (Detroit: H.F. Brownson, 1898), 307–8.
[133] Ibid., 308.

frequently did accuse "Catholicity and reason as standing opposed each to the other, as two opposite poles." He called for "thinking men and authors who claim intelligence and mean to be just" to cease this faulty rhetoric, which he claimed resulted from associating Catholicism with Reformation theology. The Reformation fundamentally opposed reason, Brownson argued, and inaugurated an "extreme and exclusive supernaturalism," which made Protestantism "a retrograde movement, and designed in its very essence to arrest the intellectual and theological progress of the race."[134] Thus Protestants found it difficult to reconcile faith and reason, but Catholics could do so with relative ease.[135]

To some degree, Brownson sympathized with those who struggled to bring faith and reason into harmony; the issue used to "torment" him. But, as a Catholic, he saw how faith and reason worked perfectly together: "each has its place, and each may be said to serve the other."[136] Using the first-person plural to refer to himself in the capacity of editor, as he often did, Brownson wrote that his Catholic life was "the period of our freest and most active and energetic thought" because he found a school of thought in which faith and reason were "perfectly reconciled, and mutually harmonized."[137] Brownson not only proclaimed the resolution of the conflict between faith and reason; he also described to his readers in great detail exactly how he, with aid of Catholic theology, understood the dichotomy as a harmonious whole. This understanding of the place of reason shaped his beliefs regarding education.

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[134] Brownson, "Rome or Reason," 301–3.
[135] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 495; Anti-Catholic literature characterized Catholics as being required to give up their reason and submit to authority on the basis of "blind obedience." See Welter, "From Maria Monk to Paul Blanshard: A Century of Protestant Anti-Catholicism," 48–49.
[136] Brownson, "What Human Reason Can Do," 322–23.
[137] Brownson, "Rome or Reason," 311.

In order to understand Brownson's views on faith and reason, one must understand his views on the Fall of Adam and its effect on reason and free will. According to Brownson's interpretation of their views, Protestants claimed that Adam's sin stripped man of reason and free will and made him "corrupt in his entire moral or spiritual nature."[138] In Brownson's view, Protestants also argued that those who had not been saved could not perform a good action in the sight of God; they could do "only evil, and that continually."[139] But, as Brownson points out, these two assertions also contradicted each other; if people did lose both reason and free will as a result of the Fall, then how could they sin? The doctrine of total depravity contradicted that of free will. "If those whom Protestants call the unregenerate, the ungodly, or sinners, lost by the fall…the ability to do or think what is morally good, they must have lost equally the ability to do or think what is morally evil," and therefore could "no more sin than can the beasts that perish."[140] Brownson reconciled this discrepancy by asserting that mankind did not lose reason and free will in the Fall; reason may have been "obscured by original sin," but man "lost nothing essential to his nature as pure nature" in the Fall.[141] Although mankind now needed "medicinal grace," otherwise the Fall did not change much. Before, as after, mankind needed supernatural aid to reach an understanding of God.[142] Brownson argued that the need for "regeneration, the spiritual birth into the supernatural

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[138] Orestes A. Brownson, "What Is the Need of Revelation? (1873)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. III (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1883), 512; Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 1," 758.
[139] Brownson, "What Is the Need of Revelation?," 512.
[140] Ibid., 513.
[141] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 503; Orestes A. Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 2," *Ave Maria* II (1866): 789.
[142] Orestes A. Brownson, "Harmony of Faith and Reason (1861)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. III (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1883), 258–59.

or teleological order" existed before the Fall, as after, and eventually he even came to argue that God had planned to send Christ as a mediator to raise mankind to the supernatural order even before Adam sinned.[143]

This supernatural order represented one of two orders of being, concepts not philosophically original to Brownson, but crucial to his understanding of the reconciliation of faith and reason. The natural order, also called the intelligible order by Brownson, described the "primitive creation or the order of genesis." The supernatural, or superintelligible, order represented "a new creation, or regeneration."[144] These two orders did not exist independently from each other; rather, they were "different parts of one whole, − really one full, complete, and universal truth."[145] The union of these two orders existed on the basis of the fact that God had created both.[146] The natural and supernatural realms formed a "dialectic whole" and thus could not be opposed to each other, for they were one and the same.[147]

According to Brownson's theory, humans could gain knowledge of these two orders in different ways. If humans had the intelligence of God, they would be able to see the natural and supernatural as one united realm intelligible by means of reason. But, because of humans' limited intelligence, they had to rely upon revelation from God to gain an understanding of the supernatural.[148]

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[143] Brownson, "What Is the Need of Revelation?," 515; Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 240; Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 2," 789.
[144] Brownson, "Harmony of Faith and Reason," 263.
[145] Brownson, "Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science," 575.
[146] Ibid., 577.
[147] Ibid., 592.
[148] Ibid.; Brownson, "Rome or Reason," 317–318.

The question of authority was an important consideration for Brownson regarding the acquisition of knowledge by means of reason or revelation. What or who ought to serve as the final arbiter of truth in the natural and supernatural orders? Brownson opposed philosophical or theological thought that bowed to tradition simply because it claimed authority; such lazy intellectual acts created a "lack of free, independent thinkers."[149] Instead, thinkers should only yield to appropriate and valid authority. In the realm of the natural, this authority was reason. "In philosophy, reason…is the only authority recognizable."[150] No religious authority should hold sway over human thinking about the natural world.

The Church held authority in the supernatural realm then, not so much on its own authority but "because God says it, and we believe that he says it, on the testimony of the Church, the divinely-constituted witness in the case."[151] In other words, "we do not believe the revelation on the authority of the church; we take on her authority only the fact that it is divine revelation; the revelation itself we believe on the veracity of God."[152] Brownson believed that the authenticity of Church testimony ought to be believed because God could not authorize false teachings. Historical evidence and the claims of the Church itself indicated that God had authorized it to teach His truth.[153]

Yet, despite its unquestioned authority in matters concerning revelation, the Church did not have authority in matters beyond that. The opinions of Church leaders

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[149] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 490. Here Brownson's views seem to resonate very closely with Mann's belief in free thought.
[150] Ibid., 491.
[151] Ibid., 490–91.
[152] Brownson, "Rome or Reason," 313.
[153] Brownson, "Harmony of Faith and Reason," 267–68.

should not be given any more weight than those of the average person "in questions of pure reason," or questions dealing only with the natural realm.[154] Unfortunately, Brownson acknowledged, this was frequently not the case; Catholics sometimes applied the Church's authority to the natural order, leading them to "exclusive supernaturalism, which denies to reason its legitimate functions."[155] Humans needed to look to different authorities depending on whether they were seeking natural or supernatural knowledge, and the authority of both the Church and reason were limited to their particular orders.

Brownson's ideas of what constituted appropriate matters for the Church to address changed somewhat as his own views fluctuated from conservative to liberal and back to conservative. His argument about strictly limiting the Church to authority in spiritual matters reflects the views of the more liberal Brownson. During his conservative periods, he spoke out in defense of the absolute supremacy of the pope, even in temporal matters. Such a position demonstrates that he sometimes felt a degree of distrust in reason, which the writings in his more liberal period seem to belie. Calls for the pope to have absolute authority made Brownson unpopular among many Catholic leaders and reflected his genuine, lifelong struggle to reconcile the authority of the Catholic Church with his own philosophy of reason and faith.[156] His philosophy, even after he became Catholic, was always a work-in-progress.

In general, Brownson viewed revelation and reason as working together to provide humans with faith in and knowledge of the divine. He believed that, in order to

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[154] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 498.
[155] Ibid., 492.
[156] Reher, *Catholic Intellectual Life in America*, 42–43.

come to faith, people first needed to have an "intuition" of the existence of God.[157] This made Brownson, at least marginally, an adherent of ontologism, referring to the belief that the intuitive awareness of God's existence preceded the act of understanding Him on the basis of reason. But Brownson's ontologism was tempered; in fact, he criticized his friend Isaac Hecker for asserting an ontologism that, in Brownson's view, left no room for reason.[158] Brownson firmly believed that an act of reason had to precede an act of faith; he also criticized Protestants who believed that all that was necessary for salvation was "the sensible affection or emotion."[159] Faith or revelation "throws light on reason, or so employs reason that we better understand its use, and the problems really within its reach," but did not eliminate the need for reason.[160] Reason and revelation worked together and could not contradict each other because they both laid bare to human minds and hearts the workings of God's single creation.

In his writings, Brownson called for Catholics to develop a faith based on reason. They should defer to proper authority, but not do so blindly. Brownson wrote about how, after he first became a Catholic, he abandoned his "own thoughts and personal convictions," simply parroting the theological ideas of others.[161] Then he gradually recognized that there had been some truth in his old ideas, despite the faulty conclusions to which they had led him. "Catholicity then rested for us, as it does yet, on external authority, but not on external authority alone. It became a personal conviction, and we

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[157] Brownson, "What Human Reason Can Do," 320.
[158] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 322–23.
[159] Brownson, "Reason and Religion - No. 1," 756.
[160] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 519.
[161] Orestes A. Brownson, "Lacordaire and Catholic Progress (1862)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XX (Detroit: H.F. Brownson, 1887), 252.

attained to that intellectual freedom which we had from the first asserted the church allows, demands, and secures."[162] Brownson argued that "men in our day demand personal conviction…to assimilate to themselves the truth which authority teaches, so that they may have in themselves…unity of thought and life, and speak from their own thoughts, convictions, and experience…and not merely repeat a lesson learned by rote, and to which they attach no more meaning than the parrot does to her scream of 'pretty pol.'" Brownson wrote that did he did not seek to reduce the authority of the Catholic Church, but that he wanted to emphasize the importance of "personal conviction." Catholics who could truly think freely would not have to rely solely on the weight of tradition in determining what they thought: "We would have Catholic truth as a part of ourselves, have it our reason, our conscience, our common sense, not merely something put on, and held on by a foreign hand."[163] This personal adoption of Catholic truth meant that one did not have to bow solely to external authority in order to be a good Catholic. One could also be a good Catholic by affirming one's own personal sense of reason and truth.

Brownson believed that people of faith ought to exercise their reason critically. This included when they evaluated alleged miraculous or demonic occurrences, which might be related to the supernatural realm, but also might have natural explanations. Although the Church maintained that miracles were possible, Brownson observed that did not mean that every event alleged to be a miracle in fact actually was. When evaluating seemingly wondrous phenomena, "we exercise to the full our critical judgment, and

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[162] Ibid., 253.
[163] Ibid., 256.

follow what seems to us the weight of evidence."[164] With respect to direct "satanic influence" in the world, Brownson also recommended critical reflection and admitted that he was "very slow to believe, and hard to be convinced" about such matters.[165]

Although his theology differed greatly from that of Packard and Mann, Brownson similarly believed that those exercising reason could not run astray of truth, as long as they reasoned accurately. Thus the Church placed no restrictions on science "as long as the scientific confine themselves to facts and real principles, and do not run or attempt to run athwart the truth."[166] In Brownson's view, the doctrines prescribed by the Church were from God and therefore infallible; thus "free thought and free inquiry" into the realities of God's creation could not contradict them. The only danger lay in theories that would "degrade human nature and abase the dignity of reason by [depriving] man of his humanity and [ranking] him with the beasts that perish."[167] As long as scientists and philosophers kept to the truth (which they ought to be doing anyway), Brownson found it impossible that their conclusions would contradict Church doctrine. Thus there was no danger in "free thought and free inquiry," only in the "pretence of free thought."[168]

From Brownson's perspective, many were turning away from faith in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus it was less important for Catholics to "[guard] against error" and much more important for them to "[stimulate] free and vigorous thought." An attitude that served to restrict the use of reason would only "swell the numbers of the

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[164] Brownson, "Rome or Reason," 320.
[165] Ibid., 321.
[166] Ibid., 322.
[167] Ibid., 322–23.
[168] Ibid.

revolted." Catholics had "a world to convert, rather than a world to protect, discipline, and govern."[169] Brownson believed that Catholics could more effectively convert the world by placing emphasis less on authority and blind obedience and more on reason and its inherent compatibility with faith. He clearly revealed this belief in his writings on education.

Reason in Catholic Education

Brownson's views on reason and faith informed his commentary on education in the United States, both before and after he became Catholic. His views on education in both periods of his life bear remarkable similarities. Brownson emerged as both an advocate and a critic of public schools, as well as Catholic education. Above all, he called for Catholic children to receive an education based not on dead doctrines and blind deference to authority, but rather on independent thought and a living faith.

Before he became Catholic, Brownson objected to the existence of the Massachusetts Board of Education in part because he thought that the government should have no say in matters of curriculum. The United States was a free country in which the people governed through representatives. Therefore, allowing the government to dictate what was taught "is entrusting our servant with the power to be our master. In a free government, there can be no teaching by authority, and all attempts to teach by authority are so many blows struck at its freedom."[170] According to Brownson, a legislature could

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[169] Brownson, "Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science," 594.
[170] Brownson, "Review of the Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, Together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board," 309.

appropriately pass laws on matters related to school funding and finances, but it should not be allowed a say on matters of curriculum, which ought to be left to individual districts.[171]

In his criticism of Mann's *Second Annual Report,* Brownson also argued that a nonsectarian, yet still religious, education was impossible: "the Board assures us Christianity shall be insisted on so far, and only so far, as it is common to all sects. This, if it means anything, means nothing at all. All…will find their Christianity ending in nothingness…No sect will be satisfied; all sects will be dissatisfied."[172] Brownson argued that there was "no common ground" between Unitarians and Calvinists because "they start from different premises."[173] Alternatives to what Brownson viewed as the insufficient religious education proposed by the Board were an entirely secular education or a religious education that incorporated denominational specifics. Brownson decidedly favored the latter, given his belief that education necessarily had to be religious.

After he became Catholic, Brownson maintained his belief in the importance of religious – and denominationally specific – education. Proper religious education made children "honest and loyal, modest and unpretending, docile and respectful to their superiors, open and ingenuous, obedient and submissive to rightful authority, parental or conjugal, civil or ecclesiastical;" it taught them to "know and keep the commandments of God and the precepts of the church; and to place the salvation of the soul before all else

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[171] Ibid., 413.
[172] Ibid., 404.
[173] Ibid.

in life."[174] Secular education without the incorporation of religion would promote negative habits in young people, which would only turn them into "thieves, robbers, cheats, swindlers, and sharpers."[175] This belief in the absolute need for religious education laid the foundation for all of his writings on education more broadly.

Although Brownson believed that the lack of a religious education would have a very detrimental effect on young people, he did not set as much store as some of his peers in the efficacy of good education alone. Even the most refined and morally strict education might not produce an upright and moral citizen. Brownson attributed this fact to two causes. The first was that children themselves served as active agents who influenced their own trajectories; they were not "ductile as wax in the hands of the educator."[176] The child was "a living subject, endowed with a special nature and a free will of its own."[177] This free will might lead a child with a disadvantageous moral education to grow up to be pious and honest, while another who had received the best religious education available might turn into a criminal. "The same regimen will not produce the same effects in all," Brownson noted.[178] His writings on reason and faith suggest that he believed that the independent exercise of reason on the part of young people accounted in part for this incongruity. Young people would reason and act

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[174] Orestes A. Brownson, "Unification and Education (1871)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XIII (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 292.
[175] Orestes A. Brownson, "The Public School System (1875)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XIII (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 516.
[176] Orestes A. Brownson, "Paganism in Education (1852)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. X (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 555.
[177] Orestes A. Brownson, "Schools and Education (1854)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. X (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 573.
[178] Brownson, "Paganism in Education," 555.

independently regardless of how they were taught. Here Brownson reveals doubts about the efficacy of education in actually influencing behavior.

The second cause of the discrepancy between education and subsequent morality was that many external influences on young people emanated not from "the school-room," but from society.[179] Children "are educated in the streets, by the influence of their associates…in the bosom of family, by the love and gentleness, or wrath and fretfulness of parents…and above all by the general pursuits, habits, and moral tone of the community."[180] Even children who were sent to Christian schools would not be immune from the influence of society, and, if that society were "pagan" or "heathen," they might absorb those attributes.[181] Brownson also noted the importance of the sacraments in influencing the creation of godly individuals: "Education cannot…supply the place of the sacraments."[182] Those holy rituals in part counteracted the godlessness of society in a way that education alone simply could not do.

Brownson's belief in the importance of religious education and his less than sanguine attitude towards the efficacy of education in general compared to other influences informed his perspective on the common schools. In the mid-nineteenth century, some of his fellow Catholics vociferously condemned the public schools and called loudly for public monies to supply Catholic schools as alternatives to the supposedly nonsectarian, but, in reality, very Protestant common schools. Bishop John

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[179] Brownson, "Schools and Education," 570.
[180] Brownson, "Review of the Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, Together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board," 394.
[181] Brownson, "Paganism in Education," 561.
[182] Brownson, "Schools and Education," 572; Orestes A. Brownson, "Public and Parochial Schools (1859)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XII (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 207.

Hughes led this effort in New York.[183] Brownson did not join these Catholics in condemning the schools; instead, he judged their attacks to possess "a zeal, a vehemence, and a bitterness alike impolitic and unwarranted."[184] He took up his pen to defend some elements of the common schools in order "to allay the wrath unnecessarily excited against us and our church."[185] Exciting popular opinion against the schools did more harm than good, Brownson wrote, and those agitating against them should defer to the proper Catholic authorities.[186] Hughes viewed Brownson's moderate position with respect to the schools as sabotaging his own efforts, and the two men sparred in various periodicals until Hughes died in 1864. Brownson found it so unbearable to work under the bishop's ecclesiastical supervision that in 1857 he moved his family out of Hughes' diocese to Elizabeth, New Jersey.[187]

Largely because of his belief in the importance of spiritual education, the Catholic Brownson sustained his pre-Catholic position that parents and the Church, not the state, had primary responsibility for education. But he did not oppose the creation of state-sponsored schools, as long as the state left curriculum to churches and parents and did not dictate what would be taught in the schools.[188] As a Catholic, he did recognize that public schools were unquestionably biased towards Protestantism and objected to them

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[183] Carl F. Kaestle, *The Evolution of an Urban School System: New York City, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 148–56; David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), 84–86; Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 167–70.
[184] Brownson, "Public and Parochial Schools," 210.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 212.
[187] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 242–43, 246–47.
[188] Brownson, "Schools and Education," 573; Brownson, "Public and Parochial Schools," 206.

on such grounds, calling for the laws against sectarianism in the public schools to be enforced and suggesting that many Catholics would not hesitate to send their children to public schools if they were truly nonsectarian.[189]

Although he recognized the public schools' injustices towards Catholics, Brownson also wrote about many of the advantages of the schools and suggested that their disadvantages were perhaps not so bad after all: "they are not all we could wish…but they are by no means as dangerous to us as non-Catholics in their anti-popery zeal persuade themselves."[190] He addressed the complaints of the virulent Catholic critics of the common schools that they drew children away from their faith, arguing that the schools had only a moderate influence on apostasy and that society played much more of a role.[191] More often, Brownson wrote, Catholic children who attended public schools and spent significant amounts of time with Protestants would gain a strengthened faith. They would grow accustomed to Protestantism early on, and therefore it would not have the appeal of "novelty."[192] Early familiarity with Protestant objections to their faith would also make Catholic children more capable of answering them and teach them "self-defence" with respect to religion. Brownson wrote, "Catholicity…can be no hot-house plant." [193] Here he placed a great deal of confidence in the ability of young people to think independently from their peers and teachers. He seems to be much more comfortable allowing Catholic children to be educated with Protestants than Isaac Leeser

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[189] Brownson, "Schools and Education," 578.
[190] Ibid., 582.
[191] Ibid., 579.
[192] Ibid., 580.
[193] Ibid., 581–82.

was allowing Jewish children to go to school with Protestants, although both shared the goal of teaching children how to defend their particular faiths.

Brownson also called explicitly for Catholic children attending public schools to develop discernment with regard to what information they should believe on the basis of the authority of their teachers. Children would know that the teachers were Protestant, Brownson wrote, and would be "therefore forewarned to distrust whatever they find in these schools, or hear said by these teachers, on the subject of religion."[194] Brownson thus gave children somewhat more credit for being able to think for themselves than other Catholic critics of the common schools.

Ultimately, Brownson argued that Catholic young people needed "to form a sturdy Catholic character, that may be trusted in some measure, with God's grace, to itself. They who are to live in the world, must be formed to withstand the world and to be able in whatever straits they are placed to do something to help themselves."[195] Brownson's advice here, calling for young people who had learned to navigate the world using their own judgment and willpower, echoes the exhortations of Frederick Packard and Horace Mann for children to develop an internal moral compass. It also appears to contradict the emphasis on deference to authority apparent in Mother Angela's Metropolitan Readers.

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[194] Ibid., 579.
[195] Ibid., 582.

In his liberal period at least, Brownson also censured Catholic schools for being "guilty of a gross anachronism" by teaching a Catholicism stuck in the past.[196] For Brownson, the education sponsored by the Church portrayed Catholicism as opposed to progress and suggested that one had to regress in order to be a good Catholic. Rather than teaching doctrines as "living principles," many Catholic teachers taught them as "isolated or dead facts."[197] Students were not "shown the light [the dogmas] throw on each other when taken in their dialectic connection and as a whole."[198] Because they did not understand the connections among the different doctrines, Catholics who remained faithful had to base their faith on "external authority alone, which, without the internal authority, is hardly satisfactory to any but very devout Catholics."[199] Catholic education thus often "[failed] to produce living men, active, thinking men…and hence it also fails to enable the church to take possession of humanity, and to inspire and direct its movements."[200] In order for Catholicism to take its rightful place, in Brownson's view, as the leading force of human civilization, Catholic youth needed to be taught a living faith and also had to learn how to reason critically about the theological foundations of their faith.

Regarding instruction on the proper relationship of faith and reason, Brownson recognized that many Catholics perceived the two as incompatible, largely because of the way they were taught. Because of the defective philosophy they learned, those who had a

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[196] Orestes A. Brownson, "Catholic Schools and Education (1862)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XII (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 502.
[197] Ibid., 503.
[198] Orestes A. Brownson, "Education and the Republic (1874)," in *The Works of Orestes A. Brownson*, vol. XIII (Detroit: Thorndike Nourse, 1884), 454.
[199] Ibid., 455.
[200] Brownson, "Catholic Schools and Education," 505–6.

religious upbringing found themselves with "difficulties, if not doubt, the moment they begin to philosophize."[201] But such a situation was not inevitable; young people could be taught "a true and sound philosophy" that would foster faith.[202] This philosophy had to be Catholic, because "anti-Catholic" philosophy, even paired with Catholic theology, would lead to "a discrepancy between…faith and reason."[203] Despite its Catholicity, the system should not be taught on the basis of authority, and it should not be indoctrinated into students. Rather, it should nurture "complete emancipation from all man-made systems, and room for the free and independent exercise of reason according to its own nature and laws."[204] As with Packard, the modern reader might quibble with Brownson here, observing that he could not be advocating complete freedom because he would not allow a thinker to contradict Catholic doctrine. But, because of his absolute surety of the truth of Catholicism, Brownson emphatically did advocate true intellectual freedom; he simply rejected the freedom to propound erroneous conclusions that contradicted truth.

Brownson held similar views about the importance of independent thought before he converted to Catholicism. In his criticism of Mann's *Second Annual Report,* Brownson diverged somewhat from the focus on formal schooling, calling for American adults to be better educated by means of an improved American literature and press. Brownson criticized American writing for simply following the lead of public opinion, rather than making bold new statements. In American literature, he called for "free, deep, earnest thought." "He, who shrinks from free thought and free speech, is the most abject

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[201] Brownson, "Rationalism and Traditionalism," 495.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid., 496.
[204] Ibid., 497.

of slaves, is not a man but a pitiable thing, unworthy of heaven, and too imbecile for hell."[205] The press ought not to be afraid of expressing opinions with which the majority disagreed, but it "must not dogmatize, must not seek to establish a creed, but to throw what light it can on all questions of interest to man or society, to elicit discussion, and induce the people to find out the truth for themselves."[206] Brownson doubted the ability of formal schools to teach Americans to think freely; he believed that all of society should facilitate free and independent thought: "The community can never be educated in schools, technically so called; they can be educated only by the free action of mind on mind."[207] Formal education had its benefits, but all of the influences of society also ought to foster reason and independent thought.

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The writings of both Mother Angela and Brownson reveal their belief in the importance of reason, but Mother Angela's exhortations were carefully qualified. Faith and piety had to precede reason, and even after reason was developed, it was still better to defer to a trustworthy authority. Mother Angela's views likely reflect the limitations of her own situation: she was a highly intelligent, educated woman working within the confines of an extremely patriarchal organization. Brownson developed much more fully than Mother Angela the relationship between faith and reason as they existed in a "dialectic whole."[208] He believed that it was essential for young people to gain an

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[205] Brownson, "Review of the Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, Together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board," 432.
[206] Ibid., 434.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Brownson, "Faith and Reason, Revelation and Science," 592.

understanding of this concept so that they could justify their faith to themselves on the basis of "internal authority," not just external, as well as so that they could respond intelligently to Protestant attacks on their faith.[209] Brownson believed that good education ought to teach young people how to apply reason to the natural realm and how to determine rightful authority with respect to the supernatural realm. He sought education that would encourage young people to live out their Catholic faith as if it were a living truth, as Brownson believed it was. Brownson was thus certain – as certain as Packard and Mann, Gratz and Leeser – that no amount of reasoning, properly applied, could topple his faith.

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[209] Brownson, "Education and the Republic," 455.

Epilogue: The Legacy of Thinking for Themselves

All of the figures examined – Packard, Mann, Gratz, Leeser, Mother Angela, and Brownson – believed that faith and reason supported each other. In their educational visions for American children, they affirmed that reason and faith taught truth about the natural and supernatural realms and could not contradict each other. Several, namely Gratz, Leeser, and Mother Angela, demonstrated a degree of caution in authorizing young people to exercise reason independently, probably due to the intense pressure to conform to the dominant Protestant society which these Jewish and Catholic educators knew the young would experience. Others, especially Packard, authorized independent thought to a much greater extent than has been appreciated in the scholarly literature. In general, because of their degree of trust in their particular faiths, these educators did not fear the consequences of young people exercising reason, as long as they did so wisely. They believed that God's truth would only be affirmed, no matter how the young sought to challenge it.

Some new scientific developments of the mid-nineteenth century tested this reconciliation of faith and reason. For example, new geological evidence indicated that the earth was much older than the previously accepted 6,000 years. Despite the potential conflict this posed to the religious understanding of creation, many people of faith, including Orestes Brownson, could reconcile such new evidence with their beliefs and

accept the new estimate for the age of the earth.[1] But the most formidable difficulty was yet to come.

Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection was one of the greatest challenges faced by Judeo-Christian faith since its founding, causing a major philosophical problem for many people of faith who had previously had no problem reconciling religion and science. In particular, the theory challenged evangelicals who believed in a literal, common-sense interpretation of the Bible and who believed that Scripture and science would always support each other.[2] Like Protestants, both Roman Catholics and Jews also disagreed about the validity of Darwin's theory and the degree to which they should accommodate their understanding of faith to reflect it.[3] Brownson was one of those who rejected outright the notion of the evolution of species.[4]

Ultimately, Darwinism and other scientific developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to a broad liberalization and secularization of American society and religion.[5] Some found their faiths amenable to the new ideas and synthesized them into a new worldview. Others, more conservative, rejected natural selection and like theories that challenged their notions of God. These fundamentalists developed or

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[1] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 367, 370.
[2] George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter?: The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 93–94.
[3] R. Scott Appleby, "Exposing Darwin's 'Hidden Agenda': Roman Catholic Responses to Evolution, 1875-1925," in *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mariano Artigas, Thomas F. Glick, and Rafael A. Martinez, *Negotiating Darwin: The Vatican Confronts Evolution, 1877-1902* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 3–6, 18, 279; Marc Swetlitz, "American Jewish Responses to Darwin and Evolutionary Theory, 1860-1890," in *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Naomi W. Cohen, "The Challenges of Darwinism and Biblical Criticism to American Judaism," *Modern Judaism* 4, no. 2 (May 1984): 121–57.
[4] Carey, *Orestes A. Brownson*, 370.
[5] T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 23–25, 41–42.

maintained their insistence on the literal interpretation of Scripture in a way that seemed to some observers to shove reason aside, although, in truth, they still valued reason as one of multiple authorities.[6] Those who resisted modern, secular society in this way found refuge in their religion. Others did not find religion satisfying or sufficient, but still lamented the "overcivilization," "moral impotence," and "spiritual sterility" of society, as discussed by T.J. Jackson Lears in *No Place of Grace.* These antimodernists looked for genuine experiences and transcendent meaning in a variety of alternative outlets, such as medievalism, arts and crafts, or Eastern spirituality.[7]

One might think that the piety of the religious educators discussed here placed them in opposition to the currents of secularism in the wake of Darwinism. They certainly favored religious, not secular education, and would not have approved of the abandonment or minimization of religion. Nevertheless, their strategies unwittingly contributed to the movement towards secularism in several ways.

By embracing the use of reason to comprehend God and their relationship with him, these religious thinkers and others may have contributed to the eventuality of unbelief emerging as a viable personal choice in American society. According to James Turner, many religious thinkers in the nineteenth century "[applied] secular standards to religious knowledge," which exacerbated the challenge scientific developments posed to religious faith.[8] Some religious leaders had long been denying the mystical and unknowable in religion in favor of arguments that all could be explained using reason.

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[6] Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[7] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 4–5.
[8] James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 159.

Thus they had no recourse when faced with Darwin's very reasonable theory. They had made "a decision to deal with modernity by embracing it – to defuse modern threats to the traditional bases of belief by bringing God into line with modernity…They committed religion…*intellectually* to modes of knowing God fitted only for understanding this world."[9] This resulted in the confrontation of science and religion on the same ground. For many, religion could not hold its own in the realm of reason.

In calling for the use of critical reason with respect to faith and the secular world, these religious educators also encouraged young Americans to challenge the beliefs inherited from their ancestors, "undermining all the older, external forms of moral authority," in Lears' words. Their calls for the increased use of reason thus necessitated the development of a form of internal regulation, "a moral gyroscope," if society were not entirely to break down.[10] The educators studied here called for such a "moral gyroscope" that would allow young people to make decisions on the basis of their own consciences and not the dictates of authority figures. David Riesman has identified this transition as the shift from tradition-direction to inner-direction. For a tradition-directed individual, social rules and culture primarily dictate behavior, while an inner-directed person relies upon internal principles inculcated at a young age.[11]

Was this advocacy of relying upon one's internal "gyroscope" freeing or was it still a thinly veiled mechanism of social control? Riesman wrote that an inner-directed person moves toward "generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals" and that

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[9] Ibid., 266–67.
[10] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 12–13.
[11] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 15.

"he goes through life less independent than he seems."[12] So perhaps the internal moral compass advocated by these educators represented an instrument of social control to some degree, but, if so, it was not very effective. The license to think for themselves on the basis of moral principles, which these educators were so certain would lead young people to sure faith, sometimes led them beyond the confines of traditional religion and morality, contributing to secularism and moral relativism, developments which the pious most wanted to avoid.[13] The consequences of their encouragement of young people thinking for themselves extended far beyond those they had foreseen, as changes in American society, namely Darwinism, liberalization, and secularization, indicate.

The practice of thinking for themselves that these educators advocated in fact bears some resemblance to modern notions of critical thinking, but it is not identical. The concept of critical thinking came into wide usage in the 1970s and 1980s. According to one definition, a critical thinker "gathers and assesses relevant information…, comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards," and "thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought."[14] Alternatively, critical thinking means "seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, [and] deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts."[15] A critical thinker "[searches] for information that opposes [a] position as well as

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[12] Ibid., 15, 25.
[13] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 41–42, 46.
[14] Richard Paul and Linda Elder, "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools" (The Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2007), 4.
[15] Daniel T. Willingham, "Critical Thinking: Why Is It So Hard to Teach?," *American Educator* (Summer 2007), 8.

information that supports it."[16] One aspect of these definitions may be found in nineteenth-century exhortations for young people to think for themselves, while the other aspect is mostly absent. These educators did believe strongly that conclusions ought to be drawn only on the basis on factual evidence, not prior attitudes, assumptions, or unsupported hypotheses. Such an emphasis reflects the legacy of the influences of Scottish common sense reasoning in America.

Yet these educators, with the possible exception of Horace Mann, were not generally as open to alternative conclusions or other systems of thought as a modern advocate of critical thinking would be. Advocates of modern critical thinking affirm that thinking ought to be unbiased and that no assumption or conclusion should be sacred, if the evidence appears to contradict it. Yet these nineteenth-century educators simply could not condone certain strains of reasoning. Even Mann, who demonstrated more open-mindedness to less traditional ways of thought, would not have advocated atheism, even if the factual evidence seemed to point that way. But these educators' belief in the existence of a concrete body of unchanging truths precluded such an eventuality, in their minds. According to their worldviews, the proper exercise of critical reasoning could not challenge religious truth. Young people reasoning correctly not only *ought to* come to certain conclusions; they *had to* come to those conclusions. There was simply no other option. Thus their religious certainty allowed them to encourage children to think for themselves without fear that they would undermine their faith.[17]

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[16] Paul and Elder, "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking," 7.

[17] A more radical variant of modern critical thinking calls for a "critical consciousness" that promotes social change, encouraging young people to "[question] official knowledge, existing authority, traditional relationships." See Ira Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 129. This version of critical thinking would seem rather extreme to

Such confidence on the part of these religious educators might seem to highlight the most marked difference between their philosophies and those of advocates of modern critical thinking. Yet predetermined ideologies also inform the work of modern critical thinking advocates; they are not entirely neutral. Although these ideologies are usually not religious, they do bind critical thinkers to certain types of conclusions and bar them from others. For example, a modern critical thinking advocate would not likely affirm the validity of a conclusion that was misogynistic, racist, or ethnocentric, even if that conclusion had been reached by means of deliberate critical thinking. In fact, the modern critical thinking advocate would likely have the same reaction as the educators discussed here when confronted with a conclusion that contradicted their embedded ideologies. They would simply conclude that the reasoner's logic was faulty.[18] Thus, although their foundational ideologies differ, modern educators and the nineteenth-century religious educators examined here have strikingly similar attitudes towards critical reason.

Packard, Mann, Gratz, Leeser, Mother Angela, and Brownson each provided a model for a way to integrate reason with faith that in some ways anticipated modern theories of critical thinking. These educators found ways to make meaning out of contradictions which might have seemed insurmountable, while also encouraging young people to develop their own understanding of right and wrong to help them steer a true course through a world filled with temptations. In some ways, they worked to combat the trend towards secularism, providing models of faith and reason working in harmony.

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these nineteenth-century religious educators, and it would be anachronistic to locate this impulse in the nineteenth century. But a parallel still exists. The nineteenth-century educators encouraged children to follow their own consciences rather than the directives of traditional authority figures, and they encouraged social change through reform in the name of morality and religion.

[18] For this interpretation, I am indebted to the anonymous readers of an article I submitted to the *History of Education Quarterly* in 2014.

Yet, paradoxically, their advocacy that the young should think for themselves may also have contributed to the late nineteenth-century split between the secular and the spiritual, a chasm which remains in much of American society to this day.

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