

Orestes Brownson on Catholicism and Republicanism

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ORESTES BROWNSON'S PRESENCE looms large in Russell Kirk's celebrated 1953 tome, in large part because, for Kirk, Brownson represents a luminous thinker unjustly neglected by modern scholars.¹ Even further, Brownson seems to be a central figure not only in the nineteenth-century development—or maintenance—of order in American society, but, for Kirk, is someone whose prose remains genuinely instructive for contemporary citizens; he is "one of those dead who give us life." Brownson's insights are called upon in Kirk's culminating essay in *The Conservative Mind*, and shortly after that book's publication Kirk edited a collection of Brownson's essays for the Henry Regnery Company.² The collection highlights the range of Brownson's interests and the expansiveness of his thought. Whereas in *The Conservative Mind*, Kirk treats Brownson almost exclusively as a religious thinker, the Regnery collection includes almost exclusively political, and largely secular, tracts.³

Brownson did not acquire his political and religious views in a systematic fashion, and the circuitous path of his intel-

lectual and spiritual journey was the source of both his great strength and his weakness, to the extent that he had one.⁴ He was born in Vermont in 1803, but at the age of six (after the death of his father) was sent to live with an elderly couple with a Calvinist-Congregationalist bent—though they were not regular churchgoers. At fourteen, his mother brought him back to her new home in upstate New York, where he encountered a variety of sects and nonbelievers. Then, at the age of nineteen, he entered a Presbyterian church in Ballston one day and was baptized there, one month later.

However, the "harsh doctrines of Calvinism,"⁵ especially its teachings on double predestination and election, he could not abide. Within four years, he had withdrawn from Presbyterianism and been ordained a Universalist minister. He was soon appointed editor of a Universalist journal, *The Gospel Advocate*. The Universalist position he found much more palatable, dovetailing as it did with both his theological conviction about the efficacy of voluntary works and his political concern with furthering the cause of the rights of man. Without doing too much injustice to the subsequent two decades, Brownson was eventually attracted to a radical humanist and skeptical view, then to Unitarianism, then to Transcendentalism, until finally—after becoming some-

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thing of a celebrity in the public presses and pulpits—he entered into communion with the Roman Catholic Church in 1844.⁶ Over the course of the next thirty years Brownson became an influential and indefatigable public defender of Catholicism against all comers. With the exception of a short period in the early 1860s, he was stalwartly orthodox—not an easy task for a prolific, autodidactic essayist.

I

Brownson's works have been unduly neglected, Kirk rightly laments. In the late nineteenth century his collected essays were published in twenty volumes by his son, Henry F. Brownson,⁷ but Kirk notes that as of the mid-1950s "nothing of Brownson's had been in print for many years."⁸ That omission was corrected in part by Kirk's own collection of essays, noted above, and in the same year, by the publication of *The Brownson Reader* by Alvan S. Ryan of Notre Dame.⁹ A mini-revival of interest in Brownson followed, and there have been occasional longer biographical treatments since, but still, precious few have been the sustained analyses of his thought and its contribution to American politics and Catholic American intellectual development. The recent publication by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute of Brownson's 1865 magnum opus, *The American Republic: Its Constitution, Tendencies, and Destiny*, part of a larger series of his works, will, one hopes, help to remedy this situation for a new generation of readers.¹⁰

Kirk's treatment of Brownson in *The Conservative Mind* is found in a chapter titled "Transitional Conservatism: New England Sketches," where he also discusses John Quincy Adams, Emerson, and Hawthorne. Brownson clearly fits here, given his intimate knowledge of the Transcendentalists and the New England mindset. As Kirk observes, contrary to the common nativist denunciation of

Brownson and his followers as foreigners, or agents of alien interests, Brownson in fact appears in many ways as a quintessential New Englander.

One Yankee trait evident in Brownson is his wariness of the excesses of democracy: "Our great danger lies in the radical tendency which has become so wide, deep, and active in the American people."¹¹ This tendency, which Brownson routinely connects with the rise of Jacksonianism, rejects the order and stability of organically developed societies in favor of human constructions, and is animated by hostility to the notion of authority, especially the authority of God—a principle that can be apprehended only by acknowledging the fundamental social significance of the Church.¹²

One Brownsonian characteristic that could not have sprung so easily from his New England roots, though, was his wholesale embrace of Catholicism as the only religious body that could sustain the religious spirit while at the same time also serving as the means for sustaining republican government. As Kirk describes Brownson's view, the Protestant principle descends through three states:

first, the subjection of religion to the charge of civil government; second, the rejection of the authority of temporal government, and submission of religion to the control of the faithful; third, individualism, which "leaves religion entirely to the control of the individual, who selects his own creed, or makes a creed to suit himself, devises his own worship and discipline, and submits to no restraints but such as are self-imposed."¹³

The result of the Protestant temper, in Brownson's view, is a distrust of authority and a neglect of the necessity of God's assistance in human affairs, thus undermining the "moral solidarity" that must serve as the basis of any democratic order.

The ultimate necessity of Catholicism

for democracy is a constant for Brownson, and a principle he shared with that other profound nineteenth-century commentator on American politics, Alexis de Tocqueville. Both thinkers certainly considered the danger that individualism would undermine the bonds of community, and both also feared an apparently opposite danger, the growth of “tyrannical democracy,” or what Tocqueville called the “soft despotism” of concentrated bureaucratic power.¹⁴ As Tocqueville puts it, “I think that in the democratic centuries that are going to open up, individual independence and local liberties will always be the product of art. Centralization will be the natural government.”¹⁵ This sentiment is one Brownson would seem to endorse wholeheartedly, but he differs slightly from Tocqueville in his insistence on connecting his fear of an unfettered civil authority with his religious principles. As he notes in his reflections on the publication of the *Syllabus* of Pius IX: “The civil power is bound to obey the law of God, and forfeits its authority in going contrary to it. We shall not suffer those who refuse to believe the infallibility of the Pope, [only] to assert the infallibility of Caesar or the state.”¹⁶

Kirk’s assessment of Brownson as primarily a religious thinker leads us to consider further Brownson’s positions on the Church and on America. With Brownson, one can hardly treat one topic without the other, but we will focus here on his understanding of the religious character of America.

Brownson seems to have taken his bearings with reference to two fixed principles, the *first* being that America was *not* constitutionally hostile to Catholicism, that its original republicanism may even have been open to the vigorous claims of the natural law tradition. Whether or not that is the case, it is clear that for Brownson democracy will only be rescued by the presence of a vibrant Catholicism. This

fact is what gives him such confidence that the efforts of the Nativists and Know-Nothings would in the end prove self-defeating.

The *second* critical element of Brownson’s thought on this question seems to be his comprehension of Catholic Christianity’s robust self-assurance, its willingness to defend itself in the face of a vast array of adversaries. The following analysis will focus on these two principles in Brownson’s thought, and then assess our contemporary circumstances in light of Brownson’s presumptions and concerns.

II

For Brownson, a proper understanding of America begins with an appreciation for the *contrast* between democracy and republicanism. The roots of this political analysis can be seen in his response to the Nativist critique of Catholicism in America.¹⁷ The Nativist sees foreigners as holding views that are undemocratic, and therefore un-American, and therefore antithetical to the common good. Brownson’s view of the American political order and its founding principles casts doubt on the cogency of these Nativist sentiments, both in their rejection of Catholicism and in their attachment to what he considers an exaggeratedly democratic interpretation of the America experiment.

Brownson maintains that America is the product of a combination of religious—or, more precisely, Christian—and secular influences, as he suggests in an essay on the relationship between the institutions of church and state. The northern colonies were settled by strict religious believers (establishing a “theocracy” or “clerocracy”), while in the southern colonies the tendency was “to establish the supremacy of the civil order, and to make the church a function of the state.”¹⁸ The resulting combination of these two “tendencies” was the assertion

of “the Christian idea, or the union and distinction under the law of God, of the two orders.”

The uneasiness of the marriage between secular and Christian elements in America can be seen, Brownson argues, in the divergent understandings of *natural rights*, which he calls the “real, unwritten, providential constitution” in America.¹⁹ The secularist understands natural rights to be unconnected with anything transcendent: in effect, autonomous. But the truth about the American experiment is that the nation’s founding documents acknowledge the necessary dependence of any system of natural rights on a divine creator; natural rights are ultimately grounded in, and derived from, the rights and authority of God. Thus, for Brownson, within the American order, consent alone *cannot be* the basis of legitimate government.²⁰ Popular sovereignty is limited by the sovereignty of God.

The strength of the American republic, then, lies not in its individualism or in its unbridled democracy, but in its maintenance of an orderly hierarchical society, and this is where the fundamental necessity of Catholicism arises. The people, freed from a class of political masters over whom they exercise no control, are now in the seat of power; they are “sovereign.” Yet the people themselves “need governing, and must be governed.... They must have a master.”²¹ In contrast to the Nativist claim, Brownson holds that Catholicism “is necessary to sustain popular liberty, because popular liberty can be sustained only by a religion free from popular control, above the people, speaking from above and able to command them—and such a religion is the Roman Catholic.”²² This being the case, the Nativists undermine their stated interest in sustaining the American form of government through their opposition to the one institution that would be adequate to the task, thus revealing that their animus is not really pro-American but only anti-

Catholic, and especially anti-Irish.²³

Opposition to Nativism, or the “Know-Nothings,” was of course also voiced by non-Catholics on political grounds, either because of the secrecy of the movement or because of its rejection of the founding principles of America’s constitutional order. As Abraham Lincoln famously put it in 1855:

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that “*all men are created equal.*” We now practically read it “*all men are created equal, except negroes.*” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read, “*all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics.*” When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.²⁴

Brownson’s view, again, is that Catholicism is necessary for America. As he put it in 1859, “Catholicism recognizes and confirms the law of nature, that is to say, natural justice, denied by the stricter forms of Protestantism, and therefore recognizes the equality of all men before the natural law, the true basis of liberty.”²⁵ Against the charge that Catholic principles are at odds with the fundamental American principles, Brownson echoes Augustine, noting that Catholicism is not hostile to any particular political order, save despotism. The Church provides the remedy for defective orders where there are no checks upon arbitrary power by imposing moral restraints on its use, and where such checks do exist the Church “hallows them and renders them inviolable.”²⁶ In a republic, on the other hand, the Church restrains popular passions, subjects the people to the law of God, and “disposes them to the practice of

those public virtues which render a republic secure.”²⁷

While he had earlier held out great hope for the future of America, and thus was unstinting in his support for America’s cause (and the Union’s cause, during the Civil War), by 1875 Brownson had grown less sanguine than formerly: “Let the American people become truly Catholic and submissive children of the Holy Father, and their republic is safe; let them refuse and seek safety for the secular order in sectarianism or secularism, and nothing can save it from destruction.”²⁸ The real threat to the American way of life comes in the ascendancy of human pride, emboldened by a false, extremist claim of equality and freedom. Republican government cannot countenance such selfish immoderation: “It must be based on love; not on the determination to defend your own rights and interests, but on the fear to encroach on the rights and interests of others.... It is only in the bosom of the Catholic Church that this sublime charity has ever been found or can be found.”²⁹ After about 1875, while Brownson will still defend the American form of government, he will do so only insofar as democracy is understood in the qualified manner in which he articulates it; the difficulty, he notes, is that practically speaking, no one else understands it that way.³⁰

III

The second fundamental principle at the heart of Brownson’s thought on religion and America is the “givenness” of Catholic Christianity’s confidence, and thus its self-assurance concerning the promulgation of its doctrines and dogmas, as well as in its missionary endeavors. As we have seen, for Brownson the Catholic message is exactly what republicanism needs to heed, for without it the political order will be lost on the shoals of anarchic democracy: “A republic can stand only as it rests upon the virtues of the people; and these

not the mere natural virtues of worldly prudence and social decency, but those loftier virtues which are possible to human nature only as elevated above itself by the infused habit of supernatural grace.”³¹ The political or earthly success of the American system will itself depend upon recognizing and sustaining the elements of civil society that promote the life of substantive, *real* virtue, not simply the calculative, self-interested “virtue” capitalized on by the band of devils famously employed by Kant.³²

The teaching of Catholicism, as Brownson repeatedly stresses, is not at odds with the notion of political or civil liberty. Instead, it is the very ground of such liberty. The most despotic states in Europe, he argues, are not the Catholic states, and the Church’s teaching on society provides the bedrock of stability for the family and for civic associations that promote social harmony.³³ One ought not draw the false conclusion from this circumstance that the Church should thus dictate the precise contours of public policy, however, for although the Church is infallible in dogmatic questions, “we have never heard it pretended that she is infallible in her human legislation.”³⁴ Still, it does behoove the state to recognize and adhere to the salutary social principles so compellingly articulated by the Church for the guidance of statesmen and political reformers.

The bold Catholic claims advanced and defended by Brownson are directly contrary to what he terms the teaching of the “modern infidel school”³⁵ of, among others, Pierre Bayle, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine. One can scarcely find a sentiment so diametrically opposed to that of Brownson as what one finds in Paine’s *Common Sense* concerning the multiplicity of religious denominations: “For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe that it is the will of the Almighty that there should be a diversity of religious opinions among us. It affords a larger field for

Christian kindness.”³⁶ In Brownson’s vision, the extreme version of religious liberty or separationism (extreme, that is, for the time) undermines the very capacity for human community: “With our multitude of sects, we may instruct, but not educate. Our children can have no moral training, for morality rests on theology, and theology on faith. But faith is expelled from our schools, because it is sectarian....”³⁷ In Brownson’s view, there is a fatal defect in the specifically “modern” republicanism of the “infidel school,” and every effort must be made to bring Americans to appreciate the specifically *non-modern* (and thus, Christian) dimension of their constitutional order.

Brownson’s admiration for a robust public Catholicism can be seen in the revealing “Introduction” he provides to the revived version of the Last Series of *Brownson’s Quarterly Review* in 1873. Brownson notes here his own disdain for the orientation of the *Review* prior to its suspension in 1864, a situation that led many of his admirers to think that he was “on the point of abandoning the church.”³⁸ Admitting that he had mistakenly tried to “present Catholicity in a form as little repulsive to my non-Catholic countrymen as possible,” Brownson now rejects that approach:

I have no ambition to be regarded as a *liberal* Catholic.... I have no elements of liberal Catholicity in my nature or in my convictions, and the times, if I read them aright, demand Catholicity in its strength, not in its weakness; in its supernatural authority and power, not as reduced to pure rationalism or mere human sentimentality.³⁹

What he takes to be the liberal element in Catholicism he makes clear in his 1874 essay, “Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Sunt,” wherein he sets forth the necessity of the Church for salvation, in opposition to the liberalizing trends of some contemporary theologians:

[T]he theologians, who by their explana-

tions open wide the door of salvation, labor with all their might to prove that those who apparently die outside the church, and whose salvation, they tell us, is not to be despaired of, do not really die out of her communion, but, in fact, in it, and as Catholics. That is, men may be in the communion of the church while apparently out of it, and adhering to sects hostile to it, being excused through invincible ignorance.⁴⁰

Brownson takes some solace in acknowledging that his earlier writings were apparently exonerated by the Vatican from any charges of false advocacy, and he sets out to state clearly and unhesitatingly his embrace of the fullness of Catholic teaching, even against those who recommend a trimming or soft-pedaling of the more difficult social and theological truths.⁴¹

IV

If Brownson so clearly regretted the decline of religious life in America in the 1870s (following the Northern triumph in the Civil War), one can only wonder what he might have to say about our own contemporary religious practice and belief. Among the plethora of works one might consult on such matters, Robert M. Bellah’s 1985 study *Habits of the Heart*⁴² provides valuable insight into the popular sentiments of religious and non-religious people alike, and Thomas Reeves’ 1996 work *The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity* gives striking statistical evidence of the decline of religiosity in America in mainstream denominations in the twentieth century.⁴³

But it is not only what Brownson terms “liberal” Christianity that is suffering. The most recent account of the precipitous decline of religion in America focuses its attention most trenchantly on Catholicism itself. In Kenneth C. Jones’ new study, the *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: The Church Since Vatican II*, one can see—in the decline of religious participation, belief, and vocations—how Brownson’s

own church has been affected by movements both internal and external over the course of the past four decades.⁴⁴ In the legal realm, Philip Hamburger's massive and important study *Separation of Church and State* traces the roots of the Nativist critique of Catholicism in establishing the strict separationist view in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴⁵ The adoption of this secularizing interpretation of the First Amendment by the overwhelming majority of contemporary legal scholars and judges has rendered most American Catholics today hostile to the view of religion advocated by Brownson—and, indeed, completely unaware that there might be a legitimate alternative to the prevailing American secularism. In the political realm, recent studies and polling data have indicated the manner in which Catholic voters and politicians have assimilated themselves to the positions adopted by the general public, seeing nothing significantly distinctive about the Catholic political and social message. The seriousness and self-confidence that were part and parcel of the Roman Catholicism Brownson so forcefully embraced have dissipated, a circumstance Brownson would likely have found inconceivable.

One contemporary author, Philip Jenkins, suggests in his book *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*⁴⁶ that recent opposition to Catholic teaching is the result of an important cultural shift in America. Brownson confronted opposition from Nativists and what would later perhaps be termed “fundamentalists;” much of the public hostility toward the Church was generated by those who saw Catholicism as a threat to the traditional public order of American life. In this vein, one might include certain writings as late as the 1950s: for example, Paul Blanchard, in his *American Freedom and Catholic Power*⁴⁷ and *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power*⁴⁸ drew direct links between the authoritar-

ianism—no, totalitarianism—America was confronted with on the international scene and that found within the institutional Catholic Church. Both Communism and Catholicism were depicted as serious threats to the traditions of American liberty.

In the contemporary public sphere, however, it is far more often the case that opposition to the Roman Church comes not from defenders of an old-order America, but rather from those who see Catholicism as intimately tied up in the defense of that order: both America and Catholicism earn rebukes for promoting patriarchy and stifling modern notions of human autonomy. The result of this shifting of the cultural critique has been a realignment of interests on the political and cultural level. One indicator of that shift is pointed out by James Hitchcock, who suggests that the spiritual promise of America can likely be revived only through “some kind of synthesis of Evangelical Protestant and Catholic substance whose exact contours are at present impossible to imagine.”⁴⁹ Political cooperation between these groups has burgeoned in the past decade, a phenomenon that would likely have struck earlier analysts as at least improbable, if not impossible.

V

The trajectory of Brownson's thought spans a broad array of critical and provocative issues, and as such there is much that we can gain from taking him seriously. One might suggest, however, that we face something of a different task, given the cultural and intellectual transformations that have occurred between his day and ours. The exaggerated contemporary claim is not so much on behalf of the Nativism that Brownson so incisively critiqued, a kind of ethnic aversion to the perceived threat of the religion of “foreign” interlopers. Rather, the dominant new assertion might be described as a Nativism of “this-world,” a Nativism of

the *saeculum* as such, which rejects wholesale any argument or institution which takes its bearings from the recognition of a transcendent truth.⁵⁰ The transformation of the dominant American ethos, certainly within the intellectual classes, to the point where it no longer accepts claims on behalf of faith, or even on behalf of universal reason—whether one thinks of reason in the context of the fullness of the natural law tradition or of the Enlightenment—is the most substantial obstacle to the realization of the political and religious principles Brownson advocated so indefatigably.⁵¹

In the final chapter of *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk summarizes the promise of conservatism, and assesses its future in America. In the process of assaying the influence of ideology in the American academy, Kirk turns to Brownson to give an account of the *proper* role of the intel-

lectual in society. Brownson calls upon the scholar to avoid both contempt for and condescension to the people:

The scholar is not one who stands above the people, and looks down on the people with contempt. He has no contempt for the people; but a deep and all-enduring love for them, which commands him to live and labor, and, if need be, to suffer and die, for their redemption; but he never forgets that he is their instructor, their guide, not their echo, their slave, their tool.⁵²

This passage, somewhat surprisingly, comes from a lecture a year before Brownson's conversion. One can imagine how much more firmly Brownson must have felt that irresistible calling over the next thirty years of his life, and how much more the contemporary world, and contemporary scholars, are in need of the kind of anchor he provided.

1. *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot* (Chicago, 1986, Seventh Revised Edition). 2. *Orestes Brownson: Selected Essays* (Chicago, 1955). 3. The essays span the years 1843 to 1873, and are intended, Kirk tells us, to reveal the consistency of Brownson's conservative thinking over the whole span of his post-conversion years. 4. Brownson gives a brief autobiographical note in the Preface to his 1852 collection, *Essays and Reviews Chiefly on Theology, Politics, and Socialism* (New York, book dated 1858). 5. Letter to Bernard Whitman, June 13, 1831, quoted in *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence*, ed. Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert (Notre Dame, 1979), 3. For Brownson's critique of Calvinism as antithetical to liberty, see, inter alia, "Liberalism and Socialism" (*Brownson's Quarterly Review*, April, 1855; *Works [infra]*, 10: 526ff.): "The error of the Calvinist does not lie in founding our titles to eternal life on grace and grace alone, but consists in denying the natural law...." (*Orestes Brownson: Collected Essays*, ed. Kirk, 143). 6. Details of Brownson's early life can be found most fully in *Orestes A. Brownson: A Definitive Biography*, Thomas R. Ryan (Huntington, Ind., 1976). A thoughtful account of Brownson's early religious views and their connection to party politics can be found in Edward Day, "Brownson's Quest for Social Justice" (*American Ecclesiastical Review*, August, 1954). 7. *The Works of Orestes Brownson*, ed. Henry F. Brownson (De-

troit, 1898; originally published 1882-1887 by Thorndike Nourse). 8. *Orestes Brownson: Collected Essays*, 3. 9. *The Brownson Reader*, ed. Alvan S. Ryan (New York, 1955). 10. *The American Republic: Its Constitution, Tendencies, and Destiny*, Intro. by Peter Augustine Lawler (Wilmington, Del., 2003), Vol. I of *Orestes Brownson: Works in Political Philosophy*, Gregory Butler, series editor. (A précis of the substantial introduction can be found in Lawler's "Orestes Brownson and the Truth About America," *First Things*, December, 2002: 23-28.) Other recent books that should be consulted are Gregory Butler's *In Search of the American Spirit: The Political Thought of Orestes Brownson* (Carbondale, Ill., 1992) and Robert Herrera's *Orestes Brownson: Sign of Contradiction* (Wilmington, Del., 1999); still available is the volume in the Sources of American Spirituality series from Paulist Press, *Orestes A. Brownson: Selected Writings*, ed. Patrick W. Carey (1991). 11. Quoted in *The Conservative Mind*, 248. 12. *Ibid.*, 249. 13. *Ibid.*, 246; the internal quotation is from Brownson's "Catholicity Necessary for Democracy" (*Essays and Reviews: Chiefly on Theology, Politics, and Socialism*, 375). 14. For Tocqueville's assessment of the danger of soft-despotism, see *Democracy in America* II.4.6, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago, 2000), 661-665. 15. *Ibid.*, 645. 16. *Brownson's Quarterly Review. Last Series*-Vol. III.3 (July, 1875, 417); see

also "The Secular Not Supreme" (August, 1871; *Brownson's Works*, 13:303-326). **17.** We will only be able to touch upon Brownson's political views here; for further analysis, see especially Peter Lawler's "Introduction" to *The American Republic: Its Constitution, Tendencies, and Destiny*. **18.** "Church and State" (May, 1870; *Works* 13:263-284). **19.** On Brownson's view of America's "providential" constitution, and his view of "territorial democracy," see Lawler's "Introduction." **20.** A thoughtful analysis of this issue can be found in Robert Kraynak's *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy: God and Politics in the Fallen World* (Notre Dame, 2001), though Kraynak would not likely go as far as Brownson in defending the theory of natural rights. **21.** "Catholicity Necessary to Sustain Popular Liberty" (October, 1845; *Brownson's Works* 10:1-17). **22.** *Ibid.* **23.** "Native Americanism" (January, 1845; *Brownson's Works*, 10:17-37, at 23). **24.** Letter to Joshua F. Speed, Aug. 24, 1855 (*Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858*. Ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher. New York, 1989), 363. **25.** "Conversations of Our Club" (1858-1859; *Brownson's Works*, 11:296). **26.** "Native Americanism" (*Essays and Reviews: Chiefly on Theology, Politics, and Socialism*, 375), 439. **27.** *Ibid.* **28.** "Introduction" to *Last Series* (*Brownson's Works* 20:383). Brownson here and elsewhere routinely speaks of his "Americanism," though he does not want it to be confused with what subsequently becomes a matter of controversy between the Vatican and views attributed to his long-time friend Isaac Hecker. On this issue, see the Introduction to *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence*, 38-46. **29.** "Native Americanism" (*Brownson's Works*, 10:17-37). **30.** See his letter to Hecker of August 25, 1870: "Catholicity is theoretically compatible with democracy, as you and I would [e]xplain democracy, but practically, there is, in my judgement, no compatibility between them" (*Correspondence*, 291). **31.** "Native Americanism" (*Brownson's Works*, 10:17-37). **32.** "As hard as it may sound, the problem of organizing a nation is solvable even for a people comprised of devils (if only they possess understanding)." *Perpetual Peace*, First Supplement, in *Perpetual Peace and*

Other Essays, tr. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, 1983), 124. **33.** See, for example, "Saint Worship," wherein Brownson defends Pius IX's 1864 "Syllabus of Errors" (1865-66; *Brownson's Works* 8:117-185, at 146). **34.** "Civil and Religious Freedom" (July, 1864; *Brownson's Works* 20:308-342, at 315). **35.** Brownson's critique of these "purely atheistic" thinkers is in "Political Constitutions" (October, 1847, in *Essays and Reviews*, 293-321; *Works*, 15:546ff.). **36.** *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Cambridge, Eng., 1989), 35. **37.** "Native Americanism" (*Brownson's Works* 10:17-37). **38.** "Introduction" to *Last Series* (*Brownson's Works* 20:381). **39.** *Ibid.*, 382; see also "The Constitution of the Church" (July, 1875; *Brownson's Works* 8:528). **40.** "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus" (April, 1874; *Brownson's Works*, 5:577). **41.** See especially his treatment of the question of papal infallibility in "Papal Infallibility and the Republic," and "Papal Infallibility and Civil Allegiance" (*Brownson's Works*, 13:326-351, 13:483-499). **42.** *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, 1985; new edition 1996). **43.** *The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity* (New York, 1996). **44.** St. Louis, Mo., 2003. **45.** Cambridge, Mass., 2002. **46.** New York, 2003. **47.** Boston, 1949. **48.** Boston, 1951. **49.** James Hitchcock, "Prospects for a New Christendom," in *Modernity and Religion*, ed. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, 1994), 127. **50.** The vacuity of such a claim can be seen in contemporary international relations, driven largely by a concern for protecting human rights, but with little or no comprehension of the source or grounding for such rights. A thoughtful critique of this modern miasma can be found in Pope John Paul II's 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, especially on the crisis of the separation of faith and reason, wherein modern rationalism leads to nihilism (see Sec. 45ff.). **51.** Brownson treats the important question of the relationship between right and duty in numerous places, most notably in an essay on Donoso Cortes, "Rights and Duties" (October, 1852; *Brownson's Works*, 14:290-316). **52.** "The Scholar's Mission," 1843 address at Dartmouth College, quoted in *The Conservative Mind*, 480. (*Brownson's Works*; 19:65ff.)