Who is out of Line in the March of Progress?

Perspectives on Religion and Industry around the Great Exhibition of 1851

Jonathan Cohn
5/10/2010
Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the History Department at Georgetown University for the opportunity to write a Senior Honors Thesis. It has been a rewarding intellectual exercise and learning experience, and I have enjoyed the interactive, engaging way in which the Department structures the Seminar, a format which allows us all to learn from each other along the way. I would also like to thank my faculty mentor, Professor Susan Pinkard. Her knowledge and advice were invaluable to the success of this project, and she consistently challenged me with questions that enabled me to delve deeper into my study. I would also like to thank my parents for their love and support.
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter One: Locating Peace and Progress on the Boundaries of Faith ...................... 13

Chapter Two: Creating a National Home for Greatness
*Protestantism and Progress in the Past, Present, and Future* ................................. 26

Chapter Three: Forging the Boundary between Gain and Greed
*The Variable Role of the Jews in the Conceptualization of Progress* ..................... 45

Chapter Four: Popery vs. Progress
*The “Papal Invasion” from Within* ........................................................................... 59

Chapter Five: Nations Gone Awry
*The International Spectrum of Religion and Progress* ........................................ 77

Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 93

Appendices ............................................................................................................... 96

Bibliography ............................................................................................................. 103
Introduction

On May 1, 1851, in Hyde Park, London, the doors of the Crystal Palace opened to thousands of visitors, eager to see the vast array of goods waiting before them. This palatial hall was the home of the first World’s Fair, known as the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All the Nations (or the Great Exhibition, for short). Albert, the Prince Consort—husband of Queen Victoria—had been working with the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture, and Commerce (Royal Society of the Arts) to orchestrate an international celebration of industry and commerce, one in which each nation could display the ingenuity of its citizens. Although the exhibition was held in London, the exhibitors themselves represented a number of nations, from European nations like France and Germany to imperial holdings such as India and Australia, and even distant nations like the Ottoman Empire and China. This meeting of nations would, in the hopes of Albert and his colleagues, accelerate the already rapid period of industrialization, in which Great Britain had been thriving. This union of nations in the honor of industry would be the bellwether of a new era of progress.

However, the word progress does not have one meaning alone, but rather is a far-reaching term worthy of explanation. In order to elicit the conceptualization of progress as presented by the Great Exhibition, it is wise to start at the root of any construction of economic progress, that is, money. To plan an event of such a scale would require a close management of this influx of capital from donations, subscriptions, etc. Prince Albert gathered together a group of five well-connected and well-financed individuals to serve as the treasurers for the event: Arthur Kett Barclay, Esquire; William Cotton, Esquire; Sir John William Lubbock, Baronet; Samuel Morton Peto, Esquire; and Baron Lionel de Rothschild. Although not the most direct public face of the

Exhibition—that would be Albert—these men were the financial face of the Exhibition, those without whom the idealized future of progress would have fallen flat.

Samuel Peto was a prominent Baptist railroad builder. Born in Woking, Surrey, in 1809, he inherited the business of his uncle Henry Peto in his early twenties. He built a number of railroads in England as well as in Canada, and his most notable projects included the Norwegian Grand Trunk line and the Royal Danish Line, completed three years after the Fair. He also had a career in politics, having been elected to represent Norwich in the House of Commons in 1847 and was then reelected in 1852. Because of his financial success, he was a notable philanthropist in the Baptist community. In the late 1840s, he commissioned the building of a chapel in Bloomsbury with twelve thousand dollars of his own money. His chapel would serve a congregation of 2,000. He asked the congregation to reimburse him only for one-third of the expenditure so that he could build another chapel. With this, he purchased a building in Regent’s Park for eighteen thousand pounds, which he rendered “one of the most splendid chapels connected with the Dissenting interest in the kingdom.”

Sir John William Lubbock, Third Baronet, was a well-known banker and member of the Royal Society, an aristocratic society devoted to the study of science and philosophy. He served as the head of Lubbock & Company Bank (later known as Roberts, Lubbock, & Company). His great-uncle, the son of the rector of the parish of Lamas, had come to London to found the bank in the mid-eighteenth century. Sir John began his education at Eton College, an Anglican-affiliated boys boarding school and continued to Trinity College in Cambridge. After graduating

---

in 1825 he became a partner in the family bank. In addition to being a banker, he was also an accomplished scientific and mathematical writer, serving as Treasurer and Vice President of the Royal Society over the next two decades. He published a number of works on astronomy, including the acclaimed book *A Theory of the Moon*.\(^5\)

Like Sir John W. Lubbock, treasurers Arthur Kett Barclay and William Cotton were members of the Royal Society and Justices of the Peace. William Cotton, Esquire, served as a justice for the petty court in Ilford, a suburb of London.\(^6\) By the end of the 1850s, William Cotton had gained a position on the board of directors for Pelican Life Insurance Company as well as on the board for the Bank of England itself.\(^7\) Arthur Kett Barclay ran Barclay, Brothers, & Company, the family’s brewing company, and was a justice for the court in Dorking, a market town outside of London. The Barclay family financed the construction of a church devoted to the Holy Trinity, consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester the year after the Exhibition, in honor of a deceased relative.\(^8\)

Lionel de Rothschild was the sole Jew of the coterie, and like his Baptist counterpart he was not a part of the Royal Society. He was a prominent member of the Rothschild family, known for their expertise in banking and finance. The Rothschild family had well-established connections with the political powers of England; in 1825 they helped prevent a liquidity crisis in the Bank of England, and in 1832 they provided the capital to finance the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. Rothschild was also a political figure himself, the subject of a decade long debate in Parliament over whether or not Jews could take office.

The varying backgrounds of the treasurers shed light on both political influence and economic power at the time. The three members of the Royal Society of the Arts embodied an Anglican establishment. The other treasurers, on the other hand, serve as examples of the burgeoning rise of a Nonconformist middle-class through the industrial age and the role of the Jews in helping to finance industrial and political progress. Notably absent from this group is the presence of a treasurer of the Roman Catholic faith, which still had some aristocratic representation and, more importantly, was growing rapidly at the time.

From this lens of the coexistence of religious difference in an economic entity, one enters into what was perhaps the guiding principle of the Great Exhibition, the idea that when nations all work actively for economic self-interest, amicable relations will be achieved and all prejudices will subside in favor of collaboration. In this fundamental assertion lies the core concept of progress guiding the Great Exhibition. Great Britain, the home of the Industrial Revolution, had seen great economic expansion and imperial expansion, and unlike many countries on the Continent, it experienced a relative degree of political stability. In a conceptualization of progress, Great Britain would have to be considered a step ahead of its peers. What, then, was the driving force behind such progress, prosperity, and stability? In the search for answers or the desire to create them, religion, Protestantism to be specific, became the guiding force of industrial success. Consequently, the idea of progress itself became dependent upon and inextricable from religion. Such a union of ideologies necessitated that not all could fit into such a conceptualization of progress.

As the Great Exhibition opened up the doors for a diverse array of visitors, it necessitated a grappling with religious and class differences in a tumultuous time for both. However, that same influx of visitors presented subjects onto whom the British could project their anxieties and
against whom they could seek definition. Nationhood, piety, and economics were merged together in an understanding of self. Britishness, then, was based on a construction of Protestant heritage and social mobility. The good Protestant worked for the sake of work itself, for moral gain as much as economic gain. This tight linkage of industriousness and progress to religion created ambiguous territory for those who were not Protestant. The Jews and Roman Catholics fell on opposite sides of the spectrum of work and progress. Because the Jews—in representations both popular and factual—could be affluent and could be the financiers of industry, they were welcomed into this future of progress but not without caution or unease. In contrast with the ambitious and upwardly mobile Protestant laborer, the Jew was seen as ambitious to the point of greed; whereas the Protestant labored for the sake of moral and economic gain, the Jew became the image of work for the sake of financial gain alone. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic population, both in England and abroad, was seen as fully antithetical to progress; in their submission to the papacy, they lost the self-driven character needed for industrial prowess. In the march of progress, not all could follow.

In understanding how these two religions could fall on the opposite sides of the spectrum on progress, it is important to take note of the anxieties that existed around both populations at the time. The year before the Crystal Palace opened its doors, the papacy had reestablished a territorial hierarchy in Britain, no longer considering it to be a missionary region but one worthy of the establishment of diocese and bishops. The advancement sent much of the public into “anti-popery” fervor, perhaps best manifested by the section devoted to “Papal Aggression” in The Times, London’s daily newspaper, which chronicled the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in England. In 1851, the year after this act and the year of the Exhibition, arose a debate in Parliament about the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which sought to ban Catholic bishops from
assuming territorial titles. At the same time, a battle of religious and civil ideologies was raging over the issue of whether or not a Jew could be seated in Parliament.

Roman Catholicism and Judaism were not the only faiths that spurred anxieties. The British Empire was home to considerable populations of Muslims, Hindus, and assumed polytheists, challenging the idea of a Christian empire. Moreover, exhibits from China and the Ottoman Empire in the Crystal Palace gave national faces to Buddhism and Islam, respectively. Nevertheless, these anxieties, unlike those surrounding Roman Catholicism and Judaism, lacked a basis in the demographics of the Island itself, existing predominantly in colonial holdings or distant competitors.

Similarly, the issue of the relationship between religion and progress has deep historical roots and was not unique to the year 1851 nor to the Great Exhibition. Nevertheless, this event serves as an excellent entrance into understanding the greater concerns of the time. As the Crystal Palace was to hold the industry of all nations as well as of all within the nation, at least nominal interaction with those of different faiths, or at the very least with the goods they produced, became inevitable. This gathering, then, provides the perfect starting point for the exploration of the ways in which the concepts of religion and progress were intertwined. Although the event itself will be essential for setting the scene for this paper, it will act more as a lens through which to understand society and its grappling with such issues than as a central object of study itself.

Over the past twenty years, there has been an increasing tendency in scholarly discourse to look at the Exhibition within the framework of contemporary social and political worldviews

---

9 Zeynek Celip’s *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth Century World’s Fairs* provides an introduction of such visions of Islam; however, her focus is predominately on the fairs that came after the Great Exhibition. For insights into the perceptions of China and the Ottoman Empire, see Francesca Vanke’s “Degrees of Otherness: The Ottoman Empire and China at the Great Exhibition of 1851,” found in the collection *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. 
and controversies. The issues of progress and identity often become the focal points of discussion; however, when religion enters the picture, it is often dependent on a dichotomy between Europe and its colonies or at times that between Europe and Asia. Paul Greenhalgh’s 1988 text *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions, and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* was the first text that really sought to unravel the issues of economic progress and national identity at the Great Exhibition. In celebration of this imperial majesty, trade was presented as something almost sacred, uniting humanity and solving the world’s problems through capitalism. This idea of transcendence of boundaries was furthered by the notion of progress that lay at the heart of all exhibitions. Although the discourse of progress had a universal appeal, it did not see a universal interpretation: “The problem of course, was that few of the power groups could agree on the direction Utopia lay in, or who should run it once the world had arrived there.”

The ambiguity of the word “progress,” to him, was just as, if not more, important than any of the perceived definitions.

John Davis, in “Albert and the Great Exhibition of 1851: Creating the Ceremonial Industry” (2005), continued such a discussion on a more microcosmic level, analyzing the aesthetic tools through which meaning was created at the Exhibition. In this work, he delves into the construction of imperial legitimacy that was intrinsically linked to the Fair and analyzes the performances of Albert and his peers at the ceremonies that led up to and initiated the Great Exhibition. Such performances embodied the plurality of meanings the Fair intended: internationalism and nationalism, peace and power, celebration of history and celebration of the future, monarchical power and democracy.

The most recent work on the Great Exhibition is Paul Young’s *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: the Victorian New World Order* (2009), a text which also grapples with the

---

performance of imperial legitimacy. Although Young asserts that the Exhibition was designed to be the bellwether of a new era of global interactions, he does not make the assumption that such a position was universally accepted.\textsuperscript{11} Being the host of the Exhibition, Britain was able to determine the terms with which the understanding of the global community of the future would be designed. Equating nations and the commodities that represented them, the layout of the Fair provided an easily digestible framework for the rendering of the relationships and hierarchies of the world community.

The most focused analysis of the issue of religious difference at exhibitions, on the other hand, was done by John Burris in \textit{Exhibiting Religions} (2001). His text seeks to understand the development of the study of religion as a discipline, and he asserts that the international exhibitions of the nineteenth century were essential to laying the foundations for such a discourse. At such fairs, even though England and its continental peers were still Christian-centric in worldview, the existence of organized religion, whether Christian or not, became the marker of a developed society. Burris claims that the wave of industrialization and prosperity manifested at the Great Exhibition led to a conflation between religious hierarchy and international hierarchy. He writes, “The gap in the relationship between material productions and the divine was clearly closing at the Great Exhibition, and as it did, it was becoming more feasible to equate industrial and technological progress with some form of religious sanctification.”\textsuperscript{12} Burris focuses primarily on how the European powers contrasted themselves with their new imperial conquests; however, he ignores the ways in which the hierarchy was manifested within the powers themselves.

One of the best examples in recent scholarship of the contextualization of religious-national identity is Eitan Bar-Yosef in *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799-1917* (2005). Britain, by the mid-nineteenth century, having reached a point of economic, political, and industrial power viewed itself as “a chosen nation.” In addition to the religious rhetoric that dominated the discourse of both royalty and clergy, the design of the Fair also spoke to such imagery: “With its palm-trees and fountain, the shining glass and visual profusion, the gathering of nations and a sense of utopian triumph, no wonder the Crystal Palace was depicted as Revelation’s New Jerusalem.” Bar-Yosef explains how Great Britain attempted to forge a unified religious identity, positioning itself as the new site of an international pilgrimage and the new divinely ordained arbiter of world values.

In order to understand how people perceived the relationship between religion and progress, this paper will focus primarily on texts written by prominent religious and political figures from that era. As a number of characters will frequent the unfolding drama of the Crystal Palace, their names and backgrounds will be addressed now in order to mitigate potential confusion. The words of Prince Albert, the sponsor of the whole endeavor, will be duly noted throughout. As for the more religious of the notables, there is a mix of Nonconformist—predominately Congregationalist—and Anglican ministers. Reverend Henry Birch, the author of *The Great Exhibition Spiritualized*, was a Congregationalist minister who held harshly critical views on the existence of a state-sponsored church. Samuel Warren, the author of the long-form poem *The Lily and the Bee*, was a Welsh barrister, the son of a Nonconformist minister, and

---

a fellow of the Royal Society. Reverend Thomas Binney, author of *The Royal Exchange and the Palace of Industry*, was a well-known and well-traveled Congregationalist minister and controversialist and was elected the Chairman of the Congregational Union in 1848. Reverend John Stoughton, author of *The Palace of the Glass and the Gathering of the People*, was a well-known and well-published Congregationalist minister from 1832 to 1843; although he retired from the pastorate, he continued scholarly work on religious reform and theology and also served the role of Chairman of the Congregational Union in 1856.

As noted, a number of Anglican ministers and organizations will also help unravel this web of perspectives. Reverend John Richardson, the author of *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited,* was the evangelical Anglican incumbent of St. Barnabas’ Church in Manchester. Reverend J. A. Emerton, the headmaster of Hanwell College, sponsored an essay competition on the moral effects of the Exhibition, gaining moral, but not financial, support from the Prince Consort in the endeavor. Reverend John Charles Whish, an incumbent of Trinity Church in Kent, composed the winning essay, known simply as *The Great Exhibition Prize Essay.* The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, creators of the lesson pamphlet *Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected with the Great Exhibition,* was the oldest Anglican missionary society, which had a made a special point of creating charity schools to educate the underprivileged children in England. Dr. Edward Meyrick Goulburn, author of “The Crystal Palace: a Satire,”

---

18 “Evangelical Alliance,” *Evangelical Christendom,* August 1, 1856, 261.
20 The second resolution from the first minute-book at its first meeting demonstrates the centrality of education to the Society: “Resolv’d that we consider to-morrow morning how to further and promote that good Design of erecting Cathechetical Schools in each parish in and about London” Rpt. In Allen, W. O. B., and Edmund McClure, *Two hundred years: the history of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2006), 135.
was one of the members of this society. The English Monthly Tract Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society were similar evangelically-oriented organizations, focused on the dissemination of religious literature, although they were not necessarily limited to the Anglican Communion alone. For now, from this list of characters, it is best to glean a conceptualization of the types of figures, political and religious, that were driving the discourse around the Great Exhibition and its role in leading toward the future of progress.

Prominent periodicals, such as *The Times* and *The Economist*, will help to add further context. Moreover, the satirical magazine *Punch* will serve as a complement to these more serious texts. Although it was often ideologically liberal, its target audience was a more conservative Protestant middle-class. When one reads satire, one must keep a discerning eye for the personal biases of the author; when a satire, in word or in image, promotes a stereotype, one must not assume that the author necessarily held the view presented. That such a stereotype would be presented in a text indicates its existence; one can, to a degree, infer its prevalence in society at large. Even if the artist does not espouse the belief at all and is criticizing it, its dissemination forces it into the collective consciousness of the populace. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the message of the image or article, one still encounters it in daily life. *Punch* itself is an example of the ideological gap that can exist between the producer and consumer of a periodical. Richard Altick locates *Punch* as “markedly left” but he highlights the contradictory nature of its role in public opinion: “It then was torn between radicalism and gentility; it had ultraliberal principles but sought its market in the generally conservative middle class.” Its target market responded well; by 1850 *Punch*’s circulation reached around forty thousand,

---

21 The text itself, as cited below, only lists the initials “E. M. G.” for the author. The use of these initials is also found in the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge’s 1860 collection “Sermons for Sundays and Other Holidays of the Christian Year.” The Table of Contents to this work associates the initials E. M. G. with a Dr. Goulbrun. *The Times* confirms his identity as he penned a letter to the editor on March 7, 1851.

making it one of the most well-read periodicals of the time.\textsuperscript{23} Punch, then, may be mocking, rather than guiding, its audience—a large one at that—as much as its explicit subjects of satire.

If progress belongs to Protestantism, what happens to those of other faiths? Chapter One of this paper will detail the ideological union of peace, industry, and piety, providing a conceptualization of progress through the lens of the Great Exhibition, and it will foreground the aforementioned thesis of the event that international commerce and collaboration would effect the end of prejudice. Chapter Two will underscore the aforementioned unity forged between Protestantism and industriousness—the idea that progress belonged uniquely to the devout Protestant, especially those of Great Britain. Chapter Three will grapple with the ambiguous role of the Jews in the march of progress; although they were characterized by long-lasting stereotypes of greed, they were, ultimately, still prosperous and, consequently, lay within the conceptualization of economic progress. The Roman Catholics, however, were seen as the antithesis to progress—be it social, religious, or economic. Chapters Four and Five will analyze this issue in two parts. Chapter Four highlights the anxieties around the re-establishment of Roman Catholic hierarchy and places them in the context of religious and economic animosities toward the Irish. As the Exhibition was an international event, Chapter Five places such anxieties around Roman Catholicism from an international perspective, creating a spectrum of European nations in the understanding of faith and stability. Defining progress became an issue of identity, national character, and the future.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 38.
Chapter One

Locating Peace and Progress on the Boundaries of Faith

The Great Exhibition became viewed as a potential landmark event, ushering in a new era, the final step of a part of a historical march of progress. The staging of a fair to stimulate international commerce would help to supplant the belligerent tendencies with a desire for a more peaceful economic competition. With all invested parties—both individuals and nations—working for the sake of self-interest, prejudices would wane in the favor of collaboration and mutual gain. An economic worldview, with an underlying theme of piety, was the only way to achieve the prosperity and peace that the future could hold. Commerce alone could not achieve the lofty goals of progress, nor could religion alone. However, when functioning together—when religion underscored economic activity—the desired future was unstoppable.

The prosperity manifested at the Great Exhibition was not viewed devoid of historical context, for an understanding of the past was essential to explain progress. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the oldest Anglican missionary organization, disseminated a lesson book about the Great Exhibition to explain this very point, among others. The compilation, entitled Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition, included a lesson for advanced pupils on the history of international gatherings to offer a context for the current one. The first noted gathering was that of Alexander the Great in 324 BCE in Babylon. The lesson recounted the past epoch: “The ancients, half-trembling, united to applaud a man, who by war and bloodshed facilitated the extension of commerce, science, &c.”¹ Although Alexander effected economic progress to the region, he was only able to do so through bloodshed and fear. On the other hand, the current gathering of nations was a peaceful

---

¹ Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852), 19.
counterpart to this historical event, both in interaction and in leadership. The lesson explained, “We are met under the direction, patronage, and protection of a noble and loving Sovereign; who not only encourages and rewards industry, but whose ambition is to unite with the silken cords of peace the four quarters of the globe.”² The element of hierarchy present in Alexander’s story had not disappeared—the nations are, in a way, bowing to Great Britain. However, piety enhanced the effects of the contemporary event; rather than a celebration of political or temporal power alone, the trope of the national gathering was transformed into a celebration of God, who “made it to abound in riches, and has endowed man with faculties capable of using those riches to his advantage, comfort, and happiness.”³ The lesson proceeded to a second example of archetypal national gatherings, the Crusades. Religion entered the picture here; however, bloodshed still prevailed as the means to commerce and connectivity. The lesson explained that such a warring attitude erred in not “going forth to preach the risen glory of a living and interceding Saviour.”⁴ By noting such a failure in the Crusades, when Europe went to the East, the lesson implied that this new gathering would not suffer the same failing. When the Continent and the East came to England, there would be a more dominant religious discourse. In many ways, there was.

This idea of a peaceful rendering of the Crusades was attractive to a number of religious commentators, who saw history moving in a progressive series; the pagan gathering of Alexander and the Roman Catholic assemblage in the Crusades would see their supersession in the Protestant-led meeting of nations. The new international pilgrimage could combine the positive attributes while eradicating the negative. In the middle of Reverend John Stoughton’s exposition on the Fair The Palace of Glass and the Gathering of the People: a Book for the

---

² Ibid., 19-20.
³ Ibid., 20.
⁴ Ibid.
Exhibition, his words read like a Crusader’s apologetic. Stoughton, a Congregationalist minister from Kensington, does not whitewash the Crusades, admitting that they suffered from “superstition, folly, waste of time, and pernicious moral influence.” However, at the same time, he asserts that the Crusades conferred benefits in that they enlarged

the circle of human knowledge, and the domains of civilization, and corrected errors in geography, and wore away prejudices between race and race, and promoted the interests of commerce and navigation [...and did] create and swell that deep tide of anti-papal feeling which preceded the Lutheran reformation and promoted it when it came.\(^5\)

This predecessor in the world of national gatherings, then, set the stage for the Great Exhibition—establishing the economic, political, and religious paradigms dominating the contemporary period in England.

Moreover, that he spoke of anti-papal sentiments instead of pro-reform sentiments is worthy of note. Anti-papal fervor, not a push for perceived purism, was put on the same level as geographical knowledge, lessened racial prejudice, and increased economic ties in its significance for modernity. In light of this as well as his passing acknowledgement of the bloodshed, one must also question the integrity of the claim of the eradication of prejudices—a belief that provided more rhetorical appeal than it did reality. When balancing the gains and the losses, he ultimately decided that the Crusades had been propitious for modernity because although they “wasted an immense amount of wealth, sacrificed human life to an awful extent, and were products of intense misery in various forms,” the ultimate good produced was more permanent.\(^6\) Despite the strength of his convictions that all gatherings are positive events, he did not substantiate such a lofty claim with any other examples on an international scale.

---


\(^6\) Ibid., 97.
There could be no more fitting candidate than Prince Albert, the brains and the driver behind the Exhibition, to speak of the event in its contemporary context. Prince Albert had insisted that his project maintain an international character and fittingly laced his rhetoric with such promises of international peace and progress. In a speech to politicians, ambassadors, and investors at the Mansion House in March 1850, he emphasized and united both the economic and the social benefits to the Exhibition. He proudly affirmed, “Nobody, however, who has paid attention to the peculiar features of the present era, will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end to which indeed all history points toward the realization of the Unity of mankind!”

Lord John Russell, the current Prime Minister who had been a strong advocate of free trade, shared Albert’s sentiments, acknowledging the peaceable complement to economic gain: “You can hardly have such an assemblage of distinguished men at one time, without encouraging a friendly feeling toward England and all other countries […] I feel sure that one of the most important effects of this Exhibition will be, that good-will and amity will flow from this festival.”

Such constructions of peace and brotherhood became an active and essential part of the political promotion of the Exhibition.

Albert’s praise of the Fair was paralleled by the gushing praise he received from the event’s proponents. Reverend Birch proclaimed the Prince Consort “the Prince of Peace” and noted, “Immortal honours will crown they head. Poets will celebrate thy praise, — historians shall record thy triumphs,— and the Christian Church will be ready to acknowledge thee as the

---

7 Prince Albert, “At the Banquet Given by the Lord Mayor.” (speech presented at the Banquet Given by the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor Thomas Farncombe, the Mansion House, March 21, 1850) in *Addresses Delivered on Different Public Occasions* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1857), 60.

8 Ibid., 65-6.
harbinger of millennial glory.”9 The reference to Albert as a “Prince of Peace” by a minister is particularly incongruous because of the traditional association between the title “Prince of Peace” with Jesus; Albert, consequently, became a Messiah of industry. Samuel Warren also praised the Fair as an unparalleled princely creation, an “enterprise right royal, nobler far than ever Prince before accomplished.”10 Such effusive praise dominates Warren’s poem. The London Times, furthermore, provided an even more all-encompassing praise in an editorial in February 1850, affirming, “The Prince Consort can take the credit of having projected a festival in the appreciation which all men and all nations concur. Such unanimity of approval has never yet been gained for any object, however, intrinsically laudable, however, sincerely promoted, or however enthusiastically desired.”11 The editorialist refused to acknowledge the existence of detractors, claiming that the Exhibition united people across ideological differences: “prelates and nonconformists, peers and tradesmen, ambassadors and manufacturers, Whigs and Tories, Free-traders and Protectionists.”12 Over a year before the Exhibition, it was already the subject of great—if not overweening—hope, pride, and patriotism and a source of newfound popularity for Prince Albert.

The theme of the eradication of prejudice dominated most, if not all, of these texts. The gathering together of people of different nationalities, in its essence, had to lead to more amicable relations and a greater understanding—at least in principle. Reverend Henry Birch, the author of The Great Exhibition Spiritualized and a Congregationalist minister, affirmed, “It has already done much to soften down prejudices, —to remove asperities, —to kindle feelings of sympathy and affection where coldness and apathy previously existed; and we doubt not it will

---

12 Ibid.
continue to infuse into the various orders and ranks of men one common feeling of universal brotherhood.”

One must not ignore the coexistence of this discourse with religiously prejudiced language. Just as the Great Exhibition, for Birch, was a bellwether of peace and brotherhood, it also portended the evangelization of the human race. In speaking of this, he condemned “heathen idolatry,” “Mahommedan delusion,” and “Jewish prejudice.” The economic brotherhood of man became intertwined with a religious brotherhood of man, one in which all other religions must ultimately fade. Taking into such an outlook, Reverend George Clayton, although ultimately considering that the Exhibition will be a net blessing, warned, “There may be excess even in Christian circumspection; it may give birth to prejudice; it may lead us to look with universal suspicion on our kind, to harbor hard thoughts of men, and indulge in evil surmising which will repress, if not extinguish the feelings of Christian charity.”

Clearly, religion, although it could lead to peace and amicable relations, could also achieve the opposite effect.

Reverend J. C. Whish, the winner of an essay competition on the effects of the Great Exhibition on the “moral and religious welfare of mankind,” seems to be more honest in his reference to the assuaging of prejudices. Competition sponsor Reverend J. A. Emerton, an Anglican minister and a headmaster at Hanwell College, was a strong proponent of the teaching of French in schools and sponsored an appropriately themed essay competition sixteen years later; consequently, the winning essay would undoubtedly not bear direct, or even indirect,

---

14 Ibid., 6.
animosity toward the French. Whish explains, “[I]t was scarcely to be wondered at, that when the Briton never met the Frenchman, except with bayonets fixed and swords unsheathed […] we cannot be surprised that each should look upon the other as an alien in blood, worthy of only contempt and hatred.” However, the international exposition will replace such bitterness with “the more accurate and enlarged knowledge of the real characters of our neighbours, the right appreciation of their talents, and other excellences.” The sharing of goods will yield the sharing of sentiments. The Nonconformist publication The Eclectic Review cites and agrees with this belief about the Exhibition, in its review of Exhibition literature, claiming that it would effect “a more cordial feeling of brotherhood, to a clearer perception of their common interests, and to deep human sympathy with another.” Samuel Warren, perhaps most effusive because of the poetic form of his text, exclaims, “Alike feeling, loving, admiring: with the same sense and faculties perceiving and judging what the same energies produced! […] O rare unity in multiplicity, uniformity in endless variety!” For Warren, the wars between nations have, moreover, been replaced with a war on “error, ignorance, and prejudice.” Such a war, however, cannot be won quite so easily.

The war on prejudice could perhaps be won by the inculcation of this message of peace in children. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, an evangelical Anglican group that sponsored a number of charity schools, created a lesson booklet for the express purpose of teaching about the Great Exhibition. Many of the lessons were practically-oriented, touching

---

17 William Nassau Molesworth, Prize Essay, on the Great Importance of an Improved System of Education for the Upper and Middle Classes (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867).
18 Whish, Prize Essay, 47.
19 Ibid., 51.
22 Ibid., 28.
upon the objects that were on display at the Exhibition; however, a few lessons moved from the technical to the historical and cultural. A lesson designated for advanced pupils discussed the potential results of the Fair and England’s duty, “as the nation blessed with the largest amount of spiritual light and influence.”

First and foremost on the list of six possible results was the claim that the Exhibition would yield “a more intimate, friendly, and extended intercourse, which must tend to remove misapprehensions and prejudices.” This lesson’s preaching against prejudices will be revisited in later chapters, as the manual contradicts itself, promoting—rather than eradicating—prejudice in other lessons.

At the discourse of peace lay the crossroads of economics and religion, of industry and Christianity. The emphasis on skills and production at an exhibition was to become a new conduit for international competition, peacefully supplanting the more destructive manifestation of such competitive urges, i.e. war. Reverend Birch proclaimed, “Let all hatred and strife cease—all wrath and revenge be forgotten, —all past injuries be buried in eternal oblivion, […] Let there be a conflict of arts and not of arms, and let nation vie with nation in cultivating peace on earth.”

Economic competition in exhibitions would still have the same splendor and emphasis of honor as war. Reverend Stoughton predicted, accordingly, that the commodities and products on display would be regarded more highly than “the blood-stained banners, bruised shields, and splintered spears, with other trophies torn from the vanquished.”

The London Times in a February 1850 editorial furthered this transformation of battle imagery to that of trade by claiming that exhibitions were an inevitable and logical consequence of the evolution and amelioration of society: “Our parades must be of manufactures, not of men. We may still

---

23 Notes and Sketches, 20.
24 Ibid.
25 Birch, Spiritualized, 6.
26 Stoughton, Palace of Glass, 45.
compete, *en champ clos*, with our neighbours and our rivals, but on better conditions and surer hopes.”

Moreover, this new form of competition would, according to the editorialist, reorient national priorities to favor the “most industrious, most genius, and most patient.” The virtues lauded by a Protestant-defined work ethic, rather than those of a military society, would reign.

Concomitant with this first World’s Fair in London and its celebration of peace was an International Peace Congress, a follow-up to one held in Paris in 1848. The demographics of the Peace Congress are worthy of note, especially in light of its concurrence with the Great Exhibition; both events united discourses of economy and religion. Businessmen, manufacturers, and shopkeepers dominated the demographics at the peace congresses. The discourse of free trade was tightly woven into that of peace, for the union of economic competition with arbitration was seen as the new grounds for international relations. Moreover, economic activity could bind together the interests of nations, making them averse to war in the first place. Clergy, on the other hand, constituted over 20 percent of the British delegation (194 out of 865), over half of whom self-identified as Nonconformists. Both events, moreover, had a predominantly British attendance, despite claims of diverse international representation on both sides. Despite having an attendance in the millions, the Exhibition saw comparatively few foreign visitors. A total of 58,000—almost half of whom were French—graced the Crystal

---

28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
Likewise, the composition of the London Peace Congress was almost 90 percent British. To put this into perspective, even when the Congress had been held in Paris two years prior, the attendants were over sixty percent (309 of 481) of British origin. The French had a decent attendance at the Paris Congress (about twenty percent), but no other nationality had any sizable delegation at London.\(^{33}\) Both of the bastions of peace in London were centers of a British Protestant socially mobile class.

Economics, not religion, could be the hope for the peaceful future. A French article from the *Journal des Débats* republished in the *Times* asserted that the Great Exhibition would be more effective at achieving universal peace than would the Peace Congress happening in the city at the same time. The author asserted, “The real Congress of Peace is the great industrial exhibition which will take place next year in London.” The writer insists that he is not denying the role of morality and religion in fostering peaceable relations and implying that only through economic interest can they be achieved. However, if one is to work within a group of disparate bodies, one must find a common ideology that can cross boundaries. He questions, “But in the name of what religion—of what moral authority—does the Peace Congress speak? What mission has it to preach?” In the medieval era, the papacy could establish peaceful relations because it had a monopoly over religion; however, the contemporary peace movement joins Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Although a tendency toward peace could be found in the different traditions, there is no sole authority to dictate such an ideology. Economic self-interest, though, works across the nuance of faith, working at shared intentions. Moreover, the idea that


The Great Exhibition caused the number of foreign visitors to grow by more than double its average size, from 21,500 to 58,000. Of those, 27,000 were French, 12,000 were German, 5,000 were American, 3,800 were Belgian, 2,900 were Dutch, 1,800 were Spanish or Portuguese, and 1,500 came from Prussia and Italy each. All other participating nations sent fewer than 1,000.

\(^{33}\) *Reports of Peace*, 239.
all of the faiths share a common God is a modern progressive belief; the author scoffs at the idea of all three groups being united by a “God of Peace.” Only economic means, accordingly, could be conducive to peace. Even though this article itself originated in a French periodical, its selection by the editors of The Times indicates that they believed it to have some value worth disseminating among their audience as well. Whether they agreed in full or even at all one cannot be sure; however, the idea was deemed important enough to be presented.

Views of peace were not universal. An editorial on November 29, 1850, provides another bitter critique of the peace movement, equating it to anarchism. The author goes on to assert that national character, especially that of England, is too strong to yield for peace. The writer proclaims, “In fact there is about as little chance of the Crystal Palace being consecrated as an act of universal brotherhood as of St. Peter’s at Rome, or St. Isaac’s at Petersburgh.” He further notes that Englishmen “have their views of political justice, wisdom, and truth, and, like all people in earnest, are ready to fight for them if necessary.” The Crystal Palace is compared to central religious buildings in the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox traditions. Does this, then, mean that the Crystal Palace is the temple of peace or of Protestantism—or maybe just of Englishness? Moreover, although the perspective on peace is somewhat cynical, it highlights an unbending pride in national character, the belief that British values exist on a different plane than those of other nations and cannot and must not be sacrificed at any cost.

Such unendingly high expectations of peace and brotherhood lent themselves to humor at times. As “[i]t is said that even the Army will ‘form up,’ and do its best to square the differences which have too long existed between nations, and do its share towards converting the swords into ploughshares,” Mr. Punch, the fictional narrator of the magazine Punch, suggested

36 Ibid.
that the army be presented in display cases like the other goods.\textsuperscript{37} Exhibitors can give tours of the process in which a “country bumpkin” becomes a soldier, showing the live versions of each along the way in order to “have a salutary effect on the smart, active, and enterprising young men, who are ambitious of being shot at for a shilling, and induce them to remain at home, instead of seeking glory at the cannon’s mouth, or in the barrack parade ground.”\textsuperscript{38} The comic “Peace! A Sketch from the Crystal Palace” also poked fun at the claims of peace.\textsuperscript{39} (See Appendix A.) Here, a crowd of school girls in uniform gather around a cannon in a display case while two military officers speak in front of them. The items on display at the Fair are weapons, aimed for the goal of war, but rendered harmless by commodification. Although \textit{Punch} made jest of the omnipresent predictions of peace, it ultimately reaffirmed them. In “The Morals of the Great Exhibition,” \textit{Punch} mocks the perceived moral lessons of the Great Exhibition, juxtaposing the interpretations of the British visitor with those of foreign visitors, the interpretations of husbands with those of their wives, the interpretations of the subscribers with those of the shilling day visitors, and many others. Despite the humorous differences they all manifest, they all give way to the moral seen by Mr. Punch himself: “That the different nations of the world, and the different classes of society, might meet oftener, with much advantage to each other.”\textsuperscript{40} Even though \textit{Punch} laughs at the obsession with peace, it ultimately reaffirms the belief that such a gathering will remove societal prejudices and yield better relations.

Both economic exchange and religious persuasion were to be the bellwethers of the utopian future. The economic self-interest fueled by trade-oriented capitalism with the help of a pious character strain would lead to a universal effort toward the collective good and an ending

\textsuperscript{37} Mark Lemon and others, “The Army at the Great Exhibition,” \textit{Punch} 20 (1851): 64.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Mark Lemon and others, “Peace! — a Sketch from the Crystal Palace,” \textit{Punch} 21 (1851): 22.
of divisions. However, the prejudices and divisions—of religion, nation, and class—did not see their demise in the floors of the Crystal Palace; rather, both this economy of money and the economy of morals, as the following chapters will show, facilitated the continuation of the deeply-rooted stereotypes and prejudices of national characters.
Chapter Two: Creating a National Home for Greatness

Protestantism and Progress in the Past, Present, and Future

“The chief and governing purpose of the Festival is to declare our belief and trust in the British way of life, not with any boastful self-confidence nor with any aggressive self-advertisement, but with sober and humble trust that by holding fast to that which is good and rejecting from our midst that which is evil we may continue to be a nation at unity in itself and of service to the world. It is good at a time like the present so to strengthen, and in part to recover, our hold on the abiding principles of all that is best in our national life.”

~The Archbishop of Canterbury on the opening day at the Crystal Palace, May 1, 1851

As London was the site for the physical celebration of progress, Great Britain was viewed as the national home of a progressive future. Industrious behavior, linked to a Protestant heritage, would be the impetus or the rationale for this role of moral and economic leadership of the globe. In its lesson booklet for the Great Exhibition, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge listed as one of the most prominent results of the gathering “[a]n invigorated desire to progress and excel—The latter should spring, not from a spirit of rivalry, but from a deep sense of the value of excellence.”¹ The Protestant, then, must work for the sake of both moral and economic gain—for the intrinsic value of work itself. Hard work was the path to piety, and piety the path to hard work. Protestantism and industry became intertwined, with each fueling the other and both reinforcing a belief in the centrality of social mobility to British character. Such a view, consequently, promoted a vision of society defined in economic terms. The unnamed author of a book review of Exhibition literature in the Nonconformist journal The Eclectic Review explained, “[I]t is a perversion of truth—like all other perversions, fraught with incalculable mischief—to put the laboring class into a state of hostile antagonism with other classes, whether this be done by the pandering to the cupidity of the rich, or to the unreasoning

¹ *Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852), 20.
Greed and irrational dependency exist on opposite ends of a spectrum and, as will soon be seen, hinge on the stereotypes that define the visions of Jews and Roman Catholics, respectively. The true character, thus, lies in the middle ground—be it a content, perhaps even industrious, poor, a prudent elite, or a mobile middle-class—all of which were believed to be the markers of the march of progress of Great Britain.

The prosperity of the contemporary day was contextualized within the religious and political history of England itself. During June of 1851, the second month of the Fair, Prince Albert gave a speech commemorating the sesquicentennial anniversary, or 150th anniversary, of the Society for the Propagation of the Bible in Foreign Parts, an Anglican missionary organization that worked to proselytize in the colonies. The concomitance of the Great Exhibition with this third jubilee was no accident in Albert’s eyes, but rather an indication of the overall march of religious, social, and political progress of Great Britain. The first jubilee, i.e. 1751—fifty years after the Society’s creation, had occurred amidst the Enlightenment Period, seen by Albert as full of “religious apathy, lax morals and a sceptical philosophy [which] undermine the Christian faith, treating with indifference and even ridicule the most successful objects.”

As the first jubilee was characterized by religious turbulence, the second was plagued with political turmoil. The United States had broken off to become an independent nation, and England and France were frequently at arms against each other. Both of these—the skeptical and the warring—were the antitheses of the modern age, in which religious fervor had been reignited and peace restored, in Albert’s eyes. He explains that England is “at an auspicious moment

---

4 Albert’s claim that Europe existed in a state of peace at this time is ironic in light of the internal dissensions that had plagued Europe mid-century. The struggles over unification happening in Italy, for instance, challenge such a generalization of peace. The relative peace between nations did not imply a lack of discord within.
when we are celebrating a festival of the civilization of mankind, to which all quarters of the
globe have contributed their productions and are sending their people, for the first time
recognizing their advancement as a common good, their interests as identical, their mission on
earth the same.” In the context of the speech, these advancements would have been linked to
the evangelizing efforts of the Society. Albert even proclaims, “And this civilization rests on
Christianity, could only be raised on Christianity, can only be maintained by Christianity!”
Even though a speech given by the Prince Consort could be a form of pandering—ceremony can
always shroud integrity, one cannot deny the resonance his words would have had on his
audience. The prosperity manifested by the Great Exhibition, opened barely a month before, was
inextricable from the British march of progress.

Reverend John Stoughton goes even further back in the nation’s history to explain the
progressive path to the modern era in his book *The Palace of Glass and the Gathering of the
People*. He credits the current auspicious state of England to the past four hundred years of its
history, chronicling developments such as the Wars of the Roses—the cause of a weakened
aristocracy, a more centralized monarchy, and a burgeoning mercantile class, the political
ramifications of the Reformation, and the rise and success of the Puritan Party. He explains,
“Past changes are the secret of our present stability; the intestine wars of our bygone centuries,
which shocks us as we read their story, were really the harbingers of the national peace, order,
and security on which we recently congratulated ourselves when wild revolutionary hurricanes
swept over the thrones and institutions of Europe.” Great Britain, in his eyes, has been on the
vanguard of history, experiencing all of its revolutions and reforms earlier than in other

---

6 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 59.
nations—with that of religion an integral component. The Crystal Palace, then, symbolizes this march of progress, one defined by benchmarks like “the decline of feudalism, the development of the free principles of our constitution, the invention of printing, the reformation of religion [...] but above all, the efforts of the preacher and the schoolmaster, those two most efficient labourers in the cause of moral civilization.”⁹ This last item on the list—its culmination—becomes the keystone of the development of Englishness; the preacher and the schoolmaster, the lifter of souls and the lifter of minds and status, define the era. They instruct the future generations in piety and diligence, the essence of the British character.

Although there was much variation between Protestant denominations in Great Britain at this time, this paper will consider British Protestants together because of this shared valuation of the Reformation and explicit beliefs that, despite their differences, they were still linked in their break from Roman Catholicism. In the conclusion of the religious census report of 1851, Horace Mann, the official presiding over it and compiling it, asserted a harmony among British Protestants despite the seeming diversity of belief, claiming that “the differences which outwardly divide are not to be compared with the concordances which secretly, perhaps unconsciously, unite.”¹⁰ He continues, “Perhaps in a people like the English—trained to the exercise of private judgment, and inured to self-reliance—absolute agreement on religious subjects never can be realized.”¹¹ Protestantism, then, is a direct result of the British character, one of liberty and autonomy—with a self-reliance that will fuel both industry and faith.

He is not alone in this direct assertion of Protestant unity. Reverend Henry Birch, a Baptist minister, spoke of this in the stated intentions of his work The Great Exhibition

⁹ Ibid., 34.
¹¹ Ibid.
Spiritualized, “[T]he Author begs leave to say, that whilst the work is decidedly and mainly of religious character, he has carefully avoided everything of a controversial nature, and confined his attention to those great fundamental principles which are acknowledged by all Evangelical Denominations.” Moreover, Thomas Binney, noted for his history of impassioned Nonconformity, defined his construction of national Christianity in a similar manner, when praising its celebration at the Crystal Palace: “We do not mean, the forms or peculiarities of any church […] We refer to our EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM itself, which is substantially the same throughout our many sects.” Even though both of these men were known opponents of the existence of a state-sponsored church, they still viewed British Protestantism as a relatively unified body, especially in contrast to Roman Catholicism and other religions.

In the context of such a history, England’s greatness became the direct result of a lasting religious covenant with God. John Stoughton states that, even though the Middle Ages saw a lot of ecclesiastical corruption, Christianity was the bedrock of social order and was integral in shaping the national character. He explains, “Our nobles heroes have been inspired by its celestial spirit; our most precious institutions have felt the shaping touch of the divine.”

Furthermore, in a sermon on the benefits of the Great Exhibition, Congregationalist minister George Clayton includes a panegyric on his homeland, extolling not only the scope of Britain’s empire and economic prowess, but also its national virtues:

And great she truly is […] great in the moral and Christian bearing of a large proportion of her people—great in the cultivation of the mind and morals of the rising population of her inhabitants—great in the distribution of her Bibles, in her mission to the heathen, in the emancipation of the slave, and in the circulation of

---

14 Stoughton, The Palace of Glass, 60.
her countless tracts for the instruction of universal man—great in her means of defence and security—great in the presence and protection of her God. England, for him, is the paragon of Christian virtue, and it is this virtue that has led to its military, economic, and political successes. He continues, “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.” Clayton presented a special relationship between God and England, one evocative of the biblical relationship between God and the Hebrews. Reverend Stoughton also forged such a connection: “For years has the eye of him who watched over ancient Israel to see what they were doing with his truth […] whether they taught its doctrines and precepts to the young and ignorant, or left them uncultivated, a prey to unbelief, to superstition, or false philosophy—for years has that eye been looking on English Christians.” England has become the new Israel for the nineteenth century, the new era of progress.

The perceived influence of religion on the domestic march of progress fueled a conceptualization of international hierarchy. In its publication “The World’s Great Assembly,” disseminated around the time of the Crystal Palace, the English Monthly Tract Society proclaimed, “No, no, England! It is not time that has made thee what thou art, or Benares [Varanasi, India] would be loftier than London. It is Christ’s good gospel, and on thee it lies to give that unspeakable boon to the idolatrous Hindu!” Reverend John Stoughton similarly noted that, without Christianity, England would have been in a “stereotyped condition” like India and China, being “poor, imperfect, and weak.” Of faith is born power, and if not for England’s long history of Christianity, then, it could never have reached its perceived heights of civilization.

16 Ibid.
17 Stoughton, The Palace of Glass, 100.
18 English Monthly Tract Society, “The World’s Great Assembly” (London: J. F. Shaw, 1851), 7. Benares is another name for the modern day city of Varanasi, believed to be the oldest in India.
If England’s imperial and industrial success indicated the existence of God’s favor, then industrialization was man’s duty and function with regard to God’s creation. Prince Albert, in his speech at the Mansion House, announced that “man is approaching a more complete fulfillment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world.”

He explained, “His reason being created after the imagery of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs his creation, and, by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer nature to his use; himself a divine instrument.” The English Monthly Tract Society, in their publication “The World’s Great Assembly,” also saw the Exhibition as a testament to man’s dominion over nature: “Oh, ‘tis indeed wonderful, how God gives man skill to make an inheritance of all things—see the mightiest beasts his docile servants; the most stubborn metals his instrument or his ornament.”

Reverend Stoughton, likewise, writes, “[The human soul’s] attempt to rule over all around, and to enrich itself with the spoils of the conquered region, is not a contest with a co-ordinate of equal power, but it is the effort of a kingly nature so formed by God, created in his image, and inaugurated into regal office.” To put the earth to the uses of industry is to do God’s work; as God reigns over mankind, man should reign over nature. Material gain through the use of nature was man’s obligation.

The Crystal Palace, as a physical structure, also merged such concepts of religion and industry. A May 10th article by The Examiner claimed that the Palace surpassed all religious temples in the city in its manifestation of the worship of God. The article further drew a parallel between the Crystal Palace and Saint Peter’s Basilica: “The Crystal Palace took six months in building and cost one hundred and fifty thousand pounds; St. Peter’s took three centuries and

---

21 Ibid.
cost sixteen millions. It is an honour to our country and age that such a fabric could have been raised, either in the same time, or in any time, by any other race of men, or in any other age.”

The Crystal Palace, an industrial hall, superseded Saint Peter’s as being the largest physical embodiment of devotion. *The Economist* described the trip of foreigners to the Exhibition as “the pilgrimage of all nations to the shrine of peaceful industry” and again called it a “splendid temple.”

A review of the *The Great Exhibition Prize Essay*, likewise, referred to the Palace as a “[w]orthy temple of industry and concord, rising gracefully from the ground, light and airy as an exhalation.” If there was to be a national church for all of British Protestantism, then the Crystal Palace could be an excellent candidate.

The existence of a temple of providence and progress, consequently, inspired a need to convey this message of divinely-inspired industry. Reverend Thomas Binney, who compared London’s Royal Exchange—the city’s commercial hub—to the Crystal Palace, advocated for the display of the psalm “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof” at the Palace as an appropriate celebration of Providence. Reverend J. A. Emerton, the aforementioned sponsor of the Prize Essay competition, expressed a similar sentiment in a January 1851 editorial in *The London Times*. He warned the commissioners from allowing the Crystal Palace to be reduced to a modern incarnation of the Tower of Babel and to ensure that it retain a proper religious character. In order to accomplish this, he recommends that a structure be erected to display the words “Glory to God in the highest, and in earth peace and goodwill to men.”

Although both men advocate for similar causes, their tones are markedly different. Binney, a Christian

---


27 J. A. Emerton, letter to the editor, *The Times*, January 22, 1851, 6. The letter is signed “J.” but was reproduced in the appendices of the winning essay (in which full identification is given).
Socialist, avoids any invocation to patriotism but rather focuses on piety and humility. He explains that the quote “attributes nothing to any individual; it proclaims no national or municipal greatness; it breathes no flattery to monarch, merchant, class or kingdom.”

Rather than buttressing national sentiments, the inscription will reinforce the understanding that material progress has come from divine intervention. However, Emerton makes a point of invoking national pride in his argumentation. When making his case for such an adornment, Emerton references the use of religious phrasing in the decoration of the Alhambra in Granada, a well-known example of Islamic architecture, encouraging a stronger assertion of faith in order not to seem inferior in piety to another tradition. Emerton argues that his point would be befitting to “national taste, no less than national piety” and, in doing so, creates a union and a dichotomy between these two concepts.

On one hand, he is divorcing piety from taste while still asserting that they seek the same ultimate ends. Moreover, the use of “national” for both foregrounds the claim to a sense of national identity through Protestantism, one that has laid the foundation for the material success at the Fair. Binney’s explanation, however, has limits when viewed in this context; if Great Britain contributed a full forty percent of the exhibitors in the Crystal Palace, then there is not a freedom from national preference. Likewise, if divine favor has brought about material wealth, then the nations with the most wealth would be the most favored. Nevertheless, his quote ultimately triumphed. On the cover of the catalogue for the Exhibition lay the following words: “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all that therein is; the compass of the world, and they that dwell within.” Industry was the work of God.

28 Binney, Royal Exchange, 6.
29 Emerton, letter to the editor, 6.
30 John R. Davis, The Great Exhibition (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999), 175.
31 Whether or not they should be sharing this natural endowment is another issue.
32 Binney, Royal Exchange, 155.
The English Monthly Tract Society highlights the greater importance of a display of piety to a display of goods and, through such an act of hierarchy, ultimately categorizes them together. Their publication asserts that the foreign visitors will be looking at Great Britain as a model of political stability and national progress for their own countries. They note, “Many of them who never studied religion as a matter of personal salvation, are now studying it as an engine of national improvement.” Although the word “engine” does, admittedly, have multiple meanings, in this context, one cannot ignore the metonymic association created with industry; in other words, piety becomes a machine or a tool for the creation of national character and advancement. The discussion continues, “We shall feel emulous as to the reputation of our artisans; but how little is our honour involved in a specimen of English machine, compared with what is in a specimen of heart.” The people, more than the goods, are the true display.

The fixation with associating Protestantism and industry even led to such an equation of the two, that is, Christianity becoming as much of an industry than an impetus for it. A series of letters to the editor in the *Times* in May of 1851, a back-and-forth bickering over the role of the Bible at the Fair, highlight this dynamic. The first, appearing on May 5, came from an anonymous disgruntled Protestant clergyman, who lamented the subdued presence of the Bible at the Great Exhibition. He asserted, “To a man capable of serious reflection there is probably no work in that vast and astonishing magazine of human genius and skill which appears more curious and remarkable than the Bible exhibited by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and printed in no less than 130 different languages.” He continued, “As a specimen of industry, consecrated and glorified by religion, it is well worthy of a place in a building which was inaugurated by a prayer, and by the noblest chorus of thanksgiving to God which the genius of

34 Ibid.
35 Protestant Clergyman, letter to the editor, *The Times*, May 15, 1851, 8.
man ever immortalized in music.” By placing the Bible in the realm of the other goods on display, material progress and Christianity were merged. One might think that putting a sacred text on par with vegetables and ironworks as an exhibit might be belittling; however, when religion becomes associated with material progress, the representation of the Bible as a material good is only fitting. It is possible that the process of translation and replication, rather than just the object itself, was seen as the signifier of progress, but the printing press was not new anymore by the time of the Great Exhibition. The author noted that this display, as well, should be the “interest, no less than of just pride, of every Protestant Englishman.”

The pan-Protestant identity discussed earlier is apparent again here. The British and Foreign Bible Society itself was non-denominational, and the attribution of such pride to “every Protestant Englishmen” forges a unity across denominations. The identifier “Protestant,” used over the potential “Christian,” honed in on the strictly Protestant construction of Britishness, making an explicit attempt at leaving out Roman Catholics.

However, the purpose of the letter to the editor was not just to laud the Bible as a paragon of industry, but rather to decry the perceived mistreatment and misplacement. The Exhibition Commission had rejected the British and Foreign Bible Society’s first request for space outright. The second request was granted—although in a smaller allocation than desired—and then revoked, with a staircase taking its place. Ultimately, the Commissioners allocated space to the British and Foreign Bible Society: a by-passage near the Prince of Wales’s cradle—by no means a prime position in the Palace. The rationale behind this could range from dismissal to an overall lack of space to a cursory attempt at pacification. The discontented writer also decried that the appropriate page for the display in the guide to the Exhibition was left blank, presented as if it

---

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
were not there at all. In his tirade, he united Protestant concerns with national concerns, referring to the display as “a wonderful national work (for it is a national work).”\textsuperscript{38} The portrayal of the Bible display as a national work can carry a few different meanings. On one hand, the clergymen, as discussed above, could be discussing the accomplishments of the British publishing industry. More likely, however, he was equating the reading and reproduction of the Bible, closely linked to the tenets of Protestantism, with the nation itself.

He also contrasted the treatment of the Bible exhibit with that of Augustus Pugin’s Medieval Court, an exhibit from the British section designed in a Gothic Revivalist style rife with Roman Catholic iconography. He claimed that the Roman Catholic exhibitors “have had their specimens of medieval art set off to the best advantage.”\textsuperscript{39} He, however, asserted, “I don’t begrudge any exhibitor whatever his creed may be, the most advantageous room for his worker.”\textsuperscript{40} It seems, however, as though he did begrudge the more spacious allocation given to Augustus Pugin; whether he was livid in anger or just merely peeved, he would not have taken the time and energy to write the letter and highlight the point had he not seen this as an example of an imbalanced treatment. That the Medieval Court, a representation of the pre-industrial past amidst a celebration of industrial future, could even be such a sizable part of the Exhibition is worth exploration and will be revisited in a later chapter.

The language of the anonymous Protestant clergymen was rife with an overtone of victimization, implying that others did not agree with this case; however, two following letters in \textit{The Times}, in this ongoing “Bible war” refuted this. The first, written by someone of the alias “Oedipus,” attacked the integrity of the exhibit, on intellectual rather than religious grounds. A self-defined scholar, or at least dabbler in language study, he accused the Bible exhibit of an

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
Cohn 38

“utter want of philological knowledge,” with inaccurate translations and books placed upside down. He did not negate the Protestant identity espoused by the clergyman but rather felt that his compatriot poorly represented the Bible, which deserved a more academically sound treatment. It is surprising, though, that the exhibit would have manifested such poor maintenance considering that the chain of correspondence between Reverend J. A. Emerton and the head of the Society leading up to the Exhibition highlighted the security in sufficient preparation. On a letter dated February 4th, W. Fletcher, the Assistant Secretary of the Society, had claimed that they had already been allotted their due space by the Commission for their array of Scriptures for both the English and the foreigners, noting also that they had issued an appeal for more space because “our work is most important at this crisis of our country’s history.”

The Society had a decent plan, or so it seemed.

The following day, Henry Bohn, the commissioner for Section 17 of the Exhibition, wrote a response to the two prior letters in an attempt to present the Commission’s account of the events in question. He affirms that the Society’s exhibit had been turned down because of a violation of a clause in the Commission’s code before it even reached him. Upon receiving a second claim from the Society, he noted that he felt that it was “justified in making [an exception] in favour of the Bible” and decided to grant twenty-five feet of space, which, although sufficient in his mind for a book display, did not satisfy the Society’s secretary. Subsequent requests were out of the aegis of his commission, rendering him not responsible for the problems that had occurred. This apologetic further challenges the Protestant clergyman’s complaint by showing that legitimate technicalities, not biases, governed the decision.

41 Oedipus, letter to the editor, The Times, May 16, 1851, 6.
42 Whish, Prize Essay, 93.
43 Henry Bohn, letter to the editor, The Times, May 17, 1851, 7.
Moreover, Bohn’s willingness to attach his name to his letter, unlike the clergyman and the linguist, adds an official, rather than universalizing, connotation to the opinions espoused.

As this entire debate hinged on a rendering of Protestantism as an industrial force, *Punch* mocks this fixation with mechanization, as well as the fixation with peace by lamenting the nonexistence of the “benevolent machine” at the Great Exhibition.⁴⁴ Mr. Punch notes that “[w]e exhibit machines simply destructive: guns, pistols, artillery, shells, all kinds of devices intended to smash, pierce, shatter, mutilate, and kill, perhaps with horrible agonies, brave and good men.”⁴⁵ He describes the missing machine by its purpose, “returning on the part of society good for evil—to provide the vilest, the most atrocious criminal, a passage to the realms of endless bliss.”⁴⁶ In other words, as the piece soon implies, that “benevolent machine” is Christianity. This metaphor for Christianity could lead to disparate interpretations. On one hand, there is the implication that there is something “un-Christian” about the Crystal Palace—that the displays of weaponry undermine the value of peace and congress touted by Prince Albert and his many supporters. However, the article also refers to Christianity as a “machine,” one that processes souls for the better and performs a more valuable purpose than standard pieces of industrial production. Both industrial machine and “Christian” machine lead to the advancement of the elite classes and the alienation of the working class. Interestingly enough, the “machine” of Christianity, according to the author, should be in the “British contributions”; British Christianity, not that of the Continent, is that which has the superior powers—as Britain has attained industrial and mechanical progress, so, too, has it attained moral-spiritual progress.

If there were a machine of Christianity, then it certainly would have been the engine of social mobility that renders the working-man into a middle-class citizen. With frequent

---

⁴⁵ Ibid.
⁴⁶ Ibid.
proletariat revolutions in Europe—such as that of the Chartist movement in Britain in the 1830s—the fear of a socialist revolt was latent and impossible to ignore. However, in the beacon of industry, the solution to the issue of poverty was not socialism, but rather the gospel of social mobility. The imbue ment of labor with moral and spiritual worth both justified the current condition and provided the ideological framework for a commitment to hard work; whether or not status was ultimately improved was another case entirely. Reverend John Richardson, author of the *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited*, affirmed that society must ensure that “our working-men are persuaded that the moral tone of their class, is preliminary to and productive of the general amelioration of their order.”\(^47\) John Stoughton highlighted this point as well, instructing, “The desire of gain, regulated by justice and generosity, is to be distinguished from that love of money which is so strongly reprobated in that best of books, as ‘the root of all evil.’”\(^48\) The British laborer works not solely for financial gain—as was believed of Jews. Rather, he works for the sake of both moral and economic gain combined. John Whish similarly imbues labor with moral worth, noting, “Every event which helps to overcome the sloth and indifference of men’s minds, and to a more admiring and adoring love of God; at least it gives them the knowledge which may become the foundation of that holy feeling.”\(^49\) Such moral lessons were even put into the classroom. In its lesson booklet for the Great Exhibition, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge listed as one of the most prominent results of the gathering “[a]n invigorated desire to progress and excel—The latter should spring, not from a spirit of rivalry, but from a deep sense of the value of excellence.”\(^50\) In piety would lie the foundations of hard work.

---

\(^47\) John Richardson, *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited; or, an Inquiry into the Condition of Those Industrial Classes Who Have Really Represented England at the Great Exhibition* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1851), 49.


\(^49\) Whish, *Prize Essay*, 16.

\(^50\) *Notes and Sketches*, 20.
Liberty, in the context of national character, had, at times, more economic than political connotations. Consequently, one can see the irrevocable link between economics and liberty in this understanding, i.e. that a society that allows for the production of such superior goods and that had the resources to stage such an event would, by logical extension, be free. Liberty is more freedom from economic oppression than it is emancipation, how one might think of it in a modern construct. The necessity of working for privileges, consequently, became a social good, spurring industrious behavior. Reverend Richardson explained, “Such regulations of a cautionary and prudential character, are not a […] diminution of liberty; they are the test that such right would be used in subordination to the general good, —and criterions that liberty in such instances, will not be prostituted to selfish and unworthy ends.”51 He affirmed that the poor acknowledge that the franchise is a goal for which to strive, an ultimate reward for the ambitious worker. Class hierarchy, then, is and should be inevitable. He noted, “Were all distinctions of condition, rank, and wealth, removed to-day, they would be again tomorrow.”52 The Eclectic Review, a predominately Nonconformist literary magazine, supports Richardson’s argument, claiming that “it is a social law, not a social wrong, which makes them separate yet mutually dependent; that [… and] to confound the classes created by civilization […] is to do that which tends to the dissolution of the whole fabric.”53 Mobility, the character of the society, cannot exist without hierarchy. The reviewer, moreover, called political independence a “sacred right,” worrying that any efforts at extending it to other classes could border too closely on communism or socialism, the seeds of its ultimate destruction.54 The existence of social status, with overtones of both religion and an implicit claim to a work ethic, cannot be eschewed.

51 Richardson, *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited*, 58.
52 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
How would one even display liberty? Reverend Binney cited economic openness as manifestations of such civil liberties, explaining that to evangelical Protestantism “we are indebted for the power we are at present exercising and using in the face of the world, —the power of throwing our metropolis open to all the nations, —receiving them all, without passports, and with hardly a caution.”\textsuperscript{55} The event in itself, then, was an example of the centrality of economic and political liberty to British national character. Reverend Whish linked the concept of liberty to institutions, citing the greatness of British hospitals, almshouses, schools, courts of law, and parliament, and credits them for enabling Great Britain to prosper while the neighbors on the Continent suffer revolutions. He noted, “For though we attribute that success primarily to God’s blessing, yet it is by our national institutions that blessing is instrumentally conveyed.”\textsuperscript{56} However, such institutionalized access to health, education, and services remained entangled with religion, through the idea of divine influence.

Moreover, some promoted the idea that Britain, per se, did not even have an underclass, for social mobility and economic liberty have yielded everyone better off than the past. John Stoughton affirmed, “If the English working man has still some evils in his social condition of which to complain—if his neck be still chafed by a yoke real or fancied—he should remember that his condition is enviable compared with that of his father.”\textsuperscript{57} Such an attitude sought to ignore present problems, justifying a condition solely based on its improvement from the past.

\textit{The Economist} took a similar stance in an analysis of the Crystal Palace: “The proposed Exhibition marks the great fact, that useful industry, has now wholly escaped the contamination

\textsuperscript{55} Binney, \textit{Royal Exchange}, 144.
\textsuperscript{56} Whish, \textit{Prize Essay}, 80.
\textsuperscript{57} Stoughton, \textit{The Palace of Glass}, 36.
of slavery, and is raised to a post of honour.” That the poor are not slaves is a mark of pride for Great Britain, having abolished slavery in 1833. England had done so before the other main colonial powers—France and Spain, who had made further steps toward abolition by the time of the Exhibition. The United States would have been the most prominent offender at the Crystal Palace, but the Ottoman Empire and China had yet to eliminate the institution of slavery as well. Although Western Europe had free labor, the British still saw themselves as the European—and global—bastion of economic mobility. John Stoughton commended the Crystal Palace, “The edifice looks more majestic than ever when contemplated as the work of a nation of freemen. The money freely given—the labourers freely assembled—the work freely done. The fact proclaims to the world the wealth and liberty of England.” Reverend John Charles Whish, in his prize-winning essay on the moral lessons of the Fair, also cited this as a key element of its moral worth: “But we do proclaim as a theoretical truth, that the race of man could not have existed in its present state if there had not been a provision in the nature of things for sufficient and remunerative labour for all men, and that the best and most natural rule is, that labour should be free and unrestricted.” The British working-classes, theoretically, had the agency to rise up and to better themselves as history marched ahead.

The Great Exhibition cemented and reaffirmed a vision of progress that hinged on the ideas of industriousness and mobility, both believed to be an outgrowth of Protestantism. Industry and liberty were outpourings of piety, and both became intertwined with faith itself in both religious and political discourse. Fitting for the day, Christianity—Protestant Christianity,

---

59. France abolished slavery in its own land and those of all of its colonies for the second time in 1848, and Spain did so in 1837 albeit only for the nation itself.
that is—became a machine in and of itself, one that would make new men, men who were committed to hard work and whose character was defined by a freedom of thought and discretion that was the basis for ingenuity. The success of the Empire, both political and economic, seemed a testament to the overall moral character and worth of the British populace.
Chapter Three: Forging the Boundary between Gain and Greed

The Variable Role of the Jews in the Conceptualization of Progress

Just a few miles away from the Crystal Palace, a debate had been raging in Parliament for a number of years. Both Houses had been grappling with the issue of the Jewish Disabilities Bill, which would have granted the Jews the same political liberties as the Established Church, the Nonconformist denominations, and the Roman Catholics. Lionel de Rothschild, the aforementioned well-established financier and treasurer for the Exhibition, lay at the center of this political debate. He had been elected to the House of Commons as one of the members for London in 1847; however, Jews were barred from being seated in Parliament because of the required Christian oath. The House of Commons passed a Disabilities Bill in 1848, heavily championed by Prime Minister Russell—head advocate of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; however, the House of Lords rejected it. Rothschild was re-elected in the following year and was allowed to swear on the Old Testament alone, but the debacle resumed when he left out the phrase “on the oath of a Christian.” On the opening day of the Great Exhibition, the House of Commons introduced legislation to remove that phrase from the oath—only to fail to pass the House of Lords. The back-and-forth between election by the people and rejection by the House of Lords continued for the majority of the decade, only ending in 1859, when he and two other elected Jews were allowed to be sworn in under their own oaths.

Although the tensions around the Catholic population were prevalent in the discussions around the Great Exhibition, the religious anxieties around Judaism were largely absent in the discourse around the Exhibition itself. However, they had a prominent role in the discussions of how progress was to manifest itself in the future. Whereas the Protestant worker exhibited social mobility and a valuation of work for its own essence, the Jews were seen as obsessed with
money for money itself. Although their labor would not be attributed the same sublimation as that of their Protestant counterparts, their financial success, embodied by a few prominent figures, placed them on the borders of progress.

The debate raging in Parliament hinged on the interpretation of British national character. The most common argument against the seating of Rothschild was that any change in the parliamentary oath would harm the Christian character of the nation, establishing a precedent to weaken the relationship between the Church and the State and perhaps even extend political rights to the Muslim subjects of the Throne.\footnote{“London, Friday, May 2, 1851,” The Times May 2, 1851, 4.} On the other hand, however, not granting the Jews equal political rights would challenge the idea of Great Britain as the vanguard of liberty and progress. On May 2, 1851, The Times reported on such views from the Solicitor-General, who asserted that he, as well as his peers, “should feel degraded if at this moment those strangers who had been summoned hither from all the countries of Europe should find that we had retrograded in our political pre-eminence, and fallen back upon the dark epochs and periods of persecution.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Religious persecution, especially that of the Jews, was often associated with the actions and history of Roman Catholicism and particularly of the papacy itself; progress, then, necessitated inclusion. Likewise, that Rothschild was repeatedly re-elected for his seat in London indicated that at least some public support was present for the inclusion of Jews in Parliament, and to deny the voters their right to representation would be an affront to political liberty.

Moreover, British Nonconformists were often strongly in favor of Jewish political rights. For one, having fought for their own inclusion into the political sphere, they had a keen focus on providing such liberties for other communities as well. In fact, two prominent Jewish bankers, Sir Moses Montefiore and Lionel de Rothschild’s father Nathan, had provided the £15
million loan desired by the British government to compensate slave owners in the West Indies for the emancipation of slaves, a cause close to the hearts of many Nonconformist abolitionists. If abolition was a sign of progress, then the Jews were a part of it.

Lionel Rothschild, with his close ties to the Exhibition itself, provided a public face for the inclusion of Jews into the conceptualization of progress. For instance, he had been a guest and a speaker at Prince Albert’s fundraiser at the Mansion House in January 1850, the early stages of the initiative. Being “much applauded” at the start, he gave a rousing speech to the potential donors, extolling the potential for peace and economic gain from the Exhibition.\(^3\) The positive reception he received shows that his standing with the community, regardless of the opinion of the House of Lords, was still quite high. Likewise, befitting his status, he intermingled with the elites of England and those visiting from abroad on the opening day of the Exhibition.\(^4\) He provided a prominent face for the Jewish community of England, one manifesting affluence and philanthropy.

When the Exhibition finally arrived, officials did explicitly seek to accommodate the needs of its Jewish attendants. One prominent issue was that observant Jewish season ticket holders who wanted to attend on a Saturday would be stymied by the need to sign one’s name for entry, an act that would break the Sabbath.\(^5\) After a number of letters came in on this issue, including one from the most notable of Victorian champions of Jewish rights Sir Moses Montefiore,\(^6\) a specific section was created to allow such observant Jews to enter without signing their names.\(^7\) That the Commission allowed for changes to be made for the sake of facilitating

\(^6\) Sir Moses Montefiore and Lionel de Rothschild were connected through extended family relationships. Lionel’s brother Nathan was the husband of Moses’s wife’s sister Hanah.
\(^7\) *Jewish Chronicle*, May 9, 1851, 247. Reprinted in Geoffrey Cantor, *Quakers and Jews*, 152.
Jewish attendance demonstrates a will to conciliate the Jewish population, a desire to get attendance as high as possible, or both. Certainly, some of the aforementioned reverends might have wanted Jews to attend for the sake of evangelization; however, the change in policy was a testament to the influence of a few members of the prominent Jewish community more than to anything else.

The *Jewish Chronicle* also made sure to highlight all of the displays of Jewish expertise at the Fair. Editor Marcus Breslau, considering the anti-Semitic trope that Jews were not inclined to intellectual endeavors, encouraged those who would hold such a belief to attend the Fair with an “official catalogue in your hand, [and] tell us whether among the many artistic and scientific benefactors and competitors which the mighty exhibition has drawn together the derided and contemned Jew does not make a fair and honourable stand?”

When the Royal Commission bestowed medals on the best exhibits in each of the thirty categories of the Fair, the Jews had a respectable representation, especially for a group that made up less than one percent of the total population of Great Britain. The *Jewish Chronicle* highlighted the following list of seven Jewish medal-winners: Nathan Defries (gas-meter), Faudel and Phillips (needlework and embroidery), Barnett Meyers (walking sticks), B. Jonas and brothers (cigar makers), S. and M. Meyer (imitation furs), M. Myers and Son of Birmingham (steel pens), and Moses, Son and Davis (tallow). The Royal Commission offered much praise for these works. Faudel and Phillips’s needlework was described as “beautiful” and “worthy of notice,” and S. and M. Meyer’s imitation furs, which were made of rabbit-skin instead of traditional and more expensive

---

9 In 1851 the Jewish population of England and Wales totaled around 8,438, served by 53 synagogues; in terms of number, at least, they were much less of a threat than the Catholics, having less than ten percent of the other minority’s already small share in demographics. Horace Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales, Abridged Report* (London: George Routledge & Company, 1854), 55.
10 *The Jewish Chronicle*, October 24, 1851, 23; 24 September 1852, 407. Reprinted in Geoffrey Cantor, *Quakers and Jews*, 154. The term “imitation fur” does not refer to the modern understanding of the term; rather, it refers to a coat made from rabbit-skin, a cheaper material, designed to look like a more expensive fur.
furs, were celebrated for their ability to make a luxury good affordable by the working-classes. Ten French Jews received medals, and another ten received honorable mentions; likewise, three Dutchmen won medals from the Commission as well. These men were accompanied by a number of other Jewish exhibitors who had not won medals or mentions.

This booster’s enthusiasm about Jewish achievement, however, was not paralleled in the mainstream press, where references were mostly absent. *The Times*, however, does cite what was probably the most prominent example of Jewish display—at the Great Exhibition, a silver testimonial to Sir Moses Montefiore done by Messrs. Hunt and Roskell of London. The piece, exhibited in the Fine Arts Hall in the Crystal Palace, provided an artistic rendition of the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. The sphinxes on the testimonial represented Egyptian captivity, and the figures on it represented Moses and Ezra. These were accompanied by images of a Jew of Damascus in chains and one released as well as adornments of corresponding texts in Hebrew. The *bas reliefs* detail the journey through the Red Sea, and Sir Moses Montefiore and Lady Montefiore are depicted as arriving on the shores of Alexandria. This superimposition of Sir Moses Montefiore in the historical context is quite fitting in light of his aforementioned advocacy for global Jewish rights and his integral role in the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies. As a champion of liberty, he was clearly a figure of progress. Although his likeness was not displayed on it, Sir Moses Montefiore also exhibited another work of fine art, a pair of vases made from sandstone and craftsmanship from Jerusalem. The reviews of the Royal Commission referred to the vases as indicative of “much ingenuity and

---

11 *Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into Which the Exhibition was Divided* (London: Royal Commissioner, 1852), 1040.
patient labor,” bestowing upon it an Honorable Mention, a notable but lesser award. The Jews were clearly capable of invention and ingenuity, the necessary steps for industrial progress.

Although the religious, as opposed to national, identity of exhibitors was not often noted, one might expect that the existence of such challenges to the stereotypical representations of the Jew as solely a moneylender might have received at least some attention. However, there are multiple potential reasons for this lack of reference to Jewry in the reporting on the exhibits themselves. For one, the Jewish population was not unique to any one nation at the Fair. The *Chronicle* focused on the successes of transnational Jewry, however, with a special focus on those of England, thus removing it from the specific context of national identity. Moreover, it is possible that the religious identity of exhibitors was largely ignored; however, as Jews were viewed as only moneylenders and were stereotyped in highly physical terms, one would imagine that the existence of Jewish inventors—and a number of them—would have earned the attention of the fair-goers. However, the absence of reference to Jewish innovation could be a conscious decision, a desire to ignore such a presence out of a desire to ensure that the celebration of Protestant industry would highlight the industriousness of Protestants.

Although there was a distinct Jewish presence at the Great Exhibition, only a few references to Judaism work their way into the resulting literature. Dr. Edward Meyrick Goulburn, in his poem “The Crystal Palace: a Satire” warns, “Lo! Godless leaders of a Godless band/Strive yearly to unchristianize the land.” Although there is no direct reference to the Jews in this line, the outline with which his poem is introduced cites this location in the text as “The Jew Bill,” a clear reference to the Jewish Disabilities Bill. Goulburn portrays this attempt at religious liberty for the Jews as a threat to British identity because it would remove the religious

---

14 Reports by the Juries, 1227.
component of nationhood; moreover, the word “yearly” implies the fear of an ever-present, persistent menace. Dr. Goulburn, from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, also cites concerns with the Pope’s re-establishment of Catholic hierarchy and juxtaposes the two cases of religious anxiety with each other, connecting them in the minds of the reader. At times, Goulburn’s poem, which is titled a satire, has elements of humor; the part of the poem that contains these two references appears to be an indictment on England’s moral corruption. He claims that England is “tottering on perdition’s brink” and “facing imminent judgment.”¹⁶ The epigram for his poem, moreover, is an allusion to the distaste for foreigners, citing a line from a satire by first century Roman Poet Juvenal, who lamented the dominant influence of Greek customs in Rome. The poem, then, is framed as a critique of invading influences, of which, to him, the Jews are a part.

The only other noticeable reference to contemporary Jewry in the discourse around the event itself comes from Reverend Birch who, when speaking of the future evangelization of the human race through the Exhibition, claims that “Jewish prejudice” will be eliminated.¹⁷ Such “prejudice” contrasts with the “delusion” attributed to the Muslims and the “error” seemingly attributed to Roman Catholicism. His belief that the Jews are prejudiced evokes lasting stereotypes of Jews as stubborn or narrow-minded because of their refusal to accept Jesus as their Messiah. He references the contemporary Jewish population in one other case, saying of the attendants, “They include men of all religious creeds and forms, and perhaps of no creed at all: —the Jew, the Pagan, the Mahometan, the Infidel, the Christian! In this vast assemblage, men of all nations, climes, colours, creeds, and circumstances, meet and mingle in one

¹⁶ Ibid.
Although the incessant exclamations seem to indicate an enthusiasm at such diversity, Birch is comparing the demographics of the visiting populations to the masses on Judgment Day, which does not bode as well for any claims of tolerance or appreciation as one can assume that Birch does not believe that all in this “promiscuous throng” will end up in heaven. However, as Birch and many of the other writers that have been discussed are ministers, most of the allusions to Judaism exist in the context of the Old Testament, not the Jewish population of nineteenth century Europe.

As the Jewish question takes on an ancillary role in the discourse explicitly around the Great Exhibition, a contemporary source like *Punch*, itself targeting the Protestant middle-class audience being discussed here, offers some insights, both in terms of the views held by its writers and illustrators and the views which they are satirizing—offering the commentary to complement the reality. There is, however, scholarly debate over how to understand the magazine’s treatment of the Jews. Ann and Roger Cowen, in *Victorian Jews through British Eyes*, claim that “when put to coming out with its views *Punch* was honest and forthright and not anti-Semitic.”

However, Frank Felsenstein proposes a polar opposite understanding, viewing *Punch* as brimming with anti-Semitism. Although Felsenstein provides interesting analyses of certain illustrations and articles that arose around the Exhibition, his article “Mr. Punch at the Great Exhibition: Stereotypes of Yankee and Hebrew in 1851” relies on illogical comparisons. He highlights what he sees as hypocrisy in the treatment of the Americans and the Jews around the Exhibition. He attempts to tie the issue of the emancipation of slaves in the United States with Jewish emancipation in England. Although the British mocked the Americans for still owning slaves, they themselves were not respectful of the rights of their own minority populations.

---

18 Ibid., 58.  
Although this latter, more tempered version of his thesis is not without merit, he is overextending the comparison of slavery in the United States to anti-Semitism in Victorian England. The Jews were not granted political rights; however, they were not enslaved, retaining a degree of economic agency that often proved quite successful.

The representations of the Jewish population existed in two opposite ends of the economic spectrum. On one hand lay the image of Jewish poverty, embodied by clothes-sellers and tailors in the Minories, a district of East London known for its large Jewish population. However, on the other hand was the image of Jewish affluence, linked to finance and banking—most commonly with the image of Lionel de Rothschild. Although the economic status differs in each case, both images rely on money; the image of the impoverished Jew often showed the same desire for purely financial gain as his wealthy counterpart—his success was just lacking. Consequently, the relationship between Jews and money provided a construct of what happens when the valuation of ambition is taken too far. The Jews represented work for financial gain alone, a principle that Protestants attempted to distinguish from the principle of hard work for the sake of improvement. The Jews were, if anything, seen as too aggressive in this will to prosper. The association of the Jews with banking, though, is particularly interesting because, as the basic account of the treasures demonstrated, adherents of the Anglican faith were already playing a prominent role in the banking industry. Moreover, that the memorialization of labor hinged on industrial production and invention created an uncertainty around the view of banking, for as an industry, it did not create material output itself. The financier does not invent and does not produce; however, without his work, such invention and production could not happen. Seen as international or foreign population, the Jews were often viewed as having outside allegiances.

---

For instance, the Census categorizes them as “a nation and a Church at once.”\footnote{Horace Mann, \textit{Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales, Abridged Report} (London: George Routledge & Company, 1854), 55.} However, unlike the Roman Catholics, they were not seen to be submissive to the whims of a foreign power structure as will be discussed in following chapters. Although they may collaborate with foreigners, they still seek gain and advancement and have the self-autonomy necessary to achieve it.

As a publication that engages in stereotypes for its very purpose, \textit{Punch} unavoidably fed into anti-Semitic tropes. However, at the same time, \textit{Punch} remained an advocate of the seating of Baron de Rothschild. In “Mr. Punch’s Review of the Session” in 1851, he notes, “When promised a Jew Bill, we thought ‘twas a true bill/And hoped to see Rothschild in quiet possession/Of his seat in the House, but the hope was a chous, Sir.”\footnote{Mark Lemon and others, “Mr. Punch’s Review of the Session,” \textit{Punch} 20 (1851): 84. The word “chous” is an archaic slang term for a trick or sham. Cited from “Chous,” \textit{The Oxford English Dictionary, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.} (1989) OED Online. Oxford University Press, 2 March 2010. \<http://dictionary.oed.com/>.} Whenever Mr. Punch broaches the issue of Rothschild’s seat, he always mocks those preventing him from taking his rightfully earned seat. Such a seemingly objective mention of the Disabilities Bill is a rare occurrence in this satirical magazine. When Mr. Punch discusses the Jewish Disabilities Bill, it is clear that the writers support the legislation, but the support for religious liberty that would befit the liberal tendencies of the editorial board did not prevent them from engaging in stereotypes in the portrayal of Jews.

A merger of both of these motifs appears in an article entitled “Lord John Taking up His Bill” from 1851. The acknowledged liberalism begins the article as Mr. Punch writes, “We trust that bigotry and intolerance will no longer deprive the House of Commons of the services of a class of men so eminently calculated as the Hebrews.”\footnote{Mark Lemon and others, “Lord John Taking up His Bill,” \textit{Punch} 20 (1851): 147.} However, this advocacy is balanced...
with stereotype as the reason for such support is the experience of the Jews in “bill-transactions,” a dual reference to parliamentary legislation and finance.\textsuperscript{24} This foregrounds the stereotypical connection of Jews with money although one cannot jump to conclusions about whether or not this individual piece harbors any ill-willed anti-Semitism as Felstenstein implies. This theme reappears in a later article discussing the position of the “Hebrews” in the House of Lords. Mr. Punch asserts that the Hebrews, having a long lineage, would fit perfectly into the pedigree-obsessed aristocracy, and he suggests a title for the Jews in order to liken them to the other aristocrats, “Lord Discount”—a blatant reference to money.\textsuperscript{25} One cannot ignore an underlying anti-Semitism here; however, the aristocracy is equally the target of the joke.

Likewise, the article “The Defeat of the Jews by Lord Nelson” satirizes Lord Nelson more than it does the Jews. Punch compares Earl Nelson, a contemporaneous member of the House of Lords speaking out against the Jewish Disabilities Bill, to the Earl Nelson from the Napoleonic wars: “[F]or the gallant and reverend Earl ennobled by Trafalgar has led the van against the Hebrew host, now thundering against the gates of Parliament.”\textsuperscript{26} The representation of the Jewish “threat” is grossly and humorously exaggerated at the start. \textit{Punch} mocks the prevailing assertion in the House of Lords that the admission of Jews into Parliament would lead to the gradual, or not so gradual, admission of a host of foreigners. Lord Ashley, a member of Parliament who was an advocate of Christian Zionism, predicted that, were the legislation passed, then “not only Jews would be admitted to Parliament, but Mussulmans, Hindoos, and men of every form of faith under the sun of the British dominions.”\textsuperscript{27} Lord Ashley’s anxiety about Jewish influence in Parliament is particularly noteworthy because of his prominent

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Hansard}, XCV, 1278 (16 December 1848) <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>.
advocacy of Zionism in its formative years, a move that could be viewed in this context as a way to remove the Jews from England itself. However, of the results of expanding religious liberty, Punch jests, “THE EMPEROR OF CHINA— for purposes best known to himself— may swamp the House of Commons with flowery members from the Flowery Country. THE SULTAN […] may send a score of Mahometans […] for no other purpose than to beard SIBTHORP himself with their bigotry.” Such hyperbole, however, is followed with a subtle but genuine plea to action: “Meanwhile Earl Nelson believes that the people care not for justice to the Jew: and in such case leave the people to the enjoyment of their indifference. For, if you do justice an hour before you are coerced into the act, what comes next?” The assumed indifference of the populace is not something to be respected or tolerated.

In an article entitled “Baron Rothschild on a Wheelbarrow,” Punch provided another solidly positive endorsement of Jewish emancipation. After mocking the way in which both Houses treated Rothschild, the author affirms, “MR. ROTHSCHILD must come off the wheelbarrow. ROTHSCHILD must take his seat in the House of Commons.” Furthermore, he states that the granting of civil liberties would have an ameliorating effect on the Jewish population: “[W]ith Young Israel represented in Parliament, will not Young Israel be a gentle, urbane, and most conscientious presence in the City?” This assigning of positive attributes is

28 “Defeat of the Jews by Lord Nelson,” 51. Charles de Laet Waldo Sibthorp, commonly known as Colonel Sibthorp, was a Member of Parliament for Lincoln and a staunch opponent of Catholic emancipation, Jewish emancipation, and the Great Exhibition.
29 Ibid.
30 This difference, however, was not necessarily the case. Although there may not have been overwhelming support, there was an active tradition among British Dissenters of advocating for the rights of religious minorities. In 1848, the Eclectic Review, for instance, avowed, “[S]hould the improbable case ever arise, of their [electors] electing a Mussulman, or a Hindoo, our own voice would be raised in defence of their right to do so” (Eclectic Review, n.s. XXIII (Jan-Jun 1848), 382 Reprinted on Larsen 135). Support for religious liberty, however, does not necessitate tolerance or appreciation, but rather a political interest.
31 Mark Lemon and others, “Baron Rothschild on a Wheelbarrow,” Punch 19 (1850): 72. The “wheelbarrow” image is an allusion to a line by Martin Luther about the Jews: “They sit as on a wheelbarrow, without a country, a people, or government.”
32 Ibid.
even implied earlier when the fictionalized Rothschild speaks of the “fallen” of his race. That a contingent of the “fallen” existed indicates that he and apparently others must be at a higher moral level; Rothschild, then, is a redeeming figure for British Jewry. His prosperity and character enable him to be considered potentially both British and “Hebrew.”

As Rothschild provided a positive although still ambiguous face for Jewish ambition, images of common Jews also graced the pages of *Punch*, providing a less ambiguous and more decidedly negative portrayal of a fixation with money. An 1851 cartoon depicts two Jews from the “Firm of Noses,” a name that provides both a rhyme with the word “Moses” and an allusion to physical stereotypes, celebrating the Christmas season. (See Appendix B.) The two men, adorned with business suits and characterized by their large noses, wish holiday blessings on each other while a poor British girl shivers off to the side. The article following the picture reads, “Now if there really be […] any emotion that really calls for the admiration of a clothes-buying public, it is The Poetical Thanksgiving by Jew Tailors, for the Love and Mercy divinely associated with Christmas. On such a theme—and for such a money-making purpose—JUDAS ISCARIOT were worthy to be the laureate.”  

Whereas Christians would be celebrating the Christmas season because of its religious value, the two Jews in the graphic are apparently enthralled by the money-making opportunities with which it provided them, making their fortunes at the expense of the Christian population. The accompanying text, moreover, associates them with scavengers, pickpockets, costermongers, and turncoats, highlighting this accusation of greed and theft. Only through their manipulation of Christians were they able to rise in their social status, one that contradicts the clothes-peddling stereotype associated with the Minories. Their more refined appearance clearly distinguishes them from other *Punch* representations of clothes sellers, such as that in the comic “The Dealer in Old Clothes:

Teaching the Young Idea How to Steal.” (See Appendix C.) The central Jew, ugly and large-nosed, has a greedy look in his eyes as he hunches over to pay a young child, assumedly Christian, for clothes he has stolen. Both depictions of Jews, whether indicating affluence or poverty, centralize a desire for money and a willingness to sacrifice principles for the sake of it.

In a progress defined by hard work and ingenuity, it was unclear whether or not the Jews, in the British worldview, could find a home. The Jews, regardless of class, were associated with money, an identification that was very malleable in the results it can produce. This fundamental linkage allowed for somewhat positive portrayals of the Jews, such as that of Baron Rothschild, when economic weight is tied to prestige and allegiance to the throne. If prosperity indicated moral worth, then there must have been some shared essence in character between the Protestant and the Jew, both of whom did not abide by will of a centralized foreign power structure. However, at the same time, the affluence of the Jews was viewed as a testament to greed, or ambition gone too far, rather than to a methodical diligence. Nevertheless, although Jews could be seen as an economic threat, such a threat could be transformed into an asset as long as it was channeled for the right ends; industrial progress can only happen with the money to finance it.

---

34 Mark Lemon and others, “The Dealer in Old Clothes,” *Punch* 20 (1851): 25. The Cowens, however, do not see prejudice in either of these two comics, citing that both may have arisen from actual accounts from writers or their friends. Even if there was a foundation in reality, the physical depiction undoubtedly invokes stereotypes. Although Felsenstein’s cries of anti-Semitism sometime go too far, here they hold merit.
Although England had a long history of anti-Catholicism—its Catholic population did not receive emancipation, or the right to hold seats in Parliament, until 1829—the years leading up to the Great Exhibition marked a high point in public anti-Catholic sentiment. The Catholic Relief Act of 1829, even though it allowed the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland to hold offices in Parliament and to attend universities, still put a strong hold on the agency of the Roman Catholic clergy by prohibiting the future entry of any Roman Catholic priests into religious orders or societies. Over the next few decades, the Roman Catholic population in England would see rapid growth. From 1841 to 1851, the Irish-born population in England and Wales had almost doubled, rising from 290,891 to 519,959. Irish-born immigrants and their children accounted for approximately seventy-five percent of the total Roman Catholic population, with the rest consisting predominately of Old Catholics, aristocratic vestiges of the pre-Elizabethan era, with a negligible percentage of converts. In response to such a growing religious demographic, on September 29, 1850, Pope Pius IX re-established a territorial hierarchy in Great Britain and appointed the Spanish-born Bishop Wiseman as the cardinal. The apostolic vicariates, the ecclesiastical structuring that dominates the missionary regions of the Roman Catholic Church, that had existed for the past 150 years, were supplanted by bishoprics, or dioceses, marking a tighter papal jurisdiction. The move was viewed as highly controversial: from November to April, weekly and, at times, daily features on the “papal aggression”

1 Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829, s 34 <http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=1030241>. “And be it further enacted that in case any person shall after the commencement of this Act, within any part of this United Kingdom, be admitted or become a Jesuit, or brother, or member of any other such religious order, community, or society as aforesaid, such person shall be deemed and taken to be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being thereof lawfully convicted, shall be sentenced and ordered to be banished from the United Kingdom for the term of his natural life.” This was later repealed in 1871.

dominated the *Times*. Amidst the political and social controversy, Prime Minister John Russell introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill into Parliament, which would prohibit such a hierarchy from taking effect, and the bill was made into a law on August 1, 1850. The debates over this bill, which was eventually passed, raged in the months leading up to the opening of the Crystal Palace.

Such an atmosphere of anxiety-ridden anti-Catholicism provokes a discussion of the ways in which Roman Catholicism was treated in the context of the Great Exhibition. While Parliament decried a growing ecclesiastical hierarchy, and public sentiment often agreed, Britain was preparing to invite a number of predominantly Catholic countries, including Italy (the home of the feared hierarchy), Spain, and France, into its capital city. Feelings toward Roman Catholicism, consequently, open up a murky space between nationalism and religious prejudice; however, the language that dominates the treatment of Roman Catholics, both within England and in the neighboring countries from the Continent, shows that religion takes precedence over nationhood in the creation of self-image. As Protestantism had been viewed as the cause of imperial and industrial success for its promotion of self-autonomy and diligence, then the Roman Catholics, subjugated to the directives of a foreign prince, would logically be unsuccessful. Roman Catholicism became the foil for the British Protestant identity.

As the relationship between Great Britain and Roman Catholicism is a decidedly complex issue, it will be handled in two parts: those within the United Kingdom and those from visiting countries. In terms of proximity, the Irish, as noted above, would have been the most visible Roman Catholic population in England at the time—and also the source for the style of cross used in the Medieval Court. The Irish, then, become a conduit through which to broach the understanding of Roman Catholicism abroad. Prejudices directed toward Ireland were

---

3 Eighty-five articles ran between November 1850 and April 30, 1851—the day before the opening of the Fair.
dominated by religion and stigmatized Roman Catholicism with a connection to poverty and reactionism.

The ideological grappling with an influx of Roman Catholics into the country must first, however, be understood through the lens of the aforementioned restoration of hierarchy, the most direct and salient manifestation. In the creation of a public consciousness of such “papal aggression,” *Punch* frequently frames the re-establishment of hierarchy as a foreign invasion. Pope Pius IX, consistently mocked in *Punch*—and never in a light-hearted fashion, is often portrayed as conniving and borderline obese with unaware Englishmen at his side; he is a covert threat to national stability. In the comic “The Guy Fawkes of 1850: Preparing to Blow up All England!” the pope, who is wearing both papal robes and a Guy Fawkes mask, is stacking up mitres for the bishoprics of England while three men stand idly in the background.⁴ (See Appendix D.) Guy Fawkes, a Catholic restorationist who attempted to blow up Parliament in 1605 during the reign of James I in an attempt to embarrass the monarchy, was English-born, so the comparison to the pope either renders Guy Fawkes foreign or presents the pope as an internal threat. In either case, the pictorial representative of this papal agitator plans to destabilize the whole country, not just Parliament, making the threat more pressing. In another picture, “The Pope ‘Trying it On’ Mr. John Bull,” the Pope and an adviser, apparently sacerdotal, attempt to put a mitre on the head of England’s anthropomorphized self,⁵ sleeping smugly in his chair while the British lion in a picture by his seat growls.⁶ (See Appendix E.) In “The Thin Edge of the Wedge: Daring Attempt to Break into a Church,” Pope Pius and a co-conspirator (similar to the man in the aforementioned picture) attempt to break into a church with a wedge reading “Roman

---

⁵ John Bull, a stout middle-class (implicitly Protestant) Englishmen, was used as a personification of the nation during this period.  
Archbishopric of Westminster.”7 (See Appendix F.) The look on the Pope’s face is grave and worried—from anxiety or exertion while his companion stares keenly to ward off passers-by.

The anxiety around the threat of an invigorated Roman Catholic Church looms over these pages.

In other pieces, *Punch* unites the image of a foreign invasion with a motif of theater or spectacle. In “An Italian Church in London,” he speaks of the pope’s decision to build a church in London and suggests a new plan. Mr. Punch explains, “Wherefore, then, not at once purchase the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane? Certain we are that the persons empowered to sell would let the fabric go cheap—dog-cheap. [...] The scenery and machinery, pantomime tricks, and so forth, with a very little expense, would be convertible to Papal uses.”8 The Roman Church, here, is portrayed as little better than a play or other staged spectacle. Its mass is all surface without any form of spiritual interior, as a play visually captivates, but, at the end, is no more than a constructed set and costumes shorn off. The word “fabric,” if more akin to the connotation of “fabrication,” enhances this interpretation and further diminishes the perceived value of the Roman Catholic Church. The article’s reference to Shakespeare, who “some contended [...] was a true heart Catholic,” as a patron saint for the Italian church in Britain becomes ironic in light of Shakespeare’s plays themselves, which predominately take place in Italy. The ‘intrusion’ of Italy in England, therefore, has already happened on stage. However, that the British playwright could become the “San Guglielmo,” as the article jests, presents a means for Britain to reassert its power, for the Roman Church, thus, shows submission to the famous bard. The article “Popery in Pimlico” repeats the same image, i.e. the Pope moving to the theater district. The writer notes, “The ‘histrionics’ will of course be continued” and that “the ‘property man’ at Astley’s is understood to be working night and day for the completion of the decorations, which

---

are expected to surpass everything since the celebrated Jewess season at Drury Lane.”

Spectacle—which combines the machinations of acting and the perceived ostentation of the Roman Catholic Church—becomes the means to explain the foreign invasion. The Great Exhibition, then, proves an interesting case in which Great Britain was indirectly inviting Roman Catholics, including those from Rome, into its capital city; here, the themes of spectacle and foreign invasion most aptly meet. *Punch* commented on the simultaneity of the two events in “The Pope’s Contribution to the Exhibition of 1851.” The article, which refers to the Vatican as a “halluci-nation” in contrast to the “nations” to be exhibited, announces, “The specimen of Roman manufacture will consist of a Cardinal, carried to such an extraordinary length as to amount to a cloak, and far to exceed the bounds of a mere *visite*, to which Papal manufactures have been understood to be hitherto limited.”

The Cardinal, assumedly Wiseman, is noted as “an offence against Customs,” “a very ingenious contrivance,” and “the result of a web that has been for some time weaving.” Apparently, the Cardinal is the only contribution that Rome can offer to the Exposition, as Rome can offer no utilitarian goods or examples of industry.

Continuing the representational union of the papal invasion and the Crystal Palace, *Punch*, in an article mimicking Lord John Russell speaking about his Ecclesiastical Titles Bill before Parliament, presents a satirical version of Britain’s contribution to the Great Exhibition. The Russell of *Punch* proclaims, “And England’s most valuable contribution to the Industry of All Nations would be a piece of legislation which should peaceably—bloodlessly—painlessly crush the machinations of a priesthood, conspiring, under the pretence of propagating religion

---

11 Ibid.
against the liberty of Europe.” Moreover, one cannot ignore the irony of the use of the words “peaceable” and “bloodless” in such a stinging tirade in light of the context of the peace-driven language dominating much of the discourse surrounding the Great Exhibition.

The union of the Great Exhibition and the “papal aggression” comes up in other satirical pieces. In a later poem, “Ballad for the Old-Fashioned Farmer on the Great Exhibition,” *Punch*, in the voice of the title character, notes,

> How much better off be we likely to be  
> For your coloured glass windows and filigree?  
> Which is all superstition and Popery of Rome,  
> And Free Trade, which is a-ruining your countrymen at home.  

When reading such a piece of satire, one must pay special attention to the voice of both the author and the narrator. The narrator here is the title farmer, who is presented as a stubborn and backwards individual, who is throwing out insults at the Great Exhibition. The line “all superstition and Popery of Rome” seems to refer to the stained glass and adornments—comparing the Crystal Palace to a Roman Catholic cathedral. However, such a comparison is not directly stated, as Mr. Punch presents the farmer as relatively nonsensical. The “popery” of which the farmer is speaking could, oddly enough, be the exhibits themselves. Referring to the physical structure as “free trade” makes little logical sense, but the windows and decorations presented by visiting nations could fit. The magazine’s coverage of the Great Exhibition, by this point, was predominantly positive and seems to take a tongue-in-cheek approach to these criticisms. Although *Punch*’s own anti-papal fervor does not show in this piece, the article implies that the beliefs attributed to the farmer would have been common enough to be worthy of satire. The satire “The Crystal Palace” by Dr. Edward Meyrick Goulburn, Anglican minister and headmaster of the Rugby School, presents these concerns less playfully and more intentionally:

---

Lo! Godless leaders of a Godless band
Strive yearly to unchristianize the land:
Lo! Rampant Popery emboldened grown,
Meets out Victoria’s kingdoms as her own.\textsuperscript{14}

Though the first two lines in this excerpt, according to the outline given by the author, refers to the debate over Jewish emancipation—allowing the Jews in Parliament was seen as a challenge to the Christian nature of the Constitution— it is worth noting that the Catholic threat and the Jewish threat are paired together. The categorization of the work as a satire complicates the ability to elicit Goulburn’s point of view. Although this poem refers to itself as a satire, it is doubtful that these lines were intended satirically as Goulburn was a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the oldest Anglican missionary society. His participation in the society, which competed with the Roman Catholics in missionary efforts, implies a desire to keep the Roman Catholic hierarchy out of England. Moreover, in a letter to the editor published in \textit{The Times} on March 26, 1851, he, in correcting a misprint of his words, affirms, “Some are for the extending of the basis of our common Christianity, and thus sacrificing truth at the altar of charity; some even advocate the abolition of all definite creed and dogma, and a meeting on the ground—assumed to be admitted by all—of Christian morality.”\textsuperscript{15} Goulburn manifests a firm stance against the efforts toward ecumenism happening at the same time, and from these words, one can assume that he would not take a conciliatory stance on Roman Catholicism, especially as it is one step further removed from the other Protestant denominations of which he is speaking. Consequently, Goulburn’s poetic satire must be viewed, at the very least in these lines, as a statement of personal opinion (not of satire), demonstrating the ideological linkage of the issues of the re-establishment of Roman Catholic hierarchy and the gathering of nations for the Great Exhibition.


\textsuperscript{15} Edward Meyrick Goulburn, letter to the editor, \textit{The Times}, March 26, 1851, 8.
The distaste with Roman Catholicism is also expressed in the aforementioned lesson book produced by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of which Goulburn was a member. During the year following the Exhibition, they distributed a lesson manual to elicit the didactic value of the event, *Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition*. Although many lessons are designed to teach skills, some focus on religion, including one on the Medieval Court found in the Crystal Palace. The lesson focuses on both the differences between the contemporary period and the medieval era in terms of industry as well as religion—affirming that although the Court has its place in the British exhibit, it does not have a place in British character. The author notes that the wood used in the contemporary period would not have been used in the Middle Ages because of its need for shipbuilding. The goods central to such commerce contributed “rather to the luxury of the rich, than to the increase of national comfort.”

The dichotomy between elite wealth and utilitarian benefit presented here assumes that modern industry works for the sake of the latter and, moreover, implies the existence of a more diverse class structure, especially that of a middle-class. As this link is implicit, there is an explicit perspective that God has brought progress to society: “Purposes of God bearing on the social, mental, and spiritual improvement of the human family, worked out by extended commerce.”

The note of “spiritual improvement” indicates the elimination of Roman forms of worship and the move to Protestantism, which, according to this lesson, has led to social and mental improvement. The role of extended commerce in the creation of such social progress revives the discussion of industry in British national character, for only through the improvement of the economy do the facets of society see their advancement.

---

16 *Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852), 117.
17 Ibid.
However, more directly, the Medieval Court is used to demonstrate that, according to the Anglican and Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholic Church is backwards. The lesson notes that the cause of such “excessive Church ornament” is “extreme love and veneration for all that is ancient, and delight in what speaks to the imagination.” 18 The Society explains how the Roman Catholics are stuck in archaic models of worship, in contrast to the Protestant version, in which “the main point is to worship God in ‘spirit and truth,’ considering that we are not under a dispensation of types and shadows, but the dispensation of the Spirit, the types and shadows being fulfilled, and a clearer light shining on the Church.” 19 Roman Catholic practice here evokes images of smoke and mirrors, fooling its worshippers into belief with spectacles. The importance of the instruction of the faults of Roman Catholic practice is so integral to the instruction that “[t]o do justice to this subject, it should occupy at least two lessons.” 20 Few, if any, other lessons merited such extensive treatment. Owen Jones, Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, also decried the existence of Gothic architecture in the Crystal Palace, seeing it as celebrating a backwards style that should be allowed to stay in the past. He asserted, “I mourn over the loss which this age has suffered, and still continues to suffer, by so many fine minds devoting all their talents to the reproduction of a galvanized corpse.” 21 The obsession with Gothic forms, in his opinion, has denied the opportunity to find a new architecture to celebrate the age of progress, failing to be a “true expression of the wants, the faculties, and the sentiments of the age in which we live.” 22

18 Ibid., 118.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
Such Roman Catholic forms of worship were also divorced from any connection to Britain in Reverend J. C. Whish’s *Great Exhibition Prize Essay*. While elaborating on the moral and religious effects of the Great Exhibition, Reverend Whish used the religions of some of the visitors to London, i.e. Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, as foils for Protestantism. Of the Roman Catholic neighbors, he noted, “Again, we find in the nations that belong to the Roman Catholic Church a straightforward unaffected boldness in the profession of their religion which is worthy of a purer creed.”23 This undermining of an apparent compliment, bold devotion, as seen here, became an ongoing trend in treatment of the Roman Catholic countries. He continued, “There is also in Roman Catholic countries, a regard to the outward forms of religion, which, though not in itself all that is required of the Christian, nor even the most important part of his duty, is yet the natural manner in which a real spirit of religion should exhibit itself.”24 Roman Catholicism, as a fellow example of Christianity, was still given moral worth—a sharp contrast to the treatment of Buddhists25 in the text; however, Roman Catholicism forms of worship become the antithesis of normative British structure. They were neighbors—not exotic foreigners like those from Asia, but the distance must be maintained.

On the other hand, Congregationalist minister Thomas Binney, known for his impassioned speech against established churches, did not add any redeeming qualities to his presentation of the Roman Catholic Church. In “The Royal Exchange and the Palace of Industry, or the Possible Future of Europe and the World,” Thomas Binney posited the destruction of Roman Catholicism in the utopian future promised by the Great Exhibition.

24 Ibid.
25 “If any good thing can be found in such a degraded moral atmosphere as that in which the Brahmin or the Buddhist lives, it certainly is much to the shame of the professors of Christianity, if they should be found at all deficient by comparison” (Whish, *Prize Essay*, 69).
Although he did not refer to the Church of Rome, he cataloged his grievances with it in this presentation of the future of Europe and humankind:

> [h]uman priesthood, visible altars, the sacrifice of the mass, literal incense, [...] the adoration of saints and martyrs,—the worship of a woman of pictures, images, and relics of the dead, —ecclesiastical tyrannies, popular superstitions, and popular serfdom, — with everything else that is incompatible with a vital and diffused Christian intelligence.\(^\text{26}\)

The reference to the “worship of a woman” is an indirect reference to Marian devotion, and the rest of the list is straightforward in meaning, although laced with discontent. The last, however, is the most striking and most relevant of insults levied against the Roman Church. Binney attributed “popular serfdom” to this “corruption” of Christianity, a connection that can be understood in both religious and socioeconomic terms. The portrayal of Roman Catholics as “serfs” paints them as purely submissive beings, blindly yielding to the caprices and edicts of a foreign prince. Lacking such autonomy and self-direction—intrinsic to the understanding of the industriousness of the British Protestant character, such Roman Catholics could not manifest ambition nor could they take part in a rapidly accelerating era of progress. Moreover, the word “serfdom” cannot be treated devoid of its socioeconomic connotations. Roman Catholicism, then, implied poverty, which has no place in his future for Europe.

Binney’s implied insults continued on from this and seemed to claim that the Pope was the Antichrist. He never mentioned the papacy or Pope Pius IX; however, he contrasted the supremacy of Jesus to the existence of “one Mediator between God and men,” who was later referred to as “the Man of Sin” engaged in an unendurable “sort of blasphemous mimicry.”\(^\text{27}\)

Furthermore, the title at the top of this page in the text, indicating the contents that ensue, reads “Fall of the Antichrist”—although the word “Antichrist” itself does not appear in the text.


\(^{27}\) Ibid., 116.
Nevertheless, following Binney’s logic, one can make the obvious assumptions of his meaning. Roman Catholicism, for Binney, did not have redeeming qualities; it was a threat both in England and on the Continent.

An editorial in *The Times* on May 14th manifested this exclusion of Roman Catholicism from the previously discussed constructions of peace and universal fellowship as well as economic progress. The piece, which decried the actions of the Irish faction to forestall legislation in Parliament, seemingly the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, claimed that the existence of Roman Catholicism ruptured the idealized visions of the “fairy vault of the Crystal Palace.”

The editorialist affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church was the “one power which steadily and stubbornly resists its [progress’s] advances, and which, being in its nature stationary, and at the same time perpetual, is placed by every advance of the human race in yet clearer and more defined antagonism to its noblest efforts and highest aspirations.” Roman Catholicism sounds like an infestation or a pest, destroying the health of the moral character of those that follow it and those around them. Moreover, the writer seemed to believe that the reinstatement of bishoprics in England was a direct attack at the Great Exhibition: “even from its birth she has frowned upon the cultivation of physical science, and, true to her mission, is now disturbing the jubilee of all nations by arrogant pretensions and sectarian bitterness.” Roman Catholicism, then, becomes a direct threat to England; it cannot coexist in England and, as one would infer from the editorial as a whole, must be eliminated. Ironically, the writer ignored the fact that many of the nations in this “jubilee” were Roman Catholic themselves—or not even Christian at all.

Catholicism was represented in *Punch* as anti-progress in “Popery and Progress,” a satirical letter to the editor defending social and economic progress in Catholic countries. 

---

description of the pre-Catholic history of Ireland is rife with foolish superstitions: “Before St. Patrick converted the Irish to the holy faith of Rome, they were a set of miserable savages, but one degree elevated above the brute. Indeed, they are said to have gone actually on all fours.”

The undermining of the fictitious author’s credibility in the author’s account continues later on, when he notes, that the diet of these pre-Catholic predecessors “consisted of that precarious root, the potato, which they ate raw.” As the potato came from South America to Europe in the sixteenth century, such a claim is clearly unfounded, and the pre-Catholic, backwards society becomes more like modern Ireland than the image later painted by the author.

The author, anonymous—represented only by the pseudonym “Verax,” contrasts pre-Christian Ireland with its contemporary counterpart: “At the present moment we behold, in that blessed land, a spectacle of moral elevation and material greatness. Fields waving with corn attest the perfection with agriculture. Inexhaustible peat bogs, by the aid of chemistry and capital, converted into mines, yielded boundless wealth.” He also praises the lack of discord in Ireland and the “adherence to veracity”; all of these blessings, of course, come from “an enlightened clergy, who sedulously encourage the study of the natural sciences.”

Considering that Ireland had recently suffered its potato famine, all the positive attributes granted to Ireland can be easily seen as satirical barbs, implying that Protestantism is inextricably and uniquely linked to progress. Of the Irish national character, the impassioned writer continues, “But, foremost among attributes which render Ireland a model nation, is that noble sentiment which abhors deceit, prevarication, and falsehood. If there is any one trait which distinguishes the Irish

---

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
character, it is scrupulous adherence to veracity.” Consequently, one can infer that both mendacity and poverty, two traits that will be revisited later in the discussions of the Continental neighbors, were joined in the understanding of the influence of Roman Catholicism.

The influx of working class citizens into the Crystal Palace evoked anxieties around Communism and Socialism, and such anxieties were conflated with those around the growing population of Irish immigrants, who themselves were often casual laborers. Moreover, the association of the Irish with foreign dissidents can be seen as an extension of the belief that they were submissive to a foreign power. If the Roman Catholics follow the will of a foreign prince, what is there to prevent them from blindly following other foreign cries for action? Calls for political and social reform had been fermenting for the past fifteen years, from the growth of the labor movement Chartism to the publication of Karl Marx’s *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Just under a month before the opening of the Crystal Palace, *The Times* reprinted an article from the *New York Weekly Herald* predicting an imminent revolution: “Such a deputation is going out, filled to the brim with all the combustibles of Red Republicanism, Socialism, Chartism, anti-rentism, and all the ingredients of revolution and reform.” However, the labor revolt predicted here was linked to anxieties around the Catholic population. The article notes that, as Great Britain is occupied with the “Catholic question,” an allusion to the perceived papal aggression, it is unable to provide for the starving populations in the manufacturing districts. Likewise, the Irish, in the thoughts of the New York journalist, would jump to support any movement to destabilize England. Although this article stemmed from New York City, not London, the fact that *The Times* found it worthy of republication indicates either an agreement with what it is proposing or a desire to force those ideas into public discourse.

33 Ibid.
34 “American Anticipation of English Revolution (From New York Weekly Herald),” *The Times*, April 9, 1851, p. 8.
35 Ibid.
Fittingly, *Punch* mocks this discursive union of Roman Catholicism with working class revolutionary fervor. In 1851, the magazine included a fake letter from Titus Oates, a seventeenth century figure who had accused the Jesuits of plotting the assassination of Charles II, highlighting new conspiracy theories for the new era. The Catholics have transformed into the Socialists. He writes to inform the readers “of a horrible plot and conspiracy, in connexion with the Great Exhibition, which is in course of being hatched by American, French, and German socialists, not only against the Constitution and the Church, but also against the British people at large.” The fears of poverty that dominate this discourse are linked to concerns about foreigners, for there are apparently no British Socialists in the radical mix. As with any satire, as before explained, it is important to situate the position of the writers of *Punch* on the matter. Although it is easy to deduce that such conspiracy theories were not espoused by the writers themselves, it is evident that they existed and were disseminated enough to warrant parody. The ideological linkage of poverty and Roman Catholicism did, in fact, manifest itself in the actual fears that the unchurched poor might turn to the Roman church. Reverend Richardson writes that ignorance among the working class is dangerous as “a system so unreasonable, so enslaving, as that of the church of Rome can be adopted and valued in a community professedly Protestant.” Such “popery” could attract the working class with “its high assumption of authority, its subtle pliability of adaptation, its specious parade of promised security, its professedly charitable and effectual application of a balm.” In the ranks of urban poor lay the seeds of the destruction of British character.

---

37 John Richardson, *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited; or, an Inquiry into the Condition of Those Industrial Classes Who Have Really Represented England at the Great Exhibition* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1851), 79.
38 Ibid.
Moreover, the linkage between Roman Catholicism and poverty also become manifest in the belief that the Church’s tithing practices deny people of the ability to attain or hold onto wealth. A *Punch* article from 1851 entitled “Conversion to Rome” claimed, only partially in jest, that the Roman Catholic Church sought conversions in order to extract money from new followers. Mr. Punch explains, “Recent examples have led us to believe that, in the conversion of young ladies, it is not the conversion of their souls which is so much desired by Romish priests, as the conversion of their money, which may be lodged in the 34 per Cents, or any of the public funds.”  

The image “Which is the Martyr?” places this critique in an Irish context, and the subtitle reads, “Let the Government inflict the penalty, if they dare, and there is not a Catholic in Ireland but would Subscribe his Penny.”  

(See Appendix G.) The political cartoon presents a dichotomy between a bishop and an Irish couple. The bishop sits at a table with a feast in front of him; the exact food items are unclear, but there is a noticeable bottle of wine in the middle of the table. The bishop himself holds up a glass of wine to give a toast for himself, and passing by him are two servants taking a large dish of fish, steam still emanating from its freshly cooked self, back to the kitchen. The fine tablecloth, curtains, and relaxing chair make him the embodiment of luxury. On the other hand, however, stand two Irish peasants dropping their pennies into a box “for the relief of the persecuted bishop.” Both man and wife are darkened with dirt from labor or squalor, and their clothes are in a ragged condition. The wife carries two children in a sack over her back, and she holds her shoes with her free hand, which could be an indication of her poverty as those who only had one pair of shoes would take them off for long journeys in order to preserve them for special occasions. Surrounding them, although fading into the background, are masses of other peasants, who assumedly have also

---

40 Mark Lemon and others, “Which is the Martyr?” *Punch* 21 (1851): 131.
donated, exemplifying their submissiveness and inability to save money, prosper, and make their own decisions. The Roman Catholic Church, then, has become a threat to the very institution of social mobility, commandeering the money from the peasantry.

Some exhibits at the Great Exhibition, however, challenged the idea of Irish ineptitude. The Royal Commission praised “very neatly executed” examples of Connemara marble from Ireland as well as “perfect” tallow-candles.\(^4\) However, on other occasions, Ireland is viewed as solely a place of cheap labor and resources.\(^2\) Statistics provided by the Royal Commission also challenge the representation of Irish peasantry. The average wages of someone in Ireland itself did not differ that much from those of people in England and Wales. In the reporting by the Royal Commission of the prizes of the Fair, a table describes the average wages received by workers in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Wages for Irish laborers range from 12 shillings to 32 shillings 6 pence whereas in England and Wales the range is from 12 shillings to 30 shillings.\(^3\) Although this does not account for the immigrant population—only the Irish residents—it nevertheless challenges a perception of Ireland as a purely peasant society. Moreover, in an account of the prospects of future industry, the Commission cites the hope that lies in a hard-working Irish population, explaining, “In conclusion with a trained and industrious population, such as largely exists in the north of Ireland and Scotland, possessing a decided aptitude for the employment, and willing to labour for a moderate remuneration.”\(^4\)

Nevertheless, one must note here the specificity with which it refers to the north of Ireland, where the Protestant churches had a stronger hold.

\(^{41}\) Great Britain Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, *Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided* Volume II (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 1241, 1372.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 1015, 1282.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 884.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 1017-8.
The fear of an increased presence of the papacy in England was paralleled with anxieties around the growing Irish population, which gave face to such religious anxieties. As Protestantism defined itself against Roman Catholicism—a faith that had been relegated to the past, the Roman Church must be incompatible with the era of *British*-led progress. Consequently, poverty, one of the most salient counterexamples to national prosperity, became fundamentally linked to Roman Catholicism.
Chapter Five: Nations Gone Awry

The International Spectrum of Religion and Progress

The Great Exhibition, because of its international dimensions, facilitated the entrance of a number of foreign Catholics into British territory—a re-imagination of the perceived papal invasion discussed earlier. France provided the largest number of foreign visitors to England during the months of the Fair—27,236 of the 58,427 total foreigners. Italy and Spain, the two other nations prominently associated with Roman Catholicism, provided noticeably fewer exhibitors. From Spain and Portugal together came only 1,774 guests, and from Italy only 1,489 exhibitors. Although the latter nations had smaller populations overall, the per capita attendance of France exceeded that of Spain and Portugal by a factor of seven and that of Italy by a factor of twelve.1 Nevertheless, these countries played a salient role in the British conceptualization of progress on the European scale. Economic and political stability became the defining characteristics of religion and progress in the British psyche. Italy’s fall from its artistic and commercial heights in the Renaissance and Spain’s fall from its political heights during the sixteenth century were seen as directly linked to their faith; Roman Catholicism had steered them away from a path of progress. France, on the other hand, presented a different case, for it was not on an economic decline but rather on an increasing path of competition with England.

Before its revolution in 1789, France had seen a similar linkage to the papacy as Spain and Italy; however, with the French Revolution came a divorcing of the religious and public spheres and a troubling anxiety across Europe about the idea of an atheist nation. In the British worldview,

---


*For every 10,000 inhabitants of France, there were 7.69 arrivals. The respective numbers for the other nations were 1.13 (Spain and Portugal) and 0.65 (Italy).
whereas slavish devotion to the papacy had derailed Italy and Spain from success, France had gone too far to another extreme; its political instability and revolutionary fervor were viewed as the product of a vacuum of religious influence from a state perspective. In between the two extremes—slavish devotion and atheist turmoil, then, could only lie the religiously-based economic and political stability of Great Britain.

Had the first international exposition been held 400 years prior, there is no doubt that the Italians could have surpassed other Europeans in the quality of their national products. Italy had been at the forefront of the Renaissance, leading in artistic, philosophical, political, and commercial reinvigoration. However, the Italy of the mid-nineteenth century, now plagued by internal strife during a long battle of national unification, looked vastly different from its earlier counterpart. How could a nation fall from such great cultural heights? Religion became the readily available explanation in the context of the Great Exhibition. The tropes that defined the representation of Ireland were also utilized in the construction of perceptions of Italy, and the home of the Roman Catholic Church becomes a Continental religious counterpart against which to define Britishness. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, already established as having an aversion to Roman Catholicism, devoted a lesson in its Great Exhibition collection to Italy amidst the plethora of more technical lessons. Canada, India, and Russia are the only other countries to receive such special treatment, and the former two are British colonies. Italy, then, becomes a curious addition to the schoolbook. As is befitting of the practical value of most lessons, the one on Italy begins with a discussion of Italy’s geography and climate as well as its national industries. However, the lesson delves into more subjective territory when it features a subsection on the national character of Italy. The rhetoric employed for the instruction of children focuses on building a national identity against that of Italy, upon
which they project the attributes—religious, social, and economic—that Britain would want to eschew. The lesson, rife with stereotypes that the manual, in an earlier lesson, claimed the Exhibition would eradicate, teaches more about Britain’s self-image as opposed to any reality of Italy as it functions as a mirror image for Britain.

The sub-lesson begins with a subtle contrast between Italy and Britain: “The Italians were at one time reckoned amongst the most polished and refined nations in the world, but they are now in a very degenerated state.”² Obviously, Great Britain would belong in the grouping of “the most polished and refined nations” of the present period, taking over the preeminence that Italy once had. However, the portrayal of Italy as in a degenerated state is not as important as its explanation for how such a reversal of fortune happened to the Renaissance vanguard. Italy’s national character, the lesson teaches, is defined by “extreme indolence and love of pleasure.” The Italians are admired for their aesthetic and artistic achievements—their exhibits of “great ingenuity and natural ability”; however, the Protestant work ethic that has been rendered as the core of the British identity and prosperity is lacking.³

The lesson also presents Italy as devoid of social mobility, instructing, “The lower ranks form the mass of the Italian population with scarcely any intervening class between them and the nobles.”⁴ The distinction drawn here foregrounds the existence of a middle-class in Great Britain, the presence of which is integral to the promotion of a work ethic. If there is no opportunity or mobility, then there is no foundation for hard work. Such a distinction emphasizes the existence of a middle-class in Great Britain, important to present to the poor

---

² Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected to the Great Exhibition (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852), 96.
³ The Italian fondness for music, painting, and sculpture that is noted in the lesson could be a reference to the Catholic Church, as its permission of images of the divine is the most striking visual distinction with the Protestant churches. The energy devoted to the creation and worship of idols would be seen as diminishing the ability to devote energy to the production of more utilitarian structures. However, the reference to the “good taste” of the Italians implies that this is not the primary concern at hand.
⁴ Notes and Sketches, 97.
children in the classroom. The Italian poverty, as the lesson continues, is a direct “result of indolence.” The teacher, then, is instructed to catalog the ills engendered by poverty—such as begging and theft—which are “all” practiced by the Italians. The lesson continues, “[D]ens of banditti infest many of the roads, which are obliged to be guarded by soldiers, at the distance of every mile, or no one could travel in safety along them. This often leads to assassination, a practice which prevails in no small degree amongst this class. Thus the children will see the numerous evils arising from indolence.”

Essentially, the children were taught that death and personal destruction were the result of a suffering work ethic. The presentation of the misfortunes that arise from a lack of diligence are evocative of scare tactics in the way in which they use jarring and disconcerting images to create a revulsion to poverty. The representation of Italians—children especially—as thieving beggars can be seen as a projection of internal anxieties in England about unrest among adolescents; as the schools of the Society were designed for indigent children, the students could be prone to such activities themselves. Nationalism, then, becomes a tool for the rendering of the children’s Italian counterparts as “other”—as flawed because of their non-Englishness and their Italianness, with its implicit Roman Catholicism.

The cognitive association of indolence with poverty dominates the lesson. The utilization of an imagined contrast with Italian children manifests itself in the realm of physical comfort as well: “Speak of the domestic comfort in English homes—Whence does this arise?—From the industry of the people—By contrasting the character with that mentioned above, draw from the children the kind of homes they would expect to find in Italy.”

There are no drawings or true visual representations of Italian houses here, and one must wonder to what extent the lesson

---

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 96.
planner has seen Italian houses. Nevertheless, this snippet creates the image of Italians living in squalor. “Industry” is the defining trait of the British character, and the faith in industry is instilled into the children with intensity that, if delivered with a harsh tone, could border on fear-mongering—the fear of what could happen to one’s physical well-being were one to become less diligent.

The positive attributes granted to Italy in the lesson on national character can only loosely, if even at all, be seen as compliments, for their main purpose lies in the way they establish a duality between English and Italian identity. The first positive attribute listed is temperance: “Notwithstanding the abundance and cheeriness of wine, intoxication is scarcely known even among the lowest ranks.”

Considering the contemporaneous prevalence of moral tirades against temperance, the reference to Italian sobriety is more aptly considered a critique on the British than a concession to moral worth in Italians. Sobriety takes on a nationalist undertone as well, for if the Italians—already portrayed as inferior beings—can manage such a virtue, then the English would look even worse not to manifest such a quality as well. The other positive attribute that the lesson grants Italy is charity: “Charitable institutions are numerous in the principal cities, from which, as well as from the convents, a great deal of bounty is bestowed upon the multitude of beggars.”

However, this Roman Catholic manifestation of charity is “done indiscriminately” and, according to the lesson, promotes a vicious cycle of poverty and beggary. Charity, in its Italian manifestation, can only loosely be considered a virtue—in such a context, it seems to be more akin to a national failing. The redefinition of charity as a character flaw helps to reinforce the necessity and uniqueness of hard work to social mobility as well as its centrality in the creation of British superiority.

7 Ibid., 97.  
8 Ibid.
The English Monthly Tract Society, another evangelical education-oriented society, more directly attacked the Italian national character, following the style of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge’s school lessons. Their pamphlet “The World’s Great Assembly,” like the lesson, undermined compliments to Italy with acerbic assassinations of character. It began, “[I]f the glow of the sun, the smile of the sky, the jocund vintage, the charm of poetry, the spell of art, the enchantment of music, the grace of manners, the pride of ancient traditions, the pomp of state, or the skill of priestcraft, could exalt a nation, how would you look down upon the sons of the new, northern land to which you come.”

Like Notes and Sketches, this piece highlighted the artistic achievements of Italy (poetry, art, music); however, unlike its more didactic counterpart, this one more directly addressed religion, noting the “pride of ancient traditions,” a reference to Roman Catholic worship, and the “skill of priestcraft.” The use of the word “priestcraft” evokes the association of Roman Catholicism with magic and witchcraft, a critique that had arisen during the Reformation around the Catholic tenet of transubstantiation, i.e. that the Eucharist is transformed into the body and blood of Christ during the mass. Magic, then, becomes a counterpart to the rationality of industry and innovation; a society dependent on spells and witchcraft could not advance properly into the future. Many of the other parts of this passage, however, may seem flattering at first, but any semblance of praise soon disappears: “But no; you lie down there in the dust, and national calamities walk over you.”

It has become long evident that Britain does not find ancient traditions and such “priestcraft” to be conducive to stability and good governance; however, the Tract Society implied that the arts do not work toward the betterment of the nation. As opposed to the more utilitarian products of England, Italian

10. Ibid.
11. A May 15th piece in The Times says of the contrast between Italian and British displays, “Next to them come the Italian States—Tuscan, Roman, and Sardinian—all striving amidst the pressure of more utilitarian industries to
commodities existed in a limited aesthetic sphere. The Tract Society’s solution to the Italian political woes was, unsurprisingly, British Protestantism: “Italy wants what England enjoys — a better inspiration than that of art, and a better guide than that of priestcraft. All the gospels that men preach have been tried — civilization, and arts, and learning […] Let [God’s word] in, and see, in a generation or two, whether Italy will wallow, as she wallows now.”¹² Becoming more like Britain — theologically, that is — could be the only solution to Italy’s national problems.

Although the aforementioned texts belittled and critiqued Italy, the aforementioned author and barrister Samuel Warren overtly snubbed Italy in his poetic tour of the countries at the Great Exhibition, *The Lily and the Bee*. When chronicling the sights at the Fair, Italy — currently in the midst of revolution and nation-formation — was only mentioned as an object of Napoleon’s nostalgia.¹³ Rome, however, becomes the substitute although it gets only cursory mention: “Rome she passed by, and with, methought, averted eye. There, brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings —.”¹⁴ Neither the national productions nor the national character is addressed. The “brooding Darkness” seen in Italy appears to be an oblique reference to the political instability that characterized the ongoing period of revolution and budding nationalism that had dominated the Italian political landscape since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The only direct discussion of Rome by Warren is in reference to the ancient Empire, which is utilized as a foil to the current British Empire. He questions, “Where art THOU, Rome? Still lingering on the earth, in pigmy representative — victim of fate ignoble infinitely far than she thy vanquished rival

¹⁴ Ibid., 35.
perishing in flame! Rome! Carthage!—where all your idle strife, your jealousies—!"\(^{15}\) Rome, both holding its political and religious implications, becomes the epitome of the fallen empire, one whose fall is coupled by Great Britain’s rise.

The relegation of Italy to the past dominates the discourse in the popular press as well. In one of the opening accounts of the Great Exhibition in *The Times*, the reporter chronicles the displays and includes his own moral judgments, “Pass on to Italy, and there see the fine arts still clinging to their ancient home, emasculated by their long separation from liberty and commerce, degenerating from lofty and vigorous conceptions into curious Dilettantism, yet still full of grace and beauty, and recalling occasionally the traces of a nobler inspiration and a happier era.”\(^{16}\) Italy is still granted its right to high aesthetics, but its political and economic situation betokens its downfall. *The Sharpe’s London Journal* also presents Italy as a country dependent on past greatness, reporting, “Italy, like Greece, dreams of the past; she may well do so; let this for the present be her excuse.”\(^{17}\) However, one must not mistake this for an animosity toward Italy; the article follows, “Let us remember the three years, the three iron ages which have ruined this country, formerly blessed by heaven; and wishing it a happier future, let us now quit the Crystal for to-day.”\(^{18}\) Italy, once, like Britain is now purported to be, had been in God’s good graces, but now it is not. Although such a view of divine control over fairs is concurrent with the general beliefs of the times, the loss of God’s favor seen in Italy could also bear a reference to religious difference, with the Protestant countries being those who still hold the favor of God.

Just as Italy presented the visible example of the downward trajectory of a cultural and commercial powerhouse of past centuries, so, too did Spain. The celebration of the imperial

---

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 39-40.
\(^{16}\) “The Great Exhibition,” *The Times*, May 15, 1851, 5.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
success of England is juxtaposed to the waning power of Spain, its great archrival from the sixteenth century. Spain, once competing with and sometimes surpassing England in naval and commercial power, was now on the lesser end of the commercial spectrum of Europe. The English Monthly Tract Society is most direct about this, noting “How splendid his nation was, before it had finally rejected and extinguished the dawning light of the reformation! How poor, and smitten, and mean, has that nation since become!”19 The same tropes found in the representations of Italy are found here: poverty and a degenerate national character as consequences of Roman Catholicism. Moreover, in the implication that Spain’s decline resulted from its adherence to Roman Catholicism lies the implication that England’s success was derived from its Protestantism. In *The Lily and the Bee*, after rejoicing in Queen Victoria’s dominion over Gibraltar in Spain, Samuel Warren reflects, “Then does she muse of Tubal’s progeny? Of dynasties long passed away—Phoenician, Carthaginian, Roman, away: of Vandal, Goth, and Saracen: —Crescent and Cross.”20 In this poem, Spain serves as a case study in the demise of imperial power or, perhaps, of political instability. As the varying dynasties that governed the peninsula faded, so, too, might that of current Spain fade into being merely a figure of the past. The Tract Society also reinitiates such discourse of political instability, linking the Spanish, Portuguese, and French in contrast to the English; only British territories, for their allegiance to and study of the biblical text itself, “witness the safety, the light, the order, the progress, and the repose which denote a prosperous State. How strange that, though wise men try to build up a stable policy, on a religion that shuts out God's free word, yet, be it with the absolutism of Italy, or the constitutionalism of Spain […] such nations do not find tranquility and strength.”21

---

20 Warren, *Lily and the Bee*, 29. According to certain legends, the Iberians were descendants of Tubal, a son of Noah’s son Japheth.
Wisdom and attempts at stability are contrasted with the Roman Catholicism of the country, which, in this construct, leads to the ultimate failure of stability.

_The Times_ also confidently asserted British superiority over Spain. On the opening day of the Exhibition, the newspaper’s account noted that Spain and Portugal are “no longer able to plume themselves on the riches of newly discovered countries.”22 Although this first account of Spain gave it some credit—Spain did, according to the piece, succeed in using its indigenous resources23—a piece two weeks later was less conciliatory. The May 15th review of the Great Exhibition reveled in the downsizing of the former foe: “How are the mighty fallen! This country, which once ruled as wide a dominion as ours […] and sent its Armada called Invincible, in vain to conquer England—this country, with a great historic name, occupies a third-rate space at the Crystal Palace.”24 The schadenfreude exhibited by the writer is enhanced as the passage continues, “The industrial energies of the Spaniards are illustrated by products which indicate significantly the decadence of material wealth. No new springs of healthy enterprise appear, nothing that gives promise for the future.”25 Spain is presented as suffering from both materialism and poverty—two contradictory vices but both rooted in the negative depictions of Roman Catholicism.

Whereas Italy and Spain had been characterized by their economic decline and falls from past glory, France, the current economic rival of Great Britain, could not be painted in such terms, and in the economic realm, it was given some credibility.26 Granted one cannot assume that the royal view filters down into that of the middle-class, however, Prince Albert, the ardent

---

22 “The Great Exhibition,” _The Times_, May 1, 1851, 8.
23 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 It is worthy of note that the ratio of Council Medals won by France at the Great Exhibition was three times greater per exhibitor than the respective ratio for Great Britain. John R. Davis, _The Great Exhibition_ (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999), 165.
internationalist, spoke highly of French contributions to the Exhibition. Three months into it, *The Times* published Prince Albert’s response to a letter of gratitude by Charles Dupin, the President of the French Commission. The Prince Consort expresses his thanks for the “great advantage we have derived from […] your Government having taken care to send so many *chefs d’oeuvre*, the character of which will certainly exercise a happy influence on the sciences and arts of our own and other countries.”

Albert, whether in reality or just in rhetoric, believes that England can benefit from interactions with its historic—one can even say current, as well—rival. *The Times*, for the most part, is in accordance with Albert. While claiming France lacks the “mechanical genius of England” and England’s “utilitarian tendencies,” a *Times* reviewer concedes that French products “touch, if not upon the actual necessities, at least upon the wants, the comforts, and the small luxuries of the million.”

France, although having a history of Roman Catholicism, is not, at least in these cases, linked to poverty; the French were, in fact, economically prosperous.

Samuel Warren continues this conversation about new-found amicable relations with France. He exclaims, “France! noble, sensitive! Our ancient rival! Now our proudly-splendid emulous friend!” Warren takes a strangely laudatory tone towards Napoleon, whose remains had been returned to France in 1840 under the permission of Queen Victoria: “[N]ow upon your spoil, his own loved France, sleepeth NAPOLEON! His ear heard not the wailing peal thrilling through the o’ercharged hearts of his mourning veterans.” Warren appears to sympathize with the French and even with their former leader, against whom the British fought over thirty years prior. Samuel Warren’s sympathy to Napoleon, although it may seem striking to the modern

---

30 Ibid., 32.
audience, might not have been as jarring at the time. Eric Hobsbawm, in *The Age of Revolution*, explained that, as time passed, turmoil became history alone, and the younger generations began to view Napoleon as “a semi-mythical phoenix and liberator.” The promises of a utopia, of a brighter future, are also coupled with Napoleon’s exemplification of one who rises up the ranks of power from merit and perseverance. Moreover, one might assume that Warren has wiped the slate of the troubled past between England and France; however, such proves not to be the case. Before continuing his poetic journey to another exhibit, he speaks of Queen Victoria’s demeanor in the French exhibit: “A sadness on her brow! Thinking, perchance, of royal exiles, sheltered in her realm: it may be of a captive, too, in yours.” In his ever-florid language, Warren manages to foreground the political instability plaguing France in the mid-nineteenth century while having just praised the country.

However, politics, rather than economics, dominate the discussion of France, and England is presented as superior both in terms of overall stability and in terms of liberty. Before the French Revolution, France could have been considered within the same religious stereotype as Italy and Spain; the persecution of the Huguenots in France led to their emigration to France’s welcoming Protestant neighbor, England. However, with the start of the French Revolution in 1789 came the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which ended the establishment of a state church in France, drawing a division between religion and government. Even though British Nonconformists, such as Binney and Birch, decried the existence of a state church, their beliefs did not extend to the removal of religious character from the government. In the British worldview, then, France, although it succeeded in removing the manacles of the

---

33 As of 1851, there were still three uniquely French Protestant houses of worship in England, including one in London. Horace Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales, Abridged Report* (London: George Routledge & Company, 1854), 109, 123.
papacy, had gone too far and, by limiting its religious character, had overturned the foundations of political stability.

The English Monthly Tract Society criticizes such fervor and also places it in a religious context in their publication “The World’s Great Assembly.” The tract asserts, “New institutions are very valuable, when they are the offspring of new men. But leaving men what you find them, and making new institutions, in the hope that they will make new men, is like making handsome boots for cripples, and expecting them to work for a cure.”34 Such an incisively ironic tone manifests a marked distaste for French governance, which, according to the Tract Society, lacks a religious foundation. Christianity—one can infer Protestantism as well—is the way to create new men: “Wherever a dozen men in France, are turned from their sins, to love and service of the Lord Jesus, a greater work is done for future repose and advancement of their country, than when a tyranny is overthrown, and a new order of institutions inaugurated.”35 France had gone from what the Society would have seen as a corrupted Christianity to no Christianity at all, unless reformed, could not see order restored. This image of revolutionary fervor and instability makes France into an ideal subject for Punch as well. The article “Visions in Crystal” from Punch satirizes both the hopes of peace and goodwill for the Great Exhibition while simultaneously mocking the individual participants. Mr. Punch begins, “He beheld the whole of ADAM’s race collected together for the first time since they were scattered on the plains of Shinar—shaking hands together, with JOHN BULL in their midst.”36 This encounter of nations personified effects the elimination of what the British see as the detriments of other national characters. The Frenchmen of the group “appeared demolishing barricades, and founding in their place good institutions—mostly derived from England.”

35 Ibid., 12.
members of this “impetuous nation” also begin to demonstrate respect for authority, “saluting a number of the A Division with great politeness”—a trait assumedly derived from British manners as well. In its attempt at throwing off the chains of the papacy, France, in the British mindset, failed to find a new construction of national character that could still respect authority but introduce liberty and mobility—a balance seen as unique to England.

England’s national virtue of liberty is also defined against that of France, which is seen as a corruption and a weakness. English liberty, considered one of the defining characteristics of the national character, is not dependent on political equality but on the idea of economic mobility. Reverend Richardson decries the motto *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* as nothing but demagoguery, stating, “Let us beware, however, lest we mistake names for things, and delude ourselves by expectations which will not be realized, because we have entertained notions which are confused and ill-defined.” Moreover, he believes that the “foolish struggles after so-called liberty” in the “wretched land” have destroyed the working-class itself: “[T]he aristocracy and gentry of the nation may lose their luxuries, their dignity, their social quiet, and fireside safety—but the workman has lost his all—his very sustenance is gone, and black despair haunts him whom false hope had foolishly flattered and betrayed.”

The upending of hierarchical order, Richardson believes, has wreaked havoc on commerce and industry, trickling down in effect to the laborers, who benefit not from rights but from a thriving industrial society. French notions of liberty lack the solid valuation of mobility and work inherent to that of Great Britain, where the vote was still tied to land ownership. The critique of the perceived divorcing of political and social rights from economic status evokes the aforementioned distaste for Italian modes of

---

37 John Richardson, *The Real Exhibitors Exhibited; or, an Inquiry into the Condition of Those Industrial Classes Who Have Really Represented England at the Great Exhibition* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1851), 53.
38 Ibid., 55.
charity. The lower classes, when helped by Church or State, become the seeds of instability in such a worldview.

The British emphasis on religious liberty indicates that the national prejudices manifested are more deeply rooted in religion than in nationhood. Nonconformist minister George Clayton, in his sermon on the positive effects of the Great Exhibition, asserts that the gathering will render religious persecution illogical. He inquires of the roots of British manufacturing, “What covered the large area of that district called Spitalfields, in our own capital, with the manufactories of the precious material, which has given beauty and splendor to our court, and spread comfort in our cottages? It was the revocation of the Edict of [Nantes].” He emboldens this assertion by saying that to the Protestant expatriates from France: “Britain owes the pre-eminence she has reached, as a great, if not the greatest manufacturing country under the whole heaven.” It appears jarring at first to see the success and imperial greatness claimed by Britain to be imbued with a foreign provenance; however, the Protestant identity shared by the French Huguenots and the British Protestants supersedes that of national affiliation.

An interest in cross-national, especially British-French, Protestant identification is manifested, as well, in the manner in which religious services were provided to visitors. The Bishop of London had established a commission to handle such provisions. Since, by law, only English could be spoken in a church, thirty-three francophone and Germanophone clergyman from the Anglican Church were assigned to hold additional services in unconsecrated or proprietary chapels. The bilingual speakers, according to the *Times*, were “either Frenchmen or Germans by birth, in English orders—or Englishmen well acquainted with the languages of the

40 Ibid., 31.
Continent.”41 The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, by whom the Notes and Sketches were written, also produced publications for the foreign visitors: versions of the Book of Common Prayer with English and French or English, French, and German.42 Unless the visitors from France or Germany happened to be British expatriates, it is highly unlikely that they would follow the Anglican worship service. On one hand, one could view it as an effort in good faith to connect with fellow Protestants in the belief that the Protestant worship services bear enough similarity, united in their lack of Roman Catholic influence. However, it could also carry a more proselytizing tone, one not absent from the Church of England or any of its affiliated societies. The Anglican liturgy, then, would serve to reinvigorate the religion of the French, restoring their faith and their stability.

That Great Britain opened its doors to a diverse array of other peoples and nations did not necessarily imply that there was a blossoming of kindred feeling with the visitors. In an event that was designed to speak to the industrial success of Protestantism, the growth of Roman Catholicism within and the influx of assumedly Roman Catholic visitors from outside foregrounded latent and not-so-latent tensions about national character and stability. Roman Catholicism, be it within England or from abroad, became the foil against which to explain the success of nations. Submission to Rome had led to the commercial declines of Italy and Spain, who no longer had a drive for advancement. However, France, in its attempt to remove its entrenched allegiance to Rome, lost all respect for political and religious authority. Great Britain could stand in the middle ground, decidedly free from links to Rome but still on a firm grounding of the order needed for the sake of national progress.

41 “Additional Church Services,” The Times, April 10, 1851, 5.
42 Ibid.
Conclusion

On October 15, 1851, the last visitors would have the opportunity to tour the world’s productions at the Great Exhibition. Did it achieve the utopian ideals of progress that it set out to realize? At the very least, Prince Albert’s dream of an international exposition of economic goods sparked a wave of World’s Fairs; thirteen more occurred during the rest of the century. London held an exposition again in 1862, but World’s Fairs were hosted by other notable cities such as Paris (1855, 1867, 1878, 1889), Vienna (1873), Philadelphia (1876), and many more. If internationalism was to be the goal of this first World’s Fair, then one can say with confidence that Prince Albert succeeded.

This paper, on the other hand, has grappled with the thesis promoted by the religious and political boosters of the Great Exhibition that increased economic interactions would eliminate prejudices between peoples. When all nations and peoples worked actively for their own self-interest, differences would fall in importance with respect to shared concerns of commerce and growth. However, this progress was tightly linked to an understanding of a Protestant identity, one of autonomy and upward mobility. Great Britain’s industrial success was perceived as one step in a progressive history—one moving toward more industry, more peace, and more piety. The Protestant work ethic was seen as the driving force behind industrialization—so much, at times, that religion and industry became equated in rhetoric. Moreover, the British character became deeply rooted in an understanding of social mobility, the product of such piety-driven diligence. Likewise, liberty, seen as the heart of the nation’s character, was inextricable from such an understanding of social mobility. Great Britain’s prosperity was seen as a product of its religion and all of its accoutrements.
As progress had a specific religious face to it, tension inevitably resulted in the conceptualization of success within other faiths in the domestic and European scale. One can envision the understanding of religion and economic worth in a spectrum. At the center lay the normative Protestant worker, who manifested his ingenuity and diligence for the sake of gain, i.e. for advancement and mobility. To one end lay the image of the Victorian Jew, who worked for the sake of greed, and on the opposite end lay the image of a Roman Catholic who barely worked at all. Appropriately, concomitant to the Great Exhibition, battles were raging in Parliament about the nation’s relationship with both of these religious minorities. The question of whether or not a Jew—Lionel de Rothschild, one of the treasurers of the Fair—could sit in Parliament became a battle over British notions of liberty and Christian identity. The Jews existed in ambiguous space in the world of progress. The most prominent vision of the Jew in England was that of the banker—a role both necessary to the process of economic growth and industrialization but also deeply entrenched in anti-Semitic stereotypes. There were ample Protestant bankers and Jewish inventors, but such realities often did not diminish established perceptions.

The interplay between Roman Catholicism and progress becomes even more complex because of the complicated history of England’s relationship with Roman Catholicism. The year before the Great Exhibition, the papacy had reestablished a territorial hierarchy in Great Britain, an act that sparked anxieties for British Protestants who defined themselves—and their idea of progress—against the papacy. Within England itself, anxiety around Roman Catholicism centered around the Irish, whose presence in England itself had been growing rapidly. The Irish, seen as utterly submissive to the papacy, became the antithesis of progress, for without autonomy over thought or action, they could not contribute to industrial growth or ingenuity. Rather,
trained in submission, they might also submit to other foreign discontents, further destabilizing
the nation.

This understanding of religion and progress as it related to Roman Catholicism also
provided the tools to understand prosperity on a European scale. Had the Exhibition been held a
few centuries prior, Italy and Spain would have been at the vanguard of commerce and power;
however, they were only second-rate nations in the Crystal Palace. In their blind submission to
the papacy, seen from the British perspective, they brought about their own downfall. France,
one of the greatest contributors to the Exhibition and one of Britain’s primary economic
competitors, had previously been tightly linked to the papacy. In its revolutions it had thrown off
the binds of Rome, but in doing so, it failed to supplant Roman authority with any other religious
foundation for society. France became the poster child for the instability that results from
moving too far away from religion. Great Britain could position itself as the happy medium—
free from the bondage of Rome but firmly rooted in a pious national character.

Because the definition of progress promulgated in religiously-tinged discourse around the
Great Exhibition was intrinsically linked to Protestantism, it inevitably could not be an all-
encompassing model. One can infer that the Great Exhibition did create a boon for industry—
spurring competition between the nations and accelerating the path toward industrialization. One
can also infer that it could have had some influence on peace—perhaps the economic
competitiveness helped curb national aggression from a military perspective as a pan-European
power struggle would be deferred for sixty years. However, when it comes to the eradication of
prejudice—that core principle for the creation of that acclaimed progressive brotherhood of man,
change cannot be so easily achieved.
Mark Lemon and others, “Peace!—a Sketch from the Crystal Palace,” 22.
Appendix B

THE DEALER IN OLD CLOTHES

TEACHING THE YOUNG IDEA HOW TO STEAL.

Mark Lemon and others, “The Dealer in Old Clothes,” 25.
Mark Lemon and others, “The Thin Edge of the Wedge,” 207.
WHICH IS THE MARTYR?

"Let the Government inflict the penalty, if they dare, and there is not a Catholic in Ireland but would subscribe his Penny."

Mark Lemon and others, “Which is the Martyr?” 131.
Primary Sources


Birch, Henry. *Church Establishments: or, the Evils Resulting from the Union of Church and State*. London: John Snow and Company, 1869.


*Evangelical Christendom*. “Evangelical Alliance.” August 1, 1856.

— — —. “The Third Jubilee of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.” June 1, 1851.


Great Britain Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. *Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition was Divided*. Volume II. London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1852.


*Leader*. “What the Great Exhibition Will Do for Us.” February 8, 1851.

———. “Progress at the International Exhibition.” April 26, 1851.


———. “The Army at the Great Exhibition.” *Punch* 20 (1851): 64.


Cohn 106


———. “Mr. Punch’s Review of the Session.” *Punch* 20 (1851): 84.

———. “Pictures for the Great Exhibition of Industry.” *Punch* 20 (1851): 42.


———. “Visions in the Crystal.” *Punch* 20 (1851): 188.


———. “Which is the Martyr?” *Punch* 21 (1851): 131.


Mayhew, Henry. *1851 or, The Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys who Came up to See London to “Enjoy Themselves, and to See the Great Exhibition.”* London, 1851.

Notes and Sketches of Lessons on Subjects Connected with the Great Exhibition. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1852.


———. “The Prince Consort Can Take the Credit.” February 23, 1850.


“American Anticipation of English Revolution (From New York Weekly Herald).” April 9, 1851.

“Additional Church Services.” April 10, 1851.

“The Great Exhibition.” May 1, 1851.

“London, Friday, May 2, 1851.” May 2, 1851.


“Prince Albert and the Great Exhibition.” August 14, 1851.


Secondary Sources


*New York Times*. “Rev. Dr. John Stoughton Dead.” October 26, 1897.


