American enthusiasm for individual religious experience has often resulted in missionary outreach and social reform. Focusing on the Reformed Protestant tradition that helped shape American culture, this chapter shows how American Protestants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came to see benevolence as the chief manifestation of Christian virtue. The chapter also describes the criticism of missionary arrogance that developed within missionary circles in the early twentieth century, and the emergence belief that while education, economic assistance, healthcare, and other forms of philanthropy were appropriate Christian endeavors, attempts to destroy other religions were not. The chapter points to this development in missionary thinking, and to social gospel tradition in liberal American Protestantism more generally, as a precursor of the liberation theology promoted by Catholic activists in the late twentieth century.

Terminology, Myth, and Tribes

William M. Shea

This chapter begins with an explanation of the enmity between American evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics, which can be traced back to colonial period. It then discusses scholarly literature on evangelical-Catholic relations, and analyzes three myths: the Protestant myth,
Roman Catholic myth, and the Enlightenment myth. An overview of the chapters in this volume is also presented.

Reinhold Niebuhr and Protestant Liberalism
David A. Hollinger

in After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History

Published in print: 2013 Published Online: October 2017
DOI: 10.23943/princeton/9780691158426.003.0011
Item type: chapter

This epilogue offers a historical perspective on the career of Reinhold Niebuhr, the most acclaimed intellectual within a distinctive American Protestant generation: the generation that brought the tradition of Protestant liberalism to its greatest moments of public authority, and then presided over that tradition's decline in relation to secular dispositions on the one hand and evangelical sensibilities on the other. Niebuhr's career displays the fissures and fusions that constitute much of Protestant liberalism's struggle to define its own relation to the United States and its various component parts. At issue, often, has been to what extent the faithful should make common cause with, or against, people who do not profess Christianity at all, or who profess the wrong kind. Those fissures and fusions have been propelled by many immediate historical conditions, but also by a variety of often conflicting senses of how Protestant Christianity can best accommodate the Enlightenment.

Fanny Crosby and Protestant Hymnody
Edith L. Blumhofer

in Music in American Religious Experience

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: May 2008
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195173048.003.0013
Item type: chapter

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) was the most prolific author of texts for hymns throughout American history. This chapter surveys the vast range of her contributions to American hymnody, and interprets the complex meanings within such that she has come to play such a critical role in the shaping of language for American hymnody. Though blind, Crosby collaborated extensively with hymn composers and compilers, such as William Bradbury, developing both an individual style and displaying sensitivity to the ways in which images and texts would appeal to the
broadest cross-section of American Protestants. She chose the language of her hymns from the revivals of her youth and the changing immigrant populations of New York City in her adult life. Her life and work embodied many different aspects of American religious experience, and her hymn texts shaped the canon and aesthetics of sacred song, particularly evangelical song, from the 19th century into the 21st century.

¡Ya Basta! Latino/a Protestant Activism in the Chicano/a and Farm Workers Movements

Paul Barton

in Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States

This chapter examines the responses of los Protestantes in the US Southwest to the Chicano/a and farm worker movements, illuminating their role in the public arena during the last thirty-five years. The primary goals are: firstly, to highlight the catalytic ability of a cadre of Chicano/a “mainline” Protestant leaders to move their churches and ecclesial organizations to endorse and support the Chicano/a and farm worker movements in Texas from the 1960s until the early 1980s; and secondly, to examine the three basic responses of Latino/a Protestants to these social justice movements (solidarity, ambivalence and indifference, and opposition). As the Chicano/a Protestants led their church co-faithful into the public struggle of these popular movements, they caused a realignment of loyalties among a number of “mainline” Latino/a Protestants. Ethnic affiliation became as important to them as their denominational affiliation. Additionally, they promoted a theological understanding of the Gospel that embraced the oppressed and viewed the kingdom of God as a goal to strive for in contemporary society.

Rivalries Redoubled: Americans in the Levant

Jennifer M. Dueck

in The Claims of Culture at Empire's End: Syria and Lebanon under French Rule

This chapter considers American involvement during the war years. Unlike Britain, the USA had a sizeable social and cultural network in
Syria and Lebanon, owing mainly to the work of American Protestant missions. This strong educational presence provided the American government with an institutional framework around which to develop stable long-term cultural networks. Moreover, the USA's reputation for political disinterestedness and anti-imperialism endeared it to much of the local population. Where the British used direct contact between their military officials and the French teaching establishments to hinder French cultural activities, American influence on education took place through grass-roots activism and diplomatic intervention. The ties that American educators had fostered with the local population for decades provided a foundation for powerful bilateral exchanges during the Second World War.

Prologue
Paul C. Gutjahr

in Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: May 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199740420.003.0000
Item type: chapter

The Prologue argues for the importance of Charles Hodge in nineteenth-century American Protestantism through his publications (including forty years as the editor of the Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review) and his fifty-six year career as a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. It is impossible to fully understand the current shape of American Presbyterianism, American Calvinism, and much of twentieth-century Protestant Fundamentalism without carefully studying the theological influence of Charles Hodge.

Crusading for an American Protestant Commonwealth (1800–60)
Robert T. Handy

in A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada

Published in print: 1976 Published Online: October 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198269106.003.0007
Item type: chapter

In the years from 1800 to 1860, the population of North America increased from about 5 million to more than 31 million. The natural increase was supplemented by immigration, chiefly from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia. The great migration to the west
that had begun soon after the Revolution increased markedly. In the context of the expansion in territory and population, there occurred many dramatic and tumultuous events of American religious history, which led to realignments in the nation's religious forces. The revivalism of the Second Great Awakening brought great changes into American Protestant life — under its influence some denominations burgeoned into giants, others were brought into promising existence, while still other churches divided under the strain. The new measures and the voluntary societies, missionary, educational and reform impulses, and the churches and slavery are specifically described. A significant realignment of Protestant strength had taken place; the patterns of revivalism and its concomitants left their mark in church and society. By 1860, many of the prestigious figures in national life were outspoken supporters of evangelical faith.

The Religion of Conservative Christians

in The Truth about Conservative Christians: What They Think and What They Believe

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: March 2013
DOI: 10.7208/chicago/9780226306759.003.0002
Item type: chapter

This chapter analyzes survey data to organize a sketch of Conservative Christianity as a religious system. It concludes that the Conservatives and Afro–American Protestants both embrace a systematic religious heritage, one that they can legitimately claim is an authentic updating of the Reformation. The central issue is the Bible as sole rule of faith. Once Mainline Protestantism began to equivocate about Genesis it compromised with modernity and lost its authenticity. Most elements of faith and practice that have been considered here point to differences between Bible religion, as espoused and practiced by the Conservative and Afro–American denominations, and the Bible-liturgical hybrid that is Mainline Protestantism. Over and over it was found that a scale composed of the three solas—scripture, faith, and grace—accounted for between 60 and 99 percent of the differences between Conservative and Mainline Protestants. Conservative Christians and their Afro–American partners in faith are the real dissenters in America—some, no doubt, more than others. Dissent permeates their core beliefs, their worldviews, their morality, their relationships with God, and their devotions. It is not a fashionable dissent but rather a stern, consistent, and determined dissent.
How did a thirteenth-century Italian friar become one of the best-loved saints in America? Around the nation today, St. Francis of Assisi is embraced as the patron saint of animals, beneficently presiding over hundreds of Blessing of the Animals services on October 4, St. Francis's Catholic feast day. Not only Catholics, however, but Protestants and other Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and nonreligious Americans commonly name him as one of their favorite spiritual figures. Drawing on a dazzling array of art, music, drama, film, hymns, and prayers, Patricia Appelbaum explains what happened to make St. Francis so familiar and meaningful to so many Americans. Appelbaum traces popular depictions and interpretations of St. Francis from the time when non-Catholic Americans "discovered" him in the nineteenth century to the present. From poet to activist, 1960s hippie to twenty-first century messenger to Islam, St. Francis has been envisioned in ways that might have surprised the saint himself. Exploring how each vision of St. Francis has been shaped by its own era, Appelbaum reveals how St. Francis has played a sometimes countercultural but always aspirational role in American culture. St. Francis's American story also displays the zest with which Americans borrow, lend, and share elements of their religious lives in everyday practice.

In the wake of the Mexican–American War, competing narratives of religious conquest and re-conquest were employed by Anglo American and ethnic Mexican Californians to make sense of their place in North America. These “invented traditions” had a profound impact on North American religious and ethnic relations, serving to bring elements of Catholic history within the Protestant fold of the United States' national history as well as playing an integral role in the emergence of the early Chicano/a movement. Many Protestant Anglo Americans understood their settlement in the far Southwest as following in the footsteps of the colonial project begun by Catholic Spanish missionaries. In
contrast, Californios—Mexican-Americans and Chicana/os—stressed deep connections to a pre-Columbian past over to their own Spanish heritage. Thus, as Anglo Americans fashioned themselves as the spiritual heirs to the Spanish frontier, many ethnic Mexicans came to see themselves as the spiritual heirs to a southwestern Aztec homeland.

The Immaculate Conception and the Elevation of the Feminine, 1855–1860s

Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez

in The Valiant Woman: The Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century American Culture

Published in print: 2016 Published Online: September 2016
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on the gender rhetoric that emerged in the Immaculate Conception debate. In articles, editorials, and pamphlets, American Protestants publicly stated their beliefs and fears about the meaning of Mary’s womanhood and objected to the dogma in explicitly gendered language. An analysis of this rhetoric reveals that the implications of the doctrine for Mary’s public function as an exemplar of Christian womanhood was a factor in the sectarian debate over Immaculate Conception theology. The chapter also explores popular visual depictions of Mary in art books, art exhibitions, lithographs, magazine illustrations, and other reproductions and examines the gender characteristics transmitted by these Marian images.

The Last Puritans

Margaret Bendroth

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
Item type: book

Congregationalists, the oldest group of American Protestants, are the heirs of New England's first founders. While they were key characters in the story of early American history, from Plymouth Rock and the founding of Harvard and Yale to the Revolutionary War, their luster and numbers have faded. But this critical history of Congregationalism over the past two centuries reveals how the denomination is essential for understanding mainline Protestantism in the making. The book chronicles how the New England Puritans, known for their moral and doctrinal rigor, came to be the antecedents of the United Church of Christ, one of the most liberal of all Protestant denominations today. The
demands of competition in the American religious marketplace spurred Congregationalists, the book argues, to face their distinctive history. By engaging deeply with their denomination’s storied past, they recast their modern identity. The soul-searching took diverse forms—from letter writing and eloquent sermonizing to Pilgrim-celebrating Thanksgiving pageants—as Congregationalists renegotiated old obligations to their seventeenth-century spiritual ancestors. The result was a modern piety that stood a respectful but ironic distance from the past and made a crucial contribution to the American ethos of religious tolerance.

The Fervent Embrace
Caitlin Carenen

When Israel declared its independence in 1948, Harry Truman issued a memo recognizing the Israeli government within eleven minutes. Today, the United States and Israel continue on as partners in an at times controversial alliance—an alliance, many argue, that is powerfully influenced by the Christian Right. This book chronicles the American Christian relationship with Israel, tracing first mainline Protestant and then evangelical support for Zionism. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, American liberal Protestants argued that America had a moral humanitarian duty to support Israel. Christian anti-Semitism had helped bring about the Holocaust, they declared, and so Christians must help make amends. Moreover, a stable and democratic Israel would no doubt make the Middle East a safer place for future American interests. The book argues that it was this mainline Protestant position that laid the foundation for the current evangelical Protestant support for Israel, which is based primarily on theological grounds. Drawing on previously unexplored archival material from the Central Zionist Archives in Israel, the book tells the full story of the American Christian–Israel relationship, bringing the various “players”—American liberal Protestants, American Evangelicals, American Jews, and Israelis—together into one historical narrative.
A Larger Vision
David Mislin

in Saving Faith: Making Religious Pluralism an American Value at the Dawn of the Secular Age

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: August 2016
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines a failed campaign in the early twentieth century to reunite Protestantism and Catholicism into a single Christian church. Despite the small number of supporters for Christian unity, their efforts provide crucial insight into the liberal Protestants' engagement with religious diversity within Christianity. By imagining a universal church, advocates of unity suggested that there were no points of disagreement within Christianity that could not be overcome. Newman Smyth and other advocates of unity attempted to use the spirit of national solidarity during World War I to encourage support for their cause. Ultimately, the campaign for unity achieved little; yet, it reflected American Protestants' shift in their views regarding religious pluralism. Many liberal Protestants who rejected the calls for unity did so because they saw nothing wrong with different forms of belief and practice within a divided Christianity.

Racial Insularity and Ethnic Faith
Jerry Z. Park

in Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion among the Latino and Asian American Second Generation

Published in print: 2012 Published Online: March 2016
Item type: chapter

This chapter talks about how Korean American Protestant students at elite universities are more likely to maintain ethnic solidarity and group identity because of hybridized ethnoreligion. In the racialized university environment, Korean Americans are lumped with other Asian Americans in programs and studies. In choosing which campus organizations to attend, Korean American students have organizational options already based on ethnicity, accepting these racialized and ethnic identities as “the way things are.” The chapter's findings reveal that not only are Korean Americans more Protestant and religiously observant than their fellow Asian Americans are, but their churches are also more likely to be racially insular compared to other minorities. This insularity stems from a
worldview that unifies Korean and Protestant identities. This merging of ethnic and religious identities is a process of hybridization that takes on uniquely American characteristics.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez

in The Valiant Woman: The Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century American Culture
Published in print: 2016 Published Online: September 2016
Item type: chapter

This chapter treats the 1854 declaration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary as Catholic dogma. The process leading up to and culminating in the declaration received detailed (and often biased) coverage in the United States’ press. The proclamation, Ineffabilis Deus, intensified and publicized an intractable theological disagreement between Protestants and Catholics. Its culmination surprised many American Protestants: with its strong affirmation of Catholic theological distinctiveness, it was a step away from conciliation. The debate that followed the proclamation offers a unique window onto popular understandings of Mary’s role. The chapter examines the broad outlines of Protestant anti-Catholic attacks and on Catholic apologetics for the doctrine, the reception of the doctrine by both communities, and the role that Mary played in signifying religious identity.

A Focus on Christian Experience
Kristy Nabhan-Warren

in The Cursillo Movement in America: Catholics, Protestants, and Fourth-Day Spirituality
Published in print: 2013 Published Online: July 2014
Item type: chapter

This chapter shows how mainline American Protestants had heard enough about the Catholic Cursillo weekend to be convinced that they had to experience the three days for themselves. What they were hearing was exciting and intriguing; Catholic friends and relatives talked about changed lives, new relationships with Christ, improved marriages, and, generally speaking, new outlooks on life as a result of their weekend experience. American Catholic cursillistas spoke with enough conviction and passion that they inspired Protestants from a
variety of traditions to seek out and make a Catholic Cursillo. In the 1960s and 1970s, Protestants were able to make a Catholic Cursillo weekend in the Diocese of Peoria. It was a small group of Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian laymen and women who, moved by their experiences during their Catholic Cursillo weekends, formed their own movements based directly on the Catholic Cursillo method.

Charles Hodge
Paul C. Gutjahr

One is reminded of just how fickle a mistress Fame can be when considering how the renown of certain historical figures only grows with time, while the reputations of countless others fade in the light of posterity. The luster of Charles Hodge’s fame has dimmed since his death in 1878. Whatever judgements exist, the truth remains that in the life of Charles Hodge one finds a stunning panoramic view of nineteenth-century Protestantism. His story touches many, if not all, of the most critical developments in American Christianity of his era, and it is impossible to deny that he exercised a profound influence in his day with lasting consequences after his death. American Presbyterianism, American Calvinism, and much of twentieth-century Protestant Fundamentalism are deeply indebted to Hodge’s theological thinking. This book offers the first biography of Hodge to appear in one hundred and thirty years. Thus, this work stands as the only modern synthetic work of his entire life and thought, and it is built upon the conviction that few Americans can match the depth, breadth, and longevity of Hodge’s theological influence. There are few figures better able to help one appreciate the immensely powerful and hugely complex nature of conservative American Protestantism in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries than the deeply pious, keenly intelligent, and yet largely forgotten Charles Hodge.

Conversion and “Community” in Amazonia
Robert W. Hefner

in Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation

Published in print: 1993 Published Online: May Publisher: University of California Press 2012
This chapter describes the new cosmology of comunidade, or “community,” in Amazonia. It also considers how the Culina Indians have responded to two different forms of missionization, one Catholic, the other Protestant. In particular, it addresses the work of two of the principal missionary groups, the American Protestant Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the Brazilian Catholic Conselho Indigenista Missionário, in the discussion of the Culina. CIMI missionaries have initiated several projects among the Culina, all of which have so far failed to stimulate interest or villagewide support. Culina become distinctly uncomfortable in multiethnic or pan-Indian contexts. SIL saw literacy as a means to deliver the Word of God to individuals.