

shall not be supported by the state. When religious and intellectual culture are divorced, is it strange that we have a harvest of crime? When, under the sanction of the highest powers, punishments are ridiculed as well as denounced, is it strange that the arm of parental authority is weakened, and the master finds his law without a penalty? Is it strange that our juvenile courtesy, is of that Doric sort which expresses itself in "Yes and No," "I will and I won't"? Is it strange that we have such a harvest of rebellion and crime? One of the reformers of this day said in a lecture in New York, that he had no hope of the clergy, none of the church; but his hope was in the lyceum and the common school. Before the lyceum last winter, in this city, a course of atheistical lectures were given. We see what is to be done with the schools, and what the hope is. Soon Christians will have to consider the question, whether a mere intellectual education with no moral basis is worth the having? Already the question has been before the Presbyterian church of the United States, whether the time has not come when they must establish schools of their own, in which moral training will be blended with intellectual, and the Bible be allowed in schools.

From causes such as I have named, has this harvest of crime sprung up. And while we boast of our common schools as the glory of our land, let us beware that they do not become our shame. Even now, in our best schools in this city, insubordination and licentiousness abound. They are developed in the circulation of obscene French prints in school, and in the efforts of girls in school to corrupt their associates.

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#### HORACE MANN ANSWERS THE REV. MATHEW HALE SMITH

(1847) From *Sequel to the So Called Correspondence Between the Rev. M. H. Smith and Horace Mann, Surreptitiously Published by Mr. Smith; Containing a Letter from Mr. Mann, Suppressed by Mr. Smith, with the Reply Therein Promised* (Boston, 1847), p. 46.

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I leave you for a moment, Mr. Smith, in order to address a few considerations to those who think that *doctrinal* religion should be taught in our schools; and who would empower each town or school district to determine the *kind* of doctrine to be taught. It is easy to see that the experiment would not stop with having half a dozen conflicting creeds taught by authority of law, in the different schools of the same town or vicinity. Majorities will change in the same place. Ony sect may have the ascendancy, to-day; another, tomorrow. This year, there will be three Persons in the Godhead; next year, but One; and the third year, the Trinity will be restored, to hold its precarious sovereignty, until it shall be again dethroned by the worms of the dust it has made. This year, the everlasting fires of hell will burn, to terrify the impenitent; next year, and without any repentance, its eternal flames will be extinguished,—to be rekindled forever, or to be quenched forever, as it may be decided at annual town meetings. This year, under Congregational rule, the Rev. Mr. So and So, and the Rev. Dr. So and So, will be on the committee; but next year, these Reverends and Reverend Doctors will be plain Misters,—never having had apostolical consecration from the Bishop. This year, the ordinance of baptism is inefficacious without immersion; next year one drop of

water will be as good as forty fathoms. Children attending the district school will be taught one way; going from the district school to the town high school, they will be taught another way. In controversies involving such momentous interests, the fiercest party spirit will rage, and all the contemplations of heaven be poisoned by the passions of earth. Will not town lines and school district lines be altered, to restore an unsuccessful, or to defeat a successful party? Will not fiery zealots move from place to place, to turn the theological scale, as, it is said, is sometimes now done, to turn a political one? And will not the godless make a merchandise of religion by being bribed to do the same thing? Can aught be conceived more deplorable, more fatal to the interests of the young than this? Such strifes and persecutions on the question of total depravity, as to make all men depraved at any rate; and such contests about the nature and the number of Persons in the Godhead in heaven, as to make little children atheists upon earth.

If the question, "What theology shall be taught in school?" is to be decided by districts or towns, then all the prudential and the superintending school committees must be chosen with express reference to their faith; the creed of every candidate for teaching must be investigated; and when litigations arise,—and such a system will breed them in swarms,—an ecclesiastical tribunal,—some Star Chamber, or High Commission Court, must be created to decide them. If the Governor is to have power to appoint the Judges of this Spiritual Tribunal, he also must be chosen with reference to the appointments he will make, and so too must the Legislators who are to define their power, and to give them the Purse and Sword of the State, to execute their authority. . . . The establishment of the true faith will not stop with the schoolroom. Its grasping jurisdiction will extend over all schools, over all private faith and public worship; until at last, after all our centuries of struggle and of suffering, it will come back to the inquisition, the fagot and the rack!

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**PETITION OF DETROIT CATHOLICS FOR SCHOOL FUNDS (1853)** From  
Michigan Board of Public Instruction, *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*  
(1853), pp. 190-91.

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**W**e, the undersigned, citizens of Michigan, respectfully represent to your Honorable Body, that we have labored, and are still laboring under grievances to which neither Justice nor Patriotism require longer submission on our part, without an effort for their removal.

We, your petitioners, wish to represent to your Honorable Body, that notwithstanding the Constitution guarantees liberty of conscience to every citizen of the State, yet our Public School laws compel us to violate our conscience, or deprive us unjustly of our share of the Public School Funds, and also impose on us taxes for the support of schools, which, as a matter of conscience, we cannot allow our children to attend.

To convince your Honorable Body of the magnitude of these grievances, we have but to refer you to the fact, that in the cities of Monroe and Detroit alone, there are educated at the expense of their parents, and charitable contributions, some 2500 of our children. Your petitioners might bear longer their present

grievances, hoping that our fellow-citizens would soon discover the injustice done to us by the present School laws, and that the love of public justice for which they are distinguished, would prompt them to protest against laws which are self-evidently a violation of liberty of conscience, a liberty which is equally dear to every American citizen; but, as the new Constitution requires that free schools be established in every district in our State, and as the present Legislature will be called upon to act upon the subject, your petitioners consider that their duty to themselves, their duty to their children, and their duty to their country, the liberties of which they are morally and religiously bound to defend, as well as their duty to their God, require that they apprise your Honorable Body of the oppressive nature of our present School laws, the injustice of which is equalled only by the laws of England, which compel the people of all denominations to support a church, the doctrines of which they do not believe.

Your petitioners would not wish to be understood as being opposed to education; on the contrary they are prepared to bear every reasonable burden your Honorable Body are willing to impose on them, to promote the cause of education, providing that our schools be free indeed. But they do not consider schools free when the law imposes on parents the necessity of giving their children such an education as their conscience cannot approve of. But that your Honorable Body may not be ignorant of what they understand by free schools, your petitioners wish to say that in their opinions, schools can be free only, when the business of school teaching be placed on the same legal footing as the other learned professions, when all may teach who will, their success depending, as in other cases, on their fitness for their profession, and the satisfaction that they may render to the public; that in all cases the parent be left free to choose the teacher to whom he will entrust the education of his child, as he is left to choose his physician, his lawyer, etc.; that each person teaching any public school in the State should be entitled to draw from the public school fund, such sums as the law might provide for every child so taught by the month, quarter, or otherwise, on producing such evidence as the law might require in such cases. Schools established on such principles are what your petitioners understand by free schools.

Your petitioners, therefore, respectfully urge that the public school system, for our State, be based on these broad democratic principles of equal liberty to all, allowing freedom of conscience to the child, who also has a conscience, as well as to the instructor and parent. And your petitioners will ever pray.

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**MICHIGAN BISHOP SAMUEL A. McCOSKRY'S OPPOSITION TO THE CATHOLIC PETITION (1853)** From Michigan Board of Public Instruction, *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (1853), p. 205.

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**T**he undersigned is the Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Michigan: He has learned from the public newspapers, and from petitions about to be presented to your honorable bodies, that an application is to be made for a division of the school fund of this State, so that "in all cases the parent be left free to choose the teacher to whom he will entrust the education of

his child." Such application (if granted) he considers as giving the right not only to parents, but to every religious body, to select teachers who will teach the peculiarities of the religious views of opinions they may hold. It will place the school fund of this State in the hands of religious bodies or sects, and entrust to them the education of the children of the State; for the right, if given to one, will be claimed by each and all. Whatever opinion the writer may entertain in reference to the system and effects of the common-school education, he begs leave to say, that he has no wish or desire to interfere with, or in any way alter, or abridge the system which has been the pride of the State, and which has furnished to so many thousands of her children the means of obtaining a high secular education; nor does he wish that the fund so generously granted to the people of the State, and so carefully guarded by her Legislature, and so highly prized by her citizens, should be used for the promotion of sectarian strife and bitterness.

It is one of the distinguishing features of our free institutions, and one which lies at the foundation of happiness and freedom of the people, that neither religious tests nor religious preferences form any part of our legislation. All religious bodies are placed on precisely the same footing, and whatever may be the exclusive claims of each and all, they can be settled only by an appeal to a higher and different authority than State legislatures. But if your honorable bodies see fit to overturn and destroy that system which has been heretofore so carefully guarded, and which has introduced into every occupation and profession, some of the most distinguished men of the State, and which has brought to the door of the poor man the means of educating his children; and if the Priests and Clergymen of every religious body are to take the place of the common-school teacher, and the State is to assume the duty, through them, of extending and building up religious differences, and of fomenting strife and contention, then, the undersigned (most reluctantly) would claim to have a share in this work. If then such a change is to be made in our common-school law, so as to allow parents to choose teachers for their children, the undersigned would respectfully ask for his proportion of the common-school fund, so that the people entrusted to his spiritual oversight may employ such teachers as will fully carry out their religious preferences. He would freely and frankly state to your honorable bodies that the amount thus granted, shall be carefully used in teaching the principles and doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and that the services of as many clergymen and laymen of the Church will be secured and used, so that no other principles and doctrines shall find any place in the different schools.

# EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

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