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"In Ten Years There Is an Increase of 450 Priests of Antichrist": Quantification, Anti-Catholicism, and the *Bulwark*

Miriam Elizabeth Burstein

Abstract The Scottish Reformation Society's *The Bulwark* (1851–present) was the Victorian era's most influential anti-Catholic periodical, a reputation based on its self-proclaimed devotion to "facts." Attempting to counter a unified Catholic Church in a period of pronounced intra-Protestant conflict, the *Bulwark* sought to root religious controversy in the increasingly popular phenomenon of statistical inquiry. The *Bulwark*'s obsession with collating and interpreting religion-based numbers was unique not for its existence, but for its sheer extent. It thus exemplifies how "official" statistical documents, methods, and conclusions were translated into the concerns of popular religious culture. In particular, the *Bulwark*'s ongoing surveys of Catholicism's "progress," intended to frighten Protestants into action, weaponized statistical discourses that were used in more measured fashion elsewhere. To that end, the *Bulwark* argued that only Protestants had the right mindset to put religious statistics into a proper explanatory framework, whereas Catholics manipulated their own data for dishonest rhetorical purposes that the *Bulwark* disclaimed. The *Bulwark*'s statistical turn, which bypassed the sectarianism of its theological articles, positioned it as a voice uniting the interests of all Protestant readers against Parliament's dangerously tolerant brand of liberalism.

In the nineteenth century, popery was progressing, or so any number of books, chapters, articles, lectures, and tracts would have you believe. In the years immediately after Catholic Emancipation in 1829, everyone from the evangelical Edward Bickersteth to the High Church Walter Farquhar Hook worried about Roman Catholicism's global progress. Of course, "progress" was difficult to define, as the Protestant Association admitted; it took its own stance on "facts, and facts alone," which it thought sufficient to awaken a torpid Protestant public.[1] These facts appear to have been insufficient, for in July 1851, shortly after the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England, a new monthly magazine, the *Bulwark; or Reformation Journal*, prefaced its first issue with a warning: "Some of our readers may be disposed to smile at the apparent hopelessness of such a project, and fold their hands to sleep, but this will only prove how little they know of Popery, of human nature, of history, and of the actual progress which this mysterious system is

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[1] "The Progress of Popery," *Publications of the Protestant Association* 1 (1839): 3.

making."[2] In other words, how little they knew of the facts. This monthly was the brainchild of the newly formed Scottish Reformation Society, and it is the only religious periodical of the nineteenth century to survive to the present day. The *Bulwark* sought to clarify the meaning of Catholicism's "progress" at greater length and in more "factual" detail than any other polemical publication of the nineteenth century. Its strategy: to *count*.

And to count meant yoking religious controversy to the increasingly popular discipline of statistics. Religion and statistics had long been conjoined in British thinking. At a practical level, until the founding of the General Records Office in 1836, the Established clergy were responsible for maintaining the registries of births, marriages, and deaths, all essential for any quantitative study of the population. Questions about population were connected early on with the Bible and its injunctions about growth.[3] Such questions would soon extend to the missionary field, as was the case with early missionaries to Tahiti, who were charged with counting the people as well as with converting them.[4] As this use of clergy and lay missionaries suggests, statistics in the early to mid-nineteenth century were neither produced by nor intended for specialists, but were the domain of gentlemen (and gentlewomen) with sufficient intellectual culture; it helped that the statisticians in mid-Victorian Britain were biased against complex mathematical operations when it came to construing and tabulating numerical data.[5]

Tom Crook has argued that, by mid-century, "statistics constituted an essential part of the public sphere and could be used, quite systematically, to critique and assess government." In other words, the "epistemological disinterest" associated with the "gentlemanly" nature of statistical studies enabled its practitioners to engage in political "critique" while being outside parliamentary politics per se.[6] Statistics such as those derived from the census allowed citizens to "come to an agreement about true states of affairs and their respective positions within them."[7] Yet the *Bulwark*'s statistical turn intersects with mid-Victorian tensions about the relationship between collecting statistics and using them. As William Jacob explained in the first issue of the *Transactions of the Statistical Society of London*, "[a] more general diffusion of accurate knowledge regarding the public affairs would tend to check that excitement and party spirit which has often been created by misrepresentation or exaggeration, and has produced annoyance to the government, and at least a

[2] "Introduction," *Bulwark; or Reformation Journal* 1, no. 1 (July 1851): 1–2, at 1.

[3] David V. Glass, *Numbering the People: The Eighteenth-Century Population Controversy and the Development of Census and Vital Statistics in Britain* (London, 1978), 24–25; Edward Prince Hutchinson, *The Population Debate: The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston, 1967), 365–66.

[4] Alison Bashford and Joyce E. Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population* (Princeton, 2016), 155–56.

[5] John M. Eyler, *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farrar* (Baltimore, 1979), 18–19, 199–200; Kathrin Levitan, *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning The Multitude in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 2011), 5–6; Theodore Porter, "Statistics and the Career of Public Reason: Engagement and Detachment in a Quantified World," in *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and the People in Modern Britain, c. 1800–2000*, ed. Tom Crook and Glen O'Hara (New York, 2011), 32–50, at 38.

[6] Tom Crook, "Suspect Figures: Statistics and Public Trust in Victorian England," in Crook and O'Hara, eds., *Statistics*, 165–84, at 173, 172.

[7] Edward Higgs, "The State and Statistics in Victorian and Edwardian Britain: Promotion of the Public Sphere or Boundary Maintenance?," in Crook and O'Hara, eds., *Statistics*, 67–83, at 72.

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temporary dissatisfaction in the public mind."[8] Jacob argued that statistics offered "an impersonal view" that might produce "a shared understanding of the phenomena under consideration."[9] Situating the numerical data outside of party politics, though, was difficult. While the Statistical Society of London initially attempted to keep its data presentation entirely free of party, other statistical organizations insisted on situating their work within political contexts.[10] In both cases, the numerical data, when properly collected, remained at the level of "facts," understood to be value-neutral, and as Lorraine Daston puts it, "severed from theory, and sheltered from the imagination"; the difference lay in whether the facts should simply be tabulated as such, leaving their use to official channels, or whether the facts should be interrogated for their political import by the statistician, who would use them to advocate for social change.[11] Moreover, such statistical work was inseparable from thinking about progress in the first place. Talal Asad has argued that the modern theory of progress not only "presupposes the continuous use of comparative statistics" but also "is in great measure the product of statistical practices": analyzing progress across both time and space relies in part on the statistician's ability to reduce people and objects to numerical abstractions.[12] Scholars of statistics as rhetoric have observed that the turn to numbers is an attempt to eliminate individuals (through addition, averaging, and so on) in pursuit of more manageable groups. Quantification supplanted "the value of personal narrative" with stratified categories; it was never about a person, only about people conceived of as potentially interchangeable, comparable units.[13]

Although nineteenth-century statistical inquiry and rhetoric initially seem orthogonal to the question of anti-Catholic sentiment, the *Bulwark*'s obsession with statistics was in fact a key route into translating even the most salacious anti-Catholic stereotypes into facts. Indeed, the journal sold itself on the basis of "facts." In 1851, the *Bulwark*'s Edinburgh publisher, James Nichol, advertised several testimonials praising the journal, including one from the evangelical politician Sir Culling E. Eardley that celebrated it for supplying "facts—modern facts"; in 1860, Nichol

[8] William Jacob, "Observations and Suggestions Respecting the Collection, Concentration, and Diffusion of Statistical Knowledge Regarding the State of the United Kingdom," *Transactions of the Statistical Society of London* 1, no. 1 (1837): 1–25, at 1.

[9] Jean-Guy Prévost and Jean-Pierre Beaud, *Statistics, Public Debate and the State, 1800–1945: A Social, Political and Intellectual History of Numbers* (London, 2012), 23.

[10] Libby Schweber, *Disciplining Statistics: Demography and Vital Statistics in France and England, 1830–1885* (Durham, 2006), 97–102; Michael J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Modern Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research* (New York, 1975), 82–83. See also Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning*, trans. Camille Naish (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 173–75; and Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago, 1998), 304–5.

[11] Lorraine Daston, "Fear and Loathing of the Imagination in Science," *Daedalus* 127, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 73–95, at 91.

[12] Talal Asad, "Ethnographic Representation, Statistics, and Modern Power," *Social Research* 61, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 55–88, at 78; U. Kalpagam, *Rule by Numbers: Governmentality in Colonial India* (Lanham, 2014), 12–13.

[13] Sandra Sherman, *Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline of Paternalism* (Columbus, 2001), 101; Kalpagam, *Rule by Numbers*, 140.

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was still hewing the same line, informing potential buyers that even Catholics were unable to argue with the *Bulwark*'s facts.[14]

And getting the facts right was important, for many mid-Victorian Protestants feared that Catholicism was poised to strike at the very heart of the nation. In the wake of Linda Colley's *Britons*: *Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (1992)—which argued that "Britishness" was held together, in part, by mobilizing the Protestant majority against a potentially deadly Catholic threat—scholarship on popular anti-Catholic tropes has focused on the many ways in which polemicists turned Catholicism into a foreign invader that threatened to undermine both nation and empire. The Roman Catholic Church's transnational organization threatened the British nation's sovereignty; its celibate clergy and nuns took direct aim at the British cult of domesticity; its ritual appeared to encourage sensual pleasures that undermined the self-control necessary for commercial success; and its confessional seemed to tear apart the hierarchy of relationships within the household.[15] This article traces not the *Bulwark*'s traffic in such stereotypes in and of itself, then, but instead asks how the *Bulwark* used statistical rhetoric to make those stereotypes seem rooted in an empirical reality beyond theological polemics. The journal simultaneously made Protestants the arbiters of all things factual related to Catholics, and it denied that those facts were being determined on Protestant grounds. More assiduously than any other contemporary publication, it sought to make disparate anti-Catholic arguments cohere by supplying readers with a quantitative basis for its qualitative claims.

It was this drive to turn stock tropes into facts grounded in numbers that made the *Bulwark* stand out. As the *Original Secession Magazine* declared in 1864, the *Bulwark* was especially notable for its statistics, which were "invaluable as an index of Popish progress, and record of our national guilt in striking hands with Antichrist."[16] Combined with the *Bulwark*'s longevity and popularity, the sheer extent of its statistical turn makes it an exemplary case study in how the growing popularity of statistics opened up new arenas for popular theological debates. Although Lawrence Goldman has argued that statistical reform movements enabled their proponents to sidestep the Scriptures and the "appeal to conscience," the case of the *Bulwark* indicates that mid-Victorian constructions of statistical data as neutral ground could be wielded in order to make theological arguments under the guise of scientific ones.[17] The *Bulwark*'s persistent interest in pinning down precise Catholic numbers illuminates, for example, why George Croly suddenly took time in a sermon to enumerate exactly how many monastic institutions, bishops, and churches

[14] "The Bulwark, or Reformation Journal," *Brechin Advertiser and Angus and Mearns Intelligencer*, 14 October 1851, 3; "The Bulwark, or Reformation Journal," *Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland*, n.s., 5 (September 1860): xxiv.

[15] See, for example, Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge, 2004); Maureen Moran, *Catholic Sensationalism and Victorian Literature* (Liverpool, 2007); Patrick R. O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge, 2006); Diana Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses: The Case of Charlotte Brontë* (Houndmills, 2005); Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies: Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge, 2006).

[16] Unsigned review of *Bulwark*, *Original Secession Magazine* 6, no. 7 (March 1864): 421–22, at 421.

[17] Lawrence Goldman, "Statistics and the Science of Society in Early Victorian Britain: An Intellectual Context for the General Record Office," *Social History of Medicine* 4, no. 3 (December 1991): 415–34, at 428.

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existed throughout Britain and its colonies; why, at the end of the century, a controversial novelist elected to have his characters suddenly drop into dialogue about current Catholic statistics; or even why, across the Atlantic, the Nativist novelist Julia McNair Wright (herself familiar with and promoted by the *Bulwark*) made her Catholic characters anxiously discuss how a Protestant was wielding statistics against them.[18]

The magazine's statistical imperative illuminates three key aspects of how numbers worked in anti-Catholic polemic: who could engage in statistical inquiry; what that inquiry suggested about the threat Catholicism posed; and how statistics provided a new way of thinking about Protestantism as a whole. The *Bulwark*'s strategy insisted that only Protestants were capable of drawing accurate conclusions from numerical data. One of these conclusions related to the omnipresent threat of Catholic "progress," which cast Protestants in the role of an incipient, endangered minority—an approach that turned the reader's attention away from potentially divisive theological disputes and toward Catholicism's social effects, and especially crime. From all these statistical inquiries, the *Bulwark* hoped, the very divergent interests that made up nineteenth-century "Protestantism" might be consolidated into one.

MOVING TOWARD ONE ANOTHER: DENOMINATIONAL STRUGGLES

The Scottish Reformation Society was launched in December 1850 with two key policy goals: opposing the resurgence of Roman Catholicism in the United Kingdom following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England earlier that year and protesting the ongoing Maynooth Grant, which provided government funding for Catholic seminaries in Ireland. From the beginning, the Scottish Reformation Society understood its political advocacy in terms of a Protestant rather than denominational identity, even though it was dominated by members of the Free Church and opposed by some prominent members of the Scottish Episcopal Church's High Church branch.[19]

The *Bulwark*, though, was part of the Scottish Reformation Society's project to establish a pan-Protestant, anti-Catholic national voice, motivated by both British politics and the new visibility of Catholics in Scotland itself. By mid-century, the Highland Catholic minority had been augmented by a substantial urban population of at least "150,000 or roughly 19.3 per cent of Scotland's 2,890,000 people," driven by waves of Irish immigration—a new visibility that caused considerable anxiety among Protestant observers.[20] Besides its affiliation with the Scottish Reformation Society, it also served as the "unofficial organ" of the other leading anti-Catholic

[18] George Croly, *Papal Rome. The Principles and Practises of Rome Alike Condemned by the Gospel. A Sermon* (London, 1849), 5; Zuinglius, *Who Will Win? A Story of the Crisis of Today* (London, 1899), 153, 279–80; Unsigned review of "Secrets of the Convent and Confessional," *Bulwark*, n.s., 2, no. 3 (September 1873): 57–60; Julia McNair Wright, *Secrets of the Convent and Confessional: An Exhibition of the Influence and Workings of Papacy upon Society and Republican Institutions* (Cincinnati, 1876), 165.

[19] "About the Scottish Reformation Society," *Scottish Reformation Society*, http://www.scottishreformationsociety.org/about-the-scottish-reformation-society/; Patricia Meldrum, *Conscience and Compromise: Forgotten Evangelicals of Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Carlisle, 2006), 189.

[20] S. Karly Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church: Catholicism, Gender, and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Manchester, 2010), 1.

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society, the predominantly Anglican Protestant Alliance.[21] In conception, it was one of the religious periodicals that attempted to "replace the 'secular' press for their readers" by "imitat[ing] the new patterns of periodical journalism," with the sole goal of aggregating and disseminating anti-Catholic news.[22] Its editorial line was alarmist, warning readers that "the secular press in Britain was really under the control of Jesuits and blasphemous infidels and could not be trusted."[23] The journal included one or two woodcuts per number plus a long feature article or editorials, short articles (some reprinted from elsewhere), news squibs, book reviews, correspondence, and religious verse. Articles were rarely more than two pages long (four or five being unusual) and most one or less; such conciseness resulted from the journal's policy of liberally excerpting from other publications while facilitating similar treatment in turn.

This approach paid off in subscribers, although precise figures are unavailable. The journal itself claimed thirty thousand subscribers at the end of its first year, a respectable number for a single-topic religious monthly; in 1860, *Blackwood's Magazine* had ten thousand and the *North British Review* two thousand.[24] Estimating the journal's later career, however, is difficult because of its multiple distribution vectors. For example, the Scottish Reformation Society's annual report for 1859 mentioned that everyone who subscribed 10s. or more to the society received the *Bulwark* and that it intended to make gratuitous copies available for proselytization; in 1865, it reported that seventeen thousand issues had gone out to the 10s. subscribers, with some additional issues sent to MPs.[25] The society's entry in the *Christian Year Book* for 1868 indicated that it had distributed "nearly 19,000 numbers" of the journal but did not break that down into subscribers, free copies, and so forth.[26] Similarly, clergymen and domestic missionaries also purchased the *Bulwark* for proselytization work or membership benefits, as was the case at the Islington Protestant Institute, which reported buying "[a]bout twenty-four dozen copies monthly" for its members—which alone would have been more than three thousand copies per year.[27] (A few years earlier, the *Bulwark* itself claimed that the number was eight hundred.[28])

The journal highlighted the importance of Protestant interdenominational cooperation for its purposes. Anti-Catholic periodicals were given to "editorial

[21] Denis G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, 1992), 188.

[22] Patrick Scott, "Victorian Religious Periodicals: Fragments that Remain," in *The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1975), 325–40, at 327.

[23] Frank H. Wallis, "Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain: Theory and Discipline," *Journal of Religion and Society* 7 (2005): 1–17, at 6.

[24] "Preface," *Bulwark* 1 (1852): v–vi, at vi; Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago, 1957), 394; Walter E. Houghton, "Victorian Periodical Literature and the Articulate Classes," *Victorian Studies* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 389–412, at 394.

[25] *Popery: Its Progress and Position in Great Britain, and the Relative Duty of Protestants; Being the Ninth Report of the Scottish Reformation Society* (Edinburgh, 1860), 4–5; "Scottish Reformation Society," *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh), 17 March 1865, 2.

[26] *The Christian Year Book, Containing a Summary of Christian Work, and the Results of Missionary Effort throughout the World* (London, 1868), 139.

[27] J. A. Wylie, ed., *Ter-Centary of the Scottish Reformation, as Commemorated at Edinburgh, August 1860* (Edinburgh, 1860), 286.

[28] "Islington Protestant Institute," *Bulwark* 3, no. 33 (March 1854): 235–36, at 235.

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self-advertisement," and following that trend, the *Bulwark*'s editors were prominently advertised on the first issue's masthead.[29] Three members of the *Bulwark*'s original eight-person editorial board, James Begg (1808–1883), William Cunningham (1805–1861), and Thomas M'Crie the Younger (1797–1875), were clergymen in the Free Church of Scotland. The remainder of the board, also clergymen, included members of the Congregationalist (William L. Alexander), Anglican (David Thomas Kerr Duncan), Wesleyan Methodist (Robert M. Macbrair), Scottish Episcopalian (William Stevenson), and United Presbyterian (Andrew Thomson) denominations. The editorial board thus theoretically presented a united evangelical front, linking members of Established and would-be national churches with Dissenters in their crusade against popery. This strategy allied the journal with other contemporary attempts to achieve "'unity in diversity'" in order to combat Roman Catholicism, a program that from the start was "fractured by theological and ecclesiological tensions, notably over the doctrine of eternal punishment and the legitimacy of slave churches, and by the problem of slavery in the United States."[30] Certainly, the editorial board's composition was a Protestant broad church: Wesleyan Methodism did not share the Free Church of Scotland's Calvinism, and Congregationalists, whose congregations were self-governing, disagreed about church hierarchy with the Anglicans and Episcopalians. The *Bulwark*'s editorial board was thus both symbolic and strategic: even though the members of the editorial board represented denominations that did not get along particularly well, their presence on the board of the same journal performed the existence of an *essential* Protestantism that could withstand the challenges posed by Roman Catholicism, which prided itself on its unity under a single head.

To that end, the lead article in the April 1852 number claimed that the various Protestant Alliances indicated a new movement "*towards one another*" of disparate Protestant groups, thanks to their common enemy.[31] This fiction of unity was further maintained by the combination of mostly unsigned articles (many by Begg) and the collage of texts reprinted from elsewhere, suggesting that all (good, evangelical) Protestants across the United Kingdom and in the United States together produced the journal's content. Jon Klancher has suggested that anonymous publishing practices in early Victorian journals constructed the appearance of "an essentially authorless text"; here, though, the journal's reliance on reprints foregrounded a multiplicity of authors speaking in the same evangelical voice.[32] That being said, the *Bulwark* invested much time in complaints that Protestants were never sufficiently unified. "There would not be much difficulty, however, in baffling them [the Catholics]," one writer said, somewhat plaintively, "if all Protestants were united in their resolution to do so."[33] And indeed, such dreams of Protestant togetherness were fragile, not least because the Church of

[29] Josef L. Altholz, "Anonymity and Editorial Responsibility in Religious Journalism," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 180–86, at 181.

[30] John Wolffe, "A Comparative Historical Categorisation of Anti-Catholicism," *Journal of Religious History* 9, no. 2 (June 2015): 182–202, at 192.

[31] "Protestant Organization of Great Britain," *Bulwark* 1, no. 9 (April 1852): 245–47, at 245.

[32] Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison, 1987), 51.

[33] "Popish Tactics in Parliament," *Bulwark* 9, no. 109 (September 1859): 57–59, at 58.

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Scotland felt that the Scottish Reformation Society was trampling on its own territory.[34] Given that Begg himself would later be responsible for making matters unpleasant during the protracted negotiations in the 1860s over uniting the Free Church with the United Presbyterians, the claims for unity here retrospectively look somewhat ironic.[35]

Although the board members were listed alphabetically on the masthead, Cunningham (then head of New College, Edinburgh) was initially singled out as "Revising Editor." However, by 1855, Cunningham had moved to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, and it was the rather cantankerous Begg, a strict Calvinist and leading figure in the Disruption, who ran the *Bulwark* alongside his other publishing endeavors, like the newspaper the *Watchword*.[36] At the turn of the twentieth century, one bibliographer noted that the journal's greatest success and greatest influence both coincided with his watch, which ended in 1872.[37] Begg brooked no quarter about his anti-Catholic sentiments, which dated to his ministerial training, when he opposed his teacher Thomas Chalmers's pro-Emancipation leanings.[38] According to his Victorian biographer, Begg gloated that, "although he wrote most uncompromising articles, and published in every issue equally uncompromising ones by others, and although the Romanists were constantly on the watch, they never found an opportunity of bringing one action of libel against him"—a boast reminiscent of his publisher's advertising.[39] Indeed, in one of his most popular books, the *Handbook of Popery*, Begg wholeheartedly argued that the "Papal system" was Antichrist, and that the Roman Catholic Church's newfound flourishing in Britain and elsewhere was a sign of the imminent apocalypse.[40] Begg was a premillennialist—a believer that the second coming would occur prior to the beginning of the millennium rather than after it—and this millenarian attitude animated the *Bulwark*'s editorial line for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Toleration was not just a minor secular matter; it endangered the entire country's prospects for salvation. The journal took such a firm stance on Roman Catholicism that it found the profoundly anti-Catholic clergyman and novelist Charles Kingsley—the man whose calumnies against John Henry Newman led to the writing of the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*—to be much too attracted to popery for their liking![41]

Much of the journal's ire was directed at the liberal policies of successive parliamentary administrations, which Begg felt were promoting the Catholic threat. As Michael Wheeler has reminded us, the very term "'[l]iberalism' is a notoriously slippery word" when it comes to religious controversy, and the *Bulwark* associated

[34] John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829–1860* (Oxford, 1991), 249.

[35] Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland, 1843–1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), 323–29.

[36] Sandy Finlayson, *Unity and Diversity: The Founders of the Free Church of Scotland* (Fearn, 2010), 103, 174.

[37] W. J. Couper, "A Bibliography of Edinburgh Political Literature," *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 2nd ser., 3 (June 1902): 182–84, at 182.

[38] Finlayson, *Unity and Diversity*, 160.

[39] Thomas Smith, *Memoirs of Rev. James Begg, D.D.*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1885–88), vol. 2, http://www.nesherchristianresources.org/JBS/ebooks/begg_memoir/CS.html.

[40] James Begg, *A Handbook of Popery, or Text-Book of Missions for the Conversion of Romanists: Being Papal Rome Tested by Scripture, History, and Its Recent Workings* (Edinburgh, 1842), 11, 298.

[41] "The Reverend Charles Kingsley at Bury St. Edmunds," *Bulwark* 10, no. 117 (March 1861): 231–33.

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liberalism almost entirely with toleration, whoever was doing the tolerating.[42] ("Its force is not abated by any impotent Liberalism," as one newspaper reviewer summed up the *Bulwark*'s approach to politics.[43]) Thus, "liberalism" referred at various times to Conservative, Whig, and Peelite administrations who made concessions to Catholics. "It is absolute folly," trumpeted a report on anti-Catholic campaigner Hugh Stowell, "to speak of liberal principles in connexion with the support of a system of the basest slavery which ever cursed the earth, and a system, every step of whose progress in Britain is a step toward the overthrow of all our privileges, civil and sacred."[44] Repeated attacks on government action—or inaction—were a hallmark of the *Bulwark*'s editorial line and were directly connected to its interest in statistics: the journal represented itself as a singular evangelical Protestant voice countering both the official political sphere and dangerously liberal Protestants. This attitude motivated many of the *Bulwark*'s statistical excursions, which asked its readers to look away from interdenominational disputes and toward the more pressing questions raised by something less divisive: the numbers.

RELIGIOUS QUANTIFICATION AT MID-CENTURY

By the 1850s, both clergy and lay Christians were invested in publishing and reading statistics about the activities of their own denominations at home and abroad. On the one hand, statistical publications invited communal identification among members of disparate denominations, who could read annual tabulations of their numerical growth, their charitable endeavors, and their physical presence. Thus, Richard Gilbert's *Clerical Guide, and Ecclesiastical Directory* (1st ed. 1829), in addition to identifying Anglican clergymen and their livings, also provided comparative tables of revenues; similarly, the annual *Catholic Directory* provided statistical information about clergy, populations, chapels, and (after 1850) dioceses. Periodicals like *Baptist Magazine* published statistical abstracts from the latest registers or almanacs.[45] On the other hand, missionary statistics simultaneously quantified the otherwise highly disparate nature of non-Christians, and encouraged the reader to believe in the possibility of remedying the numerical imbalances between Christian and non-Christians; that is, they both established boundaries and promised that such boundaries, via conversion, were always porous, with the prospect of "future perfect success" tantalizingly in view.[46] For example, W. B. B.'s *Statistics of Protestant Missionary Societies, 1861* (1863) tabulated the numbers of clergy, buildings, and schools in each country, accompanied by narrative context.

A frequent word in W. B. B.'s vocabulary was "progress," whether in relation to the doctors whose work had "greatly facilitated the progress of the Gospel" or the

[42] Wheeler, *Old Enemies*, 246.

[43] "Notices of New Publications," *North Devon Journal* (Barnstaple), 3 November 1853, 6.

[44] "The Rev. Hugh Stowell," *Bulwark* 2, no. 15 (September 1852): 63.

[45] See, e.g., "Statistics," *Baptist Magazine for 1843*, no. 35 (1843): 24–25.

[46] Joseph Mullens, *Revised Statistics of Missions in India and Ceylon. Compiled at the Request of the Calcutta Missionary Conference* (London, 1853), 6. But by contrast, Tim Rowse and Tiffany Shellam, "The Colonial Emergence of a Statistical Imaginary," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 4 (October 2013): 922–54, at 923, 944, and 952–53.

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surprisingly "rapid progress" of missionaries in Fiji.[47] Compiling numbers translated local cultural and religious differences among various indigenous peoples into equivalent units (non-Christians) that could, in turn, be transformed into something entirely different (Christians). And, of course, W. B. B.'s purpose in disseminating missionary data was fundraising: he noted that, even though "the annual accumulation of wealth in Great Britain has been at the lowest estimate about sixty million sterling," only about a "little more than half a million is spared for Christian Missions to the Heathen"—a transparent call for donations but also a reminder that the reader could become an *agent* in the onward march of Christian numbers.[48] Such statistical enthusiasm extended even to children's missionary publications, such as a report for the *Children's Missionary Newspaper* that listed the major missionary societies and their total incomes. Ironically, the half-million that W. B. B. would regard over a decade later as scandalously low here became a call to "bless God for such cheering news."[49] But the *Children's Missionary Newspaper* was making the same point: by quantifying incomes, the journal also quantified the "works" that evangelicals consisted the necessary fruit of faith. Even children might participate in what otherwise seemed to be an adult-Protestant project.

The *Bulwark*'s publishing history, however, began within just a few months of an even larger-scale act of religious quantification: the Census of Religious Worship, covering England and Wales, conducted under the auspices of Horace Mann at the General Register Office. The census took place on one Sunday, 30 March 1851, tabulating results based on church attendance rather than declared religious affiliation, and was published in 1854, becoming a surprise instant best seller.[50] The clergy, who were responsible for the questionnaires, generally cooperated, but some nevertheless resisted whether because they regarded it as an intrusion on their private business or because they thought that the method itself was fatally flawed. Nor did they appreciate the General Register Office's lack of clarity when it came to the instructions.[51] Moreover, some laypeople were worried that the census would be invasive, while Anglicans, conscious that Dissenters had different attendance patterns (including at *both* Established church and Dissenting chapel), were afraid of a plot to attack the Establishment's prerogatives.[52] Observers then and historians now have agreed that the Anglicans were correct in one respect: the way that results were tabulated "favoured the Nonconformists," inadvertently ensuring that 1851 was the first and last time that a census of religious worship would be taken.[53]

[47] W. B. B., *Statistics of Protestant Missionary Societies, 1861* (London, 1863), 10, 69.

[48] Ibid., 4.

[49] "The May Meetings," *Children's Missionary Newspaper*, June 1850, 54–55, at 55.

[50] K. D. M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), 28.

[51] John Wolffe, *The Religious Census of 1851 in Yorkshire* (York, 2005), 7–8; Keith Geary, ed., *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 2014), 3–6; W. S. F. Pickering, "The 1851 Religious Census: A Useless Experiment?," *British Journal of Sociology* 18 (1967): 382–407, at 385–86.

[52] Levitan, *Cultural History*, 86. On privacy, see ibid., 89, 91–94. Pickering, "The 1851 Religious Census," 386. See also David M. Thompson, "The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities," *Victorian Studies* 11, no. 1 (September 1967): 87–97, at 87–88, 95.

[53] Cullen, *Statistical Movement*, 69; Pickering, "1851 Religious Census," 394–95. See also Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 42–44.

The Catholic presence in the census was relatively limited, although it suggested steady upward growth. Between 1841 and 1853, religious houses increased from seventeen to eighty-eight, of which seventy-three were convents, and the number of priests had risen from 557 to 875.[54] Moreover, the number of sittings in Catholic places of worship had grown by 87.2 percent between 1824 and 1854.[55] The Catholic attendance totals for all three services on census Sunday came to 240,792, 51,406, and 73,232, respectively, bearing in mind that some of the attendees would have been at more than one service. (Some Protestants, aware that the attendance numbers would have been skewed by multiple services, estimated Catholic totals purely from sittings; however, as contemporaries pointed out, many Catholics stayed on their feet throughout services, so calculating from sittings artificially deflated the numbers.[56]) Despite the increase in accommodations and numbers, Catholics remained a distinct minority. In comparison, for example, the Established Churches of England and Ireland had counts of 2,371,732, 1,764,641, and 803,141 at all three services, and the Wesleyan Methodists (just the Original Connexion alone) had 482,753, 376,202, and 654,349.[57]

From a biblical point of view, census taking appeared to run the risk of incurring God's wrath by repeating David's sin of numbering the people (2 Sam. 24:10). This theological problem gave rise to the census-day sermon, a genre not confined to 1851. Census-day sermons both reminded congregations that it was their civic duty to fill out the forms and also encouraged them to translate the act of responding to the queries into religious meditation.[58] Thus, R. G. Baker urged his audience to meditate on the significance of the ten-year intervals and to ask themselves, "do they find us at the close of them living more closely to Him; more desirous of His favour; more afraid of His displeasure; and adorning more, in our life and conversation, the gospel of His own dear Son?"[59] For Baker, census taking provided believers an opportunity to locate themselves on their spiritual journey toward God; in the greater scheme of things, Baker warned, God was the true statistician, whose "numbering" would far outdo in consequence anything associated with this "mere periodical census of a single kingdom" ultimately doomed, like everything else, to dust.[60] Three decades later, a contribution to the *Homiletic Quarterly* by W. Binnie of Aberdeen struck a note both exasperated and apocalyptic: "There are still some people—not many, let us hope—who have a scruple about filling up the Census papers. They are haunted with an apprehension that there is something wrong—something dangerous—about the business."[61] Binnie's reminder—that census taking in itself was not sinful but that it *could* be regarded as a type of God's census at the Day of

[54] [Horace Mann], *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Religious Worship. England and Wales. Report and Tables* (London, 1853), ci–cii.

[55] Ibid., clxxviii.

[56] Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 38, 174.

[57] Mann, *Census*, 106–7.

[58] Paul Dobraszczyk, "'Give in Your Account': Using and Abusing Victorian Census Forms," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 1–25, at 15–16.

[59] R. G. Baker, *The Spiritual Improvement of the Census. A Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of All Saints, Fulham, 30th March, 1851* (London, 1851), 9.

[60] Ibid., 20.

[61] W. Binnie, "The Numbering of the People. (A Homily for the Census Day)," *Homiletic Quarterly* 5 (1881): 27–28, at 27.

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Judgment or treated as a warning against the sins of pride and greed—echoed the conclusions by clergymen as varied as the Anglican George Allen and the famed Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. For Allen, God was the one "always taking His census," in whose "never-failing memory … your name, age, dwelling, and true description, are all noted down. He is spying out all our ways"; even more dramatically, Spurgeon urged his audience to remember that God would take his census of the saved to "*show to Satan his ultimate defeat*."[62] In eschatological context, the kinds of statistical information available to believers and non-believers alike paled in comparison to God's counting of the sinners and the saved, which was actually joyous (or damning) confirmation of what He already knew.

If the census "not only allowed people to assert themselves as members of groups within the nation and as members of the national body itself but also encouraged them to differentiate themselves from others around them," then the ways in which the formal procedure could be appropriated for spiritual self-reflection suggests other possibilities, too[63]—ways of thinking about communal belonging, ways of positing new identities for the future, and ways of wondering about limits to the knowledge about one's community. Certainly, some mocked the habit of quantifying religious communities: one brief Unitarian satire from 1840 poked fun at the *Congregational Almanac*'s number-mongering by pointing out that its calculations suggested that "686,000,000" souls were currently doomed to eternal damnation.[64] Such quantification both excluded others from "Christian" community and intruded on God's prerogative to make up His own mind. But this reminder that God's knowledge was opaque to fallen humanity sat alongside more immediate questions about statistics and belonging, especially questions posed by the Census of Religious Worship itself. For the census clarified that not only had the Church of England subsided, in Frances Knight's terms, "from State Church to denomination" but that Protestantism itself was split into finer and finer shards.[65] Horace Mann himself argued that amid the "ostensible confusion and diversity" there was still an "essential harmony" uniting all the churches.[66] Such optimism could hardly be shared by a High Churchman like Frederick Samuel Bolton, who, contemplating the results of the census a few years on, noted with horror that there were about "20 different denominations" that, he sighed, "may ere long diverge and split asunder."[67] Was there a Christian community—or communion—to which believers might belong, or were there merely ever-multiplying alternatives, undermining the divine mandate that there be only one, true church?

[62] George Allen, *The Numbering of the People. A Sermon Delivered in Connection with the Census of 1861, Preached in St. Thomas' Church, Islington, on Sunday Evening, April 7* (London, n.d.), 22; C. H. Spurgeon, "The Last Census. A Sermon Delivered on Sunday Morning, April 14th, 1861," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 7, nos. 381–82 (April 1862): 273–80, at 279. On Allen, see Dobraszczyk, "'Give in Your Account,'" 15–16.

[63] Levitan, *Cultural History*, 6.

[64] "By Whom Will Heaven Be Tenanted?," *Christian Reformer, or, Unitarian Magazine and Review* 7, no. 74 (February 1840): 97–101, at 99.

[65] Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 18.

[66] Mann, *Census*, cxvi.

[67] Frederick Samuel Bolton, *Christian Unity. A Sermon Preached in St. Mary's Church, Stafford, at the Visitation of the Ven. the Archdeacon of Stafford, May 22nd, 1855* (London, 1855), 19.

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Such multiplicity of denominations extended to the multiplicity of statistical data itself, which posed another set of equally worrisome problems: Who were trustworthy publishers of statistical data? Who had access to the data? Who evaluated it? And, a rhetorician might add, how was it possible to make the results "appear independent of the speaker and thus a fact rather than an interested account"?[68] As we have already seen, Catholics emerged as a distinct but growing minority in the Census of Religious Worship, which simultaneously assuaged and elevated anxieties about the Catholic population. Certainly, Catholics were aware that "numbers can be used to construct a host of narratives and that they can resonate in dangerously unpredictable directions," and they reflected on the consequences of being turned into objects of statistical inquiry by the Protestant majority.[69] In 1839, the *Dublin Review* attacked one English Protestant for the errors that he made regarding crime statistics in both England and Ireland, to the detriment of Irish Catholics; their own comparative statistics, they claimed, proved that Catholicism was far better for "national virtue" than Protestantism.[70] Later, along similar lines, the liberal Catholic journal the *Rambler* launched a two-pronged attack on the Census of Religious Worship itself. Its first article on the topic denounced Protestant journalists for deliberately underestimating the Catholic population by deriving the total Catholic population from the number of available sittings. Worse still, the Protestants' Catholic undercount, which could have subverted anti-Catholic discourse about popery's threat to the nation, was instead weaponized in order to avoid "lowering the market, and diminishing the profits of the retail trade in bigotry and slander."[71] Protestant journals and journalist were not merely bad statisticians but also interested ones, profiting from the anti-Catholic panics they stoked. Pointedly, the *Rambler*'s follow-up rejected quantification altogether, replacing the abstractions of religious populations with choice anecdotes of Protestant moral degeneracy. "This is the result," they sneered, "of 'open Bible,' of suppressing, as far as massacre and penal laws could suppress, the Catholic Church, of stealing her revenues, of spending upwards of five millions a year on the Establishment, of the efforts of all the Christian Protestant Churches in Mr. Horace Mann's paper basket."[72] Protestant quantification, in this interpretation, produced narratives of false moral progress by suppressing what the author called "pictures" in favor of aggregates; whereas narrative "pictures" of moral depravity individuated both Protestants and their sins, the census's retreat to a restricted set of numbers confused numerical quantity with spiritual quality.

The *Rambler*'s bitter awareness that numerical groupings could be rhetoric, not disinterested analysis, manifested itself elsewhere in relation to a related difficulty: the corollary of each denomination publishing its own statistics was the chance that other people might read them. The *Bulwark* itself made a point of citing Catholic statistical publications such as the *Directory*, a publication that unintentionally proved

[68] Jonathan Potter, Margaret Wetherell, and Andrew Chitty, "Quantification Rhetoric—Cancer on Television," *Discourse and Society* 2, no. 3 (July 1991): 333–65, at 336.

[69] Elaine Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk: Imagining a Safe England in a Dangerous World* (Cambridge, 2000), 27.

[70] "Comparative Statistics of Irish and English Crime," *Dublin Review* 6, no. 11 (January 1839): 269–77, at 276.

[71] "The Religious Census of England," *Rambler*, n.s., 1, no. 2 (February 1854): 183–90, at 186.

[72] "Our Picture in the Census," *Rambler*, n.s., 1, no. 3 (March 1854): 356–75, at 372.

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a convenient resource for anti-Catholic propaganda.[73] *Fraser's Magazine* similarly opened a two-part essay on the "Statistics of Popery in Great Britain and the Colonies" with a collocation of Catholic statistical authorities; this accumulated testimony, the author claimed, would help render visible the "festering spectacle" of an ever-growing Catholic presence, which might go otherwise uncharted.[74] Catholics played the same game, as when the working-class journal the *Lamp*, criticizing the *Times*'s anti-Catholicism, pointedly referenced "*Protestant authority*" for all of its "statistical facts."[75] Such mutual appropriation highlighted the potential dangers involved in the open flow of published information, but it also ironically invoked the pretense of disinterested statistical observation. Polemicists used their opponents' numbers as if those statistics had been gathered without any reference to a guiding theory and then assimilated those numbers to their own interpretive framework. As Judith Worsnop has noted in relation to another debate raised by the census of 1851, the numbers were left unquestioned; instead, what was at stake was who had the cultural authority to *use* those numbers for their own ends.[76] In claiming the right to redefine another group's self-fashioning through statistics, the polemicists both consolidated their own identities (as Protestant or as Catholic) and "exposed" the purported partiality of their targets' analyses.

SWELLED TRAINS, AMAZING INCREASES: COUNTING CATHOLICS

It was an article of faith throughout the *Bulwark*'s history that Rome was "making alarming progress" even in counties (or countries) long associated with Protestant principles.[77] Thus, a statistical table on the proportional increase of Christian denominations in Australia demonstrated the "progress of Romanism" even there, while in the same month another table warned of Catholic clerical incursions into the army.[78] In tracking the numerical growth of Catholics in spaces that might otherwise be occupied by Protestants, the *Bulwark* ominously raised the possibility of a future in which the two religions' relative positions might be inverted. An upward trend in Catholic numbers could only mean an equivalent downward turn for their Protestant opponents. Yet Protestants, too, were progressing. An early article used the word progress four times in the space of two paragraphs, urging readers to optimism that those forming new Protestant organizations would not be content to remain in "resting-places" but instead "that their progress will be steady and rapid."[79] Not surprisingly, the *Bulwark* followed up with another table devoted to the spread of

[73] See, for example, "Romish Statistics.—St. Winefrede's Well," *Protestant Magazine* 15, n.s., no. 25 (January 1853): 5.

[74] "Statistics of Popery in Great Britain and the Colonies," *Fraser's Magazine* 19, no. 111 (March 1839): 261–77, at 263.

[75] "Irish Crime and London Morals," *Lamp* 4, no. 3 (January 31, 1852): 29–31, at 29.

[76] Judith Worsnop, "A Reevaluation of the Problem of 'Surplus Women' in Nineteenth-Century England," *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no. 1–2 (January 1990): 21–31, at 26.

[77] "Popery in Clydesdale," *Bulwark* 7, no. 76 (October 1857): 100.

[78] "Notes of the Month," *Bulwark* 8, no. 88 (October 1858): 104–8, at 106; "Popish Chaplains in the Army," *Bulwark* 8, no. 88 (October 1858): 100–3.

[79] "State of the Protestant Organization of Britain," *Bulwark* 1, no. 6 (December 1851): 149–51, at 150.

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regional branches of the Scottish Reformation Society, complete with the number of copies of the *Bulwark* that each branch had taken the previous year.[80] Nevertheless, these promises of an emerging national Protestant network devoted to terminating popish influence were just as frequently followed by warnings that Protestantism was failing to emulate Catholicism's capabilities in this line. In an article on the 1861 census, another table devoted to the religious populations of Ireland led the journal to mourn that "it is melancholy to think that Protestantism had made so little actual progress in Ireland of late years, notwithstanding all that has been done," not least because Catholicism "has been deluging Great Britain and the colonies with its offspring."[81] Progress was always unstable, with any numerical increases among disunited Protestants ebbing and flowing against hyper-organized Catholicism's ongoing growth.

But in staking its claim to delivering "the facts" about a Catholic takeover of an erstwhile Protestant nation, the *Bulwark* had to establish that Catholics could actually be quantified. For anti-Catholic commentators, this was not self-evident; indeed, for Protestants skeptical of Catholic self-reporting, the Census of Religious Worship itself raised questions about whether the number of sittings could be translated into the number of Catholics, as the Catholics themselves remarked. The low census numbers inspired conflicting responses. On the one hand, there were those like the *British Protestant*, which warned that counting sittings would lead commentators to underestimate the Catholic population.[82] On the other hand, the Free Church of Scotland's Committee on Popery used the same data to scoff that the Roman Catholic Church's tiny proportion of sittings in relation to the Protestants revealed that Catholic growth had turned out to be "fractional."[83] The *Bulwark*, however, took a third option: the problem was paying attention to the Catholic population as a whole instead of concentrating on the "House of Commons," for "a small number of men, well drilled, will overcome a thousand times as many others destitute of discipline."[84] Quantities counted, but it was political location that mattered, not the distribution of Catholics in the aggregate. Worse still, as they argued elsewhere, Catholics were "active, organized, and intimately connected with a vast foreign system," meaning that the national numbers could not capture Catholicism's reach.[85] Hence the significance of the *Bulwark*'s interest in international Catholic statistics: British observers who thought only in domestic terms would never grasp that the Roman Catholic Church did not think of itself as bounded by official borders. As a source of information, the census might adequately detail some aspects of the threat at the local level, but the *Bulwark* held that Protestantism needed to match its Catholic opponents by thinking in global terms.

The difficulty of relying on government statistics to count Catholics was further exacerbated by the invisibility of those who were believed to be the church's most powerful members—namely, the Jesuits. The lawyer and miscellaneous author

[80] "Scottish Reformation Society," *Bulwark* 4, no. 44 (February 1855): 200–1.

[81] "The Census of 1861," *Bulwark* 11, no. 127 (January 1862): 193–94, at 193.

[82] "The Special Mission—A Prospect," *British Protestant* 10, no. 98 (February 1854): 17–20, at 18.

[83] *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. Held at Edinburgh May, 1854* (Edinburgh, 1854), 102.

[84] "The State of the Struggle," *Bulwark* 4, no. 37 (July 1854): 1–3, at 2–3.

[85] "The Protestant Alliance," *Bulwark* 4, no. 39 (September 1854): 81–82, at 81.

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Andrew Steinmetz, an ex-Catholic who extracted multiple books out of a truncated attempt at becoming a Jesuit, inadvertently summed up the prevailing wisdom: "I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of these numbers: it is difficult to come at correct Jesuit statistics."[86] The Jesuits' supposed omnipresence caused problems both for the Catholic count and for the position of those counting Catholics. As Mary Poovey has argued, social reformers frequently ran into tensions between their desire to "tell society's truth" via statistics and the reality that certain ills were nearly impossible to quantify accurately.[87] Jesuits posed similar issues. Like anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists in France, the *Bulwark* was terrified by the prospect of "alien agents disguised as ordinary citizens."[88] One reprint from an Italian work informed English readers that "there are a greater number of Jesuits [there] than in Italy; that there are Jesuits in all classes of society; in Parliament; among the English clergy; among the Protestant laity even in the higher stations."[89] Jesuits made themselves unquantifiable as such, always "counting" as something else; their presence introduced an unacknowledged, perhaps substantial, margin of error into all calculations. Even when governments tried to crack down on Jesuit numbers, one report claimed, they multiplied themselves by pretending to be *other* organizations.[90] And as purveyors of supposedly Protestant information, whether from the pulpit or the press, the concealed Jesuit was well-positioned to skew any available data. Moreover, the art of Jesuit detection was rendered even more difficult by that unusual creature, the female Jesuit, whom the *Bulwark* envisioned "endeavouring to get employment as a governess in an English school for *training young ladies to be governesses*."[91] Whereas the male Jesuit infiltrator dominated public life, the female Jesuit was more frequently found in humble positions within the household, suborning not only the women and children but also "elite Protestant men."[92] In the words of the anti-Catholic ex-priest Anthony Gavazzi, the female Jesuit was "delicate, diligent, modest, attentive" but also under the thumb of a "father confessor," to whom she wrote "all the secrets of the family."[93] The omnipresence of invisible Jesuits was a running theme for the *Bulwark*: readers were informed that "Jesuit nurses and servants" convert the children; "Jesuit teaching" spoils Oxford; Jesuits even infiltrate "the pulpits of the English Church."[94] Jesuits covertly parodied the overt data-collection activities of census takers and nascent sociologists, passing on secrets to a highly disciplined organization that would use them as it saw fit. The

[86] Andrew Steinmetz, *The Novitiate, or, a Year among the English Jesuits: A Personal Narrative; With an Essay on the Constitutions, the Confessional Morality, and History of the Jesuits* (London, 1846), 369.

[87] Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864* (Chicago, 1995), 84.

[88] Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1993), 225; Moran, *Catholic Sensationalism*, 28–76. See also Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic*, 43–69; John Wolffe, "The Jesuit as Villain in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction," in *The Church and Literature*, ed. Peter Clarke and Charlotte Methuen (Suffolk, 2012), 308–20, at 320.

[89] "The Jesuits in England," *Bulwark* 9, no. 97 (July 1859): 27.

[90] "Jesuit Statistics," *Pall Mall Budget* 8 (12 July 1872): 24.

[91] "The March to Rome," *Bulwark* 5, no. 58 (April 1856): 255–59, at 257.

[92] Timothy Verhoeven, "'A Perfect Jesuit in Petticoats': The Curious Figure of the Female Jesuit," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2, no. 4 (2015): 624–40, at 630; Wheeler, *Old Enemies*, 220–28.

[93] Anthony Gavazzi, *The Orations of Father Gavazzi, Delivered in Belfast on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th November, 1852* (Belfast, 1852), 20.

[94] "The Importance of London as a Centre of Protestant Effort. Chapter 4:—The Influence of Rome in London," *Bulwark* 21, no. 243 (September 1871): 57–60, at 60.

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high-minded rhetoric of social reform reappeared, inverted, in the undertakings of concealed Catholic observers.

For the *Bulwark*, Catholics were thus both difficult to count and dubiously ethical reporters, which makes their use of Catholic-generated statistics initially look rather odd. Other Protestant observers worried about the usefulness of Catholic statistics more generally; one late-Victorian missionary journal summed up Jesuit statistical efforts in regards to foreign missionary work as "muddled" and "magniloquent bamboozlement."[95] But the *Bulwark* cast itself as an exemplary statistical reporter and analyst while critiquing Catholic statistics as not just numerically inaccurate but also rhetorical in intent. That is, the *Bulwark* split "numerical form and rhetoric" to make statistics signify simply as facts, apart from any persuasive argument constructed about them.[96] Or, as the *Bulwark* summarized an exchange between an anonymous "Protestant" and "Catholic," the "Protestant" had a "great number of historical and statistical facts" to demonstrate Catholicism's danger, whereas the Catholic "twists and misrepresents the facts and arguments which are adduced."[97] As the *Bulwark* phrased it, the *historical and statistical facts* did all the arguing, whereas the *Catholic* did the twisting. The Protestant voice spoke religious truths that remained undistorted by interference from fallen human nature, not because they came from God but because they came from numbers.

Matters did not improve when Catholics brought their own numbers to the table. The suspicion that Catholics were regularly inflating their own numbers was widespread enough that even *Punch* mocked them for it in a squib about underpopulated convents.[98] The *Bulwark* in particular accused Catholics of passing off Protestants as "Catholics." Thus, its first issue concluded with an article about how the Catholic press was reporting on Cardinal Wiseman. "The Cardinal," said the *Bulwark*, "preaches to about 2500 every Sabbath evening, at one shilling a head, or £125 a night. Simple Protestants are thus made to sustain his dignity, and swell the train of his apparent adherents."[99] Much as Catholicism was supposedly appropriating Protestant territory, it here appropriated the Protestants as convenient cash cows. Whereas Protestants had difficulties counting Catholics suspected of pretending to be Protestants, Catholics *openly* miscounted Protestants as Catholics; there was a gap between the numbers and the Catholic frame narrative that would account for them. Nearly three years later, the lead article irately noted that *Catholic Statistics, 1823 to 1853* (1853) was claiming all residents of a given territory for the Roman Catholic Church's diocese, not just the professed Catholics, so that the 2,413,589 people who populated Westminster were considered part of the Catholic "population."[100] Not content with showing that Catholic numbers often rested on deliberate slippages, the *Bulwark* often insisted that they were entirely fantastic. Unable to actually muster the numbers it ascribed to itself, the Roman Catholic Church used

[95] "Dr. Warneck on Romish Missions," *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record*, n.s., 10 (July 1885): 516–21, at 518.

[96] Poovey, *History*, 313.

[97] "The Speech of Bishop Goss," *Bulwark* 14, no. 164 (February 1865): 209.

[98] "Monasteries under the Microscope," *Punch, or the London Charivari* 26, no. 661 (1854): 105.

[99] "Popery Turning the Cardinal to Account, and Attempting to Acquire Paramount Influence in London," *Bulwark* 1, no. 1 (July 1851): 17–20, at 17.

[100] "Popish Directories for 1854," *Bulwark* 3, no. 33 (March 1854): 225–27, at 225.

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"tables" to exhibit "the amazing increase of Romish priests, chapels, colleges, schools, monasteries, and nunneries, so that the impression might be left on the minds of the uninformed that Protestantism was soon about to be destroyed by the huge overshadowing branches which the tree of the Papacy stretches far and wide athwart our land."[101] In this battle of the tables, Catholics offered up statistics to those incapable of critically interpreting them, turning the form of the table itself into its own mode of authority. Instead of separating "opinion from the eminence or authority of its holder," the better to turn "it into an object for public debate," Catholics weighted the rhetorical dice in a fashion supposedly foreign to the *Bulwark*'s own practices.[102]

Such demonstrations of close reading (and counting) were among the *Bulwark*'s regular methods for advertising Catholic perfidy: when properly reinterpreted by Protestant observers, willing to double-check the Roman Catholic Church's claims against independent statistical sources, Catholic numbers turned out to testify to Protestant strength instead of its own. The *Bulwark* was quite capable of claiming simultaneously that Catholic gains were inflated via statistical representation *and* that Catholic statistics accurately represented their threat to the nation—for example, their plot to "secure, if possible, the Metropolis."[103] This quotation, for example, appeared in an article about the statistics produced by Cardinal Wiseman in a pastoral letter; it was published in the same issue as the *Bulwark*'s own tabulation of Catholicism's growing institutional presence throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.[104] The agreement meant that, from the *Bulwark*'s perspective, the statistics were clearly accurate, no matter how different the spin. Similarly, having early on introduced a Catholic estimate of 100,000 Protestants killed during the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, it proceeded in later issues to take the 100,000 as unquestioned gospel.[105] In other words, the *Bulwark*'s primary means of accounting for unreliability was the unstated assumption that Catholic statistics were "authentic evidence" when they made Catholics look bad and fictitious when they made Catholics look good.[106] By reading Catholic statistics against the grain, the *Bulwark* suggested that it was possible to extricate value-neutral numbers by controlling for the politics: they argued that Catholics rejected the "elimination of opinions and interpretations" that early English statisticians insisted was essential "for their objectives to acquire the credibility and universality required by politicians," here with the understanding that the Catholics were building "opinions and interpretations" into the numbers themselves.[107] The *Bulwark* insisted on the necessity of interpretation, but its critique of how Catholics massaged their numbers was also a claim for a strict boundary line between its own numbers and how the journal interpreted them.

The *Bulwark*'s insistence that the only rhetoricians in this statistical game were the Catholics came out clearly in its anxieties about one of the most contested numbers—

[101] "Protestant Statistics—Edinburgh," 235.
[102] Prévost and Beaud, *Statistics*, 48.
[103] "Popery Seizing London," *Bulwark* 9, no. 98 (August 1859): 52–54, at 52.
[104] "Power and Growth of Popery," *Bulwark* 9, no. 98 (August 1859): 42–44.
[105] "The Bartholomew Massacre," *Bulwark* 1, no. 2 (August 1851): 35–39, at 38.
[106] "Romish Statistics for Scotland," *Bulwark* 5, no. 57 (March 1856): 236.
[107] Desrosières, *Politics of Large Numbers*, 174.

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the number of converts, in either direction. Converts were one of the key signs of progress, and their loss or gain suggested the instability of both Protestant and Catholic positions. In September 1851, one writer excitedly counted "[b]etween 400 to 500" conversions in the city of Edinburgh since the founding of the Irish Mission in 1848.[108] But the same issue anxiously noted an announcement from the Catholic press that three upper-class women were about to convert, as well as eight new novices in a Glasgow convent.[109] Such ebbing and flowing persisted—on the one hand, there was John Henry Newman's "perversion"; on the other, "Hundreds" of Irishmen and women were "leaving the Church of Rome."[110] "[F]ive Episcopalian ministers who lately apostatized to Popery" invaded Leeds.[111] But, some time later, "fifty-three persons" converted to Protestantism within just a few months "in the parish of St. Paul's, Bermondsey," and "about 200" were saved in Montreal.[112] Most triumphantly of all, when the Catholic priest-turned-anti-Catholic and temperance crusader Charles Chiniquy abandoned Catholicism for Protestantism, he brought "10,000" people with him.[113] Notably, the *Bulwark* usually counted converts to Catholicism in no more than single or double figures, whereas they counted converts to Protestantism in the hundreds, a sign that "[t]he downfall of the Eastern and Western Antichrists is probably near at hand, even at the door."[114] The fluidity of religious identification had a definite end point, at which time God, the ultimate statistician, could perform his final accounting of the damned and the elect. Numbers did not exist for their own sake; they calibrated Britain's (and the world's) progress away from Antichrist, a reminder to readers that secular narratives of shifting populations never adequately explained what the *Bulwark*'s statistics meant.

PROLIFIC IN CRIME: STATISTICS AND CATHOLICISM AS SOCIAL THREAT

Yet it was key to the *Bulwark*'s rhetorical strategy that Protestant progress was short-lived; news of Protestantism's incipient triumphs would always soon be met by another set of statistical proofs that "Rome is making progress."[115] Driving the readers to panic was not simply a matter of the *Bulwark*'s business model but also a call for grassroots Protestant intervention in questions of social reform. Whether or not the *Bulwark* anticipated political success at the legislative level is debatable; nevertheless, its support for local Protestant organizations went hand in hand with calls for them to effect visible social change, aimed at targets identifiable by resorting to statistics. The *Bulwark* thus tried to carve out a space for unified Protestant community and agency by demonstrating that the government consistently misread the

[108] "Conversions from the Church of Rome," *Bulwark* 1, no. 3 (September 1851): 59–61, at 59.
[109] "New Papists," *Bulwark* 1, no. 3 (September 1851): 74; "More Nuns at Glasgow," *Bulwark* 1, no. 3 (September 1851): 76.
[110] "Conversions from Popery in Ireland," *Bulwark* 1, no. 5 (November 1851): 123–24, at 123.
[111] "Popish Inroad on Leeds," *Bulwark* 1, no. 6 (December 1851): 153.
[112] "Notes of the Month," *Bulwark* 3, no. 29 (November 1853): 113–15, at 114.
[113] "Extensive Conversion from Rome," *Bulwark* 8, no. 93 (March 1859): 233–35, at 235.
[114] "Notes of the Month," *Bulwark* 3, no. 33 (March 1854): 249–50, at 249.
[115] "The Protestant Electoral Union of Scotland," *Bulwark* 14, no. 167 (May 1865): 301–4, at 303.

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implications of the statistics it gathered. Strictly speaking, as Edward Higgs points out, the government understood statistics as a means of promoting "personal and local responsibility," not "central intervention," and in any event was often unable to use the data at a nationwide level.[116] For the *Bulwark*, however, the disconnect between data collection and utilitarian application provided another weapon with which to target the government's insufficiently Protestant approach to legislation.

A case in point was the *Bulwark*'s ongoing crusade against the Maynooth Grant. The *Bulwark* quoted the evangelical Baptist Noel to the effect that "[h]aving maintained twelve hundred Protestant ministers in Ireland, that they may preach the Gospel to the people, because it was right, ministers seem now disposed to educate and maintain two thousand priests to contradict them because it is expedient."[117] Noel's critique suggested both the government's instability and its worldliness: its willingness to hew to moral absolutes ("right") failed once faced with demands for compromise ("expedient"). Unlike the *Bulwark*'s editors, the British government misread the significance of the numbers that it itself generated, mistaking the trees of contemporary social stability for the forest of providential history. The grant, one writer complained, turned Britain into the "drudge of the Vatican," doing the work of a foreign master in the name of peace.[118] Again, this was no minor matter; the seminarians were being trained as "emissaries of Antichrist," to a tune of £210,880 as of the year 1854.[119] Hope came only from the grassroots evangelical Protestant community that, unlike the secular government, perceived the true nature of the threat: 62,549 Protestant men had signed an anti-Maynooth petition as of March 1852.[120] So even as the journal criticized the government for nurturing Catholic priests, it insisted that Protestant textuality was spreading far more efficiently through Britain than the message of the two thousand priests in Ireland (although such optimism was always undercut in the broader scheme of things).

If one of the justifications for statistical pursuits was that facts might neutralize factions, the *Bulwark*'s rhetoric revised that position: "facts" were supposed to neutralize quarrels within the *Protestant* community while confirming the split between Protestants and Catholics. Hence their quarrel with the government, which did nothing to stop Catholic gains—and which, indeed, when in theory it *did* do something, failed to have any positive effect. Take, for example, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851, which after the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in October 1850 forbade "the assumption of any territorial title in the United Kingdom by clerics outside the established Churches."[121] But having made its point by passing the Bill, the government failed to enforce it, to the *Bulwark*'s great irritation.[122] For the *Bulwark*, this exemplified the government's inability to properly read the statistical evidence about Catholic strength. In 1852, one writer indignantly tabulated the increases in

[116] Edward Higgs, *The Information State in England* (Houndmills, 2004), 87; idem *Life, Death, and Statistics: Civil Registration, Censuses, and the Work of the General Register Office, 1836–1952* (Hatfield, 2004), 59–60.

[117] "The Theory of the Maynooth Endowment," *Bulwark* 3, no. 33 (March 1854): 237.

[118] "Maynooth, or Popery Throwing off the Mask," *Bulwark* 5, no. 50 (August 1855): 32–33, at 33.

[119] "Protestant Electoral Associations," *Bulwark* 3, no. 35 (May 1854): 283–85, at 285.

[120] "The Anti-Maynooth Agitation," *Bulwark* 1, no. 9 (March 1852): 219.

[121] G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), 218.

[122] "The Progress of Popery. A Solemn Warning in 1830," *Bulwark* 3, no. 26 (August 1853): 29.

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Catholic churches, religious houses, and priests over the past decade, and noted that every number had gone up. "Let England beware of encouragement to Popery," the writer cried. "In ten years there is an increase of 450 priests of Antichrist in this our land—all sworn foes of Jesus, our only Lord and Saviour—all enemies unto death of everything most dear and precious to man."[123] Once again, the British government revealed itself to be fatally enamored of seeking political equilibrium instead of realizing that the country's very soul was at stake: it celebrated the alienation of its own subjects, progressively turning the United Kingdom and Ireland into a bastion of another government's power. Again, the *Bulwark*'s reports of local Protestant alliances hinted that salvation lay in grassroots regional efforts. Thus, William Palmer's account of his running combat with Catholic priests in Bridport concluded by announcing that the Catholics were now down "at least" 20 members from their original 150, and that they were outnumbered by some 750 Protestants—almost a third of whom were enthusiastic enough to belong to the Protestant Association.[124]

It was key to this critique that the *Bulwark* assumed that religion, not economics or material conditions, determined social outcomes. This was not a unique position, but both statistical abstraction and the assumption of statistical regularity enabled it to articulate that position in a purportedly neutral fashion. Debates over Catholic toleration had long rested on the question of the historical record, which suggested that the Roman Catholic Church uniformly oppressed religious dissenters. Statistics, however, gave this argument a new impetus: properly interpreted, the historical records of Catholic brutalities were *predictive*, the signs of an underlying law at work. Although the *Bulwark* did not explicitly invoke the law of large numbers—"the tendency for events frequently repeated and not too closely dependent on one another … to occur in approximately constant numbers from year to year," such as birth rates—it assumed that the more Catholics there were in a given nation, the more negative social indicators, such as illegitimacy, could be expected to climb.[125] Theodore Porter has demonstrated that "statistical regularity" was regarded since the beginning of the discipline as a sign of "divine wisdom and planning"; the *Bulwark* took the next logical step of interpreting the statistics as God speaking to the elect through the medium of numbers.[126] This is where both international and historical statistics became important, as Catholicism consistently exerted the same degenerative effects on societies irrespective of time or what was then called "national character."

For the *Bulwark*, Catholic history was an accountant's ledger of warfare, murders, and executions. Many polemicists made a point of listing the numbers of Catholicism's "victims," an activity made easier in the late-eighteenth century by the biblical commentator Thomas Scott, whose note on Revelation 5:5–7 arrived at the relatively modest total of 2,086,000 dead.[127] Excerpting Scott's note was a popular

[123] "Opening of Parliament—Prospects of Protestantism," *Bulwark* 1, no. 9 (March 1852): 227–29, at 229.

[124] "Popery Effectually Dealt With," *Bulwark* 3, no. 36 (June 1854): 324–25, at 325.

[125] Gerd Gigerenzer et al., *The Empire of Chance: How Probability Changed Science and Everyday Life* (Cambridge, 1989), 40; Desrosières, *Politics of Large Numbers*, 7–8.

[126] Theodore Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820–1900* (Princeton, 1986), 51.

[127] Thomas Scott, ed., *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorised Version*, from the 5th London ed. (Boston, 1824), 6:749.

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tactic throughout the nineteenth century, although—after *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* misattributed the note to John Scott's *The History of the Church of Christ* (1826–1832) in 1838—all later citations down to the present have associated it with the wrong Scott.[128] Later authors insisted, however, on a much bloodier total. Thus, in 1840, Ingram Cobbin counted 67 million dead, while in 1862 the Methodist Henry Woodcock calculated 16,390,296 casualties between 1198 and 1500.[129] The *Bulwark* insisted on similarly high death counts, with one essayist calculating "fifty millions" of "martyrs" and "six thousand seven hundred and fifty millions" of total votaries.[130] The exceptionally specific numbers indicted Catholicism on the grounds of empirically verifiable criminality as well as theological perversion. Most dramatic of all was the essay that tabulated "one million" dead Waldenses, "one hundred thousand" dead Huguenots, "one hundred thousand" dead in the Irish Rebellion of 1641, and "FIFTEEN MILLIONS!" dead in the West Indies, all of which somehow added up to a striking death toll of "FORTY MILLIONS for conscience' sake."[131] The sensationalist rhetoric counterpointed the reduction of brutally martyred bodies to interchangeable abstractions. Unlike the *Rambler*, which supplanted statistics with shocking anecdotes, the *Bulwark* dramatized the Roman Catholic Church's transformation of individual sufferers into corpses that could only be counted as statistical abstractions. But the headcount of martyrs also actively predicted future behavior. If it was "folly" to insist that "an infallible Church can change, or that Rome has abated one jot of all the haughty, impious, bloody, and lying doctrines which she maintained during the darkest ages," then it stood to reason that the statistics of dead martyrs proved that the Roman Catholic Church behaved according to laws that ought to convince even the most liberal Protestant.[132]

Just as history testified to Catholicism's death toll, so contemporary social investigation revealed that it also turned living bodies into carriers of social deviance. As Ian Hacking reminds us, the statistician researches "the laws about 'them,' about the other," and it is normally "the laboring or criminal or colonial classes that are the chief objects to be changed, for their own good."[133] From an evangelical point of view, Catholics were similarly misguided subjects whose theological errors led directly to criminal mindsets. Certainly, not all Protestants fell into this trap; William Lucas Sargant, a businessman of a statistical turn, derided attempts to link criminality to Catholicism by pointing out that, in fact, it correlated to poverty.[134]

[128] "The Progress of Popery," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 44, no. 276 (October 1838): 494–507, at 498.

[129] Ingram Cobbin, *The Book of Popery. A Manual for Protestants; Descriptive of the Origin, Progress, Doctrines, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Catholic Church* (London, 1840), 121; Henry Woodcock, *Popery Unmasked; Being Thirty Conversations between Mr. Daylight and Mr. Twilight, in which the Peculiar Doctrines, Morals, Government, and Usages of the Romish Church are Truthfully Stated from Her Own Authorised Works, and Impartially Tried by God's Word, the Only Unerring Rule of Doctrine and Duty* (London, [1862]), 327–28.

[130] "Popery the Grand Curse of Christendom," *Bulwark* 4, no. 46 (April 1855): 263–64, at 263.

[131] "The Butcheries of Rome," *Bulwark* 3, no. 27 (December 1853): 63.

[132] "Popish Reformation," *Bulwark* 1, no. 6 (December 1851):151–52, at 152.

[133] Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 1990), 120; Lawrence Goldman, "Victorian Social Science: From Singular to Plural," in *The Organisation of Knowledge in Victorian Britain*, ed. Martin Daunton (Oxford, 2005), 87–114. See, for example, ibid., 97–100.

[134] William Lucas Sargant, *Essays of a Birmingham Manufacturer* (London, 1870), 2:60.

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The *Bulwark*, however, insisted that religion, not class, determined behavior, and it was hardly unique either in this position or in sensing the appeal of comparative statistics on Protestant and Catholic criminality. Thus, the Presbyterian clergyman James Aitken Wylie, a staunch anti-popery campaigner, contemptuously lumped "Jews, infidels, and the lapsed masses generally" into his accounting of the Protestant crime statistics yet still arrived at a figure of "considerably below a thousand criminals" per million, whereas "[e]ach million of the Romanist population yields well-nigh three thousand."[135] As far as Wylie was concerned, any religion, or even no religion, was an improvement on Catholicism when it came to shaping the moral sense, but Protestantism was the true route to developing a law-abiding populace. The *Bulwark* agreed. Although the *Bulwark* felt that British global superiority was in part a result of innate national character, it pointed to Protestantism as the source of "good order and morals, freedom and intelligence."[136] The *Bulwark*'s obsession with vital statistics countered the government's conciliatory policies by demonstrating that, far from constructing a healthy polity, toleration for Catholicism destroyed the body politic at the most literal level. As the Roman Catholic Church's past behavior indicated objective statistical trends, so too did its present influence.

At the most mundane level, Catholicism led to abject poverty and crime, a warning that toleration would necessarily lead to the collapse of the British economy. This critique of Catholic "economic backwardness" prefigured German anti-Catholic charges some years later.[137] Thus, two articles in succession noted, first, that there was an inverse correlation between the number of priests and the length of the railway system and, second, that in Ireland the more Catholics in a district, the more crowded, single-room cabins.[138] The same issue noted that poor Catholics in English workhouses were far out of proportion to their demographic presence.[139] And it was no surprise that, in comparison to the English and Scottish, the Irish banked no savings to speak of.[140] Thus, Catholics were not just impoverished, but improvident, and because improvident, criminal. A census of prisoners taken in 1852 revealed 2,955 Catholics in jail out of a total of 21,626—"nearly *one-seventh of the whole*," the *Bulwark* trumpeted, when they were not "much more than *one-thirtieth part*" of the entire English population.[141] Considered in the light of the relevant "statistics and facts," then, it was clear that "Rome is *twenty-four* times as prolific in crime as Protestantism; and if the whole 18,000,000 of England were Papists, the land would be like Sodom and Gomorrah."[142] Irish Catholics hardly fared better. Citing a parliamentary report, the *Bulwark* argued that its calculations revealed that "there are 3 Roman Catholics committed to prisons in Ireland to

[135] J. A. Wylie, *Rome and Civil Liberty: Or, the Papal Aggression in its Relation to the Sovereignty of the Queen and the Independence of the Nation* (London, 1866), 225.

[136] "The Sources of Britain's Greatness," *Bulwark* 9, no. 102 (December 1859): 145–48, at 148.

[137] Wallis, "Anti-Catholicism," 6.

[138] "The Priest and the Rail," *Bulwark* 10, no. 120 (June 1861): 327; "Popery and 'Mud-Cabins' in Ireland," *Bulwark* 10, no. 120 (June 1861): 327–28. The first article was a reprint from the *Gospel Magazine*.

[139] "Popish Paupers in the Workhouses of England," *Bulwark* 10, no. 120 (June 1861): 314–18.

[140] "Popery and Savings Banks," *Bulwark* 11, no. 121 (July 1861): 20.

[141] "Popery a Parent of Crime," *Bulwark* 3, no. 32 (February 1854): 199–200, at 199.

[142] Ibid., 200.

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every 1 professing Protestant"; worse still, there were "five times more juvenile offenders" among the Catholics.[143] Such crime rates were not confined to the United Kingdom. A report on murders and illegitimacy showed that the "*Papal states*" had one hundred murders to each million in population, "Romish Austria" thirty-six, and "Protestant England" four.[144] Similarly, an article on South Italy argued that the "fruit of Romanism" was on view in its appalling numbers of homicides, horse thefts, cattle killings, and general violence.[145]

Wayward Catholics similarly showed themselves incapable of sexual restraint, once again endangering the nation by refusing to channel their desires into morally and financially productive labor. Anti-Catholic rhetoric cast Catholicism as antagonistic to the family, but—although the *Bulwark* spent considerable time on the terrors of nunneries, the confessional, and clerical celibacy—it was also concerned about illegitimacy.[146] This interest was topical: the Registrar-General of Scotland first made annual statistics of illegitimacy rates public in 1858, and the results revealed that "nine per cent. of all births" in Scotland were illegitimate—a percentage "higher than that of England and several other European countries."[147] Inconveniently, the comparative aspect of these statistics later turned out to be wrong, but this did not stop speculation about religious causes.[148] Although more methodologically rigorous statisticians like W. G. Lumley warned that it was simply impossible to make Catholicism correlate with illegitimacy rates, such cautions did not trouble dedicated anti-Catholic campaigners.[149] James Begg himself argued elsewhere that the statistics showed that the already-bad bothy system (single-sex housing accommodating multiple residents) led to even worse sexual misbehavior in districts with pronounced Catholic populations.[150] The *Bulwark*'s interest in the statistics on celibacy and illegitimacy overlapped with equally obsessive attention to the numbers in both France and America, albeit without sharing those countries' anxieties about *declining* population rates.[151] Rather, the *Bulwark* insisted that Catholics multiplied themselves unceasingly while decreasing the proportion of their actual contributions to the community at large. In a detailed account of M. Hobart Seymour's *The Moral Results of the Romish System, A Letter to Lord Palmerston* (1854), the *Bulwark* found that, in 1850, "nearly one-third" of all births in Catholic France had been illegitimate, and "near one-half" in Munich. It got worse: "SEVENTY-THREE per cent" of all births in Rome were foundlings. In safely Protestant London, though, the

[143] "Popery in Irish Prisons," *Bulwark* 9, no. 105 (March 1860): 229–31, at 230, 231.

[144] "A Proposed Popish Establishment in Jails," *Bulwark* 20, no. 231 (September 1870): 57–62, at 61.

[145] "Brigandage and Romanism in Italy," *Bulwark* 15, no. 176 (February 1866): 220.

[146] O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance*, 50; Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism*, 153–78. See also Peschier, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic*, 25–42.

[147] Kenneth M. Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and the Family, 1850–1914* (Edinburgh, 1980), 30.

[148] Ibid., 31.

[149] W. G. Lumley, "Observations upon the Statistics of Illegitimacy," *Journal of the Statistical Society* 25, no. 2 (June 1862): 219–74, at 270.

[150] "Houses for the Working Classes," *Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland*, n.s., 3, no. 11 (June 1859): 251–53; Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes*, 29–41.

[151] Timothy Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 2010), 84, 88, 90–91.

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numbers added up to only "FOUR per cent."[152] The Roman Catholic Church's willful destruction of Protestant bodies found its mirror image in the encouragement it gave to illicit passion, whether lustful or homicidal. Catholic lay sexuality was not merely ungoverned itself but actively produced ungoverned, fatherless *and* motherless children. Taken together with the statistics on crime and poverty, these numbers added up to a threatening Catholic population composed entirely of diseased deviants, both incapable of "appropriate" productivity (i.e., capitalist accumulation and investment) or labor and also given to reproducing *and* destroying itself uncontrollably. By contrast, the same statistics indicated that the Protestant population was remarkably self-disciplined, contained, and financially prudent—the ideal foundation of a modern nation-state.

CONCLUSION

Christians from multiple denominations seized on statistics for polemical purposes, but the *Bulwark*'s investment in numbers across several decades enables us to better understand how polemicists conceived of their lists, tables, and calculations. If the *Bulwark* dealt in salacious anecdotes, like its contemporaries, it nevertheless staked its claim in the religious periodical market by proclaiming itself a journal of "facts," facts that were frequently figures. The *Bulwark*'s statistical rhetoric transformed popular anti-Catholic stereotypes into seemingly unquestionable data, rooted in numbers that apparently owed nothing to Protestant bias. Nevertheless, the journal's message, conveyed more or less explicitly, was that *only* Protestants, and only Protestants of the proper theological orientation, at that, knew how to use statistics. In tabulating Catholic "progress" by appropriating numbers gathered *by* and *for* Catholics, they dismissed Catholics as deceptive rhetoricians, trying (and failing) to cast themselves in the best positive light. In so doing, the *Bulwark* elaborated in detail on a fundamental position that other polemicists might leave as a matter of course. Thus, when in 1899 "Zuinglius" had two characters debate why the Anglo-Catholic Sabine Baring-Gould had produced very different numbers about Catholic crime than the Protestant M. Hobart Seymour, the conclusion was that Baring-Gould had gone to "private statistical societies" of no probative use, while Hobart Seymour only relied on the very best numbers from "Government returns."[153] The best numbers always added up to Catholic perfidy, whether they were draining the nation's coffers or encouraging illegitimate children. At the same time, turning to numbers enabled both the *Bulwark* and other anti-Catholic campaigners to temporarily set aside denominational frictions in service of their larger Protestant goals. If, from the *Bulwark*'s point of view, liberal Protestants had ceased to count the number of the Romanist beast, then, in turning to statistical rhetoric, they hoped to appeal to those who trusted in a different form of counting altogether.

[152] "The Moral Results of the Romish System," *Bulwark* 4, no. 90 (October 1854): 85–89, at 87–88.
[153] Zuinglius, *Who Will Win?*, 280.

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