



Religion in Nineteenth Century America (Religion in American Life)

Grant Wacker

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Written from the perspective of the various denominations that thrived in the 19th century, this comprehensive survey of the middle period in America's religious past actually starts a little earlier, in the 1780s. In the aftermath of the American Revolution, the citizens of the newly-minted republic had to cope with more than the havoc wreaked on churches and denominations by the war. They also tasted for the first time the effects of two novel ideas incorporated in the Constitution and the First Amendment: the separation of church and state and the freedom to practice any religion.

Grant Wacker takes readers on a lively tour of the numerous religions and the major historical challenges--from the Civil War and westward expansion to immigration and the Industrial Revolution--that defined the century. The narrative focuses on the rapid growth of evangelical Protestants, in denominations such as Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, and their competition for dominance with new immigrants' religions such as Catholicism and Judaism. The author discusses issues ranging from temperance to Sunday schools and introduces the personalities--sometimes colorful, sometimes saintly, and often both--of the men and women who shaped American religion in the 19th century, including Methodist bishop Francis Asbury, ex-slave Sojourner Truth, Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy, and evangelist Dwight L. Moody.

Religion in American Life explores the evolution, character, and dynamics of organized religion in America from 1500 to the present day. Written by distinguished religious historians, these books weave together the varying stories that compose the religious fabric of the United States, from Puritanism to alternative religious practices. Primary source material coupled with handsome illustrations and lucid text make these books essential in any exploration of America's diverse nature. Each book includes a chronology, suggestions for further reading, and index.

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