Throughout the nineteenth century America, religious officials often condemned the dramatic performances of actors. Many bishops, priests, and monks believed that the theater was one frequent target of their condemnation. The Catholic Church, for example, strongly condemned theatrical amusements. "The actors of this state theatre were considered as servants of the devil," said one bishop. "They corrupt the minds of the people and lead them astray." The Mormon Church, on the other hand, was more tolerant of the theater. Some Mormon leaders even supported the use of the theater to promote the spread of Mormonism. The Reverend Orson Pratt, for example, was a prominent theater patron and supported the use of the theater as a means of spreading Mormonism.

In 1890, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in the case of Barnum v. American Musuem of Natural History that the theater was a place where "the public may attend and listen to lectures on the subject of the human race," and therefore could not be considered a place of worship. This decision helped to further marginalize the theater in American society.

In the early twentieth century, the theater continued to be a target of religious condemnation. The Fundamentalist movement, which gained strength in the 1920s, was particularly opposed to what they saw as the corrupting influence of the theater. They advocated for the ``chattering of monkeys'' to be replaced by more ``proper'' forms of entertainment.

However, the theater continued to thrive despite these attacks. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, a new generation of theater innovators emerged, including Orson Welles and Elia Kazan. These directors helped to bring the theater back into the mainstream of American culture, and today it is an accepted and beloved form of entertainment.
theatre as an inversion of the house of God, similar to the church in...