

LECTURE OF ARCHBISHOP HUGHES,
ON THE DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM.
(From the Boston Pilot, Nov. 16.)

On Sunday evening last, Archbishop Hughes delivered a lecture in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, on the "Decline of Protestantism and its causes." The hour appointed was 6 o'clock, but long before that time every available spot in the building, including the aisles, was covered with human beings. Nearly all the Catholic clergy of the city were in attendance, and occupied the space within the railings around the altar. Half a dollar was charged for admission, and the sum of \$1500 was realised, which will be appropriated to the Catholic institutions of New York.

There was the most intense anxiety to hear, upon this interesting subject, the greatest divine—the brightest ornament of the Catholic Church in the New World, and the pride of the old land of learning and of Saints. All felt that none could do so equal justice to the topic, and the lecture, as the reader will perceive, has amply justified those expectations. It is indeed a brilliant and a lucid argument for Catholicity and against the Protestant creed. It was listened to throughout with the most breathless attention, and occupied more than an hour in the delivery.

The Most Rev. Dr. Hughes having ascended the pulpit, proceeded to address the audience as follows. He said,—The civilised world is divided into two great religious denominations—the one Catholic, the other Protestant. It is true, there is the Greek Church, which rent itself by schism from the Catholic Church, of whose divine faith it still retains a portion; and there are the followers of the impostor Mahomet, and kindred forms of heathen darkness and superstition. But I speak of the civilised world, and that is divided, as I have said, into two distinct and antagonistic creeds, as opposed to each other as light is to darkness. What Catholicity is everybody knows, for the true Church is like a city set upon a hill, and he that runs may read. It is not so with Protestantism. It is vague and indefinite, and though, in a popular sense, the term may be partially understood, it has no precise meaning in a religious sense, and conveys no idea of a body of doctrine or a code of morals. One of these systems has been in the world since the foundation stone of Christianity was laid by the great Architect—the other since the beginning of the sixteenth century. The rise and decline of Protestantism are comprised within a period of three hundred years. The word "decline," in the title of this lecture, I have not adopted arbitrarily. The decline of Protestantism is a fixed fact, acknowledged by learned and distinguished Protestant writers themselves; and they also admit that decay is the inevitable tendency of their creed. It is inseparable on the very first principle on which it is founded—the denial of all authority and the right of private judgment. Among other writers, I may mention the great Macaulay, the Essayist, the Reviewer, the Historian. He acknowledges that Protestantism is an invasion upon the beautiful system of Catholicity, and he has prophesied that the tree of the true Church will continue green and unfading, when the traveller on London bridge shall behold the ruins of Westminster. But I hope, ere that day arrives, that the voice of the true worship of a repentant nation returning to its first love, will be heard in St. Paul's. So the Catholic Church has always been a rallying point—the unity of the faith. From this central point its doctrines spread on every side in the first age of the Church, when the heathen were gathered in myriads into the true fold of the great Shepherd of Souls; and the faith has continued to extend itself to the present hour, and will never cease to overspread the Earth till all nations bow to the victorious sceptre of the Cross. But it will be said, that Protestantism has also diffused itself. I admit its rapid spread immediately after its promulgation—but its extension was not only limited, but it has since receded from the ground it occupied, as if God had said, "Thus far thou shalt go, and no farther," and here shall the proud waves be stayed. What time did the Reformation, as it is called, commence, and what was the cause of Luther's partial success? It commenced in a very corrupt period, and when the public morals were at a very low ebb. There were abuses which afforded the arch heretic an opportunity of creating a schism in the body of Christ's Church, and seducing the members from the ancient faith of their fathers. On the other hand, he appealed to the worst passions of fallen human nature. His adherents sought and obtained political alliances, and in a short time the new creed overran Germany, Switzerland, France, England, and without exception the whole North of Europe. It was only by the Irish people that the desolating flood was stayed. The battle between truth and error has lasted for three hundred years; but Ireland, true to her God and to the holy Mother of pure Christianity, has never been conquered by the Protestant Propagandist. The Providence of God appears to be manifest in this. The rapid conquest of Protestantism in other countries was one of its most remarkable features. In fifty years from its date, it covered every inch of ground it ever possessed, and Luther himself lived to see the widest extent of the system which he originated. Not only our churches, but our universities were taken possession of by the professors of the new creed. Protestantism immediately seized on all the wealth and became master of kings, and armies, and navies, and senates, and nations, and everything which the Catholics had in course of time accumulated either for charitable or religious purposes. Yet where is it now, and what has it done? Let us regard it in its professions. What were its professed mission and purpose?

Its mission, according to its own statement, was to regulate a fallen Christianity—to introduce a pure and perfect religion, as a substitute for that apostate Church, as it called the Catholic faith, from which itself emanated. If such was its purpose, we should think that it would take some certain ground in reference to its mission, for if it really believed that it was the form in which God would save the world, it was bound to labor for the salvation of the world, to speak in unequivocal language, so that it should accomplish in its own time something like what the apostate Church had previously accomplished. Two things, however, it was bound to do; first, to convert pagan nations, and the other was to preserve itself, for if it lost itself in attempting to gain over others, it would necessarily show that it was not what it pretended to be. I shall not attempt a definition of what Protestantism is. I have sought in vain for anything like a definition, nor, indeed, do I conceive it possible to give what may be called a definition of the word Protestantism. However, I shall take it in its fairest light, and endeavor to find an idea of what it is by the elements of which it is composed. Protestantism is a generic term, the conditions of which are that the individual who calls himself by this name, protests against the Catholic Church in the first instance, but protests implicitly against all human authority; and on the other hand takes that meaning from the holy Scriptures, reflected by his own mind. I will take the period of 1567, when Protestantism was comprised in three great divisions—the Lutheran, the Calvinist and the Anglican. On looking at the symbolical books of that period, I find it is understood as comprising two elements—one positive, and the other negative. At this time it embodied a great many of the essential truths of primitive Christianity—I mean the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Saviour, Original Sin, the Holy Eucharist, and others. These were the positive doctrines, while the doctrine of the Intercession of Saints and others were cut off. These were the negative faith of Protestantism. You have, therefore, these two principles, and beyond them I cannot pretend to define what Protestantism is; for if you pass from the generic term to a specific one, and trace it to the present day, there will be found these two elements—the one embracing these and these doctrines, and the other rejecting these and these doctrines. We cannot at this day but regret that what was positive has ceased to be so, and if Protestantism included all those fundamental doctrines, how great has been the decline on the side of latitudinarianism. I have written for this lecture, perhaps, some sixteen or twenty pages of authorities and have been obliged to put them all aside, because, if I attempted to quote them, it would occupy my whole time.

And what authorities are these? Protestant authorities, some calling themselves by one name and some by another, but all admitting the decline of Protestantism from what it once was. Do you speak of Germany? In Germany the doctrine of the Trinity is held, if held at all, only by a few and by the ignorant, but as for your great men and doctors, they have no conception of any such thing. Rationalism has taken the place of Protestantism, although they still claim the ancient name, from the meaning of which they have departed. If you speak of them of the miracles, they were all done through mesmerism. This is their explanation of Scripture, and yet they are enjoying all the emoluments of Protestantism, the old benefices instituted for the support of the Catholic clergy. Do you go to Switzerland? In Geneva they have a patron saint, not Calvin, but Rousseau; and his sentiments are those of persons calling themselves Christians. In the days of Calvin, a man would be burned to death for denying the doctrine of the Trinity; at the present time, he will not be burned to death for believing in it, but he will be laughed at. Go to France, and travellers will tell you that the Churches represent a mockery. Go to Holland, and the same thing meets the eye. Go to Sweden, and all is dark, and cold, and dreary, and stiff as iron, because freedom of conscience is a thing unknown. We read of a man of genius, who wished to be a Catholic, banished, and his property confiscated. Look over the history of Protestantism in England. See what that country has passed through since 1567. Protestantism there seems to have no privilege, and if you look for any propagation of Protestantism there you will look in vain. It is a long time since it felt the necessity of attempting something like what was accomplished by the Catholic Church, in the conversion of the heathen; and we find that, one hundred and forty years ago, missionary societies were established, but what they have done is a blank, as far as history is concerned. We know that, within our own memories, millions and millions of money have been received in England, and in the United States, for the purpose of missions, all of which has been sacrificed, with thousands of missionaries, in attempting to do something to propagate Protestantism; and, I will say boldly, all without success. We have heard much of their success in the Sandwich Islands, but I believe it will be found that the propagation of Protestantism there is illusive. We know that the population of those Islands has diminished one-half under the influence of missions; and we know that the conversion of those that remain is of such a kind that the people by law are driven into the Churches with canes. These, therefore, are symptoms of decline. It is declining on both sides. On one side is the decline of all who have separated from its primary doctrines. We must either admit that all Germany and Holland has declined into infidelity, or we must still call it Protestant. But Protestants will not admit this; but it shows how fast Protestantism declines into infidelity. It declines on the other side, for it is a very consoling reflection that many of the best and purest minds that ever embraced Protestantism, have come, one after the other, in the direction of the Catholic Church. In Germany, too, we hear of four hundred men connected with the universities, becoming Catholics, not in a body, but one by one. If they remain, they will not submit to any yoke. They say the Scriptures are their guide, and they are the interpreters. You have taught us, they say, to disregard authorities, and you attempt to fasten your yoke upon us. It may be said that Catholic nations have turned out many infidels, but they never can do so under the cry of Catholicity. Protestants have no check on them. If Protestantism, therefore, has declined, and is declining, and is destined to decline, it may not be unreasonable to inquire into the cause of it. I think the fact itself is undeniable, for it is admitted on all hands. The question, then, is, what is the cause?

The causes are many, but I think the primary ones are to be found in the very elements of Protestantism itself; for I conceive that God has given to man but two principles for his guidance; one is authority, the other is reason. If it be said that we, Catholics, because we admit authority, do not exercise reason, we have an answer which is obvious, and ought to be satisfactory, which is, that if you ask us our reason for submitting to authority, we say, that by the exercise of reason we arrive at the conviction that God, having made a revelation, has made a Church, to be the guide of the people to the end of the world. If this be true, what can be more rational than that we should submit to the teaching which God himself has provided. This is our argument; but on the other hand, the Protestant system from the beginning, cast off all authority. It is very difficult to say, now, what were the motives for asserting this principle; but one thing is clear, that the first principle of Protestantism is to pull down. Its first mission was not to build up, but to pull down; and a more efficient instrument for pulling down could never have been made by the ingenuity of man—the principle which made every man the judge of what was right and true in the Holy Scriptures. Hence, therefore, the first principle of Protestantism was a condition of necessity, and it seems not to have foresight to reflect that this principle could be turned against anything else. Hence

you find that after it produced the first ebullition, a species of half religious and half political revolution, it began to fix limits, and endeavored to put some restraints on the wildness of its adherents. This, therefore, is the other element; and from that period to the present day, Protestantism has manifested that it never could under such principles hold its own, or propagate itself. And why? Because these two principles are contradictory, one of the other.

How can you make me free to read and judge the Scriptures, if you tie me down to the Augsburg Declaration, the thirty-nine articles, the homilies, or the Westminster confession? What kind of freedom is that? The freedom you proclaimed invited me to desert the Catholic Church, in order to put my neck under a yoke which you have framed for me, and which you could not bear yourself. You give with one hand, and take away with the other. Protestantism, therefore, is in contradiction with itself, and cannot exist. Hence it is, that all those persons who have gone in the direction of rationalism, go on the first principle of Protestantism; and all those who deny authority, and seeing and feeling the necessity of it, come one by one into the church from which their ancestors departed. This principle has followed Protestantism everywhere. It springs from the heart of Protestantism, and follows it through every vein; hence the number of sects—they cannot be enumerated; but all of them are justified in their character by the very first principle of the association to which they belong. And here, also, Protestantism has lost all power over the mass of mankind. It has so lost the capacity to preserve any doctrines of its own, that it is paralyzed and powerless. It has lost all central force; and because it was conscious of this fact from the beginning, you will observe that in every instance it has attached itself to the State. The Protestants have no land of freedom except these United States, and here they have the kind of freedom of which none of the advocates of Protestantism have reason to be proud. In every other country it is a department of State. You may speak of its bishops, its ministers, and its dignitaries, but you will find that they have no tongue except that which the minister or king puts in its mouth. Have we not proof of that in England; have we not seen a dispute the other day, between a presbyter and his bishop, about the nature of the sacrament of baptism—a doctrine which was settled by Christ 1,800 years ago—decided by the judge on the bench? In that dispute the bishop had an advantage over the presbyter. On the contrary, he was opposed by the Archbishop, and there was the Archbishop, the Bishop and the presbyter professing to be Protestants, and yet they could not find what the doctrine of baptism was, until it was made known to them by a civil officer, the judge on the bench. In every country but this, it is a mere slave, a function of government, in which the civil laws speak to it, as it does to the officer of the army and navy. Again, if you speak of its wants of success in conversions, how is it possible that it can succeed? We hear of missionaries going with high hopes of converting pagan natives, and holding, on board ship, conventions to agree upon what kind of doctrines to present to the heathen. We have seen a missionary leave the country, who was converted on the voyage and baptised. How could we expect the heathen to listen to men who are contradicting each other. And even where this is not the case, they have confounded the judgment of the pagans, from the fact that, being Protestants, they must commence by saying that our Saviour established a church which, after fifteen hundred years, failed, and that they came to renew it. How quickly will the heathen, with the perception of natural talent, say, what confidence can I place in you if the church of the author of Christianity failed? Protestantism has no body of doctrines. It has no heart, no intellect, no complete system by which men can be brought into an association of a religious kind. Protestantism still numbers, perhaps, fifty millions of men, many of them the most enlightened and the best educated in the world. Yet, under the unhappy auspices of the first principle of Protestantism, as if God would make known what were their specific creeds, it is probable that not ten out of the whole number could be found on all points to have the same belief in regard to the substance and details of the Christian religion.

On the other hand, the Catholics number two hundred millions, all over the globe, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and I run no risk in stating, that out of these two hundred millions there could not be found ten that disagree in regard to the revelations of the Son of God. There are other causes to which I might refer if time allowed. In every country it is used as a state engine, and here, where it is not so used, you will perceive the excesses and fanaticism into which it runs. What is New England now? It is a land of scepticism. The very pulpits erected for the purpose of preaching the doctrine of the Trinity, have been used for preaching against the divinity of the Son of God. You see persons declaring they expect to see greater men than Jesus Christ. And you see women, the sex so much honored by the Virgin Mother of the Son of God, holding conventions, and quarrelling about woman's rights. Look at Miller. He can set a nation crazy, and who can stop him. Where is the authority in the Protestant Church to say, unhappy man you must cease? So, too, with Joe Smith, and the Mormons. And where is the authority in Protestantism to prevent him from seducing thousands and thousands from the path of heaven? They preach from the pulpits the decisions of ecclesiastical bodies. But what authority are they? None at all. All is gone—the life is gone, the soul is gone, and the principle is gone, if there was any principle except that which was calculated to produce a series of disputes and contradictions among those to whom God had bequeathed, as a legacy, one united system of divine revelation. During all the time to which I refer, in which the Catholic Church saw several nations fall from the right path, like stars from the celestial firmament, she was not idle,—she has made glorious efforts, and has taken from Protestants their best men, while she also replenished the pagan. She brought South America and all its Indian tribes into communion with her. She sent her missionaries into China, and planted there a nucleus which may one day turn out a glorious and beautiful portion of the Church of God. She sent her missionaries to Paraguay, and they were not of the delicate stamp—they were not of the stamp of those whose only mission appears to be to distribute tracts, and count them by the number of pages; but missionaries animated with the soul and life of truth.

Oh, how beautiful are some of the passages in the lives of the missionaries during the period when Protestantism was making its ravages in the heart of Catholic Europe. Who can imagine a scene such as that which occurred in the tranquil rivers of Paraguay,

when the ministers, to convert the Indians, had recourse to the touching strains of lutes to the sweet music of which they sang beautiful hymns that appealed to the hearts of those benighted Pagans, and which the Church has consecrated in praise of God and of the Mother of our blessed Redeemer. The Indians could not resist the influence of those hymns and it was this influence which first led to their conversion. When one of the two Missionaries, after their separation from each other, had returned to the place where they parted, he found the body of his companion pierced with arrows. On his body he found his breviary opened at the prayer for the dead, and instead of whining at what occurred he chaunted over the body "Te Deum Laudamus," because from that moment he began to conceive hope that God would give a blessing to the people, although they had shed the blood of His minister. And if the Catholic Church be in error, and Protestantism true, how strangely has God manifested the distinction between truth and error, when the Protestants have converted none and the Catholic all! What, then, has Protestantism done?—Where, in a word, has it exhibited any of those signs of divine approbation which have always accompanied the Catholic missionaries? Protestantism requires all that it ever had for itself. It gained nothing. It could not preserve itself or its doctrines; and when we number those who have unhappily gone farther from the truth, and when we number those who are daily admitted into the Catholic Church, there can be no hesitation in believing that Protestantism is declining, that it is destined to decline, and that probably before the end of a century from this day there will be throughout the civilised world, nothing of what had been Protestantism, and the Protestant church. This is the probability; and it is on this account that the Church has never ceased for a moment to send her missionaries throughout the world. It is on this account Protestantism needs, and pretends to have discovered great secrets. It is said the discovery has been made that it is the intention of the Pope to seize the valley of the Mississippi. They seem to think this a secret. Not so. Every one should know that the church will convert the whole people of the United States, if necessary—the army, the navy, the government, senators, representatives—the President himself. We have received from God what Protestantism never received—a command to go and teach all nations.

And why should we not do our best in a country to which we are bound by so many ties of duty and gratitude? It is no secret—the object and hope of the Catholic Church are to convert all nations, including England with its high Parliament and imperial Sovereign. God, who has permitted this great schism to take place, knows the time and circumstances of this conversion. In the meantime, look at the list of great men who are leaving high places and emoluments in the established Church of England and seeking admission to the one true Church. Look at the meek Spencer, who is willing to be called a fool for the Church's sake. Who can think of Newman, with all the strength of his mighty intellect, and all the sweetness of a pure soul infused into every page of his writings, coming back, and doing all in his power to repair the injury which he and his associates had done. Who can think among ourselves the number that have already come in or are preparing to do so? For I think I may say, in the presence of Protestants, that in all my life I have never conversed with a Protestant who was entirely satisfied with the religion he entertained. I do not say, on this account, that he preferred Catholicity. But on the other hand, the illustrious converts who have been brought up, as it were in the camp of the enemy, from the moment they became Catholics their souls were filled with gratitude.

Why then should we not enter in prayer that God will conduct those wandering souls back to the fold—to unite them in our faith in communion with His church. We should pray for those, and oh, if it had not been for this awful schism, if the nations had remained in communion with the church of God, we would have converted the whole world. Paganism and all species of infidelity would have vanished before the approach of the herald of Christianity. Oh, should we not pray for the day, when missionaries shall not be at difference, but when the church shall send out missionaries to bring all nations to the knowledge of one God, one faith, and one baptism. Amen.

IMPORTANT TO THE CONFRATERNITIES OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.—The Curate of Notre Dames des Victoires, in Paris, requested the Rt. Rev. Bishop Aletmy to have the following notice published in this country for the sake of the different Confraternities of the Immaculate Heart of Mary affiliated to the Archconfraternity of his Church. The notice is that the names of the members of the various confraternities affiliated to that of Notre Dame des Victoires, ought to be sent to him, as otherwise they do not gain the indulgences attached. Those of the Clergy that have the confraternity in their churches are humbly and earnestly requested by him to send him the names, addressing to "M. le Curé de Notre Dame des Victoires, a Paris, France."—*Freeman's Journal.*

(From the London Correspondent of the Tablet.)
Wednesday Evening
The Hierarchy and the Cardinalate of Archbishop Wiseman, continue to be, as you may see by the papers, the great topics of conversation and speculation at present. It is said that Lord John Russell, as at present advised, intends to take no step whatever in the matter I cannot help thinking that the excitement is mainly among the Clergymen of the Establishment. I was very happy to see in the letter of the Paris correspondent of the Times, on Friday last, a paragraph which confirms the news I gave you about the foundation of an asylum for converted Anglican Ministers. He tells us that "the religious society here"—i. e., a Paris—have purchased one of the very finest houses in the Rue de Greville for a seminary, the young men there educated being chiefly intended for Great Britain. For myself, I lament Mr. Goltz's decision to establish his magnificent foundations in Paris. I understand, however, that he considers it highly desirable that Anglican converts should be for a time separated from England and English influences before they are sent back to perform sacerdotal functions in the land which witnessed their Puseyite vagaries. New schools for girls and infants are to be opened in Castle-street, in the Warwick-street district. They are to be placed under the superintendence of Religious. The Times has nailed the Bishop of London very fairly on a point of his answer to the address of the