

PROTESTANT ISMS AND CATHOLICITY IN THE
UNITED STATES.

Dictionary of Religious Denominations. By Dr. Roswell Hitchcock.

Progress of Christianity in the United States. By Dr. Philip Schaff.

Princeton Review, 1879.

Catholic World. New York, 1871.

Sadlier's Almanac and Directory, 1881.

ANY one reading attentively the works of the well-known Lord Macaulay, cannot fail to observe that if, of all the British essayists treating of kindred subjects, he is thought by non-Catholics to be one of the most impartial critics of Catholicity, he is in reality one of the worst, because most covert, perpetrators of the modern English contempt of Catholics; and still he is a writer who is his own best refutation by the numerous testimonies he gives to the venerable Church of the ages. No man can so well answer Macaulay as Macaulay. When he has made a thrust at you with his keen polemical sword, ere the blow has fairly fallen you find his sword-handle in your grasp, to return him a Roland for his Oliver. Such is the fortunate propensity of so many able non-Catholic writers to witness against the sects and for the Church, that Dr. F. W. Marshall's *Christian Missions* is considered simply unanswerable from the fact that of the eleven hundred volumes cited in its composition nine hundred and forty-seven are written by non-Catholics. In a humorous light it is Shakespeare's episode of Prince Henry and Poins, who, it will be remembered, put up poor Jack Falstaff to rob the moneyed travellers, and who, having retaken the booty, were compelled to restore it to the royal treasury. In these pages non-Catholics—even bishops, doctors, and ministers—shall testify to the downfall or emasculation of their own and their fellow-Protestants' isms.

"A house divided against itself shall fall," is not only Scripture, but also experience of every day.

Protestantism is that divided house, and its severed members testify against it now to show its more and more nearly approaching dissolution, as its first builders imitated the upraisers of Babel and were confounded in their tongues and separated in their tribes, forever. Of the first three Protestant isms, Lutheranism can claim no solidarity with Calvinism; their first principles are as divergent

as the north and the east. Neither can Calvinism any more claim common life with Anglicanism, than Anglicanism can with Catholicity. All sects—that is, cut off from different parts of the tree which was to overshadow the nations; sections clipped off the rock of Peter, they fell of their own dead weight, and they never will coalesce among themselves any more than they will reunite with their first source of life, unless they revivify by shaking off their independent death and putting on the common life of unity with the parent trunk, or the Rock of Ages.

These three divisions were subdivided in the lifetime of their founders or shortly after their death: Lutherans into seven or eight sects, Calvinists into five or six, Anglicans into fully as many before the end of the reign of Elizabeth, who was really the foundress and establisher of the ism in its separate form as both schism and heresy. Thus we have at least eighteen or twenty denominations or religious fractions within fifty years of their primitive foundation. These have produced upwards of three hundred offshoots in as many years. We seem, however, to be wasting time showing the defenders of the Reformation that their hundreds of sects are destructive of the ground principle of Christianity, viz., unity of doctrine, one code of morals. We have advanced so far that many not only seem to think but do think that the multiplicity of opposing sections of “believers” is a positive advantage.

The United States is truly the paradise of propagation of indefinite numbers and shades of denominations. There are nearly as many in the Union as can be enumerated in all the world besides, —not less than fifty or sixty.¹

The latest apologist of denominationalism in the United States is Dr. Philip Schaff, in the *Princeton Review* of September, 1879. He dares to proclaim that “American denominationalism is the necessary outcome of the Church history of Europe,”—which might be honored with a conditional *transeat* if it were not blasphemously added: “It is overruled by providence for the more rapid spread of Christianity!” But with all its advantages, Dr. Schaff cannot but covertly envy the sublime unity of the Catholic Church, for he continues: “The Roman Church, with all its outward uniformity, has as much carnal animosity among its monastic orders as there ever existed between Protestant sects.” Say you so, Dr. Philip Schaff? This sounds as if it might have been

¹ The existing sects that have made themselves any name are more properly divided into 40 greater and about 100 smaller. Buck's *Theological Dictionary* gives 116; Hitchcock's *Religious Denominations* some 120, many of which are found to have collapsed.

penned by some of the editors of the Jewish reptile press in Prussia,—and we are tempted to exclaim with the poet, “Jew, I thank thee for that word!” A three-hundred-sided Christianity must necessarily have as many faces as it has sides, and each side is bound to be obliquely if not diametrically opposed to every other. “As there *ever* existed between Protestant sects” is incredible in a doctor of theology and laws. What has become of the quarrels of, for example, Luther with Carlstadt and Hesshusius, both of whom he maltreated and banished; Calvin's burning of Servetus, indorsed by the gentle Melancthon;¹ Henry VIIIth's butcheries of Catholics for denying the supremacy and of Protestants for heresy! No one need fear the stirring up of bigotry by these and other examples. The cause of the first Reformers on the score of bloody persecutions has been given up by all earnest and honest non-Catholic writers. The corypheuses hunted down one another pitilessly. But where do we find recorded that the Augustinians, from whose ranks Luther seceded, ever banished or burnt the Dominicans, whom they envied the preaching of the indulgences? Who has handed down that the strong and subtle Jesuits—some 13,000 or 14,000 in number when suppressed—ever ripped up members of the other “monastic orders” to obtain the front ranks they acquired in fighting and conquering the rising isms? But one would scarcely need to go back beyond colonial times in the United States to find abundant examples of how the “brethren dwelt together in unity” and exercised no “carnal animosity” against one another. In Boston alone, in 1635, Roger Williams, founder of the Baptists, Rev. John Wheelwright, Ann Hutchinson (afterwards murdered on Long Island), and Aspinwall, were banished for heresy; in 1650 Sharp was lashed for having embraced the new sect of the Baptists, and in 1659 three persons were hanged as Quakers,—not to speak of the long and bloody wars waged against both Baptists and Quakers as “denominational”

¹ Calvin, Ep., 187. The Genevan is not generally credited with the imprisonment, banishment and death of also Valentine Gentilis, Jerome Bolsec, Favre, Perrin, Judge Peter Ameaux, Henri de la Marc, and lastly poor Jacques Gruet, who was beheaded and had his head nailed to a post for accusing Calvin of persecution and for proofs of impiety found in his writings. In Nuremburg, 1577–1617, 350 were executed for sorcery and heresy; 345 getting off with simple mutilation. Many of these were non-Catholic.

² Marcus Willson's *Outlines*, p. 338. Dr. Heylon (*Baker's Chronicles*) credits Henry VIII. in 38 years—to 1547—with the execution of 2 queens, 1 cardinal, 2 arch-bishops, 18 bishops, 13 abbots, 500 monks, 64 noblemen, 124 citizens, and 110 females. S. H. Burke, *Men and Women of the Reformation*, New York, 1872, makes his victims reach the enormous number of 80,000! of whom a large proportion were Protestants.

dissenters, as Bancroft relates after contemporary colonial historians. All which—and much more that might be adduced—proves that the older divisions into separate sects were not exactly a parting in peace like that of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv.), but were accompanied by mutual bloody persecutions and vituperations, the latter not yet having died out on the lips of the doctor of theology of Union Theological Seminary, as witness his giving place in statistics by name to only twenty-three or twenty-four sects out of over fifty, and his insulting references to many minor sects, which have precisely the same reason of being and right of rebellion as the larger ones had, viz., the reason and right of private interpretation.

Dr. Roswell Hitchcock's *Dictionary of Religious Denominations*¹ (article "Protestants") lumps the Protestants in the United States at 25,000,000, but his own figures, in detail, foot up but little above 8,000,000.

Dr. Philip Schaff's series of three tables, respectively: 1, of 1870; 2, comparative, of 1776 (or 1780-90) and 1876; 3, of 1878 inclusive, besides being self-contradictory, differ *toto cælo*, even *cæteris paribus*, from the figures of Dr. Hitchcock's book, though the same Dr. Schaff has a long and eulogizing recommendation of Hitchcock's work inserted among the nearly five hundred approbations appended to the *Complete Analysis*.

Here are specimens of Dr. Schaff's tables: 2, of 1876; and, 3, of 1878, both taken, in his own words, "from official records and . . . leading men of different churches:"

STATISTICS OF 1876.			STATISTICS OF 1878.		
	Ministers	Churches		Ministers	Cong's.
Baptists.	13,779	22,924	All Baptists,	20,292	13,230
Methodists,	20,458	10,000	All Methodists,	23,568	32,000
Presbyterians, Gen. Assembly,	4,744	5,077	Presbyterians, Gen. Assembly,	6,012	7,147

Who is so simple as to believe that the Baptists gained 6513 ministers in two years, and that with only nine theological seminaries among the regular Baptists, and no talk yet of the easily multiplied "local preachers?" Still more incredible that they should have erected nearly 8000 churches, or organized 4000

¹ Published in 1875, in *Complete Analysis of the Bible*, with the public and detailed indorsements (*in fine*) of upwards of 300 Protestant ministers, bishops, doctors, and professors of every denomination, of any numbers, and eulogized by 175 secular and religious editors of papers, this *elenchus* must be considered as of undoubted authority by all the leading denominations of non-Catholics to date of publication.

congregations, *each year* for two years in succession, even if it be granted that the congregations exceed the churches.

But here is a harder nut to crack for a statistician. The Methodists had, in 1876, 8000 *more* churches than they had congregations in 1878, or they must have lost 4000 churches or congregations *per year* for two years in succession! Whither? And we are not yet at the bottom, for it appears from the writer's note at the foot of third table that, by the authority of the *Methodist Almanac*, 1879, the number of congregations "differs somewhat,"—some nearly 4000—from the figures in Dr. Schaff's columns. The table credits the Methodist Episcopal Church *North* with round 20,000 congregations, while the *Almanac* puts those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, without distinction,—South, East, and West, then, as well as *North*,—at 16,099. So about 12,000 congregations have vanished in two years! The compass will need to be boxed better to suit business Americans. .

But we hasten to apologize. What has been lost in churches and congregations can readily be more than counterbalanced by an effective "local" Methodist clergy; for, pursues the same note, undisturbed by slight differences, "there are counted besides (ministers given above) 12,749 local preachers." In fact, if you want to go into exact details and count the whole force, "all the Methodist organizations together number 30 bishops and 26,642 local preachers, in addition to the regular ordained clergymen;" in fine, 18 bishops and nearly 3000 preachers more than the whole number given in the "official records" and by "leading men of different churches." Who goes bail for the paradox, that there is a "minister" *or* "local preacher" to every 68 Methodist "communicants," or a "minister" *and* a "local preacher" to every 136 "communicants?" And in this whole matter of "local preachers," as easily manufactured as a yard of jeans, we would recommend to Dr. Philip Schaff words, which we would be stoned to death for as blasphemers, from Dr. Walton's preface to his *Polyglot* (London, 1657): . . . "All are doctors; all are divinely learned; there is not so much as the meanest fanatic, or jack-pudding, who does not give his own dreams for the word of God. . . . These have filled our cities, villages, camps, houses, nay, *our churches and pulpits*, too, and lead the poor deluded people with them to —." We spare this last, because we honestly believe that the old English doctor's conclusion is rather too sweeping for our country.

We come to compare the membership of the non-Catholic denominations by communicants and nominal members, meaning by the latter term those who can in any sense be claimed or are claimed as belonging to a particular sect. For contrast we will

also adduce, as examples, a few figures from Dr. Roswell Hitchcock's enumeration :

Ecclesiastical Statistics of 1878. (Dr. Schaff in Princeton Review, September, 1879.)			Dictionary of Religious Denominations. (Dr. Hitchcock's Complete Analysis, 1875.)	
DENOMINATION.	Commun. Members.	Nom. Members.	Members in United States.	Members in the World.
Baptists,	2,656,221		1,094,806	c 2,500,000
Episcopalians,	314,367	1,250,000	1,100,000	
Quakers,	70,000	100,000		
Lutherans,	808,428	2,000,000	332,155	
Methodists,	3,428,050	14,000,000	2,240,000	c 3,000,000
Moravians,	9,407	16,236		
Presbyterians,	897,598		c 445,378	c 57,846
Ref. Episcopalians, . .	7,000	16,500		
Ref. Dutch,	79,000	251,000		
Ref. Germans,	124,596	151,651		
Swedenborgians, . . .	5,000	15,000		
Universalists,	37,965	42,500		

Numbers marked *c* denote communicants.

1. If the blanks in the table of the *Princeton Review* were filled up according to the proportion between the communicant and nominal membership of the more numerous sects, the whole number of members of the *twenty-three* or *twenty-four* denominations *named* in this *full* list of Protestants would exceed 34,000,000! Take only half this number for the, certainly, twenty odd sects, *not named* here, and we would have within 10,000,000 of the number, which Doctor and Bishop Hopkins,¹ of Vermont, gave, twenty-five years ago, as the aggregate of Protestants in the whole world, viz., 61,000,000, or 51,000,000 Protestants in the Union. If this be *reductio ad absurdum*, whose is the absurdity? The blanks of the nominal, supplied from the communicant column, would raise the nominal members to over 21,000,000 for little better than half the "denominations" in the country, the communicants alone footing up nearly 9,000,000.

2. To show how arbitrary must be the relation as given between communicants and nominal members, the proportion of the former to the latter is among the Episcopalians as 1 to $4\frac{1}{8}$; Quakers, as 1 to $1\frac{3}{10}$; Lutherans, as 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$; Methodists, as 1 to $4\frac{1}{2}$, Reformed Episcopalians, as 1 to $2\frac{1}{8}$; Reformed Germans, as 1 to $1\frac{1}{8}$; Swedenborgians, as 1 to 3; Universalists, as 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$. Average proportion, as 1 to about $2\frac{1}{2}$.

The 9,000,000 communicants would thus average 22,500,000 nominal members for only the majority of the sects. We are evidently getting into the "long" of American Protestantisms; but the "short" will not delay its appearance.

3. The nominal membership of "all the Baptists" in the *Review*

¹ End of Controversy Controverted, Letter 22.

table of 1878, multiplied according to the proportion given for the more numerous sects, would produce 10,624,884 nominal Baptists in the United States. According to Hitchcock's *Dictionary*, published in 1875, the Baptists numbered in all "1,094,806 members" in these States, which, subtracted from Dr. Schaff's figures in 1878, would show an increase in a few years, and a difference of the insignificant sum of 9,530,078.

By the same inverse ratio and double back-action integral calculus, Dr. Schaff contrives to figure out 428,050 more Methodist communicants in the United States in 1878 than Dr. Hitchcock's best efforts, assisted doubtless by the same Dr. Schaff and the near five hundred indorsers of the *Complete Analysis*, could scrape together in the whole world in 1875,¹ and we are not oblivious of the fact stated in the *Review* that the "Baptists and Methodists, who are scarcely known in some countries of the Continent, and barely tolerated in others, are numerically the largest in the United States."²

By further comparison we find the Presbyterians credited with an increase of 450,000 communicants, or 1,800,000 nominal members, and the Lutherans with an accretion of 476,273, or 1,900,000, respectively, in four or five years.

And if the figures of Hitchcock represent total membership, as they do on their face, their glaring and monstrous disproportion with similar figures of Schaff can only be characterized as a thumping statistical lie.

As some extenuation for the honor of our common humanity, we will not fail to observe that the statistics or estimates of Dr. Hitchcock are not always of 1875, or even 1870, but sometimes reach back as far as 1869 and 1867, and in odd cases 1864, though the book printed in 1875 is supposed to represent the census nearest that date.

It will interest to contrast with both Dr. Hitchcock and Dr. Schaff these statistics of 1868, "taken entirely from Protestant sources, and chiefly from official documents published by the respective denominations,"³ with the average annual increase.

¹ We, however, have taken Dr. Hitchcock's first number as somewhat nearer the truth.

² Princeton Review, September, 1879, p. 230.

³ Catholic World, May, 1871, where are given exact details of fifty-one sects.

	Church Members in 1887.	Average Annual In- crease in 25 years.
1. Lutherans,	332,155	7,182
2. German Reformed,	110,408	3,431
3. United Brethren,	97,983	1,319
4. Moravians,	6,655	26
5. Dutch Reformed,	57,846	1,261
6. Mennonites,	39,110	380
7. Reformed Mennonites,	11,000	200
8. Evangelical Association,	58,002	1,791
9. Christian Connection,	500,000	7,954
10. Church of God,	32,000	960
11. Old School Presbyterians,	246,350	8,958
12. New School Presbyterians,	161,538	2,167
13. Reformed Presbyterians (General Synod),	8,324	153
14. Synod of Reformed Presbyterians,	6,000	
15. Associate and United Presbyterians,	63,489	1,000
16. Associate Reformed Presbyterians,	3,909	80
17. Free Presbyterians,	1,000	
18. Cumberland Presbyterians,	100,000	1,819
19. Baptists,	1,094,806	13,796
20. Free Will Baptists,	59,111	204
21. Seventh-Day Baptists,	7,038	41
22. Dunkers,	20,000	500
23. German Seventh Day Baptists,	1,800	30
24. Free Communion Baptists,	104	
25. Anti-Mission Baptists,	105,000	6,143
26. Six-Principle Baptists,	3,000	
27. River Brethren,	7,000	80
28. Disciples (Campbellites),	300,000	4,762
29. Congregationalists,	278,362	4,734
30. Unitarians,	30,000	300
31. Universalists,	80,000	1,000
32. Protestant Episcopal,	194,692	6,536
33. Methodist Episcopal,	1,146,081	30,377
34. Methodist Protestant,	50,000	
35. Methodist Church,	50,000	2,000
36. Free Wesleyan,	25,000	200
37. African Methodist,	200,000	7,500
38. Zion African Methodist,	60,000	2,008
39. Methodist Episcopal (South),	585,040	4,087
40. Free Methodist,	4,889	617
41. West Primitive Methodists,	2,000	40
42. Independent Methodists,	800	
43. Friends, or Quakers,	100,000	1,000
44. Hicksites,	40,000	400
45. Shakers,	4,713	60
46. Adventists,	30,000	1,500
47. Swedenborgians,	5,000	186
48. Spiritualism,	165,000	8,000
49. Mormon Church,	60,000	2,000
50. Christian Perfectionists,	255	10
51. Catholic Apostolic Church,	250	10
Total,	6,396,110	134,802

At which officially stated rate of increase of fifty-one denomina-
tions in these States, there might have been, all counted, in 1878,
7,744,130, and by A. D. 1900 the whole number of professing Prot-
estants in this progressive country may possibly reach 10,844,576,
or, if the population increase at its usual ratio, some 50,000,000
less than all the prospective inhabitants of the republic. So far
from being, or being likely to become, a Protestant nation is our

magnificent fatherland, that neither now is there, nor in the near future is there an even probable prospect of there being more than about a sixth of its citizens attached to any or all of the Protestant denominations.

Come we now in passing to sift Dr. Philip Schaff's "figures," supposed to represent the "facts" regarding the Catholic Church in the United States in 1878 inclusive. Three out of the six columns are inaccurate and misleading, misrepresenting even Sadlier's *Directory* of 1879. Instead of 52 bishops in 1878, as Schaff puts it, there were 63, 11 of whom are archbishops, of which archbishops one is a cardinal. Though the footnote remarks in *nonparcil* type, "the membership includes the whole Roman Catholic population," the same number is inscribed in both columns of "communicants" and "nominal membership." A comparison of Schaff and Sadlier with what may be called an authoritative pamphlet, viz., *The Catholic Church in the United States: its Rise, Relations with the Republic, Growth, and Future Prospects*,¹ will illustrate both Dr. Schaff's bungling misconceptions and Sadlier's inaccuracies.²

ROMAN CATHOLIC STATISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR 1878.

	"Princeton Review."	"Sadlier's Directory."	"The Cath. Ch. in the United States."
Archbishops,	12	12	11
Bishops,	40	52	57
Ministers,	5,750	5,750	5,650
Congregations,	5,589	5,589	7,520 ³
Nominal Membership,	6,375,630	6,375,630	7,000,000
Communicant Membership,	6,375,630	Not given.	Not given.
Colleges,	78	78	77
Theological Seminaries,	23	23	33 ⁴

¹ By Very Rev. J. T. Hecker, editor of the Catholic World. Catholic Publication Society Company, 1879.

² Sadlier's Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, though the only publication of its kind in these States, is only official in as far as some reports it gives are sometimes indorsed by the authority of particular bishops of the dioceses over which they preside. As a whole it is not official, nor indorsed by any ostensible ecclesiastical authorization. A close observer will have remarked that its "Summary" is not accurately representative of even its own detailed data. "Recapitulations" are not unfrequently at war with items they are supposed to gather into one, and the same "Reports" are often continued from year to year without change.

³ This includes 1800 chapels and stations, which are counted in the sense intimated by Dr. Schaff in note 6 to 3, Ecclesiastical Census, 1878. If this inclusion be considered unfair, we would like to know by what right the log-huts and box-houses, erected by the people and at public expense, to be used as public or district common schoolhouses, are Sunday after Sunday occupied as country "meeting-houses," and doubtless counted as among the denominational houses of worship. They certainly are almost invariably so used in Kentucky, and we have good reason to believe in the neighboring and Western States.

⁴ These as "Ecclesiastical Institutions," doubtless, include religious houses of study.

In the little measure of justice that is done Catholics in these and similar tables dispersed throughout Dr. Schaff's long article, we ought to be grateful for the notification of some "facts" brought out by the figures of this table (3), to wit: 1. Catholics are credited with over twice and a half as many colleges as the "denomination" having the highest number among the sects, three times as many as the next highest, and quite as many as all the remaining sects put together.

2. The Catholic Church is shown as maintaining more theological seminaries than ten other "denominations," twice and a half as many as the regular Baptists, seven more than the Episcopalians, eight more than the Lutherans, within one of twice as many as "all the Methodists;" and if we were credited with our real number, twice as many as any single sect in the fifty odd denominations.

It is time to say a word about the diversity of computation of their own numbers, especially among prominent Catholics.

1. No reasonable man is going to make Catholics responsible for the reckless assertions, even accompanied by figures, of "national" and secret-society demagogues pretending to be Catholics. One, for example, has given data, place, and details, by which he wished, nine or ten years ago, to prove there were then over twelve millions of Catholics in the United States. Another—not, however, to be classed among scandalous nominal Catholics—by giving an average of 2500 people to each priest made the Catholics, in 1871, exceed 10,000,000.

2. The immense waves of immigration, sweeping millions on our shores in less than a score of years, have necessarily staggered even sober minds in making estimates. But, right here, let us say that, though it be conceded that the majority of our people are of Irish descent, there are not over 2,000,000 of our vast number who are actually of Irish birth.¹

A great many more are of Celtic origin, and perhaps only the respectable minority of Anglo-Saxon lineage; but the Anglo-Saxon element does not exceed a fifth, or at most a fourth, of the whole population, much as we are vaunted by Dr. Schaff and toadyists as "the daughter of Great Britain," and "one of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race."

The great God made us a nation; we owe little to Great Britain. And if men had anything to do with our race we Americans have made ourselves by electrifying into a homogeneous mass elements from every strong race. "But God made us, not we ourselves."

¹ Take any State: In Georgia, 5000 of Irish birth to 26,000 Catholics; in Indiana, 29,000 to 150,000; in Illinois, 120,000 to 400,000; in Louisiana, 17,000 to 200,000. Even in New York State, where there are 530,000 Irish by nativity, there are 1,125,000 Catholics. In Pennsylvania, finally, 285,000 to 560,000.

3. The great majority of well-informed, leading Catholics, and public writers of any particular note, have settled on about the figures of the pamphlet above as an average estimate, viz., 7,000,000 Catholics. The very detailed census ordered by our Holy Father, Leo XIII., in the course of 1879, if strictly taken, will give official figures as to our undoubted strength in the United States.

Now laying aside individual criticisms, what is the intention and animus of the whole tribe of the trumpeters of Protestant "Progress of Christianity in the United States?" In view of the too successfully attended lectures of a shallow but fluent atheist in the course of the past two years, and the ever-increasing publication of downright infidel literature, it has become painfully apparent how many hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, of our population openly sympathize with naked unbelief, who would scarcely stop short of offering incense literally to the Goddess of Liberty we have set forth on our coins, and are about to inaugurate in the harbor of New York as the tutelary genius of our nation. God forefend! But it is evil omen enough that the gigantic Goddess is but the emblem of the pagan deity "Libertas," and the representative of the live strumpet whom the fathers of the present French donors actually enthroned on the altars of desecrated Notre Dame in Paris, and worshipped but ninety years ago.

Catholics are not surprised at the workings of a leaven kneaded into the body politic in the last forty years by the increase of Protestant churches, and the decrease of faith among American Protestants. What need to corroborate this testimony of a late (January, 1881) New York correspondent of the *London Post*: "Indifferentism exists among Americans to a far greater extent than is generally supposed. The men who have fallen into this mode of thought have generally been educated Protestants, but their Church has wholly lost its hold upon them, and they have drifted away into what is not exactly infidelity, but which practically comes very near it." Protestants have been the dupes of their purblind leaders, and through their honesty and earnestness of purpose have become simple enough to hug the delusion that things were going on not only well enough, but gloriously; in fact, that they were making rapid strides in converting the country, and establishing a great Protestant nation in this grand New World. The few shades outlined here and there in the imaginative picture they would paint, are only admitted to set off the *coulour de rose* they would fain make us believe is the predominant feature of the grand reality portrayed. Here is about a common estimate: There are some 35,000,000 or 40,000,000 now of "more orthodox," respectable Protestants; two or three millions belonging to a "few petrified

sects, . . . having no right to exist except as antiquarian curiosity shops;" in fact, "a few obscure sects perpetuating their ignorance and stagnation, . . . dead to the surrounding world," which "cares no more for them than for antediluvian fossils."¹ And we have, say, 42,000,000 or 43,000,000 Protestants!

The Catholics may be possibly a fifth or sixth of this number, some over 6,000,000, though, of course, they count as little or nothing in the work of Christianity proper in the country. Throw in 7000 or 8000 Jews, count some 160,000 Indians (80,000 already converted as Protestants!), 135,000 Chinese, a million "miscellaneous," and we have about completed the 50,000,000 inhabitants of "America." "By which, of course, I mean here the United States," which, in fine, "with the other great branch of the Anglo-Saxon race, . . . is chiefly intrusted by providence with the propagation of Bible Christianity to the end of the earth," . . . especially "in the outlying semi-heathenish population."² Scarcely an indication of a hint that there are even a few thousands who—outside of the exceptions above—do not profess Christianity in one form or other. This is again the "long" of American Protestantism. What is the "short" of it and the truth? Fully one-half of this leading nation of the Western Hemisphere profess no religion whatever, though we hasten to add that these twenty odd millions of quasi-infidels are not actual unbelievers in the sense understood in Europe, and are often more amenable to Christian principles and have more human kindness than many professing certain "denominations."

The professing Protestants in the country we have proved to be about equal or little superior in number to the Catholic population, though many call themselves Protestants because they are not Catholics, and as many more—minors and irresponsible persons—are under distinctively Protestant influence by blood or marriage relationship with "professors of religion."

Outside testimony concords with domestic confessions. Professor Flint, of Edinburgh, only the other day, blaming the American Presbyterians for being "slow and unenergetic," for "caring little for converts," "being too lazy to heal their own divisions," concluded that "the spirit of liberty was a disintegrating influence in a religious sense," adding significantly "that *all* the Protestant bodies (of the United States) were suffering from this severely," and "the only Church that seemed to thrive was the Catholic." Bishop Littlejohn, preaching before the University of Cambridge, declared in a scholarly period that our republicanism was undermining the faith of the American branch of the Anglicans. Commenting on

¹ Dr. Schaff's charitable estimate of the smaller sects, pages 231, 232.

² Dr. Schaff's *Progress of Christianity in the United States*, pp. 231, 235.

which the New York *Times* roundly pronounced that "not only had the influence of the democratic idea hindered for many years the Anglican Church in this country, but the same influence *is steadily disintegrating* the Protestant sects." "The drift of the times," it concludes, "is towards religious anarchy."

Outward show still remains a whited sepulchre. In vain to point to the 70,000 congregations, 60,000 edifices, 20,000,000 sittings, \$300,000,000 worth of property. The more the churches the less the Christians. Protestantism is dividing its forces more here than elsewhere. Division is death. All these paraphernalia are but expensive preparations for a funeral. The ripples of the circle, caused by plunging the heavy stone of Protestantism into the, then, calm sea of the world, are ever widening, even weakening, until at last, and at no very distant time, they must fade out of sight on the ocean of humanity. Original Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism are dead, while the London *Scientific Miscellany* (in London *Tablet*, February 7th, 1880) quotes Catholicity as over 254,000,000 strong. Neither the Thirty-nine Articles, nor the Confession of Augsburg, nor the Five Points of Calvinism, could each count a round million of followers, true to the letter, true to the spirit of the first reformers. The children of Luther, of Calvin, and of Elizabeth were born with the stain of their parents' original sin; doomed to split into a hundred sects and disintegrate even unto final dissolution.

Mr. W. H. Mallock joins James Anthony Froude in declaring that "the non-Catholic portion of Christendom has fought almost its last fight with Satan, and is about to surrender itself to his undisputed sway."¹ But what, they ask, "is the Catholic portion of Christendom" doing? "The Catholic Church is gaining ground in the more energetic races that had been the stronghold of Protestantism. Her numbers increase, her organization gathers vigor. Her clergy are bold, energetic, and aggressive. . . . She has taken into her service her old enemy (?) the press, and has established a literature. Her hierarchy in England and America ('the two great branches,' we may remark, 'of the Anglo-Saxon race') have already compelled the state to consult their opinions and respect their pleasure." Query, by the same authority: "Why is Protestantism standing still while Rome is advancing? Why does Rome count her converts from among the evangelicals by tens, while she loses to them, but here and there, an exceptional and unimportant unit?"² One needs no answer but the text of Scripture: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"Travellers assure us," concludes for us the Ritualistic organ,

¹ Short Studies on Great Subjects, by James A. Froude.

² Revival of Romanism, by the same.

St. Luke, "that the only form of religion that is making any way in the United States, keeping at the same time within the bounds of decency and decorum, is the Catholic."

Catholic increase in the United States in the first half of the past century has been from $\frac{1}{120}$ th part of the population to $\frac{1}{20}$ th; in the second half from $\frac{1}{20}$ th to $\frac{1}{4}$ th. Since 1870 Protestantism has averaged yearly in the city of Rome 10 converts.

In the electric light irradiating from the simple eloquence of this contrast there needs no horoscope to predict that it will not require many more decades to run their course in this age of quick mutations before America, if she shakes off the skeptic torpor benumbing her vitality, shall have made her final choice between linking her eternal destinies with the crumbling ruins of the isms or taken her stand on the Rock of Peter and in the everlasting Church that is built thereon. There is no abiding ism between Jericho and Jerusalem. When Protestant isms shall have exhausted themselves, like their predecessors, the men-made counterfeits of the buried centuries, their false lights going out as an extinguished comet which has surprised and astounded nations, the unbiased American mind will direct its acumen to observe more narrowly the brilliancy of the colossal figure uprisen in the land, who, as she conquered of old the Greek, the Roman, and the barbarian, is even yet "bringing into activity every intellect to the obedience of Christ." II. Cor. x. 5.
