

Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin.

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WHEN Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, the majority of her subjects were still attached to the Mass though opposed to the Pope. Beyond the Tweed a hostile Sovereign was both her personal rival and her legitimate heir. Of Ireland she held at the beginning little more than the fringe, and the whole country her Continental enemies hoped to wrench from her rule, and to organize into a base for invasion. It would be hard to dogmatize as to her religious belief. Her mind seems to have wavered between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. She has been accounted a great Protestant Queen, and no doubt she did more to root Protestantism in the land and develop and strengthen it than any other English Sovereign; but it was not because she embraced it heartily and with the whole consent of her mind, but because, as Froude shows, she cleverly and unscrupulously played the two great Roman Catholic powers, France and Spain, against each other, and the policy gave England an advantage. She had not the profound conviction of William the Silent, and in moral grandeur and loyal-hearted devotion to duty she cannot be compared to the late Queen Victoria.

It was only after some hesitation that Elizabeth resolved to revive the policy of her brother Edward. With a keen insight into the drift of things, she saw that the new opinions would tend best to the greatness and glory of the kingdom, and the welfare of the people, and she gave her support to the Reformation. A new Supremacy Act was passed. In substance it agreed with the former, only the Queen would have herself described in it, not as "Head on earth of the Church of England," but by the words "the only Supreme Governor of this realm and of all other Her Highness's dominions, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal." Her motive in refusing

to be called the Head of the Church is stated in a letter of Bishop Jewell to Bullinger to have been that "this honour is due to Christ alone, and cannot belong to any human being whatever."

The use of the Church Service in English which had been abolished in Mary's reign was now ordered by Elizabeth to be restored. But to the people of Ireland the change from Latin to English was a change from one unknown tongue to another, for English maintained itself with difficulty in the pale, and outside the pale it was a dead language. This formed part of the instruction given to the Viceroy, the Earl of Sussex, and he seems to have loyally carried it out. On his going into Christ Church, "the Litany was sung in English, and afterwards the Lord Deputy took his oath, and then they began to sing, 'We praise Thee, O God,' at which the trumpets sounded."

The Prayer-Book was to be used in Ireland according to the Act of Uniformity, but there was still wanting a Confession of Faith. And accordingly, early in 1567, what was called "A breefe declaration of certain principall Articles of Religion," was issued by the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sydney, and a Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners. These Articles are eleven in number, and possess a special interest as forming the earliest creed of the Reformed Church in Ireland. They set forth in explicit terms the doctrine of the Trinity, and also declare that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation. They recognize the Royal Supremacy, and assert that the Bishop of Rome has no more authority than other Bishops have in their provinces and dioceses. They condemn private Masses, and the doctrine that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice, and maintain that the Communion is to be administered in both kinds. They disallow the extolling of images, relics, and feigned miracles, and conclude by exhorting all men to the obedience of God's law and the works of faith.

With these necessary preliminary remarks, let me now introduce to the reader the subject of this paper. Adam Loftus was the second son of Edward Loftus of Swineside in the parish of

Coverham, in Yorkshire, an old and wealthy family. He was born probably in the year 1533, and was educated at Cambridge, where he made great progress in various branches of knowledge. When Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge at the beginning of her reign, her attention was attracted by the graceful bearing of the young student, his skill in dialectics, and the eloquence of his speech. She encouraged him to give diligent attention to his studies and promised him early promotion. And no doubt her royal favour proved a spur to his ambition. He became Rector of Outwell St. Clement, in Norfolk, then was made one of the Queen's Chaplains, and soon after she sent him into Ireland as Chaplain to the Lord Deputy, the Earl of Sussex. This was in May, 1560. In the following year he is spoken of as Chaplain to Alexander Craik, Bishop of Kildare and Dean of St. Patrick's. In the same year he was presented by the Crown to the Rectory of Painstown in the diocese of Meath. His learning, integrity and practical wisdom soon found further recognition, and on October 30, 1561, on the recommendation of Lord Sussex, and apparently also of Archbishop Parker, he was raised to the Primatial See of Ireland. Sussex writes to Sir William Cecil in these words: "I beseech you to have Mr. Adam Loftus in remembrance for the archbishopric of Armagh, whose learning is fit for a better place." And, further, he bears witness to his "vehement zeal in religion, good understanding in the Scriptures, doctrines and other kinds of learning, continual study, good conversation of life, and bountiful gift of God in utterance."

Ware tells us that Loftus "was consecrated by Hugh Curwen, Archbishop of Dublin, and other Bishops," in March, 1563, having just reached the canonical age. After he had been in Armagh a short time his health seems to have given way, and he obtained leave of absence in England for twelve months. While in England he addressed a letter to Cecil, enclosing an account that had reached him of the damage done to his diocese by the native rebels, and requesting permission to resign his archbishopric. It was during this visit he was admitted to the

degree of D.D. at Cambridge. Elizabeth at the same time granted him the Deanery of St. Patrick's *in commendam*.

In 1567 Curwen removed to Oxford, and Loftus was appointed to Dublin in his stead. He hoped to retain the Deanery of St. Patrick's, but it was given to Dr. Weston, the new Lord Chancellor. It appears from a memorandum in the State Paper Office that the translation of Loftus to the See of Dublin had been under consideration by the Privy Council as early as October, 1563, and some writers have conjectured that the Puritan principles professed by His Grace were the secret cause for the long delay of this appointment. These principles come out clearly in a letter to Sir William Cecil, written on July 16, 1565. We find him in sympathy with the Calvinistic party in the Church of England, in their opposition to the surplice and other Popish apparel, as the authorized dress of the Church of England was termed. "It is reputed here," he writes, "that no small offence is taken with some of the ministers for not wearing such apparel as the rest do, and that for the same many godly and learned preachers be deprived of their livings. O crafty devil and subtle Satan, when he cannot overthrow (no, nor once shake) the chiefest points of our religion, what ado makes he about trifles and light matters! . . . St. Paul saith, *Ab omni specie mali abstinete* (refrain from all appearance or outward show of evil), and if popery be evil (as no doubt it is most wicked) in wearing the popish apparel, we commit a manifest show of much abomination." Loftus was also accused of making innovations in the celebration of the Holy Communion. There is a letter from the Earl of Argyle to Loftus, dated November 18, 1565, in which he tells us that he had heard from John Knox of his Lordship's fervency "in suppressing the tyrannical kingdom of the common Antichrist," etc. While it is true that Loftus's theology was strongly leavened with Puritanism, it is equally true that he was a stanch and sincere adherent of the Establishment. In our day he would perhaps be called a Liberal-Evangelical. He seems to have been indifferent in matters of ritual. Personally

he favoured a more simple ceremonial than that established by law, as did Hooper before him and Bedell after him. He denied that he had in his sermons to the clergy or people "persuaded any innovation, or seemed to dislike of (but wished reverently to be embraced) that order set forth already by the law."

Sir Henry Sydney, who announced to Loftus the Queen's consent to the translation to Dublin, added on his own account the words, *Nunc venit hora ecclesiam reformandi*. At this time many of the Bishops and clergy of the Irish Church were place-hunters, slothful, grasping, ignorant, and loose in morals. The Creed was to them but an empty historic formula. It had no influence upon their lives; it was but the instrument by which they climbed to power and gained wealth and honours. Archbishop Loftus struggled, though not with transparent success, to bring about a better state of things. We find him writing to the lords of the Privy Council on June 10, 1566, "that such Bishops hereafter from time to time may be sent (into Ireland) as for their learning and zeal in God's holy word may be Bishops indeed." And in another letter to Sir William Cecil, written on the same day, he says, "Your honour knoweth right well that the Queen's highness shall never have just obedience, unless the cause of the gospel be first promoted, and alas! how can that be except such sit in chief places ecclesiastical as are of approved zeal and knowledge in God's holy law."

It was a cause of surprise to many persons that Loftus should leave Armagh for Dublin, seeing that the Primacy was not only a higher title, but also had a larger income attached to it, though at this time, owing to the disturbed state of the country, the income was only nominally larger. The Archbishop explained that he "would rather have less honour and less reverence in quietness than to be in danger and to live within his diocese so far from the metropolis of Ireland, and to hazard himself especially in those times." These were indeed evil times. Even in the metropolis Loftus was not safe. In one of his letters he expresses the fear that "all their throats

will be cut." And in another, written at a later period, he says that "his life is daily and hourly sought for." During the disturbances that occurred in the spring of 1573, he suffered severely. His town of Tallaght, lying on the borders of the Wicklow Mountains, was invaded by the Irish, and his nephew and some of his men were slain at the very gates, a disaster somewhat similar to that which happened to Bishop Bale at Kilkenny, a quarter of a century before.

On the death of Weston in 1573 Loftus was appointed Lord Keeper, and held the office till April, 1576, when he was succeeded by Sir William Gerard. Two years after he became Lord Chancellor, in which office he continued till his death. Meanwhile, he laboured diligently as a preacher and an ecclesiastical commissioner to advance the Reformation. He did not spare himself, though his health was by no means robust. The Lord Deputy, Fitzwilliam, writing to Burleigh, tells him that Loftus has an infirmity in his leg, and "cannot long continue withal, though, having youth and strength, he hath and may bear it out for a time." And he appeals to the great Minister to procure for him the Bishopric of Oxford and the Deanery of Wells. "Though both together," writes the Deputy, "they be a good step short of his Archbishopric," yet for his health's sake he would allow thereof. Loftus, however, elected to remain in Dublin on the ground that he was too old to undertake new duties. For thirty-eight years he held the Archiepiscopal See of Leinster, and during that time he was the ruling spirit of the Church of Ireland.

Archbishop Loftus had a difficult part to play in uplifting and maintaining the standard of Protestantism in Ireland. He fully appreciated the magnitude of the task before him, and he did the best he could to carry it out successfully; but from the first it was a hopeless business. The majority of the people were fiercely opposed to him and the interests he represented, and the men of influence and authority showed a chilling indifference to the promotion of Evangelical truth. There were few who sympathized with him, fewer still who gave him

active help. It would not be an extravagant thing to say that neither Elizabeth nor her Ministers ever seriously sought to win the country to the Reformed Faith. While the Government showed a vigorous hand in all that related to civil polity, they were lax in spreading religious truth. They placed more faith in the sword than in the Bible. We find Sir Henry Sydney writing to the Queen respecting the condition of the Church in Ireland: "So deformed and overthrown a Church there is not in any region where Christ is professed, and preposterous it seemeth to me to begin reformation of the politic part and neglect the religious." But that was precisely what was done. In thirteen letters of instruction to various Lord Deputies during the reign of the Great Queen, the subject is hardly alluded to. We seek in vain for such an allusion in most of the contemporary pamphlets published relative to Ireland. The Deputy, Lord Grey, in a letter to Walsingham, April 24, 1581, says that he has been "watch-worded that he should not be too eey-full" (eye-ful—*i.e.*, watchful) "therein; namely, in religion and affairs of the Church. He points out that he received much instruction with regard to civil and political government, but none concerning the looking to God's due service—seeing of His Church fed with true food—and repressing of superstition and idolatry wherewith the groves of Canaan were surely no more filled nor infested than this lamentable Ireland is."

It may be well to refer here to the founding of the University of Dublin by Queen Elizabeth, in which Archbishop Loftus took a leading part. Ware says: "In Easter holidays Adam Loftus, Lord Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, with others of the clergy, met the Mayor and Aldermen and Commons of the city at the Tholsel, where he made a speech to them, setting forth how advantageous it would be to have a nursery of learning founded here, and how kindly her Majesty would take it if they bestow that old, decayed monastery of All Hallows, which her father, King Henry VIII., had, at the dissolution of the abbeyes, given them for erecting such a

structure." "The creating of a college," said the Archbishop, "will not only be a means of civilizing the nation and of enriching this city, but your children, by their birth in this place, will so, as it were, fall opportunely into the lap of the Muses, and you need not hazard them abroad for the acquiring of foreign accomplishments, having a well-endowed University at your doors." He ended his speech with the words: "Nay, you will in this time of Reformation dazzle the eyes of the papists with the lustre of well-doing." The first stone of the college was laid on March 13, 1592; and thus came into existence the famous University distinguished for the great men it has produced and the invaluable services it has rendered to learning and religion. When the proposal was sanctioned by the Queen, Loftus subscribed £100 to the foundation. He was appointed first Provost, and gave the foundation its ecclesiastical tone. "This place," he said, on surrendering the office to Walter Travers, "requires a person of an exemplary conformity to the doctrine and discipline of this Church, as they are established by law. . . . Both papists and schismatics are (though in different degrees of enmity) equally our implacable enemies."

Archbishop Loftus died at his Palace of St. Sepulchre's, Dublin, on April 1, 1605, being seventy-two years of age, and was buried in the choir of St. Patrick's Cathedral. He had married Jane, eldest daughter of Adam Purdon, of Lurgan Race, Co. Louth, who predeceased him by ten years; and by her he had twenty children—a large family to provide for! This may, perhaps, explain "the love of money" which we have noticed as a feature of his character. But, as one has remarked, "though he was unsatisfied in getting (which was a sin), yet in bestowing he was most princely."

Loftus's personal appearance was in his favour. In a miniature, said to have been taken from life, he is represented as a grave, thoughtful, noble-looking man, nearly bald, with small moustache and a full, white beard." He was a man of singular ability, an eloquent preacher, a lover and patron of

learning, and a clever man of affairs. He was ready at all times to sacrifice his own ease and comfort to promote the interests of those whom he deemed worthy. The State Papers furnish abundant evidence of this generous trait in his character. His temper was easily ruffled. It must be admitted he had much to try it. His enemies were many, and did not hesitate to stab him in the dark. But it is impossible to deny that he lacked self-control, and used at times passionate speech which was afterwards turned against him. He redeemed some of the property of the Church alienated by his predecessor. He was not afraid to oppose the Lord Deputy when he thought his policy would be injurious to the well-being of the Church. He had no sympathy with national aspirations. He stood for England all through. An Englishman himself, he loved his country and pushed her interests in Ireland with resolute will and ardour of love. He was ambitious, and he saw, as a statesman, that his ambitious desires and projects would be best furthered by that policy, while at the same time he was convinced, as a genuine reformer, that the welfare of the Irish lay in the spread of reforming ideas. In his beliefs he was unquestionably sincere; and he sought sincerely to bring his beliefs to bear upon the lives of the people of his diocese and of the country at large; and though we cannot say his success was great, yet the seed sown by his hand was assuredly not wholly lost. Is it not written: "Cast thy seed-corn upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days"?

