

## THE ATTRACTIONS OF POPERY.<sup>1</sup>

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Dr. John H. Rice, with the intuition of a great mind, warned Presbyterians against a renewed prevalence of popery in our Protestant land. This was when it was so insignificant among us as to be almost unnoticed. Many were surprised at his prophecy, and not a few mocked; but time has fulfilled it. Our leaders from 1830 to 1860 understood well the causes of this danger. They were diligent to inform and prepare the minds of their people against it. Hence General Assemblies and Synods appointed annual sermons upon popery, and our teachers did their best to arouse the minds of the people. Now, all this has mainly passed away, and we are relaxing our resistance against the dreaded foe just in proportion as he grows more formidable. It has become the fashion to condemn controversy and to affect the widest charity for this and all other foes of Christ and of souls. High Presbyterian authority even is quoted as saying, that henceforth our concern with Romanism should be chiefly irenic! The figures presented by the census of 1890 are construed in opposite ways. This gives the papists more than fourteen millions of adherents in the United States, where ninety years ago there were but a few thousands. Such Protestant journals as think it their interest to play sycophants to public opinion try to persuade us that these figures are very consoling; because, if Rome had kept all the natural increase of her immigrations the numbers would have been larger. But Rome points to them with insolent triumph as prognostics of an assured victory over Protestantism on this continent. Which will prove correct?

Both logic and Holy Writ teach us that "the thing which hath been is the thing which shall be." Like causes must be expected to produce like effects. For Presbyterians of all others to discount the perpetual danger from Romanism is thoroughly thoughtless and rash. We believe that the Christianity

left by the apostles to the primitive church was essentially what we now call Presbyterian and Protestant. Prelacy and popery speedily began to work in the bosom of that community and steadily wrought its corruption and almost its total extirpation. Why should not the same cause tend to work the same result again? Are we truer or wiser Presbyterians than those trained by the apostles? Have the enemies of truth become less skillful and dangerous by gaining the experience of centuries? The popish system of ritual and doctrine was a gradual growth, which, modifying true Christianity, first perverted and then extinguished it. Its destructive power has resulted from this: that it has not been the invention of any one cunning and hostile mind, but a gradual growth, modified by hundreds or thousands of its cultivators, who were the most acute, learned, selfish, and anti-Christian spirits of their generations, perpetually retouched and adapted to every weakness and every attribute of depraved human nature, until it became the most skillful and pernicious system of error which the world has ever known. As it has adjusted itself to every superstition, every sense of guilt, every foible and craving of the depraved human heart, so it has travestied with consummate skill every active principle of the gospel. It is doubtless the *ne plus ultra* of religious delusion, the final and highest result of perverted human faculty guided by the sagacity of the great enemy.

This system has nearly conquered Christendom once. He who does not see that it is capable of conquering it again is blind to the simplest laws of thought. One may ask, Does it not retain sundry of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, monotheism, the trinity, the hypostatic union, Christ's sacrifice, the sacraments, the resurrection, the judgment, immortality? Yes: in form it retains them, and this because of its supreme cunning. It retains them while so wresting and enervating as to rob them mainly of their sanctifying power, because it designs to spread its snares for all sorts of minds of every grade of opinion. The grand architect was too cunning to make it, like his earlier essays, mere atheism, or mere fetishism, or mere polytheism, or mere pagan idolatry; for in these forms the trap only ensnared the coarser and more ignorant natures. He has now perfected it and baited it for all types of humanity, the most refined as well as the most imbruted.

I. Romanism now enjoys in our country certain important advantages, which I may style legitimate, in this sense, that our decadent, half-corrupted Protestantism bestows these advantages upon our enemy, so that Rome, in employing them, only uses what we ourselves give her. In other words, there are plain points upon which Rome claims a favorable comparison as against Protestantism; and her claim is correct, in that the latter is blindly and criminally betraying her own interests and duties.

(1.) A hundred years ago French atheism gave the world the Jacobin theory of political rights. The Bible had been teaching mankind for three thousand years the great doctrine of men's moral equality before the universal Father, the great basis of all free, just, and truly republican forms of civil society. Atheism now travestied this true doctrine by her mortal heresy of the absolute equality of men, asserting that every human being is naturally and inalienably entitled to every right, power, and prerogative in civil society which is allowed to any man or any class. The Bible taught a liberty which consists in each man's unhindered privilege of having and doing just those things, and no others, to which he is rationally and morally entitled. Jacobinism taught the liberty of license—every man's natural right to indulge his own absolute will; and it set up this fiendish caricature as the object of sacred worship for mankind. Now, democratic Protestantism in these United States has become so ignorant, so superficial and wilful, that it confounds the true republicanism with this deadly heresy of Jacobinism. It has ceased to know a difference. Hence, when the atheistic doctrine begins to bear its natural fruits of license, insubordination, communism, and anarchy, this bastard democratic Protestantism does not know how to rebuke them. It has recognized the parents; how can it consistently condemn the children? Now, then, Rome proposes herself as the stable advocate of obedience, order, and permanent authority throughout the ages. She shows her practical power to govern men, as she says, through their consciences (truth would say, through their superstitions). Do we wonder that good citizens, beginning to stand aghast at these elements of confusion and ruin, the spawn of Jacobinism, which a Jacobinized Protestantism cannot control, should look around for some moral and reli-

gious system capable of supporting a firm social order? Need we be surprised that when Rome steps forward, saying, "I have been through the centuries the upholder of order," rational men should be inclined to give her their hand? This high advantage a misguided Protestantism is now giving to its great adversary.

(2.) The Reformation was an assertion of liberty of thought. It asserted for all mankind, and secured for the Protestant nations, each man's right to think and decide for himself upon his religious creed and his duty towards his God, in the fear of God and the truth, *unhindered by human power, political or ecclesiastical*. Here, again, a part of our Protestantism perverted the precious truth until the "manna bred worms, and stank." Rationalistic and skeptical Protestantism now claims, instead of that righteous liberty, license to dogmatize at the bidding of every caprice, every impulse of vanity, every false philosophy, without any responsibility to either truth or moral obligation. The result has been a diversity and confusion of pretended creeds and theologies among nominal Protestants, which perplexes and frightens sincere, but timid, minds. Everything seems to them afloat upon this turbulent sea of licentious debate. They are fatigued and alarmed; they see no end of uncertainties. They look around anxiously for some safe and fixed foundation of credence. Rome comes forward and says to them, You see, then, that this Protestant liberty of thought is fatal license; the Protestant's "rational religion" turns out to be but poisonous *rationalism*, infidelity wearing the mask of faith. Holy Mother Church offers you the foundation of her infallibility, guaranteed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. She shows you that faith must ground itself in implicit submission, and not in human inquiry. She pledges herself for the safety of your soul if you simply submit; come, then, "trust and be at rest." Many are the weary souls who accept her invitations; and these not only the weak and cowardly, but sometimes the brilliant and gifted, like a Cardinal Newman. For this result a perverted Protestantism is responsible. If all nominal Protestants were as honest in their exercise of mental liberty as the fear of God and the loyalty to truth should make them; if they were as humble and honest in construing and obeying God's word in his Bible, as papists profess to be in submitting to the authority of the Holy Mother Church, honest inquirers would

never be embarrassed, and would never be befooled into supposing that the words of a pope could furnish a more comfortable foundation for faith than the word of God.

(3.) To the shame of our damaged Protestantism, popery remains, in some essential respects, more faithful to God's truth than its rival. For instance, while multitudes of scholars, calling themselves Protestant Christians, are undermining the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, Rome holds fast to it in her catechisms and formal declarations. True, she claims inspiration for others than the prophets, evangelists, and apostles for her popes, namely, and prelates, holding to "the apostolic succession." But if one must err, it is better to err by excess than by defect on a point like this, where negation cuts the blinded soul of man off absolutely from the divine guidance. Thousands of pretended Protestant believers are advancing their destructive criticism to assert that the Pentateuch is a literary fraud. Rome firmly maintains that it is God's own work through Moses. A thousand deceitful arts are plied to degrade the conception of inspiration, as giving only thoughts, and not the words, or as consisting only in an elevation of the consciousness by poetic genius, and such like treacherous views. Rome still teaches the old-fashioned, honest view. What right have such deceitful Protestants to scold Rome for dishonesty of those historical and spiritual impostures upon which she founds the claims of the popes? Truly, they are dirty enough; for the forged decretals, for instance, too much contempt and reprehension cannot be expressed. But they are not a whit dirtier than the mental dishonesty of the men who, after asserting that they have proved the Pentateuch mostly a literary fraud, done by priestcraft more than a thousand years after its pretended date, still assure us that its value as Scripture and divine rule of faith is not wounded. These recent justifiers of pious fraud cannot convict the older ones. The old imposture, like a rotten roof, has become moss-grown with age, and is picturesque and venerable in many eyes. The new imposture stands ugly and malodorous in its rank freshness.

Again, multitudes of pretended Protestants utterly deny the trinity, the very corner-stone of a theology of redemption. Rome affirms it in all the fullness of the creeds of Nice, Chalcedon, and Athanasius. Myriads of pretended Protestants revere their own ethical philosophy so much more than they do their

God that they must needs utterly reject Christ's vicarious satisfaction for the guilt of sin. Rome continues to assert it, in spite of spurious philosophy, although she does add to it superstitious claims of human merit. Myriads of our men have become such "advanced thinkers" that they cannot away with supernatural regeneration. Rome teaches it invariably, even if it is in the form of baptismal regeneration, and still ascribes it to the power of God. Such are a few of the biting contrasts. We cannot wonder that many, even of honest and reverent minds, when they witness this ruthless destruction of the essentials of the gospel, draw two plain inferences. One is, that all such men pretending to be Protestant believers are, in fact, nothing but infidels wearing a mask, probably for the sake of the loaves and fishes as yet connected with the clerical calling; so that it is mere impudence for such men to assume to warn them against popish impostures—rather too near akin to Satan reproving sin. The other is, that the Romanist theologians must have been right in asserting, ever since the days of Luther, that our Protestant way of establishing a divine rule of faith by a rational and explicit credence must turn out nothing but rationalistic infidelity. Souls which value a divine redemption for man shudder as they behold this wild havoc of everything characteristic of a saving gospel; and they naturally exclaim, "There is no security except in going back to that old foundation, implicit trust in the witness of 'Holy Mother Church' to the Scriptures!" Now, true Protestants know that this conclusion is wretchedly sophistical, but it is dreadfully natural for honest, half-informed men.

(4.) The best argument for any creed is the godly living of its professors. Protestantism used to have a grand and victorious advantage on that point. She is ceasing to wield it. The wealth begotten by her very virtues of industry, thrift, and probity has debauched many of her children. "Jeshurun has waxen fat, and kicked." An unbounded flood of luxury sweeps Protestant families away. A relaxed and deceitful doctrine produces its sure fruits of relaxed and degraded morals. Church discipline is nearly extinct. Meantime spurious revivalism, relying upon all species of vulgar clap-trap and sensational artifice, upon slang rhetoric and the stimulating of mere animal sympathies, instead of the pure word and spirit of God, is hur-

rying tens of thousands of dead souls into the Protestant churches. These evils have gone so far that a profession of faith in these churches has come to mean nearly as little as a professed conformity to Rome means. No shrewd man regards such a profession as any sufficient guarantee for truth or common honesty in dealing. The lawyers tell us that litigation unmasks about as much intended fraud, purposed extortion, and loose swearing in these church members as in other people. Worldly conformity is so general that the line between the church and the world has become nearly as indistinct as that between spiritual and profane living in the Romish communion. Meantime, Rome gets up no spurious revivals; she works her system with the steadiness and perseverance which used to characterize pastoral effort and family religion among Presbyterians. It is true that her cultus is intensely ritualistic; but, at least, it does not offend decent people by irreverent slang; her worship is liturgical, but her liturgies, however erroneous in doctrine, are, at least, genteel, and marked by aesthetic dignity. Rome does not venture on sham miracles very much in these United States. It is true she has her spurious relics and other superstitious impostures for impressing the people; but wherein are they less of human artifices and less deceptive than the machinery of our pretended revivals, with their marchings, hand-shakings, choruses, and ephemeral conversions? Rome's confessional is, indeed, a terrible organ of spiritual tyranny; but still it is a strong organ of church discipline, and it is steadily employed as such in every Romish chapel. The average Protestant church member feels that any assumption of real presbyterial authority over him by his pastor would be an impertinence, which he would resent with scorn. The Romish priest still wields a potent, ghostly authority over his people. One may cry that he wields it by virtue of superstition, by the threat of withholding his absolution or extreme unction. Yet he wields it, and usually for the credit of his church. He teaches his members to practice the forms of their daily devotion with diligence and regularity, holding out a powerful motive in the promise of merit thus wrought out. The Protestant may exclaim, These are but machine prayers, vain repetitions told off by the dozen along with the beads! Very true, the most of it may be very poor stuff; but nothing can be quite

so poor and worthless as the living of many Protestant members, who have no family altar and no closet, who say no prayers either in form or in spirit, and who have no conscience of keeping either Sabbaths or saints' days. It is a very bad thing in the Romanist to join the worship of Mary and the saints with that of God; but we surmise that it is a still worse thing to be a practical atheist, and stately to worship nothing, neither saint nor God, as many an enrolled member of a Protestant church now does.

The Romanist's machine prayers and vain repetitions have, at least, this tendency, to sustain in his soul some slight habit of religious reverence, and this is better than mere license of life. While the two communions wear these aspects, we need not wonder that those Americans, at least, whose early prejudices lean towards Rome should honestly regard her as the better mother of piety and morals.

(5.) We Protestants are also giving away to Rome another powerful influence over honest and thoughtful Christian minds. This we do by secularizing our whole State education. The bulk of the Protestants in the United States have betrayed themselves, through their partisan political zeal, to an attitude concerning the rearing of youth which must ever be preposterous and untenable for sincere Christians. The statesmen and divines of the Reformation, the Luthers, Calvins, Knoxes, Winthrops, and Mathers, were strong advocates of State education; they were such because they believed in the close union of church and State; because their conception of the State was thoroughly theocratic. Had these men been asked, What think you of a theory of education which should train the understanding without instructing the religious conscience; which should teach young immortal spirits anything and everything except God; which should thus secularize education, a function essentially spiritual, and should take this parental task from the fathers and mothers, on whom God imposed it, to confer it on the human and earthly organism, expressly secular and godless? they would have answered with one voice, It is pagan, utterly damnable. But they thought that the State might educate, because the State with them was Christian. Thus State education was firmly grafted into the Puritan colonies. New England, with her usual aggressiveness, has pushed her usage

all over the empire. Meantime the Jeffersonian doctrine of the absolute severance and independence of church and State, of the entire secularity of the State, and the absolutely equal rights, before the law, of religious truth and error, of paganism, atheism, and Christianity, has also established itself in all the States; and still the politicians, for electioneering ends, propagate this State education everywhere. By this curious circuit "Christian America" has gotten herself upon this thoroughly pagan ground; forcing the education of responsible, moral, and immortal beings, of which religion must ever be the essence, into the hands of a gigantic human agency, which resolves that it cannot and will not be religious at all. Surely some great religious body will arise in America to lift its Christian protest against this monstrous result! But, lo! the chief the only organized protest heard in America comes from the Romish Church. It is she who stands forth pre-eminent, almost single-handed, to assert the sacred rights of Christian parents in the training of the souls they have begotten, of Christ in the nurture of the souls he died to redeem. To-day it is this Romish Church which stands forth precisely in the position of the Luthers, Calvins, Knoxes, and Mathers as to the main, central point, which is, *that the education of the young should be Christian, and should be committed to Christian hands.* And what are our representative Protestants saying? Instead of admitting this truth of the ages, and confessing the fatal error into which their haste and Jacobinism have betrayed them, they are only shouting that Rome objects to the American State school because Rome hates republicanism, and wishes to overthrow it. The best they can do is to place themselves in this absurd and dishonest position: To boast in one breath of their loyalty to the principles of the Reformers concerning education, and in the next breath to vilify the Roman Church for reasserting the very principles of these same Reformers. What can they expect save a miserable defeat upon this false position, if, indeed, common justice and common sense are to continue traits of the American mind; unless, indeed, America is to make up her mind to be atheistic or pagan instead of Christian? These misguided Protestants may be assured that there are hundreds of thousands of serious, devout parents who will be much more likely to honor Rome as the faithful champion of

Christ's rights over their children than to condemn her as the designing enemy of free government. In this unnatural contest Protestantism can only lose, while Rome gains; and she will gain the approval not only of the superstitious, but of the most thoughtful and devout minds.

(6.) It is with this most valuable class of minds that Rome is now gaining another far-reaching advantage. This is by her doctrine concerning marriage and the relations of the sexes. On these points she continues to hold and teach the highest views. It is very true that Rome errs in making marriage a sacrament of the church; but she makes it, as Scripture does, a divinely appointed and religious institution, while Protestant laws and debauched Protestant thought tend all over America to degrade it to a mere civil contract. The Roman doctrine and canon law recognize no divorce except by the pope himself. They teach that marriage is inviolable. The divorce laws in our Protestant States provide so many ways for rending the marriage tie that its vows have become almost a farce. We are told that many Protestant women in America scornfully refuse to take the vow of obedience to their husbands, appointed by God in his word; and Protestant parsons are so cowardly that they dare not mention it in the marriage ceremony. But Rome still exacts this conjugal obedience of her daughters. Romish pastors also stand almost alone in teaching their people the enormous criminality of those nameless sins against posterity at which fashionable Protestantism connives. Moral and thoughtful men who know history know how fundamental the sanctity of marriage and the family is to society and the church, how surely their corruption must destroy both and barbarize mankind, look on aghast at this spreading taint in American life. Many an educated patriot is beginning to say that Romanism is the only firm and consistent opponent.

Protestants may exclaim that Rome has ever been a corrupting religion; that even the confessional has been made the instrument of profligacy. No doubt these things have often been true; yet another thing is visibly true in these United States: that while degrading views of the marriage relation and of the honor of parentage are eating out the life of so many nominal Protestant families, and bringing them to total extinction, the families of Romanists are better protected from

this blight. Their houses are peopled with children, while the homes of rich Protestants are too elegant and luxurious for such nuisances. By the very force of the Malthusian law of population Romanism is growing, while Protestantism stands still.

I have thus described six distinct lines of influence which our unfaithfulness to our principles has betrayed into the hands of the Romanist. They are using them all with constant effect, and we, at least, cannot blame them.

II. I now proceed to explain certain evil principles of human nature which are concurring powerfully in this country to give currency to popery. These may be called its illicit advantages. I mention:

(1.) The constant tendency of American demagogues to pay court to popery and to purchase votes for themselves from it, at the cost of the people's safety, rights and money. Nearly two generations ago (the men of this day seem to have forgotten the infamy) William H. Seward, of New York, began this dangerous and dishonest game. He wished to be Governor of New York. He came to an understanding with Archbishop Hughes, then the head of the popish hierarchy in that State, to give him the Irish vote in return for certain sectarian advantages in the disbursement of the State revenues. Neither Rome nor the demagogues have since forgotten their lesson, nor will they ever forget it. It would be as unreasonable to expect it as to expect that hawks will forget the poultry yard. It is the nature of the demagogue to trade off anything for votes; they are the breath in the nostrils of his ambition. The popish hierarchy differs essentially from the ministry of any other religion, in having votes to trade. The traditional claim of Rome is that she has the right to control both spheres, the ecclesiastical and the political, the political for the sake of the ecclesiastical. The votes of her masses are more or less manageable, as the votes of Protestants are not, because Rome's is a system of authority as opposed to free thought. Rome instructs the conscience of every one of her members that it is his religious duty to subordinate all other duties and interests to hers. And this is a spiritual duty enforceable by the most awful spiritual sanctions. How can a thinking man afford to disobey the hierarchy which holds his eternal destiny in its secret fist; so that

even if they gave him in form the essential sacraments, such as the mass, absolution, and extreme unction, they are able clandestinely to make them worthless to him, by withholding the sacramental intention. Hence it is that the majority of American papists can be voted in "blocks"; and it is virtually the hierarchy which votes them. The goods are ready bound up in parcels for traffic with demagogues. We are well aware that numerous papists will indignantly deny this; declaring that there is a Romanist vote in this country which is just as independent of their priesthood and as free as any other. Of course there is. The hierarchy is a very experienced and dextrous driver. It does not whip in the restive colts, but humors them awhile until she gets them well harnessed and broken. But the team as a whole must yet travel her road, because they have to believe it infallible. We assure these independent Romanist voters that they are not "good Catholics"; they must unlearn this heresy of independent thought before they are meet for the Romanist paradise. Men of secular ambition have always sought to use the hierarchy to influence others for their political advantage; the example is as old as history. Just as soon as prelacy was developed in the patristic church, Roman emperors began to purchase its influence to sustain their thrones. Throughout the Middle Ages, German kaisers and French, Spanish, and English kings habitually traded with Rome, paying her dignities and endowments for her ghostly support to their ambitions. Even in this century we have seen the two Napoleons playing the same game—purchasing for their imperialism the support of a priesthood in whose religion they did not believe. If any suppose that because America is nominally democratic the same thing will not happen here, they are thoroughly silly. Some Yankee ingenuity will be invoked to modify the forms of the traffic, so as to suit American names; that is all.

Intelligent students of church history know that one main agency for converting primitive Christianity first into prelacy and then into popery was unlimited church endowments. As soon as Constantine established Christianity as the religion of the State, ecclesiastical persons and bodies began to assume the virtual (and before long the formal) rights of corporations. They could receive bequests and gifts of property, and hold them by

a tenure as firm as that of the fee-simple. These spiritual corporations were deathless. Thus the property they acquired was all held by the tenure of *mortmain*. When a corporation is thus empowered to absorb continually, and never to disgorge, there is no limit to its possible wealth. The laws of the empire in the Middle Ages imposed no limitations upon bequests; thus, most naturally, monasteries, cathedrals, chapters, and archbishoprics became inordinately rich. At the Reformation they had grasped one-third of the property of Europe. But Scripture saith, "Where the carcass is, thither the eagles are gathered together." Wealth is power, and ambitious men crave it. Thus this endowed hierarchy came to be filled by the men of the greediest ambition in Europe, instead of by humble, self-denying pastors; and thus it was that this tremendous money power, arming itself first with a spiritual despotism of the popish theology over consciences, and then allying itself with political power, wielded the whole to enforce the absolute domination of that religion which gave them their wealth. No wonder human liberty, free thought, and the Bible were together trampled out of Europe. When the Reformation came, the men who could think saw that this tenure in *mortmain* had been the fatal thing. Knox, the wisest of them, saw clearly that if a religious reformation was to succeed in Scotland the ecclesiastical corporations must be destroyed. They were destroyed, their whole property alienated to the secular nobles or to the State (the remnant which Knox secured for religious education); and therefore it was that Scotland remained Presbyterian. When our American commonwealths were founded, statesmen and divines understood this great principle of jurisprudence, that no corporate tenure in *mortmain*, either spiritual or secular, is compatible with the liberty of the people and the continuance of constitutional government.

But it would appear that our legislators now know nothing about that great principle, or care nothing about it. Church institutions, Protestant and Romanist, are virtually perpetual corporations. Whatever the pious choose to give them is held in *mortmain*, and they grow continually richer and richer; they do not even pay taxes, and there seems no limit upon their acquisitions. And last comes the Supreme Court of the United States, and under the pretext of construing the law, legislates a new

law in the famous Walnut-street Church case, as though they desired to ensure both the corruption of religion and the destruction of free government by a second gigantic incubus of endowed ecclesiasticism. The new law is virtually this: That in case any free citizen deems that the gifts of himself or his ancestors are usurped for some use alien to the designed trust, *it shall be the usurper who shall decide the issue.* This is, of course, essentially popish, yet a great Protestant denomination has been seen hastening to enroll it in its digest of spiritual laws.\* The working of this tendency of overgrown ecclesiastical wealth will certainly be two-fold: First, to Romanize partially or wholly the Protestant churches thus enriched; and, secondly, to incline, enable, and equip the religion thus Romanized for its alliance with political ambition and for the subjugation of the people and the government. When church bodies began, under Constantine, to acquire endowments, these bodies were Episcopal, at most, or even still Presbyterian. The increase of endowment helped to make them popish. Then popery and feudalism stamped out the Bible and enslaved Europe. If time permitted, I could trace out the lines of causation into perfect clearness. Will men ever learn that like causes must produce like effects?

(2.) The democratic theory of human society may be the most rational and equitable; but human nature is not equitable; it is fallen and perverted. Lust of applause, pride, vainglory, and love of power are as natural to it as hunger to the body. Next to Adam, the most representative man upon earth was Diotrephes, "who loves to have the pre-eminence." Every man is an aristocrat in his heart. Now, prelacy and popery are aristocratic religions. Consequently, as long as human nature is natural, they will present more or less of attraction to human minds. Quite a number of Methodist, Presbyterian, or Independent ministers have gone over to prelacy or popery, and thus become bishops. Was there ever one of them, however conscientious his new faith, and however devout his temper, who did not find some elation and pleasure in his spiritual dignity? Is there a democrat in democratic America who would not be flattered in his heart by being addressed as "my lord?" Distinction and power are gratifying to all men. Prelacy and

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See\* Dabney's Discussions, Vol. II., p. 261.

popery offer this sweet morsel to aspirants by promising to make some of them lords of their brethren. This is enough to entice all of them, as the crown entices all the racers on the race-course. It is true that while many run, one obtaineth the crown; but all may flatter themselves with the hope of winning. Especially does the pretension of sacramental grace offer the most splendid bait to human ambition which can be conceived of on this earth. To be the vicar of the Almighty in dispensing eternal life and heavenly crowns at will is a more magnificent power than the prerogative of any emperor on earth. Let a man once be persuaded that he really grasps this power by getting a place in the apostolic succession, and the more sincere he is, the more splendid the prerogative will appear to him; for the more clearly his faith appreciates the thing that he proposes to do in the sacraments, the more illustrious that thing must appear. The greatest boon ever inherited by an emperor was finite. The boon of redemption is infinite; to be able to dispense it at will to one sinner is a much grander thing than to conquer the world and establish a universal secular empire. The humblest "hedge-priest" would be a far grander man than that emperor if he could really work the miracle and confer the grace of redemption which Rome says he does every time he consecrates a mass. How shall we estimate, then, the greatness of that pope or prelate who can manufacture such miracle workers at will? The greatest being on earth should hardly think himself worthy to loose his sandals from his feet. The Turkish ambassador to Paris was certainly right when, upon accompanying the King of France to high mass in Notre Dame, and seeing the king, courtiers and multitude all prostrate themselves when the priest elevated the Host, he wondered that the king should allow anybody but himself to perform that magnificent function. He is reported to have said: "Sire, if I were king, and believed in your religion, nobody should do that in France except me. It is a vastly greater thing than anything else that you do in your royal functions." As long as man is man, therefore, popery will possess this unhallowed advantage of enticing, and even entrancing, the ambition of the keenest aspirants. The stronger their faith in their doctrine, the more will they sanctify to themselves this dreadful ambition. In this respect, as in so many others, the tendency of the whole

current of human nature is to make papists. It is converting grace only which can check that current and turn men sincerely back towards Protestantism. I am well aware that the functions of the Protestant minister may be so wrested as to present an appeal to unhallowed ambition. But popery professes to confer upon her clergy every didactic and presbyterial function which Protestantism has to bestow; while the former offers, in addition, this splendid bait of prelatie power and sacramental miracle-working.

(3.) All the churches which call themselves Protestant, even the strictest, now betray the silent influence of those Romanizing tendencies which have been and are hereafter to be explained. There is an almost universal letting down of the old standard of doctrine and worship. A comparison of prevalent usages of to-day and of seventy years ago in the Methodist, Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches (except those of the Secession) would startle any thinking mind. Every one of them now admits usages which were then universally rejected by them, such as architectural pomps, pictured windows, floral decorations, instrumental and operatic music. One may say, that these are matters of indifference which cannot be proved anti-scriptural; but every sensible man knows that they proceed from one impulse, the craving for a more spectacular and ritualistic worship. This is precisely the impulse which brought about prelacy and popery in the patristic ages. The strictest Protestant communions are now moving upon the same inclined plane. The descent is gentle, at first, but as it proceeds it grows steeper; and at the bottom is popery. The prelatie churches of America now notoriously occupy the middle and advanced parts of this course. Forty years ago, when things were not near so bad with them as now, the head of the American popish hierarchy pointed an eminent Presbyterian divine to a dainty Puseyite clergyman tripping by, and said, with a sardonic smile: "Doctor, those are the cattle who do our plowing for us gratis. They leave us little to do. My only objection to their work is, that they make their perverts rather too popish to suit my taste as a Romanist." This Right Reverend was, of course, an Irishman. Episcopalians who teach baptismal regeneration, the real presence, the apostolic succession and such like dogmas, must inevitably propel their

pupils towards popery. If their favorite doctrines have any foundation in logic or Scripture, that foundation sustains popery as fully as prelacy. When one fixes the premises in the minds of his pupils, he should expect to see them sooner or later proceed to the logical consequence; as all rivers run to the ocean, so the ultimate destiny of all high churchism is Rome. These covert educators for popery are more efficient for evil than the overt ones. I fear those who are on the road to the Eternal City more than those who have fixed their abode there. This head of my argument is, then, that Romanism is sure to win in America, because most of those who profess to be Protestants are really helping her by preparing her way.

(4.) In sundry respects I perceive a sort of hallucination prevailing in people's minds concerning old historical errors and abuses, which I see to have been the regular results of human nature. Men will not understand history; they flatter themselves that, because the modes of civilization are much changed and advanced, therefore the essential laws of man's nature are going to cease acting; which is just as unreasonable as to expect that sinful human beings must entirely cease to be untruthful, sensual, dishonest, and selfish, because they have gotten to wear fine clothes. Of certain evils and abuses of ancient history men persuade themselves that they are no longer possible among us, because we have become civilized and nominally Christian. One of these evils is idolatry with its two branches, polytheism and image-worship. Oh! they say, mankind has outgrown all that; other evils may invade our Christian civilization, but that is too gross to come back again. They are blind at once to the teachings of historical facts and to common sense. They know that at one time idolatry nearly filled the ancient world. Well, what was the previous religious state of mankind upon which it supervened? Virtually a Christian state, that is to say, a worship of the one true God, under the light of revelation, with our same gospel taught by promises and sacrifices. And it is very stupid to suppose that the social state upon which the early idolatry supervened was savage or barbaric. We rather conclude that the people who built Noah's ark, the tower of Babel, and the pyramid of Cheops, and who enjoyed the light of God's recent revelations to Adam, to Enoch, to Noah, were civilized. Men make a strange confusion here:

They fancy that idolatry could be prevalent because mankind were not civilized. The historical fact is just the opposite: Mankind became uncivilized because idolatry first prevailed. In truth, the principles tending to idolatry are deeply laid in man's fallen nature. Like a compressed spring, they are ever ready to act again, and will surely begin to act, whenever the opposing power of vital godliness is withdrawn. First, the sensuous has become too prominent in man; reason, conscience, and faith, too feeble. Every sinful man's experience witnesses this all day long, every day of his life. Why else is it that the objects of sense-perception, which are comparatively trivial, dominate his attention, his sensibilities, and his desires so much more than the objects of faith, which he himself knows to be so much more important? Did not this sensuous tendency seek to invade man's religious ideas and feelings, it would be strange indeed. Hence, man untaught and unchecked by the heavenly light always shows a craving for sensuous objects of worship. He is not likely, in our day, to satisfy this craving by setting up a brazen image of Dagon, the fish-god; or of Zeus, or the Roman Jupiter; or of the Aztecs' Itzlahuitl. But still he craves a visible, material object of worship. Rome meets him at a comfortable half-way station with her relics, crucifixes, and images of the saints. She adroitly smoothes the downhill road for him by connecting all these with the worship of the true God. Again, man's conscious weakness impels him almost irresistibly in his serious hours to seek some being of supernatural attributes to lean upon. His heart cries out, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." But when pure monotheism proposes to him the supreme, eternal God—infinite not only in his power to help, but in his omniscience, justice, and holiness—the sinful heart recoils. This object is too high, too holy, too dreadful for it. Sinful man craves a God, hut, like his first father, shuns the infinite God; hence the powerful tendency to invent intermediate gods, whom he may persuade himself to be sufficiently gracious and powerful to be trusted, and yet not so infinite, immutable, and holy as inevitably to condemn sin. Here is the impulse which prompted all pagan nations to invent polytheism. This they did by filling the space between man and the supreme being with intermediate gods. Such, among the Greeks, were Bacchus, Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Theseus, Aesculapius, etc. It is a great mistake to suppose that thoughtful

pagans did not recognize the unity and eternity of a supreme God, "Father of gods and of men." But sometimes they represent him as so exalted and sublimated as to be at once above the reach of human prayers and above all concernment in human affairs. Others thought of him as too awful to be directly approached, accessible only through the mediation of his own next progeny, the secondary gods. Here we have precisely the impulse for which Rome provides in her saint-worship. Mary is the highest of the intermediate gods, next to the trinity, the intercessor for Christ's intercession. The apostles and saints are the secondary gods of this Christian pantheon. How strangely has God's predestination led Rome in the development of her history to the unwitting admission of this indictment! Pagan Rome had her marble temple, the gift of Agrippa to the Commonwealth, the Pantheon, or sanctuary of all the gods. This very building stands now, rededicated by the popes as the temple of Christ and all the saints. So fateful has been the force of this analogy between the old polytheism and the new.

The attempt is made, indeed, to hide the likeness by the sophistical distinction between *latria* and *dulia*; but its worthlessness appears from this, that even *dulia* cannot be offered to redeemed creatures without ascribing to them, by an unavoidable implication, the attributes peculiar to God. In one word, fallen men of all ages have betrayed a powerful tendency to image-worship and polytheism. Rome provides for that tendency in a way the most adroit possible, for an age nominally Christian but practically unbelieving. To that tendency the religion of the Bible sternly refuses to concede anything, requiring not its gratification, but its extirpation. This cunning policy of Rome had sweeping success in the early church. The same principle won almost universal success in the ancient world. It will succeed again here. Many will exclaim that this prognostic is wholly erroneous; that the great, bad tendency of our age and country is to agnosticism as against all religions. I am not mistaken. This drift will be as temporary as it is partial. M. Guizot says in his *Meditations*: "One never need go far back in history to find atheism advancing half way to meet superstition." A wiser analyst of human nature says: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,

God gave them over to a reprobate mind." "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." This is the exact pathology of superstition. When the culture of the Augustan age taught the Romans to despise the religious faith of their fathers, there was an interval of agnosticism. But next, the most refined of the agnostics were seen studying the mysteries of Isis and practicing the foulest rites of the paganism of the conquered provinces. Atheism is too freezing a blank for human souls to inhabit permanently. It outrages too many of the heart's affections and of the reason's first principles. A people who have cast away their God, when they discover this, turn to false gods. For all such wandering spirits Rome stands with open doors; there, finally, they will see their most convenient refuge of superstition in a catalogue of Christian saints transformed into a polytheism. Thus the cravings of superstition are satisfied, while the crime is veiled from the conscience by this pretence of scriptural origin.

(5.) I proceed to unfold an attraction of Romanism far more seductive. This is its proposal to satisfy man's guilty heart by a ritual instead of a spiritual salvation. As all know who understand the popish theology, the proposed vehicle of this redemption by forms is the sacraments. Romanists are taught that the New Testament sacraments differ from those of the Old Testament in this: that they not only symbolize and seal, *but effectuate grace ex opere operato* in the souls of the recipients. Rome teaches her children that her sacraments are actual charismatic power of direct supernatural efficiency wrought upon recipients by virtue of a portion of the Holy Spirit's omnipotence conferred upon the priest in ordination from the apostolic succession. The Bible teaches that in the case of all adults a gracious state must pre-exist in order for any beneficial participation in the sacrament, and that the only influence of the sacraments is to cherish and advance that pre-existing spiritual life by their didactic effect, as energized by God's Spirit, through prayer, faith, watchfulness, and obedience, in precisely the same generic mode in which the Holy Spirit energizes the written and preached word. Hence, if watchfulness, prayer, obedience, and a life of faith are neglected, our sacra-

ments become no sacraments. If thou be a breaker of the law, thy "circumcision is made uncircumcision." But Rome teaches that her sacraments, duly administered by a priest having apostolic succession, *implant spiritual life* in souls hitherto dead in sin, and that they maintain and foster this life by a direct power not dependent on the recipient's diligent exercise of gospel principles. Provided the recipient be not in mortal sin unabsolved, the sacrament does its spiritual work upon the sinful soul, whether it receives it in the exercise of saving grace or not. (See the article, "Prelacy a Blunder," in *Collected Discussions*, Vol. II., p. 218.)

Now let no Protestant mind exclaim: "Surely this is too gross to be popular; surely people will have too much sense to think that they can get to heaven by this species of consecrated jugglery!" History shows that this scheme of redemption is almost universally acceptable and warmly popular with sinful mankind. Apprehend aright the ideas of paganism, ancient and modern: we perceive that this popish conception of sacraments is virtually the same with the pagan's conception of their heathen rites. They claim to be just this species of saving ritual, working their benefit upon souls precisely by this *opus operatum* agency. What a commentary have we here upon this tendency of human nature to a ritual salvation. The evangelists and apostles reintroduced to the world the pure conception of a spiritual salvation wrought by the energy of divine truth; and not of church rites; received by an intelligent faith in the saved man's soul, and not by manual ceremonial; and made effectual by the enlightening operation of the Holy Ghost upon heart and mind in rational accordance with truth, not by a priestly incantation working a physical miracle. The gospels and epistles defined and separated the two conceptions as plainly as words could do it. But no sooner were the apostles gone than the pagan conception of salvation by ritual, instead of by rational faith, began to creep back into the patristic church. In a few hundred years the wrong conception had triumphed completely over the correct one in nearly the whole of christendom, and thenceforward sacramental grace has reigned supreme over the whole Roman and Greek communions, in spite of modern letters and culture. How startling this commentary upon that tendency of human nature! Surely there are deep-seated prin-

ciples in man to account for it.

These are not far to seek. First, men are sensuous beings, and hence they naturally crave something concrete, material, and spectacular in their religion. Dominated as they are by a perpetual current of sensations, and having their animality exaggerated by their sinful nature, they are sluggish to think spiritual truths, to look by faith upon invisible objects; they crave to walk by sight rather than by faith. The material things in mammon, the sensual pleasures which they see with their eyes and handle with their fingers, although they perfectly know they perish with the using, obscure their view of all the infinite, eternal realities, notwithstanding their professed belief of them. Need we wonder that with such creatures the visible and manual ritual should prevail over the spiritual didactic? Does one exclaim, "But this is so unreasonable—this notion that a ritual ceremonial can change the state and destiny of a rational and moral spirit!" I reply, "Yes, but not one whit more irrational than the preference which the whole natural world gives to the things which are seen and temporal, as it perfectly knows, over the things which are unseen and eternal; an insanity of which the educated and refined are found just as capable as the ignorant and brutish." But the other principle of human nature is still more keen and pronounced in its preference for a ritual salvation. This is its deep-seated, omnipotent preference for self-will and sin over spiritual holiness of life. The natural man has, indeed, his natural conscience and remorse, his fearful looking for of judgment, his natural fear of misery, which is but modified selfishness. These make everlasting punishment very terrible to his apprehension.

But enmity to God, to his spiritual service, to the supremacy of his holy will, is as native to him as his selfish fear is. Next to perdition, there is no conception in the universe so repulsive to the sinful heart of man as that of genuine repentance and its fruits. The true gospel comes to him and says: Here is, indeed, a blessed, glorious redemption, as free as air, as secure as the throne of God, but instrumentally it is conditional on the faith of the heart; which faith works by love, purifies the heart, and can only exist as it co-exists with genuine repentance, which repentance turns honestly, unreservedly, here and now, without shuffling or procrastination, from sin unto God,

with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience; which is, in fact, a complete surrender of the sinful will to God's holy will, and a hearty enlistment in an arduous work of watchfulness, self-denial, and self-discipline, for the sake of inward holiness, to be kept up as long as life lasts. Soul, embrace this task, and this splendid salvation shall be yours; and the gracious Saviour, who purchases it for you, shall sustain, comfort, and enable you in this arduous enlistment, so that even in the midst of the warfare you shall find rest, and at the end heaven; but without this faith and this repentance no sacraments or rights will do a particle of good towards your salvation. Now, this carnal soul has no faith; it is utterly mistrustful and skeptical as to the possibility of this peace of the heart in the spiritual warfare, this sustaining power of the invisible hand, of which it has had no experience. This complete subjugation of self-will to God, this life of self-denial and vital godliness, appears to this soul utterly repulsive, yea, terrible. This guilty soul dreads hell; it abhors such a life only less than hell. When told by Protestantism that it must thus "turn or die," this carnal soul finds itself in an abhorrent dilemma; either term of the alternative is abominable to it. But now comes the theory of sacramental grace and says to it with oily tongue: "Oh! Protestantism exaggerates the dilemma! Your case is not near so bad! The sacraments of the church transfer you from the state of condemnation to that of reconciliation by their own direct but mysterious efficiency; they work real grace, though you do not bring to them this deep, thorough-going self-sacrifice and self-consecration. No matter how much you sin, or how often, repeated masses will make expiation for the guilt of all those sins *ex opere operato*. Thus, with her other sacraments of penance and extreme unction, Holy Mother Church will repair all your short-comings and put you back into a salvable state, no matter how sinfully you live." Need we wonder that this false doctrine is as sweet to that guilty soul as a reprieve to the felon at the foot of the gallows? He can draw his breath again; he can say to himself: "Ah, then the abhorred dilemma does not urge me here and now; I can postpone this hated reformation; I can still tamper with cherished sins without embracing perdition." This is a pleasant doctrine; it suits so perfectly the sinful, selfish soul which does not wish to part with its sins, and also does not wish to lie down in everlasting burnings.

This deep-seated love of sin and self has also another result: The soul is conscious that, if it must do many things which it does not like in order to avoid perdition, it is much pleasanter to do a number of ceremonial things than to do any portion of spiritual heart-work. After I stood my graduate examination in philosophy at the University of Virginia, my professor, the venerable George Tucker, showed me a cheating apparatus which had been prepared by a member of the class. He had unluckily dropped it upon the sidewalk, and it had found its way to the professor's hands. It was a narrow blank-book, made to be hidden in the coat-sleeve. It contained, in exceedingly small penmanship, the whole course, in the form of questions from the professor's recitations with their answers copied from the text-book. It was really a work of much labor. I said, "The strange thing to me is, that this sorry fellow has expended upon this fraud much more hard labor than would have enabled him to prepare himself for passing honestly and honorably." Mr. Tucker replied, "Ah, my dear sir, you forget that a dunce finds it easier to do any amount of mere manual drudgery than the least bit of true thinking." Here we have an exact illustration. It is less irksome to the carnal mind to do twelve dozen pater-nosters by the beads than to do a few moments of real heart-work. Thoughtless people sometimes say that the rule of Romish piety is more exacting than that of the Protestant. This is the explanation, that Rome is more exacting as to form and ritual; Bible religion is more exacting as to spiritual piety and vital godliness. To the carnal mind the latter are almost insufferably irksome and laborious; the form and ritual, easy and tolerable. And when remorse, fear, and self-righteousness are gratified by the assurance that these observances really promote the soul's salvation, the task is made light. Here Rome will always present an element of popularity as long as mankind are sensuous and carnal.

(6.) To a shallow view, it might appear that the popish doctrine of purgatory should be quite a repulsive element of unpopularity with sinners; that doctrine is, that notwithstanding all the benefit of the church's sacraments and the believer's efforts, no Christian soul goes direct to heaven when the body dies, except those of the martyrs, and a few eminent saints, who are, as it were, miracles of sanctification in this life. All the

clergy, and even the popes, must go through purgatory in spite of the apostolic succession and the infallibility. There the remains of carnality in all must be burned away, and the deficiencies of their penitential work in this life made good, by enduring penal fires and torments for a shorter or longer time. Then the Christian souls, finally purged from depravity and the *reatum paenae*, enter into their final rest with Christ. But the alms, prayers, and masses of survivors avail much to help these Christian souls in purgatory and shorten their sufferings. It might be supposed that the Protestant doctrine should be much more attractive and popular, viz.: that there is no purgatory or intermediate state for the spirits of dead men, but that the "souls of believers, being at their death made perfect in holiness, do immediately enter into glory." This ought to be the more attractive doctrine, and to Bible believers it is such, but there is a feature about it which makes it intensely unpopular and repellent to carnal men, and gives a powerful advantage with them to the popish scheme. That feature is, the sharpness and strictness of the alternative which the Bible doctrine presses upon sinners: "turn or die."

The Bible offers the most blessed and glorious redemption conceivable by man, gracious and free, and bestowing a consummate blessedness the moment the body dies. But it is on these terms that the gospel must be embraced by a penitent faith, working an honest and thorough revolution in the life. If the sinner refuses this until this life ends, he seals his fate; and that fate is final, unchangeable, and dreadful. Now, it is no consolation to the carnal heart that the gospel assures him he need not run any risk of that horrible fate; that he has only to turn and live; that very turning is the thing which he abhors, if it is to be done in spirit and in truth. He intensely desires to retain his sin and self-will. He craves earnestly to put off the evil day of this sacrifice without incurring the irreparable penalty. Now, Rome comes to him and tells him that this Protestant doctrine is unnecessarily harsh; that a sinner may continue in the indulgence of his sins until this life ends, and yet not seal himself up thereby to a hopeless hell; that if he is in communion with the Holy Mother Church through her sacraments, he may indulge himself in this darling procrastination without ruining himself forever. Thus the hateful neces-

sity of present repentance is postponed awhile; sweet, precious privilege to the sinner! True, he must expect to pay due penance for that self-indulgence in purgatory, but he need not perish for it. The Mother Church advises him not to make so bad a bargain and pay so dear for his whistle. But she assures him that, if he does, it need not ruin him, for she will pull him through after a little by her merits and sacraments. How consoling this is to the heart at once in love with sin and remorseful for its guilt! The seductiveness of this theory of redemption to the natural heart is proved by this grand fact, that in principle and in its essence this scheme of purgatorial cleansing has had a prominent place in every religion in the world that is of human invention. The Bible, the one divine religion, is peculiar in rejecting the whole concept. Those hoary religions, Brahmanism and Buddhism, give their followers the virtual advantage of this conception in the transmigration of their souls. The guilt of the sinner's human life may be expiated by the sorrows of the soul's existence in a series of animal or reptile bodies, and then through another human existence, the penitent and purified soul may at last reach heaven. Classic paganism promised the same escape for sinners, as all familiar with Virgil know. His hero, Aeneas, when visiting the under world, saw many sinners there preparing for their release into the Elysian fields. *Ergo exercentur poenis, et veterum malorum supplicia expendunt.* Mohammed extends the same hope to all his sinful followers. For those who entirely reject Islam there is nothing but hell; but for all who profess "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," there is a purgatory after death, and its pains are shortened by his intercession. The Roman and Greek Churches flatter the sinful world with the same human invention. No stroug is this craving of carnal men to postpone the issue of turning to God or perishing. We now see its effect upon the most cultured minds of this advanced nineteenth century in the New England doctrine of a "second probation." Rome has understood human nature skilfully, and has adapted her bait for it with consummate cunning. Her scheme is much more acute than that of the absolute universalist of the school of Hosea Ballou, for this outrages man's moral intuitions too grossly by rejecting all distinction between guilt and righteousness. This bait for sin-loving men is too bald.

It must be added that the doctrine of a purgatory and of an application of redemption after death is intensely attractive to other principles of the human heart, much more excusable; to some affections, indeed, which are amiable. I allude to the solicitude and the affection of believers for the souls of those whom they loved in this life, "who died and made no sign." The Bible doctrine is, indeed, a solemn, an awful one to Christians bereaved by the impenitent deaths of children and relatives. It is our duty to foresee this solemn result, and to provide against it by doing everything which intercessory prayer, holy example and loving instruction and entreaty can do to prevent such a catastrophe in the case of all those near to our hearts. But human self-indulgence is prone to be slack in employing this safeguard against this sorrow. Let us picture to ourselves such a bereaved Christian, sincere, yet partially self-condemned, and doubtful or fearful or hopeless concerning the thorough conversion of a child who has been cut down by death. Of all the elements of bereavement none is so bitter, so immedicable, as the fear that he whom he loved must suffer the wrath of God forever, and that now he is beyond reach of his prayers and help. To such a one comes the Romish priest with this species of discourse. See now how harsh and cruel is this heretical Protestant dogma! Instead of offering consolation to your Christian sorrow it embitters it as with a drop of hell fire. But Holy Mother Church is a mild and loving comforter; she assures you that your loved one is not necessarily lost; he may have to endure keen penances in purgatory for a time, but there is a glorious hope to sustain him and you under them. Every minute of pain is bringing the final heaven nearer, and the most blessed part of our teaching is that your love can still follow him and help him and bless, as it was wont to do under those earthly chastisements of his sins. It is your privilege still to pray for him, and your prayers avail to lighten his sufferings and to shorten them. Your love can still find that generous solace which was always so sweet to you amidst your former sorrows for his sins and his earthly sufferings—the solace of helping him and sharing his pains. Your alms also may avail for him; masses can be multiplied by your means, which will make merit to atone for his penitential guilt and hasten his blessed release. Who can doubt that a loving heart will be

powerfully seduced by this promise, provided it can persuade itself of its certainty, or even of its probable truth? Here is the stronghold of Romanism on sincere, amiable, and affectionate souls. Of course, the real question is, whether any pastor or priest is authorized by God to hold out these hopes to the bereaved. If they are unwarrantable, then this presentation is an artifice of unspeakable cruelty and profanity. Under the pretence of softening the pain of bereavement to God's children, it is adding to wicked deception the most mischievous influences upon the living by contradicting those solemn incentives to immediate repentance which God has set up in his word, and by tempting deluded souls with a false hope to neglect their real opportunity. If the hope is not grounded in the word of God, then its cruelty is equal to its deceitfulness. But the suffering heart is often weak, and it is easier to yield to the temptation of accepting a deceitful consolation than to brace itself up to the plain but stern duty of ascertaining God's truth.

I have thus set in array the influences which Rome is now wielding throughout our country for the seduction of human souls. Some of these weapons Protestants put into her hands by their own unfaithfulness and folly. God has a right to blame Rome for using this species of weapon in favor of the wrong cause, but these Protestants have not.

There is another class of weapons which Rome finds in the blindness and sinfulness of human nature. Her guilt may be justly summed up in this statement: That these are precisely the errors and crimes of humanity which the church of Christ should have labored to suppress and extirpate; whereas Rome caters to them and fosters them in order to use them for her aggrandizement. But none the less are these weapons potent. They are exactly adapted to the nature of fallen man. As they always have been successful, they will continue to succeed in this country. Our republican civil constitutions will prove no adequate shield against them. Our rationalistic culture, by weakening the authority of God's word, is only opening the way for their ulterior victory. Our scriptural ecclesiastical order will be no sufficient bulwark. The primitive churches had that bulwark in its strongest Presbyterian form, but popery steadily undermined it. What it did once it can do again. There will be no effectual check upon another spread of this error except the work of the Holy Ghost. True and powerful revivals will save American Protestantism; nothing else will.