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ARTICLE I.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY FROM THE
UNITY OF GOD, AS TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE, ANSWERED.

The chief difficulty in the way of a candid examination and acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity, arises from the prejudices with which the mind comes to the investigation,—its unwillingness to submit itself to the truth of God without being able to comprehend the nature of the truth believed,—and above all the enmity and aversion with which this doctrine is associated, because it is so humbling to the pride and self-righteous vanity of man.

The irrelevancy of the objections made against the doctrine of the Trinity on the ground of its alleged unreasonableness, contradictoriness, incomprehensibility, obscurity, and merely speculative and abstract character, we have, we think, satisfactorily proved to be untenable. The objections which arise from “an evil heart of unbelief” against the doctrine itself, and against the system of grace which it involves,—and which after all is the real hindrance to the more universal reception of this doctrine,—these can be removed only when “the natural heart” is transformed by the renewing and enlightening influences of the Holy Ghost, through whose teaching alone any man can call Jesus Lord, and worship Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as one God, “in spirit and in truth.” Of ALL the objections which can arise against the doctrine of the Trinity, it may be truly said that they are based upon the impious and absurd presumption that the Divine Being is more clearly and ful-

“If the truth shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

ARTICLE IV.

THE ROMISH CONTROVERSY, ITS PRESENT ASPECT, AND THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH WITH REFERENCE TO IT.*

The incidents of sacred story may furnish us instruction, either by the examples which they contain, the principles which they involve, or, as simple illustrations of the truth.

The 12th Chapter of 1st Chronicles, records the number and the strength of the tribes, that came up to David, at Hebron, themselves, or by their representatives, to make him King over all Israel, after the death of Ishbosheth. And with the characteristic terseness of the sacred writers, we have also, in a few words, the qualifications of each tribe, to meet any anticipated emergency that might arise from the opposition of the house of Saul. It is said of some, that they were “mighty men of valor;” of others, that they were “expert in war,” and of others, that they “were not of double heart.” To the men of Issachar belonged the proud distinction, of combining with an equal zeal for the cause, a superior intelligence, and a perfect organization: they “had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.”

Now, without even approximating the exploded principle, which sought a type, in every notice or allusion of Old Testament history, and allegorized the simplest state-

* The following article is the substance of a sermon, delivered before the Synod of Virginia, at their late meeting in Alexandria, Va., from 1st Chronicles, 12th chapter, 82d verse: “And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.”

ments, into the most wonderful theological dogmas; we may yet avoid the opposite extreme, which is, to treat a large portion of Scripture as if it were a mere collection of bald and barren annals, standing in no immediate relation to the dispensation of grace in the Gospel. The recorded events, in the establishment and progress of the Hebrew monarchy, have, certainly, something more than a bare historical interest: they stand in a more intimate relation to the kingdom of Messiah, than those which attended the founding of the throne of the Cæsars, the reign of Henry the Fourth, or the downfall of the Stuarts. By the authority of prophets and apostles, the throne of David is the standing type of His dominion, whose righteous kingdom shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Admitting then, as we must admit, from the essential difference in nature between an earthly sovereignty and the spiritual dominion of Jesus Christ, that the means of founding the first, have not the force of an authorized example in extending the second, yet it is not too much to say, that the record is of more value than any uninspired narrative, and its incidents are something more than mere historical illustrations. As we think there is here, a designed analogy, by which we may learn, from the method of God's dealings in one case, the designs of his providence in another, and emulating the recorded courage, devotion, and skill of those who, in other days, were the instruments of his power, in fulfilling his purpose, we may more successfully marshal the sacramental host of God's elect, in the contest with opposing errors.

Taken in this light, the pertinence of the context referred to will be easily apparent. Among the errors which oppose the progress and full establishment of the kingdom of grace in all the earth, Romanism is justly regarded as one of the most inveterate and dangerous. There are those, indeed, who do not hesitate to give it the bad preëminence of being the very master-piece of Satanic ingenuity, for withstanding and subverting the truth. But it would require an investigation more difficult than profitable, accurately to estimate the comparative influence for evil, of this, and other forms of error and unbelief. It is enough to know that it is a system

which, from its very nature, is determined in its hostility, and necessarily aggressive in its spirit. It could not be what it is, without being intolerant and relentless, and its very life-blood is, that zeal of propagandism which springs directly from its claim to a universal and exclusive authority. Infidelity is a system of negations, and for the most part, contents itself with a denial of revealed truth. Its utterances are mainly the out-givings of restless minds, vainly striving to search for themselves the repose of a firm conviction, by their own ingenious sophisms, or haply by an increase to the ranks of unbelief. In general, its apostles only claim to be their own apologists, and if it has any missionaries, they are commonly those who affect singularity for the sake of distinction, or in whom the enmity of the carnal heart works itself out, in this, as in other forms of ungodliness. But Romanism, like the house of Saul, claims the kingdom for its own. It is a rival to Christianity. It assumes to be Christianity itself, and the history of fifteen centuries is the record of its struggle for the supremacy. That, with varied fortunes, and often with seemingly fatal reverses, it has been enabled to maintain the contest through all that period, proves that it is no despicable foe; and that, in this nineteenth century, it still exists in the midst of christendom, formidable by the number of its adherents, as unscrupulous as ever in its measures, and increasingly arrogant in its tone, should be reason enough, it would seem, for a frequent review of the controversy, and the aspect of the times, with relation to it, that like the sons of Issachar, we may "know what Israel ought to do."

In considering the present attitude of the controversy, with this gigantic system of error, we shall have more particular reference to its position and progress in our own country. But we should greatly err in forming an estimate of the resources, and the spirit of Romanism, if we take our view of it, only from that modified phase which it has been its policy hitherto to present to us here. For, notwithstanding its boast of being "always and everywhere the same," and in its essential elements, which are also, its worst elements, it is so, yet upon principle, it is a changeling, and has a thousand protean

shapes, to suit the ever-changing exigencies of time and place. To understand the true position of the controversy, at any time, will, therefore, require a previous insight into the nature and genius of this system of manifold error :

I. Let me briefly sketch some of its more prominent characteristics :

1. And first, we shall do well to remember, that it is not the product of a single mind, or the birth of a single age, but the up-growth of centuries. Its vaunted claim of antiquity is, at least, so far just, as that it dates its origin at an early period in the history of the Church, and some of its radical errors reach far down towards apostolic times. These grew by accretion, through the natural affinity of error, and by the equally natural law of development, one departure from the simplicity of the truth, being the prelude to another, just as one crime prepares the way for many and greater. But though the seeds of the deadly Upas were early sown, yet, it did not spring into its full proportions, as by a single bound. It was not till the seventh century that it stood revealed in its distinctive form, and not until towards the eleventh, did its far-spreading branches overshadow the earth, distilling the dews of death upon the nations, nor did it reach its culminating point until the decisions of the Council of Trent gave the shape and symmetry of a system to its daring assumptions.

2. The manner of its growth, by this gradual unfolding, as it has modified its form, so it may also serve to explain the nature of its errors. Unlike most other heresies, they are less the result of bold speculations than the offspring of circumstances, and the adopted expedients wherewith to compass a particular, or an ultimate design. If we examine the peculiar tenets of this system, we shall find them all tending, more or less directly, to a given end, viz: the accumulation of power in the hands of the Priesthood, and its concentration in the hands of a hierarchy, of whom the Pope, according to his talents and temper, is either the executive organ, or the supreme dictator. If we examine these errors yet more closely, we shall also find, that however revolting some of them may be to the human understanding, yet they are remarkably congenial to the prevailing dispositions

of our fallen nature. During the ages of their development, the tendencies of the depraved heart were left to work themselves out, with fewer restraints than are laid upon them now. And on the principle of adapting means to an end, a Church, all whose policy aimed at the supremacy, would find its interest in dogmas, which made the governing, though godless, dispositions of men, tributary to its purpose. Thus, even the primacy of the Bishop of Rome itself, gained its first formal recognition, through the pride and passion of a blood stained Emperor, desirous only of gratifying his malignity and revenge against the Patriarch of Constantinople. But the same "cunning craftiness" which could extort from the wickedness of a tyrant a decree of supremacy, and afterwards, when its power had sufficiently increased, pretended to found this impious claim upon a right divine, is no less strongly marked in those other definitions and "infallible" decisions of doctrine, which grew, at length, into a stupendous system of Priestly domination, before which, Emperors themselves, trembled for their crowns.

3. But, if the forming period of Romanism was one of comparative darkness, let us not imagine that its errors have grown effete, or that its dogmas have no adaptation to an age like our own. The principles of human nature are always the same, and those doctrines which are the up-growth of its desires, or have been framed with a skilful accommodation to its propensities, will be found capable also, of an easy adjustment to the peculiarities of any age or people. "Popery," says Calvin, "stands not but in ignorance." The sentiment is, undoubtedly, just. But we may not infer that the errors of Romanism will disappear before the advance of civilization and the progress of science, literature and the arts. The highest perfection of these is entirely compatible with that ignorance which is the mother of superstition. The light of divine truth alone, can dissipate religious errors. Gross absurdities of doctrine, in a church, with unblushing corruption of morals and ostentatious ceremonial fooleries, may for a time, work out their own destruction, and drive cultivated minds into indifferentism and infidelity, as they did in France. But to be without a re-

ligion, is not the normal condition of man, and unless error is expelled by the truth, the exorcised demon will return, and most probably with "seven other devils worse than the first." We rely upon a false security if we expect that the worldly wisdom of this wonderful nineteenth century, and the general intelligence of these United States, will be an adequate protection against the progress of Romanism here. There may be much general information, with the smallest amount of religious knowledge, and even the great men and counsellors of the earth, do often betray a wonderful ignorance of the very rudiments of the Gospel.

It is to be remembered, moreover, that the reception of religious truth, or the liability to religious error, is more dependent upon the moral and spiritual condition of a man, than upon his intellectual capacity. There is more than always meets the eye in those remarkable words of Christ, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." But precisely in this, is an essential difference between the doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles, and those which Romanism offers to the faith of its followers. The full reception of the former requires a spiritual discernment of them, the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost, which implies also, a radical change in the affections, for it is "with the *heart* that man believeth unto righteousness. But for the embrace of the latter, the heart is already predisposed by the very perverseness of its nature,—and, as has been intimated already, they are congenial with, because the up-growth of, its desires, or carefully conformed to its governing propensities. It was well and wisely said by the great moralist of England, that "to find a substitute for violated morality is the leading feature in all perversions of religion." And we may add, that this substitute is always found, in some external relations, doctrines, or practices, which may co-exist with the governing tendencies of the carnal heart. Man, as a sinner, must have some opiate for a troubled conscience. But Romanism presents a whole pharmacopœia of nostrums, where each may find a prescription to his taste, unless indeed, he comes with a "broken heart," and that soul-sickness of sin, through the power of a convincing Spirit, which only

the Great Physician can heal, by the application of his own blood. The spectacle is sometimes witnessed with wonder, and it is heralded forth as a triumph of worldly wicked men, or men of speculative, sceptical minds, suddenly becoming the abject and bigoted devotees of Romanism. But the metempsychosis is easily explained. A conscience-troubled sinner will fly to any sanctuary that offers a refuge from his fears without requiring a renovation of his heart, and for the sake of its protection he may consent to sacrifice the outward, grosser forms of impiety, or even to wear the habit of virtue. So too, a bold but irregular thinker, whose vigorous, but erratic mind, has circled through the whole round of sceptical negations, seeking rest but finding none, may bring up his career at last, by the embrace of a system which interdicts speculation, and from that very exhaustion of wasted intellect, which covets repose, he may consent to receive the dogmas of a church, and the dictum of a Priest, with a blind unquestioning credulity, need I add that silly women, of both sexes, laden with divers lusts, will seek relief in a crucifix, rather than the cross; in the anointings and absolutions of a Priest, rather than in "the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel?" The congeniality of Romanism, with the prevalent tendencies of our fallen nature, will always make it a plausible and a dangerous system.

4. And it is all the more so, from its singular flexibility, at which I have already hinted, and its unlimited capacity of accommodating itself to the exigencies of time and place.

Though in its essential evils always and everywhere the same, yet in its outward manifestations it is endlessly diversified. In constitutional England and free America, it has a very different aspect from that which it wears in stifled Italy, or decaying Spain, and like the government itself, it is everything by turns, in revolutionary France. Essentially tyrannical in its nature, and the sworn ally of despotism, where despotism prevails, it can alternately baptize the barricades of Paris, and sing "te deums" to the usurpation which succeeds them. In our own country its brawling voice is heard at the polls, vociferating for the largest liberty, while through the

pulpit and the press, it gravely propounds the cardinal principles of all intolerance. It has a different bearing towards the poor emigrant; who, from youth, has been trained in its vassalage, from that which it assumes to the recent or half-formed proselyte, yet a novice to its mysteries, and unbroken to the vigor of its iron yoke. It has the stern air of authority, and the terrors of Priestly anathema, with which to dragoon the ignorant who are already in its toils, whilst it has also, the suavity of a courtier, and the liquid accents and honied words of persuasion, with which to captivate the unwary. It has its prepared appeals to the fears of the timid and the weak, to the hopes of the ambitious, to the imaginations of the dreamy, and to the superstitions of all. Where its power is dominant it interdicts all other forms of worship, all freedom of speech, all rights of conscience, even refusing the privilege of a decent burial to the dead. But where it is yet in a minority, and the truth is free, while, with one breath, it impudently defends the principle and the practice of its own outrages upon the rights of man and the feelings of humanity, yet with the next breath, it waxes loud in its complaints at all discussion of its doctrines, or exposure of its corruptions, or resistance of its schemes, as an invasion of its own chartered rights, and seeks to soften the blow of its frequent defeats by enlisting sympathy for itself with the whining cry of "persecution!" "persecution!"

To speak of a free press, in any country, under the dominion of Romanism, would be an obvious solecism in language. But what this system sternly denies at home, and has anathematized in all the world, as "the never sufficiently to be execrated and detested liberty of the press," it can yet freely employ abroad, and if there ever was a Journal, exceeding in the license of personal abuse and bitter denunciations of the prevailing religious opinions of the country, and in the licentiousness of an unblushing mendacity, the acknowledged organ of his Romish Right Reverence of New York, then we will agree that such a journal has attained to a preëminence which should justly entitle it to the sole distinction of "infernal." But, it has also, its seemingly philosophic dissertations for the learned in the more stately numbers

of its Quarterly, and its "Popery Made Easy," in the polite phrase and apologetic tone of its lighter and more attractive publications. In a word, there is not a grade of human intellect, there is not a mental idiosyncrasy, there is not a phase of character, for which Romanism has not an accordant note in the gamut of its endless variations.

5. And yet withal, it is essentially and necessarily, the most intolerant of systems. With a laxity in its moral requirements which leaves ample verge and scope for the workings of an unsanctified heart, it expends all its rigours, against deviations from its doctrinal standards, or denial of its infallible authority. As distinctly as the Bible draws the line of separation between the righteous and the wicked, Romanism divides all the world into two great parties, distinguished by their submission to, or rejection of her, rule, and impiously assigns to each, the awards which the searcher of hearts has reserved to the discriminations of the great day. "Her very creed draws a line, deep, and broad as the impassable gulf between the world within and the world without the pale of her communion," and by that same creed, regarding this outside world as under the dominion of the devil, it is her avowed mission to subdue and exterminate all who belong to it, by argument and artifice when she must, by coercion and constraint when she can, and by fire and sword when she dare. A church which claims infallibility and makes its own dicta the rule of faith, must necessarily be exclusive in its pretensions, and by an equal necessity, intolerant in its spirit. This is the open and repeated avowal of Romanism itself, and by her own authority, we have been taught in what light we ought to read the bloody annals of her history. Her surpassing cruelties were not the excesses of a transient fanaticism, or the offspring of an age of darkness, but the exponents of her infallible principles. It is stereotyped in her formularies that "there is no salvation outside of her pale," and it has been boldly, though prematurely avowed, that she tolerates protestantism in this country now, only because she must, and the times are not ripe for the exercise of her prerogatives.

6. In immediate connection with this fact, it becomes

us to remember also, her peculiarity as a politico-religious despotism. -Other systems of doctrine, which challenge the faith of men, yet leave it to individuals to bear for themselves the responsibility of accepting or rejecting them, and look upon those who dissent, only as misguided men, to be pitied and instructed. This system alone, claims as of right divine, a two-fold universal supremacy; an external and civil, as well as an internal and spiritual dominion over the whole earth; and all who refuse this claim are regarded, not only as heretics to be converted, but as rebellious subjects to be punished. A bold and persevering effort to realize this idea of a universal sovereignty, on the one hand, and a determined purpose to resist it on the other, has been the great conflict of ages. Let us not suppose that the struggle is over, because, for the time, the monstrous claim is held in abeyance. To obtrude it with prominence, in behalf of the imbecile old man, whose tottering throne at Rome, is propped by the bayonets of France, would be too supremely ridiculous, nevertheless, the theory lives, the dogma, though exploded, is not abandoned, but it is the secret spring of a perpetual intermeddling in civil affairs, an occasional collision, as in England, with the laws of Protestant countries, and an ambitious grasping after political importance and power everywhere.

7. Nor should we forget that is a system, which, in its organization, surpasses, in some respects, even the rigor of military discipline. Not a Macedonian phalanx, a Roman cohort, or the legions of Napoleon, were ever trained to a more perfect subordination, than that which pervades the papal hierarchy. From the Parish Priest to the Sovereign Pontiff, there is a gradation of rank and a distribution of power which, whilst it secures a mutual dependence, secures also, a unity of action, and a prompt obedience. Subjection and obedience to ecclesiastical superiors is incorporated in the oath of every Cardinal, Primate and Bishop,—the vows of every Priest, Monk, and Nun, and is the burden of Romish teaching, from its first lessons in the nursery, to its last utterances over the dying and the dead. And this obedience is enforced, not merely by such sanctions as give authority

to civil governments, but by ghostly terrors which, to a superstitious mind, are more formidable than the last extremity of physical pains and penalties. It may seem to invalidate the fact of this jurisdiction, in temporal matters, at least, that the reigning Pontiff actually needs the aid of foreign arms to protect him against his own subjects at Rome. But, it should be remembered, that a nearer view of the mysteries of Papal iniquities, and a more sensible impression of the evils of its misrule, has often served to weaken its hold upon the conscience, and it is probably true, that in the States of the Pope, there is less real devotion to the Church, than among its adherents in any other country. There have also, been a few instances in our own land, where the stretch of prelatical prerogative has been firmly resisted, and it would be strange indeed, if the liberal institutions and democratic tendencies of our people, did not operate as an occasional restraint upon Priestly assumptions. But, notwithstanding these, and such like exceptions, the general fact remains, that no government on earth, has a more complete organization, or exerts a more direct and powerful authority over its subjects, than that ecclesiastico-political organization, through which Romanism acts, and that control which it exercises over all its adherents. Claiming, as of Divine right, a superiority to all civil jurisdiction, it also claims, at its pleasure, to release its members from their allegiance to the State. And though the mandates flowing from this assumption may occasion a conflict between the patriotism and the churchism of some, yet it is easy to see which way the scale will ultimately preponderate, in minds which are thoroughly imbued with the peculiar errors of this system. Rome has absolutely at its command, and organized for its service, all the millions who sincerely receive the doctrine of Church authority and Priestly absolution.

8. But, besides these characteristics of Romanism, in its origin, spirit and organization, it is needful also, to take a rapid glance at those distinguishing doctrines which underlie the whole system, and are the basis of the entire superstructure.

These may all be included under one or other of those three cardinal points, which are the points of divergence

between all religious truth and error; viz: the rule of faith, the ground and method of a sinner's acceptance with God, and the true nature and object of worship. And upon each of these points, we shall find that Romanism has "changed the truth of God into a lie," not by directly denying it, but by adding to it, first, its own inventions, and then by magnifying these until they have entirely overshadowed the truth, and have come at length to be substituted for it. By this process the teachings of men have usurped the authority which belongs only to "the incorruptible word." The doctrine of human merit has come instead of justification by faith. The Priesthood has arrogated to itself the offices of Christ. An elaborate and unmeaning formalism has eaten out the spirituality of worship, and the utmost point of departure from the truth has been reached, in the idolatry of saints and angels.

1. The question is sometimes asked, and it is a pertinent one, if Rome has departed so far from the truth as is alleged, how is it that errors so gross, came to be first introduced, and succeeded in grafting themselves so firmly upon the faith of the Church? But this question involves no such embarrassment as is supposed by those who suggest it occasionally, as a puzzle to Protestants. The answer is historical and it is easy. It is found partly, in the fact already noticed, of the gradual unfolding of doctrines, which, if propounded at once, in their full development, would probably have met with a general rejection. But this is the nature of error, and often the art of the errorist, slowly to unmask dangerous delusions, and by plausible statements, which seem scarcely, if at all, to diverge from the truth, to insinuate the venom, until it has poisoned the springs of thought, and prepared the mind for any conceivable absurdity.

The state of the public mind in the earlier ages of Christianity, was favourable to this gradual diffusion of error. And from the habit of subjection to governmental tyranny, together with the prevailing ignorance of religious truth, it was equally favourable to that assumption of Church authority, which is, after all, the foundation-stone of the whole fabric of Romish superstitions. The dogma, which, in its mildest form of statement,

claims for the Church, as an organized body, a co-ordinate authority with the Scriptures, in matters of faith, always has been, and always will be, found in its legitimate effects, to dethrone the word of God, and make it void through human traditions. It is a doctrine which surrenders the very citadel of truth; overthrows the only unerring standard, and flings wide open the doors of the sanctuary itself, to the free ingress of all manner of false and foolish inventions. Under its operation, the Bible will be made to speak whatever language the exigencies of the times, or the designs of ecclesiastical rulers may seem to require. And when it cannot be made subservient it will be suppressed, that the infallible decrees of Popes and Councils may more effectually bind the consciences of men. Herein we find our further answer to the enquiry, how did the errors of Romanism come to prevail? They were baptized and consecrated as infallible truth by the authority of a dominant Church, which the people were taught to regard as an authorised and unerring guide, in all matters of faith and practice. This dogma of Church authority is radical, and it is germinant, and from it there needs must spring a prolific and monstrous growth of human folly and inpiety.

2. Among the most prominent, if not the earliest of this pestiferous growth, would be the perversion of the truth, in regard to man's condition as a sinner, and the method of his recovery. The teachings of the Scriptures, upon this point, are, of all others, most repugnant to the feelings of the carnal heart, and with the fullest and clearest expositions of the truth, it is not easy, so to repress the tendencies of our fallen nature, as not to seek after, or accept, some other ground of reliance than that which God has revealed. But Romanism not only fosters this tendency, she has consecrated it, and so adroitly is her entire system adjusted to its cravings, that she has not only made it her strongest hold upon the conscience, but the chiefest source of revenue to her exchequer. A right understanding of that great central truth of the Gospel, which makes it the "glad tidings of great joy," to the true penitent, viz: the doctrine of justification by faith alone, would sweep away, at a blow, all her impious Priestly pretensions, sacramental ab-

surditities, and purgatorial dreams. Let it but be written upon the heart of the sinner by the Spirit of God, as it is written in his Word, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and he will cease to depend upon the efficacy of ordinances, or value the absolutions of a Priest, or tremble at the rattling of the keys. Let him but understand that there is only "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," and he will turn aside from those human and self-constituted mediators, many who claim to stand between him and his God, and by a graduated tariff of prices, take toll for his sins, before they will suffer him to hope in redeeming mercy. Just here, is the most dangerous element of the system. Its strength lies in this, that it seizes upon the conscience, and in the name of Christianity, professing to direct it, reduces it to a slavish subjection, by alternately stimulating its fears and soothing its alarms. The essential nature of justification, that is to say, its judicial nature, as "an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth *all our sins*, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us and received by faith alone," is entirely excluded from its definitions of doctrine, or introduced only to be anathematized as damnable heresy. Rome never allows her votaries to believe that *all* their sins are pardoned, and their transgressions blotted out through atoning blood, for if they should once be enabled to say with Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," it would take them so far out of her hands as to place them beyond the reach of her exactions. Therefore, it is, that whilst retaining the *name*, she yet ignores and repudiates the *fact* of justification, by confounding it with sanctification, and making both dependent upon the sinner's own exertions, whilst she assumes to direct those exertions, and claims to be at the same time, the judge of the nature, extent, and quality of them, and to make them efficacious at last, by her official interposition. If this is not putting a man entirely at the mercy of the rulers of his Church, it is impossible to conceive in what way it could be more effectually done. Hence, we find that upon the broad

basis of this assumption, Rome has erected that stupendous fabric of practical delusions and Priestly prerogatives, whereby she "maketh merchandize of the souls of men." First, she has the mass as a perpetually renewed sacrifice, to supplement the offering of Christ upon the Cross, and an expiation for the sins which the once shedding of his blood had failed to cleanse. Then comes the sacrament of penance, including confession, for that part of sin which neither the blood of the Cross, nor the offering of the mass could take away. But as the prayers and fastings which the Priesthood prescribes, may not always be agreeable or convenient, we have next, the doctrine of *indulgencies*, in which, the Church assumes to herself the power of compounding these penances for money. Thus she conducts the sinner through life, keeping him still in her toils, though terrifying his fears and amusing his hopes, by turns, and that she may not loose her grasp upon him in life, she has also, her extreme unction for his dying bed. Nor is she willing to part with him yet, but tells him before he goes, and his weeping friends when he is gone, that there is an intermediate place of purgation, which is neither heaven nor hell, but exclusively her own territory, over which her power is absolute, and from the sufferings of which, he can only escape through her good offices. Considered thus in itself, we might conclude that such a system of barefaced assumption, and one tending so directly to clerical usurpation and tyranny, could make little or no progress in an enlightened age and country. But we may not forget that the grand effort of our fallen nature is to seek after, or make some sort of self-righteousness upon which it can rely for pardon and acceptance from God. The history of religion in every age and country, proves that this effort will be made, either in the way of an attempted compliance with the laws of morality, or in external religious observances and ceremonies. The latter is so far the prevailing type of all false religions, that ritual observances do almost invariably come to be substituted for moral duties. And whilst human nature remains what it is, a Church, which in the name of Christianity, accommodates its teachings to this tendency, will not be wanting in adherents, however mon-

trous, severe, or humiliating its exactions. Men who cannot escape from their own consciences, will submit to anything that offers a refuge to their fears, sooner than they will submit themselves to "the righteousness of God," and that because this latter implies a moral renovation, and anything else may be endured, or performed without it.

3. If I speak now of the idolatry of Romanism, as immediately connected with its perversion of the truth, in regard to the ground and method of a sinner's acceptance with God, it is with reference to the logical, rather than the historical relation of these errors. Whatever may have been the date or history of their origin, they have both, long been used as parts of the same design, and conspiring to the same end, viz: to intercept the sinner's direct approach to God in Christ, and turn off his trust and service from the Redeemer of men, to the advantage of that Church which claims to be herself a mediator. In this point of view, the invocation of saints and angels, the worship of the host, and the idolatrous reverence paid to images, pictures, and dead men's bones, all follow on, as natural sequents, to the substitution of Church authority for the word of God, and the great central error concerning the nature and grounds of justification.

The same consciousness of guilt which leads a man to seek after a righteousness of his own, will also leave him dissatisfied with it. And the same indolence and self-distrust which make it easy to rely upon the authority of others, in matters of faith, in like manner will prompt to a reliance upon the merits and intercessions of others, in the matter of acceptance with God. Now, to meet this tendency also, the Church of Rome claims to have in her possession a vast fund, or, in her own language, "a sacred treasury of merits," over and above the righteousness of Christ, and of which she is the custodian and dispenser. From this store-house she professes to help out the imperfect righteousness of her saintly followers,—and that she may enhance the value of the commodity, she is wont to exalt and deify those, whose works of supererogation have enriched her treasury. Their deeds are recorded in "lying legends," their names are enrolled in the catalogue of saints, set days are observed

in their honour, their relics encased in gold and jewels, are enshrined within the altar,—vows are offered, and prayers are made to them continually, and all this, while it withdraws the sinner from the sole-efficacy of Christ's mediation, binds him, with ten-fold stronger cords, to the church, which has assumed his office, and affects to be the keeper and dispenser of all merit.—It is, after all, the exaltation of the Church and its prerogatives, which is the effect, if it is not also, the grand design of Romish idolatry, as of all its other errors. The worship of the Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, is inseparably linked with a devotion to the Church, which claims the Virgin for its patroness, and the saints for its property,—and even where Christ is professedly recognised, his name and offices are made subservient to the same end, for, if it is the mystic presence which is worshipped in the adoration of the host, yet it was the Church that changed the wafer into a God.

Such, in its prominent features, is the system with which we are called to contend. A system whose joints and bands have been knit and hardened by the growth of centuries,—a system subtle in its distinctions, artful and unscrupulous in its methods, and thoroughly organised in its activities. A system which seizes upon the great facts in man's moral condition, and admirably harmonizes with the tendencies of his fallen nature, while in the name of Christianity, it professes to rectify and exalt them. And yet a system, the most despotic and intolerant in its spirit, and all comprehending in the grasp of its ambition. Will any man say, that in a country like this, such a system may be safely ignored, and left to its own undisturbed workings; that it can be laughed out of existence, or that it does not demand the continuous, careful and profound study of all who are set for the defence of the truth? Does any one suppose that its adherents are to be conciliated and won by our silence or concessions, or by that easy, good nature, baptised with the engaging names of "liberality" and "charity," which lends itself to its designs by encouraging words, and pecuniary aid to its schemes?

But, it is time that we turn from the essential nature of this system of errors to consider:

II. The present aspect of the controversy with it,—as perhaps, yet more suggestive of “what Israel ought to do.”

1. And our first remark is, that as to the great questions at issue, it is essentially the same controversy which was begun at the Reformation. Rome may have changed her tactics, but she has not departed from any one of her errors. The decisions of the Council of Trent, occasioned by the doctrines of Luther, have given form and perpetuity to her system, which cannot be modified without being wholly abandoned. She may have found it her policy to disguise and conceal some of her most offensive dogmas, and to forego some of her most repulsive practices, and to soften down, or gild over, with plausible statements, her distinguishing doctrines. But, after all, upon the authority of her own creed, she remains in spirit and in fact unchanged. And the controversy now, is just a renewal of the battle upon the same old issues, upon which it was fought and won three hundred years ago. It is not now, nor was it then, simply a contest about indulgences, purgatory, transubstantiation, or any other particular corruption or abuse. These were but the occasions which awakened the struggle, and opened to the minds of the Reformers, an insight into the radical errors from which these evils grow. The putting down of Tetzels and the burning of his parchment pardons, could not change the nature of the Papacy, or hinder an ultimate outbreak of Scripture and reason, against its monstrous assumptions. The conflict with this gigantic system of delusion, was not, nor is it now, whether a stupid friar shall publicly peddle the Pope's license for theft, adultery and murder, at a certain percentage. Upon questions of that sort, Rome may be a thousand times overthrown, and yet survive and flourish. The struggle in which her defeat must be final, is that which has been the conflict of ages, and which, in some one or more, of its aspects, is, and is to be, preëminently the conflict of this age;—a struggle for the supremacy of God's written word, as opposed to all human speculations, or Church authority, for the dominion of “Christ and his crown,” or, to use another pregnant expression, equally consecrated in the struggles of the

past, for the "headship of Christ," as opposed to all civil or prelatical assumptions, for God's method of saving sinners through the righteousness of Christ, as opposed to all the patchwork of human inventions, and for the spirituality of worship, as opposed to a barren formalism, that always terminates in superstition and idolatry.

2. But, though the controversy in its issues is the same, yet in its circumstances and accidents, it is materially different.

In those countries in which the reformation was strangled in its birth, and which remain still under the dominion of Rome, all discussion being interdicted, the contest must await the developements of providence, in the silent working of the leaven which may be infused, or in the result of those political convulsions which may yet enfranchise the people whose energies have been crushed by ages of oppression.

Without subscribing to any theories of prophetic interpretation, we may yet anticipate the coming of events which shall shatter the theories of tyranny, and break the iron sceptre of a Priestly despotism.

But, whilst in her own territories Rome refuses to be questioned, and stifles inquiry by the strong arm of power, she is yet ambitious of conquest, and is not only open, but impudent in asserting her claims, in lands where they may be freely investigated. In such countries, especially if pervaded by a general intelligence, we might expect some measure of reserve, and politic concealment,—that she would put on a decent exterior, and present altogether, a more comely appearance than she did to the Reformers, or does even now, where she has nothing to gain by the masquerade. In our own country, and in England, this has been her policy, until more recently, presuming upon Protestant indifference and apathy, she seems to have been making experiments upon the maxim, that the bolder the assumption and arrogance, the more certain the success.

In diffusing her dogmas, she claims for herself, the benefit, to its utmost extent, of the Protestant doctrine of religious freedom and universal toleration, while at the same time, sundry of her organs are indiscreetly confessing, that liberty of conscience is no part of her

creed, and a persecuting intolerance is the logical and necessary result of her doctrines. With the plea of equal rights she boldly asserts the right to rule, and though in never so pitiful a minority, she demands it, as of justice, that the majority should bow to her dictation, though it be to proscribe the Bible and falsify history, and silence the voice of prayer. She marches boldly to the ballot box, in the solid phalanx of her followers, when she can make her influence to be felt by parties or persons,—and when her political intermeddling has produced its inevitable reaction in her own defeat, she makes the welkin ring again, with the cry of a “violated constitution” and religious bigotry.”

In all this, it is not difficult to detect her design, which seems to be a studied effort to withdraw the controversy, even at the expense of frequent discomfitures, from the great points in dispute, to local and secondary questions of temporal interest and policy. She prefers to skirmish along the outposts, where defeat is not disastrous, and the accidents of war may give an occasional victory,—to a charge upon the centre in which her triumph would be hopeless and her overthrow fatal. Thus, the contest is every day becoming more and more practical. It is no longer the debate of learned scholastics about the meaning of a word, or the disputed testimony of doubtful Fathers. It seizes upon the interests and realities of every-day life, and by appealing to all the passions and prejudices of men, it arrays them in mutual hostility. This might seem, indeed, like a suicidal policy, for a Church, which aims at accessions from Protestant ranks, and whose position one might think, should render her conciliatory, rather than belligerent. But, let us not imagine that she has forgotten, or repudiated the arts of fawning and flattery, in certain quarters, even while fomenting an irreconcilable animosity in others. The audience to this controversy is not now, as of yore, the august presence of assembled councils and crowned heads, whose verdict would be potential upon whole kingdoms and provinces. In this country, at least, the issue is to be tried before the people themselves, and what has never been true before to the same extent, and under similar circumstances, the adherents

of Rome themselves, are a part of the jury. Now, it is not more important to make converts, than it is to prevent defections, and Rome aims at accomplishing both. From the Evangelical Churches of the country, which are the received type of Protestantism here, she can have but slight hope of accessions, and yet it is from the efforts of these, that her own followers are most in danger of being snatched from her grasp. Against these, therefore, it is her policy to awaken in the minds of her own people, all the antipathy which national and religious prejudices can engender, thus rendering them inaccessible to influence or instruction from without. But the vast majority of our population have no special Church relations, and though decidedly Protestant in their feelings and tendencies, yet this is more the result of circumstances, than of intelligent convictions. Moreover, among these, the religious element in its external manifestations, has never attained to that strength and unity of expression which it has reached, for example, in England or Scotland. We have no living traditions and monuments, of past struggles with the Papacy, which have concentrated the national feeling against it. On the contrary, nominal Protestants among us, so far occupy a neutral territory, that they are much in the habit of looking upon all religions as alike. They are greatly inclined to ascribe to sectarian bigotry and prejudice, any exposures of Romish delusions and abuses. Or looking upon the controversy, as only the contest of rival sects, their sympathies naturally tend towards the weaker party.

Now, whilst expending all its native rancor and bitterness against the different Churches, yet Rome knows how to be exceedingly gracious and conciliatory towards those who have no special interest in any. And if, besides a prevailing indifference, the enmity of the carnal heart has been at all stirred up against the truth, she knows how to second its objections, and confirm its opposition, commending herself the while, by an affectation of liberality, and an exemption from everything austere and puritanical, either in doctrine or practice. Recalling, in this connection, what has already been said of the conformity of her tenets, with the tendencies

of our fallen nature, it will be seen, that she has no unpromising field for the exercise of her arts. She enters this field, not with the arguments of ordinary polemic strife, but with those influences and agencies, which are particularly taking, with minds unaccustomed to theological distinctions, and easily affected by external plausibilities. She allows no element of influence or power to be wasted. Employing for her purposes every species of talent, and every shape of enthusiasm, she has also, her agencies, suited to every possible avocation.

In the growing towns and cities of a new country, public buildings are regarded as public benefits, and she has availed herself largely, of the architectural argument, in pretentious, and often really imposing Churches and Cathedrals. In older and larger cities, the emporiums of trade, and the receptacles of congregated misery and vice, where amid the scramble for wealth, the spirit of a heartless selfishness too often reigns, and where the unobtrusive, and often extended labours of private benevolence, are unnoticed and unproclaimed, she is constantly parading the machinery of her ostentatious charities, and challenging for them public applause and support, while multitudes of her own poor, are left to the provisions of city and State institutions. It is proverbial, that the establishment of schools and seminaries of learning, save for the education of her own Priesthood, has occupied but little of her attention, in those lauds where her power is already predominant. But, in a country like this, where the cause of popular education has received an irresistible impulse, it is necessary to her ends, either to embarrass or control it. She is aiming at both, by her ceaseless endeavors, first, to dictate the books and subjects of instruction in the public schools, and then to thrust her hand into the public treasury, and appropriate to her exclusive use a portion of its funds. She has also, her seminaries and high schools for educating the children of Protestant parents, who are willing to pay for having the minds of their sons and daughters poisoned with her errors. In this department, as in others, she avails herself successfully of her female aids. And because there is in one day a particular rage for certain ornamental foreign follies, she comes to the

relief of our semi-barbarian Protestantism, and the once brilliant Madame This, or fascinating Countess That, having been duly transformed into Sister Ursula or Saintess Theresa, shall teach our daughters the latest Parisian accomplishments, and most exquisite Italian music, teaching them at the same time,—all pledges to the contrary notwithstanding,—to take the veil when they are done, or at least, to take a confessor. She has also, her theological champions for the strife of words, and if bold affirmations, artful diversions, and specious, but shallow sophistries, could always conceal obnoxious errors, they would be oftener successful. Let not the Protestant who enters the arena of this debate, expect to encounter a manly and straightforward discussion of cardinal principles. Whatever may be the topic in hands, the old story will return, of Protestant divisions, the different interpretations of the Bible, with all the various readings, and minor errors of transcribers and printers, to the end of the chapter. Servetus will die a thousand deaths, and the New England witches will be burned, and the Quakers will be banished, as many times over, to offset the fires of Smithfield, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Spanish Inquisition, no matter though Protestantism has, for centuries, deplored and disowned the errors and excesses of those but partially imbued with her spirit, yet they are the stereotyped answer to all the cruelty and blood which has blackened the history of Rome, from its earliest origin, and which are the necessary and conceded results of principles still retained and avowed.

The history of the Romish controversy in this country, would be a curious and instructive chapter. Almost simultaneously with the first settlements on this continent, Rome was engaged in efforts to secure it. She planted her colonies and established her missions. On the rugged soil of the North and the rich Savannas of the South, her emissaries were found. It is not more than a hundred years ago, since the whole of that vast region west of the Alleghanies was claimed by a Romish Government, and a chain of French settlements and forts, strengthened by Jesuit missions, extended from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf. The lakes, the streams,

the cities, designated by the names of tutelary Saints, from the Falls of Niagara to the delta of the Mississippi, are the memorials of that gigantic scheme of French and Papal dominion, which received its death-blow at the peace of 1763. Since that period, and especially since the organization of our Government, the approaches of Romanism have been more insidious, but not the less determined, and with perhaps, equal confidence of success. There has been a remarkable revival of her energies within the past few years, and though her own boastful statements are always to be received with considerable allowance, yet there is little doubt that her members and her power have been greatly augmented. This increase, it is true, is owing chiefly to immigration. But herein is another fact which gives a peculiar complexion to this controversy,—that the adherents of this usurping Church are mainly foreigners. Principally from those lands where the despotism of Rome has least of all been broken, they come to us, from the densely populated cities and districts of the old world, with all the ignorance, errors and superstitions of ages, and yet often, with the most inflated notions of their own prerogatives and importance when they get here. But slowly amalgamating with our people, they move in masses, and are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of a few governing minds. This renders them a formidable element in political struggles, when there is a nearly equal ballancing of the parties. The result is, that they are, to both sides, the objects of flattery and dread, and frequently become to both, the objects of detestation, in the end. This, so far from destroying, only gives additional power to the influences by which they are governed, and renders them still more inaccessible to instruction.

Such, in its nature and present aspect, is the state of the controversy with this old and formidable foe to the reign of truth and godliness.

We turn, then, to our last enquiry :

III. What is the duty of the Church in the case? "What ought Israel to do?"

It would be presuming too much, if upon this point, I should offer anything beyond a few hints.

1. And of these, the first and most obvious is, that we ought to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the system which we are called to combat. This is, especially, incumbent upon those of us, who are "set for the defence of the truth." Wherever the field of our labours may be, however remote from those great centres where the influence of the Papacy is the most marked and formidable, our people, all, need to be instructed in regard to the distinguishing errors and arts of this apostate, yet ambitious Church. It is not to be numbered among the dead heresies of the past, which it would be worse than useless to exhume, for the sake of exhibiting a few fossil remains. These may be left to the cabinets of the curious, and the studies of the learned. But this is a living monster, of which it becomes us to know; not only the habits and the haunts, but also its confirmation and structure, in order that we may know also, its points of vitality. We cannot tell at what moment, or under what circumstances, any of our people may be exposed to its arts, or any of ourselves may be called to encounter its polemics. Let us not hazard too much in relying upon the vague, general impressions of Rome's errors and iniquities which pervade all Protestant countries, but which gradually lose their power as they become indistinct, through their increasing distance in time from the great conflicts which awakened them. Let us not peril the cause of truth by an indolent repose upon our convictions of right, without being able to substantiate those convictions by the demonstrations of facts and arguments. Protestantism suffers when some zealous, but uninformed champion, essays the combat with one of the trained and unscrupulous dialecticians of Rome. If we would successfully defend the truth and withstand the progress of error, we must penetrate beneath the surface, and even go down into the abysmal depths of this "mystery of iniquity." It will be a tedious and gloomy descent, and as the wreck of some bold and vigorous minds has proved, it will be dangerous too, if we go down with only the flaring torch-light of human reason and philosophy for our guide. It is like exploring the deep recesses of a mine, where fire-damps and deadly vapours are generated,—the only safety lamp

is the light of Divine truth, and the only protection the panoply of Divine grace.

2. But the more thoroughly she is instructed, the more fully will the Church be convinced that she gains nothing by attempting to conciliate through her silence, the adherents of this system. The opinion is sometimes expressed that its discussion is harmful, as tending to confirm the antipathies and prejudices of Romanists, and the question is often asked, "how many have ever been converted by such discussions?" But this is taking a most inadequate view of the case. The subject may, indeed, be presented in a spirit and manner, not only repulsive but disgusting, and we have witnessed some exhibitions from a race of beggarly itinerants, certain quondam or quasi Priests and Monks, whose ignorance and effrontery would ruin any cause that might be cursed by their advocacy. And it is possible, that even good and great men, may have occasionally forgotten, that the most successful exposure of error is, that which at the same time persuades and convinces the errorist. But it does not follow from this, that the Church is to forget, or forego the fulfilment of her great mission, as a witness for the truth. And so long as her condition is that of a militant Church, she may not content herself with a bare proclamation of the truth in its native simplicity, but she is bound to maintain it, in all its adaptations to the ever-changing exigencies of the age, and in all its antagonism to the prevailing errors of the world. Let her do this in the utmost spirit of Christian benignity. But then, as she would not be recreant to her high calling, let her do it also, in all fidelity and boldness. I have no patience with that maudlin charity which is too polite to be honest, or with that miserable expediency which claims to be wiser than God. There is less danger that discussion will confirm the prejudices of Romanists, than there is that the doctrines of grace will arouse the enmities of the carnal heart. But shall we, therefore, cease to proclaim the doctrines of grace, and sew pillows to all arm-holes, by degrading the pulpit to the graceful utterance of a few short and easy lessons on morals? Suppress the truth through fear of exciting opposition, and you have not only betrayed the truth to

its foes, but you have also strengthened that opposition for a future and more successful resistance. Wanting the power to compel, Rome can ask for nothing more than the ability to intimidate or flatter us into silence.

3. And this leads to our third remark, namely, that the duties of the Church in this controversy, belong to her in her character and office as a witness for the truth.

The weapons of her warfare are not carnal but spiritual. Her only arms, the power of truth and godliness. Her agencies the legitimate influence of instruction and example. She claims no power of coercion, beyond the urgency of the truth in love. She arrogates no ghostly dominion over the conscience. She imposes no physical restraints upon the conduct. The genius of our religion is benign. And though truth is necessarily intolerant of error, because truth, like the God who is its author, is one and supreme, yet the spirit which it breathes, like the world-embracing benevolence of Jehovah, is universally kind and tolerant towards the victims of error. She comes to them with the word of God in her hand, and with the accents of unaffected kindness upon her lips, declaring at once their danger and their remedy. And all this is perfectly compatible with the freest and fullest exposure of the errors and the arts of a Church, whose character and destiny the pen of inspiration has written, in terms of greater severity than any which we can employ.

It is the more important to observe this distinctive office of the Church, as a witness bearer, from two opposite tendencies, one of which has been referred to already, in the easy and indolent disposition to keep back the truth, and thus sometimes imperil its interests by default,—and the other, to which there is a strong temptation in the aspect of the times, is a tendency to exceed her legitimate functions, and become entangled in the ecclesiastico-political contests of the day. Whatever may be lawful for men as individuals, or needful for the preservation of our civil institutions, yet the Church is out of her sphere, and always will suffer when she permits herself to be involved, even by implication, in the strife of parties. "Let the dead bury their dead." Let native born and foreign citizens, settle their own civil and

political relations. And while every encroachment upon Protestant liberty of speech, and liberty of instruction, is promptly met and manfully repelled, yet, let not the intermeddling of Popish Priests and Prelates, be excused by the example of the Protestant ministry; let no man be allowed to believe that he is politically proscribed and disfranchised because of his religion. Especially let it not be believed that the Church, in the discharge of her functions, as a witness and a teacher of the truth, is a party to such a result.

Moreover, it is important to preserve the distinctive character of the Church as a Witness Bearer, from a disposition to confide this whole controversy, and its connected duties, to the hands of individuals and irresponsible associations. We disparage no labourer in this field, and no combination of efforts to diffuse the truth. But the Church has her own work to do, and she only can do it aright. She owes missionary work to the benighted Romanist, no less than to the benighted Hindoo, and she owes it to herself no less, to select the agents and supervise the execution of that work. Why has she left it so largely and so long in other hands? Why are her efforts so stinted in this direction, compared with the importance of the field? The whole power of the Papacy is mainly expended now, upon Protestant countries, and yet how little of the power of the Church is expended upon the deluded followers of Rome. God has still his "hidden ones" within the pale of that mystic Babylon, but how faint our echo of his voice, saying "Come out of her my people, and be not partakers of her plagues."

ARTICLE V.

GOD'S REST, OUR REST.*

Egypt had bound Israel with a thousand chains of violence and craft; but the sword of the Lord had cut sheer through them all, and his people "went out with

*Suggested by Heb. iii, and iv.