

these subjects, and they have all passed away from my memory; I have seen the pictures, and their instructive lessons are impressed upon my mind for ever.

Protestantism treasures up all great thoughts and religious teachings which are written on paper; shall she reject those which are traced on canvass or cut in marble? It were to be wished that every church in Christendom had such aids to religion as the paintings, sculptures, and music of the churches of Rome. No one, I will venture to say, whether Turk or Christian, ever heard mass in St. Peter's, or the *Misere-re* in the Papal Chapel, without becoming a wiser and a better man. In either of these temples one is made to feel like the prophet on the mountain—that the place is awful, for God is there. And yet the effect is produced chiefly by art and “ceremonies.” The object of the Church, in all her ceremonies, is to produce the deepest impressions in her adherents, for their religious improvement. I confess I cannot see any superstition in this.

As very erroneous notions prevail in regard to the Papal Benediction, and as the ceremony is one of the most interesting to be seen at Rome, perhaps I could not do better than to give a simple description of it. It is not wonderful that the people, regarding the Pope as “the minister of Christ, the dispenser of the mysteries of God,” should have full faith in the efficacy of his prayers and his blessing. They see in him the successor of St. Peter, to whom Christ said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall also be bound in heaven; and

whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall also be loosed in heaven.” But to the description of the ceremony: Imagine, then, the noble piazza of St. Peter's densely crowded with thousands upon thousands of human beings, of all ranks and ages—pilgrims, strangers from distant lands, shepherds from the Campagna, peasants from the farthest bounds of the Papal States, with a large portion of the resident population of Rome. All eyes are turned to the *loggia*, or gallery, in front of the church, which is richly decorated with damask hangings. Presently the Pope appears, carried in his chair under a canopy; with a numerous train of attendants. The troops of the city and a large portion of the great multitude fall on their knees. The Pope then uses the following form of prayer:

“May the holy apostles Peter and Paul, in whose authority and power we place confidence, intercede for us with the Lord. Amen.”

“We ask, through the intercession and merits of the blessed Mary, ever virgin, of the blessed John the Baptist, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, that the Almighty may have mercy on you, and that, all your sins being forgiven, Christ would bring you to eternal life. Amen.”

“May the almighty and merciful God grant you indulgence, absolution, and remission of all your sins, opportunity of true and fruitful repentance, hearts contrite, and amendment of life, grace and consolation of the Holy Ghost, and final perseverance in good works. Amen.”

After this comes the Benediction; his holiness making the sign of the cross three times over the heads of the multitude, says: “And may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son ✠