

5.—*The Papacy and the Civil Power.* By R. W. THOMPSON. New York: Harper & Bros. 1876.

SINCE the definition of the Infallibility of the Pope by the Vatican Council, fear has arisen in many minds that a clash may some day come between the allegiance due by a Roman Catholic citizen to the State, and his obedience to the Pope. In England, Mr. Gladstone has given the leading expression of this fear, and, in this country, Mr. Thompson, in the book before us, has devoted some seven hundred pages to proving the danger to which our institutions are liable from the power of the Roman Catholic Church. We are glad to see discussion of the matter, for, if there is good reason to fear such results, every Catholic citizen ought to know precisely where it lies, that he may understandingly judge for himself to which authority he will yield; and, if there is not, a rather wide-spread prejudice should be removed.

Mr. Thompson admits in his preface that he began and prosecuted his work from the Protestant standpoint, and this is apparent throughout the book. His argument is that of a lawyer who presents his side as strongly as possible, and is not above a little abuse of his opponent, to whom he leaves any thing that can be said on the other side, rather than of a judge who is to weigh the arguments on both sides, and dispassionately decide. That the Catholic Church has many sins on its shoulders we will admit, but, as a lawyer, Mr. Thompson should know that these are not evidence that a man cannot be a good citizen and a good Catholic. Such facts rather tend to confuse the mind and create a prejudice, while in no wise bearing on the only point to which his book is devoted,—the relation of the Catholic Church to civil government.

At the beginning of his second chapter Mr. Thompson lays it down as an axiom among the friends of free government, that "error ceases to be dangerous when reason is left free to combat it," while the opposite of this, as he claims, is maintained by the advocates of Imperialism,—“that the public mind and conscience are enlightened only in proportion as they are submissive to some superior governing power, sufficiently strong to hold them in obedience.” Protestantism he considers the result of the former of these views; decrepitude, decay, and disruption the natural fruit of the other. From this he proceeds to show—what we presume no one doubts—that the teaching of the Catholic Church is that all good members of it must accept without question all matters of faith laid down by the head of the Church,

and not attempt to reason on them; and argues that hence our political institutions are doomed to “decrepitude, decay, and disruption,” unless something can be done to check the increase in the membership of the Catholic Church. But it seems to us that there is a grave fault in his argument. Reason is as free in this country as is possible. Whenever it is not, it is the fault of the individual. The Catholic Church, to be sure, exacts absolute belief in its tenets; but so do most of the Orthodox Protestant Churches. Any member of any church has a right to reason for himself, and, if he cannot accept any dogma, can decide for himself. If the Roman Catholics, who at present are less than one-sixth of the population of the country, can obtain sufficient converts from the remaining five-sixths to give them a majority, and allow them, as Mr. Thompson seems to fear, to put the State into the hands of the Pope, and this while the mass of the reason and intelligence of the country is left free to oppose them, it will be a bold man who will dare to assert that the truth is not with them. Nor do we see any reason to believe that the increase of Catholics in this country by immigration will give them such relative numerical power as could enable them, even if they wished, to take the State into the arms of the Church. And, if Mr. Thompson’s “decrepitude, decay, and disruption” theory is correct, we do not see why it should not act first on the Roman Catholics themselves. But their church seems to have lasted pretty well, and to be on a tolerably firm basis still, in spite of this enervating influence.

A good deal of space is devoted to proof that the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope, as a dogma of the church, dates from the Vatican Council. But it was expressly recognized in the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, published by Boniface VIII. in 1302, and was recognized by the majority of Catholics before the Vatican Council as a necessary result of the Apostolic succession. The Vatican Council simply defined this infallibility to prevent any schism in the church. The infallibility of the Pope is only of acts *ex cathedra*,—i. e., in regard to matters of faith and belief; and, although the Pope himself is the final judge of what matters are *ex cathedra*, we cannot see any more danger in this than in the belief of good Protestants that they are absolutely bound by the authority of the Bible. The Catholic looks to the Pope as his highest and most absolute guide; the Protestant to his Bible. The Pope assumes no authority over those who do not admit it by being members of his church. In many cases in the past he has assumed authority over temporal rulers, but over Catholic rulers only; who, as Catholics, were rightly subject to him so long as they remained in

the Catholic Church. And no good citizen will admit that he is absolutely subject to the *civil* authorities against his conscience. Thus, at the time of the Fugitive Slave Law, many men, in all other respects most excellent citizens, did all in their power to defeat the operation of that law. Civil allegiance must always be limited by the conscience, or we make the State infallible.

The remedy that Mr. Thompson suggests for what he considers a most alarming state of affairs, is that the American people "maintain at every hazard, and in the face of all consequences, their right to enact their own laws, to preserve their own constitutions, and to regulate their own affairs according to their own sovereign will, and without foreign dictation; perpetuate their popular form of government as the rightful inheritance of their children; resist to the last the divine right of kings or popes to rule over them: firmly refuse to permit the canon laws of the Roman Catholic, or of any other, church to take the place of those of their own enacting; and teach the Roman hierarchy, and all others who shall willingly become subservient to the schemes of the Pope, that, while citizens of the United States, they can enjoy unimpaired all the rights of citizenship secured to themselves; but that, in order to this, they must render the same obedience to all existing laws which others are required to render; and that they can enjoy no exclusive privileges, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which shall put it in their power to violate the principle of American liberty, to impose unwilling restraint upon a single conscience, or to endanger the existence of a single fundamental principle upon which they have erected their civil and religious freedom."

Mr. Thompson allows his feelings to influence his use of language occasionally. Thus, although he complains of "Protestantism and Infidelity" as an offensive title, a few pages further on he speaks of "letting the car of Papacy with Jesuit conductors roll unresistingly over us." Again: "Its (the Papacy's) adroit training of its subjects in the school of dissimulation shows how completely the practice of falsehood may be systematized into a science." The word "enthused," which occurs on page 110, is one which we were hardly prepared to expect in a work of the kind. Mr. Thompson's fidelity to American institutions and his own religious belief is shown in such passages as this:—

"The Protestant institutions of the United States yet exist. The foundation stones remain solidly planted. The flag of the nation floats over all its territory. No star is missing from its folds. Does it not seem that God is on our side?—that if our Protestantism is infidelity and heresy, and Roman Catholicism the only true religion, instead of Protestantism advancing and the Papacy going down into the grave, the very reverse order of things would have transpired? With these evidences of Provi-

dential guardianship, we may confidently hope for protection from papal and imperial aggression, unless we shall become indifferent to our destiny, forget our manhood, and fail in our duty to the institutions with which we have been blessed."

C. A.

6.—*The Teachings of Providence: or, New Lessons on Old Subjects.*

By REV. J. B. GROSS. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co.

THIS work of 457 pages is divided into four books, each book subdivided into chapters, and these again into paragraphs. Book I. treats of "Human Creeds and the Gospel in Conflict, or the Meritoriousness of Good Works," and is a discussion of the old question of faith or works. Book II. is "A Critical Investigation of the Dogma of the Trinity and of the Incarnation of the Son of God." Book III. treats of "Christ as the Sole Saviour," and is a discussion of the received or so-called Orthodox Tenets of the Doom of Man and the Scheme of Salvation. Book IV. discusses critically "The Sheol or Hades of the Bible." The general scope and purpose of the work may be epitomized in the author's own words (p. 280): "I hesitate not to say that the eminently auspicious spirit of the Christian religion, as it emanated from the chaste lips of Christ, lies ignobly smothered under the crushing weight of a vile and heterogeneous mass of absurd and oppressive creeds," etc. A great deal of the space is taken up with a discussion of Biblical and especially New Testament doctrine or interpretation; but the author appears, nevertheless, to take chiefly a critical and historical interest in that matter, and to occupy a position of pure rationalism. Thus he declares Jesus to be exclusively upon a natural plane in his life and teaching, and says (p. 205): "It follows conclusively from the results of the preceding investigations of the subject, that St. Paul labored under a most egregious as well as decidedly pernicious mistake, or at least unfortunately indorsed it, when he promulgated the astounding doctrine in the early Christian Church that death was introduced into the world through Adam's sin. I will only add that when science and religion come in conflict, facts must decide and truth will prevail!" It is apparent throughout that the author has little belief in miracles (though it is no part of his plan to discuss the supernatural in general), and his view of retribution and salvation is a purely spiritual one: "Strive to live agreeably to the nature of things as God has ordained them, and you will do well; for you will be in delightful and saving relationship with

the laws of Creation," etc. (p. 276). This recalls to mind Wollaston, who gave it as a rule for a truly religious life "to acknowledge things to be what they are," and conducts perhaps to Kant's doctrine of the absolute claim of truth, whereby a departure from veracity, at any time, under any circumstances, or for any reason, can be nothing but a pernicious evil. The intention of the author in the present work is worthy of all praise. We cannot understand his undertaking the work, however. The whole subject is so remote from our present mental and moral position, that it requires an effort to breathe even a little while in the intolerable atmosphere. We should as soon think of sitting down seriously to discuss Valentinian Gnosticism, or the Hindu cosmogony, or witchcraft, or perpetual motion, or whatever else is most effete and by-gone, as to spend an instant over the doctrines known as evangelical religion. Possibly there may be a constituency requiring such a book as this; indeed, no doubt there must be. But we incline to think that the best way now to treat common Orthodoxy, so-called, is simply to let it alone, and go on "to fresh fields and pastures new" so open to the sunlight on all sides that the old black and bitter theology will slink away from the illumination. It was in this way that miracles were disposed of. No argument ever banished witchcraft or the miracles of the Saints. They simply vanished when men began to understand inductive science, and to contemplate the idea of order. It is not the least of the evils of this discussion that it seems impossible to carry it on with good nature. "Hyper-pious and contemptible twaddle," "ridiculous dogma," "grotesque notions," "fanatical article," "diseased or vicious imagination," "puerile and sensuous trinitarian idolatry," "conceited shibboleth-worshippers," "conceited sticklers," "idolatrous and blasphemous doctrines," "infamous abusers of common-sense," "astounding folly," "frightful blasphemy," "profane twaddle,"—are a few of the handsome expressions applied in this book to those who dissent from the author. We submit to Mr. Gross that this is not the proper way to conduct an argument; it suggests irresistibly that he is himself still in the bonds as bound with them. It is the old angry, vindictive, and arrogant tone of the ecclesiastic; and, for aught we can see, one kind is as good as another, and all are bad. In saying, as we have, that the author's intention is praiseworthy, we must candidly confess our opinion that we have pretty nearly exhausted his virtues in the present work. As to literary execution, the punctuation is extraordinary and perplexing to the last degree; and there is throughout a somewhat pedantic inflation of manner, which sometimes tumbles over into pedantic ignorance,—as when the author speaks of "dogmaticians" (p. 18),

meaning dogmatists. The argument is frequently quite puerile,—as when it is contended that hell-flames cannot be sulphurous, because, sulphur fumes not being respirable, the ghosts could not live in them, and, not being capable of supporting combustion, the flames would go out; or when it is asserted that the dogma of the Incarnation produces a demi-god after the pattern of the Greek myths; or when the tenet of the "only-begotten Son" is argued through a whole chapter upon the basis of the reproductive laws observed in animals and plants. In spite of the good purpose of the author, we must think the book a remarkably poor one; even to those who may be in a state of mind to profit by a discussion of the subject-matter, we should recommend a very different kind of work.

J. V. B.

7.—*The Jericho Road: a Story of Western Life.* By JOHN HABBERTON. Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co. 1877.

THIS is a story of a boy who went West to earn money to support his mother, and fell among thieves. Lem Pankett, the hero, first appears on a Mississippi steamboat, where he finds his father among the "roustabouts." His father is killed in an attempt to shoot a dam to save lock-charges, and Lem is left alone in Mt. Zion. Here he falls in with Squire Barkum, who gives him much work, much scriptural exhortation, and little pay. After many trials, he is seized by the regulators, who are about to hang him for horse stealing, when the actual thief appears and saves him. Lem is then used as a tool by counterfeiters, and finally arrested for passing his money. The book closes with his death just after his trial and acquittal, when he suddenly becomes a hero and is treated to a magnificent funeral; after which the Priests and Levites of Mt. Zion become more Samaritan-like.

The book is written as a satire on the outward profession of religion which is willing to give freely of texts from the Bible, and thinks its whole duty is then done. Squire Barkum is the representative of this class, and is particularly apt at fitting quotations from the Bible to his own case. The scene after the Doctor has warned him that Lem is likely to die on his hands from over-work is especially good:—

"He stepped into his back room, where, in his capacity of secretary of the County Bible Society, he kept the Society's property, and took down a Bible. He opened it at random, as was his habit when troubled in mind and in search of consolation, and his eye fell upon the following passage:—

"Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity."

"The Squire hurriedly shut the book. 'That sounds just like Peter,' said he, 'puttin' brotherly kindness an' charity above faith an' godliness. If he wasn't an inspired writer, I should say he was in the habit of goin' off half-cocked an' gettin' things wrong side before. I wonder how it come to open just at that place?'

"The Squire again allowed the Bible to open at random, and his eye fell upon this passage:—

"'But thine eye and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression——'

"The Squire closed the book abruptly. 'That's Jeremiah,' said he. 'I always did wonder why Jeremiah was for ever down in the dumps, an' abusin' the Lord's chosen people. 'Pears to me my humble efforts to seek the source of ev'ry consolation ain't much blest to-day; but I'll try again.'

"The book opened and the Squire read:—

"'And Nathan said unto David, 'Thou art the man.'"

"The Squire tossed the holy book across the room with such energy that it went through a window.

"'Of course Nathan said so,' said he, 'an' very good reason he had for sayin' it. too; but I don't see what that's got to do with me. I should think I'd been given over to the adversary to be tempted, an' that he'd just stuck his finger in the Bible at these places. But I've no business to get mad over it,—"resist the devil an' he'll flee from you." An' its wrong to treat God's holy word with such disrespect, an' I deserve the punishment I've got for it—them window lights cost nine cents apiece by the box.'

"The Squire went into the yard, reverently picked up the book, and again seated himself. This time he chanced upon the verse reading:—

"'So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.'

"The Squire mused. 'That's good clear sense,' said he: "who wrote that? Paul!—I might have knowed it—Paul always had a level head. I don't know what would have become of the church, if it wasn't for Paul. "Every one shall give an account of *himself* to God:" if that means any thing, it means that Lem has to be responsible for his own condition; and so, of course, it means that I haven't got any thing to do with it. I wish the doctor was here now—I'd just like to see him get around Paul with his new-fangled notions. I wonder if the doctor's really sound in the faith himself? He got past the examinin' committee more on his face an' good manners than on his evidences, I really do believe.' "

The description of the Methodist meeting is very well done, and the account of the reaction in Lem, on finding that those who were so friendly to him then were none the more willing to help him in a more tangible way, is really pathetic. The passage in which one of the counterfeiterers, after acknowledging himself a miserable sinner according to the approved phraseology, says, "There's one comfort; however great the debt is, Jesus paid it all," illustrates the kind of religious cant against which the book is aimed. It is relentless in its sarcastic treat-

ment of cant and scriptural hypocrisy, and a good deal of fun is worked in. Although there is a lack of polish to it, it has decided elements of popularity, and passes away an hour or two very pleasantly. We hope that the times when the lessons it teaches are needed are nearly gone.

C. A.