Review.

The Infallibility of the Church. A course of Lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin. By GEORGE SALMON, D.D. London: Murray, 1888. Pp. xxvii., 495.

READERS of "The Historical Introduction to the New Testament" by the same author, will not need much persuasion to induce them to procure the present volume. Like its predecessor, it consists of lectures delivered at Dublin by Dr. Salmon, when he was Regius Professor of Divinity in the University. His promotion to the provostship of Trinity College has put an end to the delivery of any more such lectures. But the publication of these two series leads one to hope that yet others may in time see the light. It would be grievous if the benefit of such instruction were limited to the generation of Dublin students who were privileged to hear it. Not only many other students, but many professors and lecturers, will be glad to have the opportunity of profiting by such lectures as these; and to teachers especially it will be refreshing to have the subjects of their own reading and lecturing gathered up and presented to them in so bright and skilful a way.

The second collection of lectures appeals to a somewhat different circle of readers from that addressed in the "Introduction to the New Testament," and to a smaller circle, although still to a large and perhaps a growing one. Of necessity, the present volume is much more controversial than its predecessor; but, as might be expected from all who know the author, the bitterness of the controversial spirit is absent from it. He can deal as hard blows against the unhistorical assumptions of Romanists, as against the uncritical assumptions of the Tübingen School; but he never hits for the mere sake of inflicting pain. Points which simply distress a Romanist without contributing anything towards a right solution of the question (*e.g.*, the scandalous lives of many of the Popes) are left on one side; and, as will be shown from quotations from the book itself, the argument is not unfrequently enlivened by an illustration, which throws a tone of good humour into the discussion, and sometimes (one would think) might almost make the Roman controversialist enjoy the humour with which his position is treated. But is it worth while writing and publishing twenty-three lectures in order to prove that the English Church can give a very good account of the reasons which prevent her from yielding to Rome's demand for submission? Yes, certainly, if they are such lectures as these. While the rest of Christendom is being drawn closer together, partly by increased knowledge of the points of difference, partly by the pressure of vice and unbelief, Rome still remains haughtily aloof, declining to concede anything, and refusing to discuss any terms other than those of absolute submission to her claims. It is important that other Christians should have the means of judging the grounds upon which this lofty position is assumed; and seeing that few persons, even among the educated, have the opportunity for investigating the questions in detail, a clear and temperate statement of the main point is of great value. If Rome is right on the question of the Infallibility, the fact of her being wrong on numerous other points is of comparatively small moment. On the other hand, if her position respecting this fundamental article is proved to be untenable, then those who have no special interest in other points of issue need not trouble themselves to consider on which side the balance of probability lies in each case. Even if there were no such people as Roman controversialists compassing heaven and earth in order to make proselytes, a consideration

of the main question would be incumbent upon every educated Christian. "For a man to say that he feels no interest in the Roman Catholic controversy, is to say that he thinks some of the most important religious questions that can be raised quite undeserving his attention; that he does not care to know what are the conditions which Christ has appointed for his salvation, and whether union with the Church of Rome be not one of them" (p. 8).

The titles of some of the lectures will give a better idea of the scope of the whole than can be derived from the general title of the volume. Among these may be noticed: "The Cardinal Importance of the Question of Infallibility;" "The Church's Office of Teaching;" "The Church's Sources of Proof;" "The Hesitations of the Infallible Guide;" "The Blunders of the Infallible Guide;" "The Gallican Theory of Infallibility;" "General Councils;" "The Prerogatives of Peter;" "The Infancy and Progress of Roman Supremacy;" "The Infallibility of the Pope."

Where all is so good, it is not easy to make selections; but perhaps there is no lecture in the series more telling than the eleventh, in which Dr. Salmon discusses the question "Does the Church of Rome believe in her own infallibility?" And he gives good reasons for a negative answer to this question. "If conduct may be taken as evidence of belief, then the way in which the Church of Rome has acted during the past thousand years or more is very strong evidence that she herself has very little confidence in the infallibility which she claims to possess. For, first, she has generally been exceedingly reluctant to make use of her alleged infallibility, even when there has been the greatest need for its exercise; secondly, when she has ventured to give a decision, she has frequently been anxious afterwards to explain it away, as having been not an official decision, and therefore not infallible; and, thirdly, she has never, until quite recently, known where this power of infallibility resides—whether in the Church diffusive, or in a Council presided over by the Pope, or in a Council without the Pope, or in the Pope without a Council. Until 1870 all these views were tenable, and all have had their advocates among Roman theologians."

Romanists are very fond of insisting on the *extreme advantage* of having an infallible guide, and the consequent probability that God would grant us such a benefit. Then they demonstrate with abundance of argument that no other Church is infallible, or even claims to be infallible; from which it is supposed to follow that the Church of Rome, which *does* claim to be such, must be the expected infallible guide. Let us pass by the fallacy of assuming that God always gives what seems to us to be greatly to our advantage, and let us examine whether the supposed infallible guide has proved to be a great advantage. When Christians have been in dire perplexity, has it at once come forward and solved their difficulties for them by decisions which experience has proved to be correct? In the many schisms between Pope and Antipope, when each was declaring that to follow the other was to incur eternal damnation, why did not the infallible voice settle the question? When human beings were being burnt as heretics for opinions which are now admitted to be not heretical, why did not infallible authority interfere to set the persecutors right? And then how few of the decisions which have been authoritatively made have been any real help to anyone! They have either come so late that the question had settled itself before the infallible decision was given, or the decision has been proved to be erroneous, and therefore, we are assured, could not have been given with authority; so that, instead of the manifestly enormous advantage of having a guide that would always lead us aright in all our perplexities and difficulties, what we have *got* is a guide who either never gives any information until

we have found out the way for ourselves, or else leads us wrong, and then assures us that his misleading directions were not given officially.

Dr. Salmon aptly compares the wise old man in Bacon who had a great reputation for his success in settling disputes, and when asked to explain the secret of his success, said that he made it a rule never to interfere until the disputants had talked themselves tired, and were glad to have a settlement on any terms. Still more aptly he compares the daughters of the Vicar of Wakefield, whose mother gave them a guinea a-piece on condition that they never changed the guineas. The honour of the family required that they should have money in their pocket; its circumstances required that they should never spend it. "The Pope seems to possess the gift of infallibility on the same terms. The 'honour of the family' requires that he should have it, but obvious considerations of prudence constantly deter him from using it" (pp. 187, 188). This policy finds its extreme expression in the minimizing Romanist who has contended that it is quite true that the Pope is always infallible when he speaks *ex cathedrâ;* but from the days of Peter to the present time no Pope *has* spoken *ex cathedrâ*, and it is highly probable that no Pope ever will do so.

But the most serious evidence that the Roman Church does not itself believe in the infallibility which it claims to possess lies not in its reluctance to use the power, but in its ignorance as to where the power resides. It is incredible that a Church which really possessed so priceless a gift should for eighteen centuries remain in doubt as to who had charge of it and had the right to use it. This was stated more than fifty years ago with characteristic force by J. H. Newman, seven or eight years before he joined the Roman Church:

> This abstract difficulty (how Romanists are to be certain that they have an infallible guide), however, is small compared with that attendant on the seat of the infallibility claimed by Romanism. Little room as there is in the Roman controversy for novelty or surprise, yet it does raise fresh and fresh amazement, the more we think of it, that Romanists should not have been able to agree among themselves *where* that infallibility is lodged which is the keystone of their system. Archbishop Bramhall reckons no less than six distinct opinions on the subject; some Romanists lodging the gift in the Pope speaking *ex cathedrâ*, others in the Pope in Council of Cardinals, others in the Pope in General or Provincial Council or in the General Council without the Pope, or in the Church Diffusive, that is, the whole company of believers throughout the world.

A little further on this uncertainty as to the seat of the infallibility is thought "providential."

> Nothing could be better adapted than it to defeat the counsels of human wisdom, or to show to thoughtful inquirers the hollowness of even the most specious counterfeit of divine truth. The theologians of Romanism have been able dexterously to smooth over a thousand inconsistencies, and to array the heterogeneous precedents of a course of centuries in the semblance of design and harmony. *But they cannot complete their system in its most important and essential point.* They can determine in theory the nature, degree, extent and object of the infallibility which they claim; they cannot agree among themselves where it resides.*

Since these telling words were written Rome has at last ventured to decide that the infallibility resides in the Pope when speaking *ex cathedrâ;* but it is still as uncertain as ever it was on what occasions, if any, Popes have spoken *ex cathedrâ*. When it is desirable to give a Papal utterance binding authority, it is declared to have been promulgated *ex cathedrâ*. When a Papal bull or brief, which has been delivered with the greatest solemnity and enforced with the severest spiritual sanctions, is found

* "Rom anism and Popular Protestantism," Oxford, 1837; pp. 148, 150.

highly inconvenient, it is pronounced to have *not* been delivered *ex cathedrâ*. No intelligible principle has yet been discovered which will show that the Papal decisions which are manifestly untrue or immoral are not *ex cathedrâ*, and yet leave the remainder untouched. The only safe course is to maintain that since the death of St. Peter no *ex cathedrâ* utterance has been made.

Let us take Dr. Salmon's illustration, and suppose that one of our universities claimed to be able to give infallible decisions in medicine. Suppose that Oxford for five or six hundred years had made this claim, and that everyone who came to Oxford for infallible advice as to his case was told that it was quite uncertain who could give it, although it was quite certain that it could be given. Some thought that it was the Chancellor who could give it; others said the Chancellor and the Hebdomadal Council; others, the Chancellor in Congregation or Convocation; others, Convocation without the Chancellor; and others, the whole body of graduates throughout the world. Would not those who came to Oxford for infallible medical decisions know what to think of the value of such infallibility? And suppose that after centuries of uncertainty the University at last allowed the Chancellor to decide that in him alone the gift of medical infallibility resided. Those who come for secure medical advice now know to whom to apply. But what is their dismay to find that there are plenty of Chancellors' medical utterances on record which are manifestly and grossly erroneous, although given with the utmost confidence and authority! Will it reinspire them with hope and trust to be told, "Ah, those were not official decisions; they were unofficial opinions"? But they ask, as a forlorn hope, "By what marks may an official decision be known?" And they are told that the greatest uncertainty prevails as to this point. But the one thing which is quite certain and which is most comforting is this, that the Chancellor *has* the power of giving infallible medical decisions. Where is the comfort of such a gift as this?

> Archbishop Whateley used to tell a story of a bridge at Bath which was so crazy that an old lady was afraid to walk across; so she got herself carried over in a sedan chair. What she gained by that was just not seeing the danger; but the bridge had to bear her own weight and that of the chair and bearers into the bargain. And so those who, through fear of making wrong decisions, trust themselves to adopt blindfold the decisions of a supposed infallible authority gain nothing but not seeing the risk of the error (pp. 73, 74).

And what has been the tendency of the directions given by the infallible guide? They *ought* to have made the way of salvation more easy by removing old obstacles. On the contrary, they have made it more difficult, by creating new sins. Every Papal definition "closes up some "way to heaven which was open before. A couple of hundred years "ago, Roman Catholics might believe, without hazard of salvation, "that the Virgin Mary either was or was not conceived in sin. Leading "men were arrayed on both sides. But since Pius IX., in 1852, pro-"mulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, no one can call it in "question, on peril of forfeiting his salvation. So, in like manner, of the "dogma of the Pope's personal infallibility and a host of other questions" (p. 93). Romanists argue as if God had left mankind in doubt as to a great many doctrines, although a belief in these doctrines is necessary to salvation; and then, as a remedy for this evil, had given an infallible guide who would tell us what beliefs are essential. But the facts are all the other way. What was necessary to salvation was known before any Bishop of Rome ever promulgated a decision of any kind; and the questions which Popes have professed to settle have been fancy questions, which did not affect men's salvation at all, until Papal authority put

a strain upon men's consciences by declaring that one view must be adopted and all other views rejected, on pain of eternal damnation.

In his lecture on the Infancy of the Roman Supremacy, Dr. Salmon goes at some length into the famous question respecting Hippolytus and Callistus. When the newly recovered portion of the "Philosophumena" was published at Oxford in 1851, still under the name of Origen, nearly all scholars came to the conclusion that this "Refutation of all Heresies" was the work of Hippolytus, and Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln made much controversial use of this vehement attack by a Roman father upon two Bishops of Rome. "Dr. Newman, on the other hand, was so "shocked at this libel on Roman Bishops, that he declared nothing would "persuade him it could be the work of the saint and martyr Hippolytus. "But a far better defence of the credit of the Roman see was made by "Von Döllinger, at that time in full credit as an able champion of the "Roman Catholic Church. His work, 'Hippolytus and Callistus,' has "been translated into English (1876), and I do not know a more interesting "and instructive work on early Church history. . . . . If Döllinger's "hypothesis be well founded, it follows that Christians in the third "century, so far from regarding the Bishop of Rome as their master and "teacher, regarded the question, who was Bishop of Rome, as one merely "of local interest, and troubled themselves little to inquire who the Bishop "of Rome was. Rival Bishops might claim the see for years, and one of "them, not an obscure person, but the leading divine in the Roman Church "of his day, and yet the schism not leave a trace in Church history, and, "as far as we can learn, not a single Eastern Christian have heard of its "existence. . . . . On the whole, I consider that Döllinger has made out so "good a case, that I am willing to acquit Zepherinus and Callistus of "the charge of heresy; though, as I have pointed out, the theory obliges "us to set very low the influence exerted by the Roman Church on the "rest of the Christian world at the beginning of the third century' (pp. 387, 388).

In the second of his four noble letters to Monseigneur Deschamps (Paris, 1870) the Père Gratry declares the question of the personal infallibility of the Pope to be "une question totalement gangrenée par la fraude" (p. 72); and by abundant instances he not only demonstrates this, but shows how impossible it is, with the history of the Papacy in our hands, to maintain that this doctrine can be true. Nevertheless, to the great grief of many of those who knew and loved him, Père Gratry thought it his duty, after the dogma had been proclaimed, to submit and profess his acceptance of it. Yet, after his submission, he told the present writer that it was still his firm conviction that the infallibility of the Pope was "ni séparée, ni absolue, ni personelle," which is a complete negation of the dogma. For the formal definition of it in the Vatican decrees declares that the Pope, when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*, "eâ infallibilitate pollere, quâ divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam in definiendâ doctrinâ de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque ejusmodi Romani Pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiæ, irreformabiles esse;" which is a very clear way of stating that the Pope's infallibility is personal, absolute, and separate. Therefore to accept the dogma, and at the same time to believe that no Pope possesses a personal, absolute, and separate infallibility, is to say "Yes," with a mental interpretation that "Yes" means "No." That men of the character of Gratry, Hefele, and Haneberg should be induced to do such violence to their consciences as is involved in their submission is a worthy result of a dogma the development of which is "totalement gangrenée par la fraude."

Of these frauds the reader may learn a good deal from Dr. Salmon's volume, and he will find the Vatican decrees in full in an appendix.

Those who desire more information respecting the long series of forgeries may consult Père Gratry's letters to the Archbishop of Malines (which, even after his submission, he still said were true), or "The Pope and the Council," by Janus, or vol. i. of Professor Friedrich's "Geschichte des Vatikanischen Konzils." But the numerous readers who have no time for research, and yet wish to have clear ideas as to the central question, will find abundant instruction in these twenty-three lectures of the ex-Regius Professor of Divinity at Dublin.

A. PLUMMER.

Short Notices.

Christ and His People. Hodder and Stoughton.

IN this volume, printed in large type, are thirteen Sermons and Addresses which have appeared at intervals in the columns of the *Record*. The authors are Canons Hoare and Bardsley, Principal Moule, Rev. G. Everard, Prebendary Edmonds, Rev. Sir Emilius Laurie, Archdeacon Richardson, Dean Fremantle, and Bishop Ryle. The subjects are well-chosen. One of them, "Christ and the Gospel of the Workshop," has a special interest at the present moment.

The Epistle to the Hebrews. By T. C. EDWARDS, D.D., Principal of the University College of Wales. Hodder and Stoughton.

Principal Edwards has fittingly conceived and admirably executed his duties, as one of the writers in the series of "The Expositor's Bible." In his preface he states what his aim is; and the whole of his work bears witness to its very complete realization. "I have endeavoured to picture my reader as a thoughtful Christian layman, who has no Greek, and desires only to be assisted in his efforts to come at the real bearing and force of words, and to understand the connection of the sacred author's ideas." The expositions of "The Allegory of Melchizedek" and "The Trial of Abraham's Faith" contain passages of great power, and a certain chastened eloquence, reminding us at times of Dr. Westcott.

Samuel Crowther, the Slave Boy who became Bishop of the Niger. By JESSE PAGE, author of "Bishop Patteson, the Martyr of Melanesia." S. W. Partridge and Co.

This interesting little book has an introductory note by Bishop Crowther. It is well written, has illustrations and a map, and is printed in clear type.

Heroes of Every-day Life. By LAURA M. LANE. Cassell and Co.

An admirable piece of work; the best of its kind. The "heroes" are colliers, sailors, soldiers, women, and policemen. Every Parish Library should have this little book.

The King's Daughters. How Two Girls kept the Faith. By EMILY S. HOLT. Shaw and Co.

An interesting and edifying Tale of the closing days of Queen Mary's reign; a good specimen number of a truly valuable series, in some respects unique.

Wild Life in the Land of the Giants. By GORDON STABLES, M.D., C.M., R.N. With eight illustrations. Hodder and Stoughton.

A handsome volume, full of incident and graphic description. The "Land" is Patagonia.