

presenting reason on reason till he be satisfied. To speak of 'authority' then, in matters of faith, is only to cheat us by words. It is simply impossible, and the only substitute the church can find is to habituate the mind to silence—to train it to dispense with reasons altogether, and perpetuate the credulity of childhood.

Notwithstanding this, Dr. Walsh ominously commends the church, for having, as he says, "proscribed the heretics of every age and country". If it be impossible, as we have seen it is, from the very nature of the mind, to believe, except on conviction, how deadly the wrong to "proscribe" men for what their convictions have forced upon them? How utterly wrong must it be to maintain in the church itself a system which only makes men Catholics by making them less than men? Dr. Walsh approves of "proscribing heretics"!†

One thing in connection with the asserted 'authority' of the church is much to be noticed. If we ask the grounds on which it is claimed, Dr. Walsh must refer us to the Scriptures for proof. He cannot refuse to do so, but must quote passages, in which, in his opinion, the doctrine is maintained. But, before it can be received as well founded and binding, each inquirer must judge the meaning of these for himself. Nor can it be permitted that the church should affix any authoritative interpretation to them beforehand, for her right and ability to do so, either with them or any other part of Scripture, is the very point to be proved, and can be acknowledged at all only after their correct meaning is otherwise ascertained. Until this is done, she stands in exactly the same position at the bar of the private judgment of each inquirer, as the claimant of a worldly dignity or privilege does at the bar of the constituted tribunals of the land. Thus she has to submit to this much abused right of the human mind to receive its belief only when convinced by satisfactory reasons, as the sole means of establishing her claims at all. We must use our private judgment to ascertain her title to demand of us not to use it! Surely if it be competent to decide on a fundamental like this, it is competent to decide on the simple statements of the plan of salvation. If the church must be built on the convictions of mankind, what pretence can there be for underrating their value as a means of deciding truth? Dr. Walsh must beware of speaking lightly of the justness and necessity of his people weighing the reasons advanced for their faith, else he honeycombs the foundation of the church itself.

Dr. Walsh tells us of the evil effects on "society at large", of "the general liberty to examine and study the Bible. Yet, including all the scandal and 'turbulence', and 'immorality', &c., of which one can think in Protestant countries, whether, on the whole, are they, or those in which Popery flourishes, most peaceful, and prosperous, and intelligent? "Throughout Christendom", says Macaulay, speaking of the Church of Rome since the Reformation, "whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces in Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant countries once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned, by skill and industry, into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what four hundred years ago they actually were, shall now compare the country round Rome with the country round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination. * * * Whoever passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality; in Switzerland from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant Canton, finds that he has passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilization". *

Dr. Walsh even as he draws to a close has another thrust at the Bible. On

* Hist. of England, Vol. i. 48.

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