

that the people derived much benefit from their instructions. That they were convinced of the necessity of sacrifices for the expiation of human guilt is manifest from some of their rites; but how unlike were their conceptions of Him whom they ignorantly worshipped, from that pure and spiritual Deity whom the Scriptures reveal! And how widely different were their sacrifices of blood, when slaughtering their fellow creatures, from that one offering which was made for sin, when the incarnate Redeemer expired on the cross! The name which they superstitiously gave to the oak misletoe, may remind us of Him who was to be the "Desire of all nations," whose name was THE BRANCH, and who was indeed given to "heal all our ills," and bestow upon all his faithful followers everlasting life.

Such was the state of miserable and degrading superstition to which our ancestors were enslaved; and such the "gross darkness" which meets our view, whenever we look back to the origin of our history. Very thankful we ought to be for the change.

Julius Cæsar invaded England from Rome fifty-four years before the birth of Christ, and found the inhabitants in the situation above described.—When, or by whom, the true light of Christianity was introduced into that country is uncertain, though there is no doubt it was at an early period. The Druids, as an order of Priesthood, were extirpated by the Roman general Suetonius, about the year of our Lord 60. Some have supposed that the gospel was carried thither about the same time, probably by one of the apostles; and it has been asserted that St. Paul himself preached the gospel in Britain. Some of the earliest fathers state that there were Christians in the island before the death of Tiberius, in the year 37.

Eusebius states that "Some of the

apostles passed over to the British Isles." Theodoret supposes that after Paul had spent two years at Rome, he visited the "islands of the sea;" and he actually numbers some of the inhabitants of "Gaul and Britain among the disciples of the tent-maker." There are several years of the apostle's life intervening between his first and second imprisonment, of which no account is given in the Scriptures. We have no reason to suppose he was inactive in the great cause to which his life was devoted; and it is not improbable, therefore, that in that interval he preached the gospel both in Spain and Britain. Gildas, the most ancient of British historians, affirms that Christianity was introduced into that country before the defeat of the Britons under Boadicea, which exactly agrees with the time in which the apostle is supposed to have visited the island. In the absence of direct and positive evidence, however, it is impossible to arrive at certainty on these points; and hence some have thought it more likely that the "glad tidings" of salvation were carried to that country by some of those Roman colonists who settled there, and who had, previously to their arrival, embraced Christianity; or that some of those British youths who were educated in Rome were converted in that city, and attempted, on their return, the conversion of their countrymen. In the second century, a petty Prince, who was permitted by the Romans to retain a shadow of authority in Britain, and was hence called King Lucius, embraced the Christian religion, and exerted his influence for the good of others. He sent some British converts to Rome (not then Papal) to be instructed, and afterwards to be employed as Christian Missionaries. From this period, through the blessing of God upon the exertions of the friends of truth, Christianity made silent but exten-