

understood, yet there will not be discernible in the whole that unity of purpose without which the enquirer must ask in vain for what ends they are severally designed. For a world necessarily involves the idea of a divine agent, and this of a divine purpose. This truth, applicable to all history, applies in a peculiar degree to that of the Church of Christ, in which we can look back directly to its divine original, through the inspired Word which has been preserved and handed down to us. Here, in the fundamentals of belief, there is nothing of doubt and uncertainty, for our building rests surely on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Starting from such a basis, it cannot be unprofitable to trace God's dealings with his Church in past ages, and by so doing to brace ourselves for encounter with the internal dissensions or attacks from without which are now trying her. The storms of unbelief are more destructive than the fires of persecution, and comparable in their results, though less speedily brought about, only to the cyclones of the tropical seas which have of late caused such devastation in the physical world. It is time surely to look to our defences, lest the storm find us unprepared. It cannot be said that we are not forewarned, when, for example, one of the leading periodicals of the day, on the table of every public reading-room, gives open utterance to such statements as that the time is come or close at hand when our choice must be between a new Christianity or none at all; and plainly advocates the acceptance of a "pure theism," such as, it asserts, was propounded by our blessed Lord himself. One good effect of storms is to clear the atmosphere; and of this, as true also in the history of our Church, the foregoing brief sketch may assure us. We gather thence how opportune were the several changes of external circumstance to the emergencies of each particular epoch in her history. The long period of repose, for instance, which preceded the outbreak of the Diocletian persecution, naturally gave birth to corruption and laxity through intercourse with the heathen: zeal was rekindled and faith purified when that great attack upon the truth reached the shores of Great Britain. Again, the Arian and Pelagian heresies did their work, by testing the foundations of the faith: when these storms had blown over, the truth was more firmly established than before. The foreign invaders of a remote and then insignificant island, who founded the greatness and glory of the Anglo-Saxon race, must needs base it on the rock of truth. Both the design of Gregory and the mission of Augustin may be looked upon as divinely ordered to this end, though human motives and passions entered largely into the minds of the agents employed, no less than in purely secular concerns. It is to the Church of Rome in Britain, no