

while anything repulsive about them, even in their first degrees, is glossed over by pious and plausible accompaniments; and secondly, that errors have been introduced successfully in times of spiritual ignorance, when truth was obscured, and the holy book of God hid from the common people. We can, by the help of Church history, point out very nearly the time when pictures and images found their way into Churches and began to be revered; and we can trace historically the lengthened contest on the subject of image-worship, and its triumph after a severe struggle. We can point by name also to the monk who, in the ninth century, first wrote in favour of transubstantiation; to the mighty sensation which the incipient doctrine of the real presence caused in the Church; to the strenuous but unsuccessful efforts of Joannes Scotus, in opposition to the monstrous delusion; and to the crowning of the whole in the twelfth century, in the decreed idolatry of the elevated host.

Dr. Jortin has remarked, that the errors and false doctrines and corrupt practices of the Romish Church, when compared with the doctrines of reason and the oracles of God, appear so groundless, so despicable, and so scandalous, that we wonder how it is that rational beings can admit or retain them. But he judiciously purposes to view them all in the light of "political institutions," designed to exalt the clergy, and to give them wealth, dignity, and power; to keep the body of Christians in ignorance and implicit faith; to make the head of the Church an universal monarch and an absolute tyrant; and thus to secure that ascendancy which all love—and in this view, our wonder ceases; for there is not one error of the Papacy that does not look this way. Late events have thrown much light on this tendency of the Papacy to subjugate to its influence the va-

rieties of human opinion and of human government. It is owing to this that Popery flourishes on the soil of liberty as well as on that of despotism; and thus illustrates its own character as the "mystery of iniquity" and the master-piece of Satan. Weak-minded Protestants do not see this, and are thus led captive by its wiles.

While Church History is valuable in tracing and exposing error, it is no less so in establishing truth. Even in resisting error, truth is established; for had heresies not arisen, prophecy would not have been fulfilled. Moreover, the sameness of the manner in which error has in all ages crept in; the steps of its gradual advancement; and the tendency of a first departure from the simplicity of Scripture, to lead to grosser, and ultimately to fatal, alienations: these are features in human nature which the lover of truth will carefully improve. Students in theology may obtain very valuable benefit from combining the study of the mental character of man, and the intellectual capacities of the species, with the practical developments of both, in the progress of opinion and the changes of religious profession and government, as forming a main character in the history of the Church.

While it is one great object of Church History to trace the causes of error, it is not less an object to mark the progress and influence of truth. Truth, in the New Testament sense of the word, is something definite and fixed, and the Church of God has been constituted specially as a witness for the truth. Hence the importance of ascertaining historically the identity of God's revelations at successive periods; the holy harmony of all His communications with mankind; and the results of the introduction of God's truth into any part of the world. Such an enquiry will embrace also the distinction betwixt pro-