

ing that of Sodom : the catastrophe was similar, the sins of which it appeared the righteous punishment, were equal.

Britain meantime, was almost wholly subdued by the arms or the policy of Rome ; and our rude ancestors began to receive more and more of the civilisation of their masters. Probably the establishment of the Roman power was more owing to the faults of the native princes than the military skill of the governors : the Roman sway was steady ; it maintained peace ; and the cultivators under their protection, could gather the fruits of the earth in safety. The continual dissensions amid the petty chiefs, under whose sway the country had previously remained, must have harassed the people ; and as in India, the British power, though not without faults, is more just than that of the native rulers, and the natives in consequence submit to it quietly ; so in Britain the Roman dominion was consolidated by a sense of the benefits, among many evils, which it brought with it. We have no means of knowing with certainty how soon Christianity was introduced into the island, we only know that it was so at an early period, though the invasions of the northern tribes in a later age again heathenized the country.

In the other parts of the empire Christianity was spreading among the people. Though Nero had put to death an immense number in Rome, there was no pretext for accusing the Christians in the provinces ; for they, necessarily, were innocent of any share in the conflagration, and we do not find that the neglect of the public rites of the heathen deities was imputed to them as a crime till the reign of Domitianus, when they were considered either as a sect of the Jews, a nation held to be the constant enemy of Rome, or as Judaizing apostates from the