

contest for this belief, till then undisputed, he that day decreed that it should be victorious; and that toilsome march through a course of agitation, was, according to the designs of God, but a long prelude to the victory. This is what we find out by following the Reverend Father Perrone in his historical account of a controversy famous in the annals of theology.

The belief in the Immaculate Conception lived in the minds of men, long ages before it was publicly spoken of: for it is worthy of notice that, in the Church, the peaceful reign of belief always precedes the noise of controversy which time brings on. Silently controlling minds, it went on displaying itself more and more by its natural expression, the ceremonies of worship and liturgic forms, when an unforeseen event disturbed the peace of a secular possession. Desirous of obtaining for their church an advantage already enjoyed by so many others, the canons of Lyons took it into their heads one day to institute in that religious city, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and without applying to Rome, they made the solemn inauguration on their own authority. On hearing this, St. Bernard, whose thought filled the Church, whose eye overlooked the world, raised his voice from the depth of his cloister with a cry of admonition and alarm. He was amazed and indignant to see observed in the sanctuary a