

Britain. Now, I am not going into ecclesiastical history. I do not know, certainly, whether Paul was ever in Britain or not; but I do know that Paul was in Rome. I do know that Eusebius tells us—and he is rather an authority, you know, as an ecclesiastical historian—Eusebius tells us that Paul was in Rome in the second year of the Emperor Nero. I do know this, that Caractacus, the Christian king of Britain, was in Rome as a hostage at the same time. We know, then, that Caractacus and Paul were both in Rome together. It was at the time when Paul was acting as a local preacher—when he preached, not at St. Peter's, but at his own hired house, just as some of us do at the present time, who are not favoured with large endowments, and that sort of thing. He preached in his own hired house, and Caractacus and Paul being in Rome together, and Caractacus coming home, as some say, and establishing, or, at any rate, aiding in the establishment, of Christianity—that shews that just as God sometimes sends the heathen to the Gospel, when the Churches will not send the Gospel to the heathen, there is a providence over all the affairs of men that works all things steadily and surely to the accomplishment of His own great and gracious ends. Well, then, if you come down a little farther still, there was John Wycliffe preaching away at Oxford with most wonderful vigour and success—with such wonderful vigour and success that the mendicant friars hated him, and they got up a persecution against him, and drove him away from Oxford. Well, that was not the only time that a grand and good thing has been done for the world by a man that has been driven away from Oxford. I am not sure that we should have had that grand battering-ram against Rome if somebody had not been driven away from Oxford. However, God had a much greater work for Wycliffe to do than he could ever have done in Oxford. He had a work that required the seclusion and the quiet of Lutterworth Rectory. And so he was driven away from Oxford, and silenced from preaching, that he might do the grander, nobler, better work of translating the Word of God. His preaching would have died with him. When the tongue of the orator is silent the voice of his persuasiveness is over, and the effect only exists as a dream of exquisite memory. But the labour of Wycliffe is a labour that will stand for ever. After Wycliffe had done his work, and after he had gone home, they disinterred his bones. The first experiments of burning that were made by a certain system were made upon bones—a very harmless sort of thing, though, and Wycliffe suffered posthumous martyrdom—the most pleasant sort of martyrdom, I should fancy, inasmuch as there was not much personal feeling about it. But you know what has been said, that the ashes were carried by the Swift to the Avon, and by the Avon to the Severn, and by the Severn to the sea, and were scattered, with his doctrine, all over the world. Well, then, by-and-by came Erasmus, and he entered upon the same work, too, under the same disadvantages. Henry VIII.—who, with all his contradictions of character, knew a strong man when he saw one, and had rather a respect for strength—was disposed to be his patron. There was a monk, or rather a bishop, who was, *prole poulor*, ignorant enough to say that Paul's epistles were written in Hebrew, who did not like Erasmus at all, and who waxed very wroth both with him and his book; upon which King Henry VIII. whispered in his ear one day, 'It is not quite safe for a beetle to attack an eagle.' That was a wise saying, and if we may quote royal authority for it, there are a good many people in our day who would be none the worse for listening to that savoury comparison. It is not safe yet for a beetle to attack an eagle. Well, Erasmus did his work of translation for the cultivated. Then there was wanted one to do it for the vulgar. Who was to do that? Why, Tyndall was raised up of God just at the proper time, and he went to Oxford, and he met with Wycliffe's Bible there, and it inspired him to do what Erasmus had done for the cultivated on behalf of the common people. And so he printed and published an edition of the Bible—which he thought a very incorrect one; and Tunstal, who was the Romish bishop at that time, bought up every copy that he could find of Tyndall's Bible.