

This leads us however to remark, Fourthly, that the martyrdom of God's servants is *overruled for the advancement of his cause*. Satan never made a greater mistake than when he excited wicked men to put Christ's servants to death, though his restless malice still impels him to the same course. The example of faith and patience, of joy and peace, which they have given in the most trying scenes, have proved more convincingly than their lives the reality of that religion which they professed; and, in conjunction with their fervent prayers, has been the means of bringing many to embrace the same truths, though they might thereby be subjected to a similar fate. The scattering of Christians by persecution has been the means of disseminating the truth to distant quarters—and thus it has become a proverb, that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." The very scene of our present sorrows has already given an example of the same principle. We believe that the death of John Williams has been overruled as a means of doing more for the cause of Missions than all the labours of his life—as the enemies of the Lord slain at the death of the Hebrew champion were more than all that he had slain in his lifetime. Nay, we question if a single event can be named in the history of modern Missions which has had wider influence in kindling the missionary ardour of the Church, and awakening in many a spirit of devotedness to the work, and thus of advancing the cause of Missions among the Heathen, especially among savage tribes, than his martyrdom on Erromanga. We cannot expect Mr. Gordon's to have the same world wide influence, but in the same manner, if not to the same degree, we are confident that the Church will yet see that his blood has not been shed in vain.

Lastly. The martyrdom of God's servants *brings honour and glory to the Author of our religion*. The calmness and patience with which the saints of God have borne the most fearful tortures—the serene joy with which they have met death even in its most appalling forms—and the spirit of love and forgiveness, which hallowed their dying moments, have told of One more than mortal who was standing by them, according to his promise, and loudly proclaimed the power of him who has said, "My grace shall be sufficient for you, I will perfect my strength in your weakness."

Then, too, the manner in which the malice of Satan and his seed has been overruled for the defeat of his own purposes and the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, illustrates the wisdom, power and goodness of him who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

And here we may remark what reason the Church has for gratitude to the Great Head of the Church as to the time at which this event has happened. When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt he led them not by the way of the Philistines, although that was near; for he said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war and return to Egypt. So the early planting of the Christian Church, though the malice of both Jews and Gentiles was excited against it and occasional and partial persecutions were the result, yet God did not permit the power of the Roman Government to be exerted against the infant cause till it was firmly planted in all the chief cities and provinces of the Empire. Nay, during its infancy it was sometimes protected by the Roman authorities. And when at length the whole power of imperial Rome was put forth to crush Christianity, it was so deeply rooted as to defy the utmost efforts of that power which had subdued the world. Had the present afflictive event occurred soon after Mr. Geddie commenced his labours, *as it might have done*, the effect, humanly speaking, would have been, that the Mission among these Islands would have been extinguished—that the missionary operations of the Church founding the Mission would have been at an end