

the enemies of Christianity are still in the field, for their opposition only roots the more firmly the well-principled attachment of its friends. God always turns the curse into a blessing. Has not persecution in all ages been the world's testimony to the truth? When the Apostles first gave their testimony, they gave it on the spot—in the hearing of all the people—within a few days of the murder. *This Jesus whom ye crucified, God hath raised from the dead.* If this could have been successfully gainsayed, all the elements of contradiction were at hand. The appeal was to the senses and the memory, and the consciousness of man. If any to whom they spoke could have met their allegations with denial, Christianity would have been strangled at its birth, and in the sepulchre, “hewn out of a rock,” they would have entombed the impostor and his doctrine. But alike in common hall, and bearded Sanhedrim, there was the feebleness of answer, or there was the silence of shame. Yes! Infidelity is an anachronism now—out of date—thoroughly out of date. The great battle of Christian evidence was fought and won in the first ages of the Gospel history.

“We cannot *gainsay it*”—how they cringed to utter it! “But we can *put it down.*” That was the mental process; so persecution arose. And then in all ages persecution has been the reluctant witness to the Truth. The tyranny of Pharaoh—the exactions which tortured the souls of the oppressed children of Israel, were Egypt’s testimony to the Truth. The rage of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, which at length made the city a desolation, was Jerusalem’s testimony to the Truth. The military instructions of the Koran, the wholesale conversions of the sword, were Mecca’s testimony to the Truth. The Dragonnades and the massacre of St. Bartholemew, the spiritual and cruel debauchery by which the Church became drunk with blood, were Rome’s testimony to the Truth. And it is for us all this evidence has gathered around the Truth of God.

To confirm your faith in the Word, and in the Christ of God, you need not wade through the ponderous tomes in which argument has endeavoured to establish them. Every reviled confession, and every imprisoned apostle, are your witnesses—every Huguenot in the dungeon, and every Lollard at the stake, are your witnesses—every Puritan chased along the glen, and every Covenant-antler hounded through the heather, are your witnesses—every Christian slave done to death by his oppressor—every missionary butchered in his holy toil—every martyr soaring heavenward in his shroud of flame, are your swift and brilliant witnesses, that this is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

On the second point, viz.:—*The active government of God to preserve the Bible and to make it strong*, much might be said; but I will not weary you, and must now limit myself to a few concluding observations. (Of what the speaker here advanced we can give only a general and brief summary.)

The history of the English Bible is a most eventful and important history. Every translation made for the instruction and benefit of the people was a signal for persecution, especially against the translators. Mark the exertions and the treatment of Wickliffe. He writes vigorously and fearlessly against the sins of the age, and in defence of the “Truth of the Scriptures,” and he is persecuted. Providence protects him, and he is permitted to die a natural death, but his bones are not allowed to rest quietly in their grave, they are dug up and burned by his enraged and baffled foes. To him the operation was a harmless one. Then there was Erasmus, that *brilliant coward*, who did much, notwithstanding, towards giving the Bible to the English people, but his timidity and his fears were ever mastering him. He did, after all, a grand work in preparing the Scriptures for the nation. “The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, published for the first time in Greek, with a new Latin translation,” was the work of Erasmus. Standish, the Bishop of St Asaph’s—and he was no President of a Bible Society—endeavoured to obtain the authority of Henry VIII. against Erasmus, and against his work. Standish was worsted in his arguments before the King, and Erasmus, and