

Genuine Faith is Never Overcome  
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The Bible is filled with stories of people who risked or even lost their lives for the sake of their religious convictions. For some critiques of religion (especially Christianity), these are just stories that have nothing to do with reality. However, it is hard to deny the existence of people like Benjamin Franklin whose family remained Protestant even during the reign of Queen Mary

and Mary 1. The Catholic Church considered itself the one true Church of Christ and did its very best to protect its flock from influences deemed heretical. One of the ways it did this was by prohibiting the translation of the Bible into English and also by prohibiting private ownership of the Bible. There were some who believed that people should be able to read or hear the Bible in a way that they could understand. People like John Wycliffe translated the Bible for the ordinary people, but the Cath405.55e wmpi9(f the)5 s.024 653.9stemaay 1 335.eaa in the1 ious b29re6(y) s

Pliny the Younger (a Roman governor) showed that Christians were not sought out but were rather arrested and given a „fair trial. Anyone accused of being a Christian was asked to curse Christ, make offerings to the emperor and invoke the gods “none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do” according to Pliny.<sup>3</sup> Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) ordered him not to engage in any form of witch-hunt. Only those who admitted to being Christians were to be punished. The Christians of this era, though not being sought out, had to practice their religion in secret for the fear of being tried. Those who were eventually found gave up their lives rather than curse their Lord or serve other gods. Even this relative security was eventually lost when Diocletian initiated the worst persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire between 303 and 311 AD. It is estimated that about three thousand or more people were killed in the persecution.

Even today, people of strong religious conviction face oppositions: sometimes mild and sometimes very strong. An example of a mild opposition is the fact that mocking religious faith is now m

According to a research conducted by Pew Research Center, religious intolerance has been on the rise at least as of 2010. According to this research, Christians were harassed in 111 countries in 2010 [up from 107, 95, 97 in 2001, 2008, 2009 respectively].<sup>5</sup> Between mid-2006 and mid-2010, Christians had been harassed in 139 countries, Muslims in 121 and Jews in 85. In all the data that showed hostility toward religions, Christianity was always the first and Islam the second. This research shows that the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestants weren't the only ones who had to risk their lives for the sake of their religion, people still do so today.

From the very first days of Christianity, Christians have endured persecution for refusing to conform to prevailing norms and customs. This persecution did not stop them from carrying

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