

THE
ACTS AND MONUMENTS
JOHN FOXE.

1563

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Editor's Preface

The energies exhibited of late by the emissaries of the Church of Rome, to re-establish her influence in this country (England), have loudly demanded the republication of those works with which our forefathers withered her influence, and baffled her energies. There is no volume in the range of our literature, that has been more effective in maintaining the principles of the Reformation — that noblest of all achievements — than *the Acts and Monuments of Martyrs*, by Master John Foxe.¹ It is this conviction which has induced the present edition of that admirable work.

When we speak of *the Church of Rome*, we speak of a religious, though a fatally erring community. But when we speak of *the Papacy*, we allude to an ecclesiastical system which not only teaches such absurdities as Transubstantiation — such blasphemies as the Sacrifice of the Mass — such idolatry as the Worship of Saints — and such a novelty as her Creed, but also has elevated an Italian Bishop to the throne of an Italian Prince who has territories, and broad domains, and numerous subjects of his own, and placed him in such a peculiar position, that he can bind by solemn oaths, and demand allegiance from a portion of the subjects of every other prince. This man — combining in himself the offices of *Priest* and *King* — has been raised to such a lofty pinnacle of secular authority, that he can control, punish, or reward a portion of the subjects of other Princes, so as to secure to himself the service and fealty of all those who, as members of the priesthood, possess either power or influence in the land. We must not regard this as a purely spiritual power, for those persons are bound by the most solemn oaths — not to defend the royalties of their liege sovereign, but to defend to the utmost of their power, in the heart of every other state, the usurped or pretended royalties of this Italian Bishop. It is a fearful and a melancholy fact that in our own fair England, palmy and beautiful England — the land of the brave, and the home of the free — there should be hundreds of men, holding and wielding a certain influence in the land, who have been appointed by this foreign potentate, who ought to have no authority in this realm, and who have sworn — not to maintain the royalties of the sovereign of England — but to maintain the royalties of this Italian Prince.²

As loyal subjects of the sovereign of England, and as liege subjects of the King of kings, we never can consent that this Italian Potentate should possess authority in this realm. We feel that the experience of this nation, and the history of the world have proved, that he exercises his authority to minister to his own ambition, and to the degradation of mankind; and that

¹ The 1563 title was *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*.

² The Court of Rome has at present — AD 1850 — above eight hundred Missionary Priests in England.

the ecclesiastical system of Rome is a mighty confederacy against the civil liberties, and religious privileges of man. We likewise feel that the emissaries of this system have never been very scrupulous as to the means of accomplishing their ends.

It may be the darkening of a nation's glory, as in the time of King John of England. It may be the sundering of all the civil ties of man, as in the history of the German emperors. It may be the massacre of thousands, as in France on the day of St. Bartholomew. It may be the tortures of an Inquisition, as in the atmosphere of Spain. It may be the most terrible persecution, as in the reign of Mary I of England. Any and all means are alike welcome to accomplish the objects of that church. And there is at all times an ample agency, in the Bishops, and Priests — in the Monks and Friars of Rome. By such agency and such means, the most potent Monarchs of Europe have been humbled; the most noble Princes of Christendom have been ruined; Emperors have been dethroned, and Kings trampled underfoot; Nations have flowed with blood, and Kingdoms have been broken into dust — all to satiate the ambition of an Italian Priest who, while professing to be meek and lowly, compelled imperial potentates to kiss his feet, and accept their crowns and kingdoms at his hands.

When we contemplate this system — though shorn of much of its power and splendor — concentrating its energies in connection with all the peculiar doctrines and discipline of the Church of Rome, and endeavoring with all its powers to re-establish her influence in this country, it is high time for every lover of religious liberty, and every friend of civil freedom to make those efforts which seem best calculated to prevent so terrible a calamity.

The Church of Rome has never abandoned her claim to this country England; and from the age of the Reformation to the present time, she has repeated her efforts to reassert that claim with an untiring perseverance. We shall touch on the chief of these efforts which she has made from time to time in this country.

In the time of good King Edward VI, the Church of England was completely emancipated from the influence of these Italian ecclesiastics. The stately and venerable pile which had been marred by the hand of time, was restored to its primitive beauty. Its goodly pillars that had been overgrown with the mold of years, and its noble arches that had been overspread with many corruptions, were cleared of all that deformed them. The minions of Priestcraft, who had made it a den of thieves and had driven their merchandise of men's souls within her porches, were removed, and the Church of England returned to her original and apostolic purity. Had the life of this young and gentle Prince been spared, the religious freedom of England had been established beyond the possibility of danger. But it was the purpose of God to scourge this nation with a scourge of scorpions, so as to teach us to cherish an undying hatred of the whole system of Popery, that the memory of its horrors and its cruelties might live in the minds of our children, and our children's children, and that so there might be cherished among us a high and unwavering resolve that it should never again be established in this country. Edward was taken to his rest, and Mary ascended the throne. We don't know what feminine amiabilities she may have naturally possessed, but we do know that she surrendered herself into the hands of the Italian Priests, and to use the language of our Redeemer, they "made her two-fold more the child of hell than themselves." ^{Mat 23.15}

It was on the accession of this queen that the Papacy made its first effective efforts to re-establish its influence in this land. Mary, with more zeal than prudence, restored the reign of

Popery. To that reign we are to look for a true portraiture of this Italian religion, when possessing influence in a Protestant nation. It is not by the unauthorized professions of modern members of that system, softened and attenuated for a purpose, that we are to look for a living exhibition of its character, but we are to read the records of those times in which the Papacy possessed the power of accomplishing its own purposes, and unfolding its own characteristics. If we desire to know the fierceness of the lion, or the ferocity of the tiger, we must view them, not with their teeth drawn, and their claws extracted, and confined within cages of iron, but as in their native wildness they range the forest, or crouch in the jungle. We must form our judgment of the nature of Popery, not from her present chained and fettered state, but from the tendencies she displayed when she possessed power and influence in the nation, and could without restraint accomplish her purposes.

The peculiar characteristic of the effort made in this reign to restore the dominion of the Papacy was PERSECUTION. Mary commenced her career with a fearful abandonment of moral principle. She pledged herself to the men of Norfolk and Suffolk, who had embraced the principles of the Reformation, that if they would assist in placing her on the throne, she would never interfere with the Protestant principles of the nation. On this pledge³ she induced them to take arms in her cause, and they placed her triumphantly on the throne. Her whole reign was one continued act of perfidy to that pledge. The system of persecution which she put in force was the most awful exhibition of cruelty, and of cold and deliberate blood-guiltiness, that the records of our race present to us. There may have been at other times, and in other lands, persecution as terrible and as bloody; but this continued through the whole five years of her reign. The loftiest in the land were its martyrs, and a woman was the perpetrator.

No rank, or virtue, or learning, gave exemption to the possessor — Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Farrer — all bishops of the church, were removed from their sees — degraded from their office — cast into prison, and finally martyred amidst the fires. Many hundreds of Christian souls were persecuted to the death.⁴ Two persons were publicly appointed in every parish, to discover and inform against every Protestant who refused to conform to Popery. They were then apprehended, examined, and, if they still refused, martyred. Many thousands were thus compelled to flee their homes, their properties, and their country, to seek in foreign lands a welcome that was denied them in their fatherland. Among these fugitives was MASTER JOHN FOXE, the justly celebrated Author of this justly celebrated Work — “THE ACTS AND MONUMENTS OF MARTYRS,” in which we have the only full and faithful narration of the cruelty of this persecution in which men, women, and children, without regard to age or sex, were indiscriminately martyred. Sometimes five, and sometimes ten were consumed in one fire, and on one occasion three women were burned at one stake, and (the blood runs cold while we write it) when one of them, under the pain of the flames, travailed with child, and one of the multitude, more humane than the rest, rescued the new-born babe, the authorities commanded it instantly to be burned with its mother! When such scenes were transacted

³ One of the most interesting historical documents ever read, is the petition of these men of Norfolk, and Suffolk, to the Queen’s Council, in the time of persecution. It will be found at p. 918.

⁴ Grimdal, who lived during the period, says the number was 860; others estimate it at half that number.

under the authority of one who was herself a woman, we may well feel that there is an alchemy in Popery, that if it finds us angels, it can transform us into devils.

The death of this woman — whose only claim to our respect is that, like one of old, she was “a king’s daughter” — stayed the work of persecution, and thus rendered ineffectual the first great effort of the Papacy to re-establish itself in this country. The succession of Elizabeth freed the Church of England from Italian influence, and settled it upon surer pillars and more steadfast foundations than ever.

The noble spirit of this Queen was such as became the monarch of this gallant nation, over whose destinies she presided. When, by that act of Popish perfidy — the massacre of St. Bartholomew ⁵ — the streets of Paris flowed with the blood of her Protestant sons, the French ambassador appeared at the court of Elizabeth. He looked around for the splendor and chivalry of England. His cheek paled. The court of Elizabeth was arrayed in the deepest mourning!

Under her reign this country stood forth as the friend and protector of the reformed religion both at home and abroad, and the grand antagonist of the Papal system. It was therefore scarcely to be expected that with an enemy so powerful, persevering, and unscrupulous as Popery, this country could be left in tranquility. The second great effort for the re-establishment of the Church of Rome, unfolded a system of internal REBELLION and foreign INVASION.

Pope Pius was pleased in A.D. 1570, for the accomplishment of this effort, to issue his bull anathematizing the Queen of England, and absolving all her subjects of their oaths of allegiance.

“The nobles, subjects, and inhabitants of England,” says this audacious manifesto, “who have in any way sworn to her, we declare to be absolved forever from any such oath, and from all manner of duty, allegiance, and obedience, as we do by the authority of these presents absolve them, and do deprive the said Elizabeth of her pretended right to the kingdom, and all other things aforesaid. We command and interdict all nobles, subjects, people, and others aforesaid, that they presume not to obey her mandate, monitions, or laws. Those who shall act otherwise we bind under a similar sentence of anathema,” etc.

This Italian Priest, not contented with thus anathematizing the Queen of England, and blasphemously assuming to absolve the people of England from their allegiance, proceeded to two other measures that strikingly illustrate the character of the Papacy. He first sent certain Jesuits into Ireland with bulls, authorizing them to raise the inhabitants of that island in rebellion against England. They unhappily accomplished his purpose there. He then took it upon himself to make over the realm of England, with its crown, its revenues, and its dependencies, as a gift to Philip of Spain. There too he succeeded in inducing that prince to equip the celebrated Armada, and prepare for an invasion of England.

Such were the means by which it was proposed to re-establish Popery in this land. Rebellion in Ireland — treason in England — and a foreign invasion in both!

⁵ Referring to the murder of many thousands of French Huguenots in 1572.

But by the Providence of God, the rebellion in Ireland was crushed, the treason in England baffled, and the armada of Spain destroyed. We could mourn over the fate of the gallant armament, were we not acquainted with its object. The pomp of the chivalry of Spain, the flower of all her gallant youth were there. All that high hope could expect from noble daring, and all that the enthusiasm of superstition could achieve, might have been expected there. The voice of Papal infallibility had proclaimed it invincible. It walked the mighty ocean in its pride. It spread its fluttering wings for the shores of England. But an Angel of Heaven was moving over it unseen. The winds rushed in their fury above it. The waves swept in their madness beneath it. There were fearless hearts before them, and mighty arms to meet them. The chivalry of England manned her fleets, and the yeomanry of England lined her shores. And this “invincible armada,” scattered on the deep or stranded on our cliffs, strewed our shores with the moldering bones of the youth of Spain.

Thus ended the second great effort to restore the influence of Rome in this country. Its characteristics were rebellion and invasion — suitable precursors of the next attempt of these Italian Priests.

The vigor of Elizabeth’s government was felt even after her death. James I received a kingdom (r. 1603-1625) from which the more daring and dangerous spirits had been exiled for their treasons, or had gone into banishment to escape the vengeance of the laws. Those were members of the Church of Rome, and devotedly attached to the interests of the Papacy. They had religiously believed that the Papal authority could absolve subjects of their allegiance, and depose sovereigns from their thrones. They had held that this “heresy” (the designation given to the reformed faith) was sufficient to lead to a forfeiture of all rights and privileges, and they therefore entered eagerly into every conspiracy that was deemed likely to re-establish the Papacy in its ancient influence in England.

These men resided chiefly in Flanders and Spain, where the members of the Order of Jesuits were in considerable numbers and activity. Garnet, Creswell, Baldwin, Parsons, and other celebrated Jesuits, soon obtained an ascendancy over these emigrants, and with the deep subtlety and unwavering courage of their order, they implicated them in endless conspiracies. It is to the intrigues of this remarkable class of ecclesiastics, that we owe the GUNPOWDER-TREASON,⁶ which was discovered on the eve of its consummation. They bound each of the agents of this horrible treason under an oath of secrecy, administered upon receiving the Sacrament! The form of the oath was,

“You shall swear by the blessed Trinity, and by the Sacrament you now propose to receive, never to disclose, directly or indirectly, by word or circumstance, the matter which shall be proposed to you, to keep secret, nor desist from the execution thereof, until the rest shall give you leave.”

There must be a frightful amount of human depravity, when a number of ecclesiastics could administer the Sacrament and swear by the Trinity to go forward in this terrible conspiracy. It appears likewise that another Priest named Gerrhard gave absolution of the sin to each of the agents, preparatory to the accomplishment of their treason. Well might that celebrated lawyer, Coke, say, “I never yet knew a treason without a Romish Priest.”

⁶ Referring to the conspiracy to blow up the Parliament building, Nov. 5, 1605.

The whole design of this conspiracy was revealed upon the trial of the conspirators. The written confession of Guy Fawkes and Thomas Winter give ample details of the mode of accomplishment. ⁷ It was proposed to blow up, by gunpowder, the houses of Parliament at the opening of the Session, when the King, with the Royal Family, the Peers, and Members of the House of Commons, would be assembled together. By such a stroke, it was expected that they would destroy the heads of all the principal Protestant families in the kingdom. And then it was arranged to seize the infant daughter of the King, who was then in Warwickshire, and proclaim her Queen, to educate her a Papist, and themselves to govern the realm during her long minority.

Such were the objects of this conspiracy, and such was the third great effort to re-establish the Papacy in England. The next was of a different character.

It was made in the time of James II (r. 1685-1688). Four of the sovereigns of England had successively been Protestants. And when it might have been expected that all hope, or at least all efforts to restore the system of Popery had been crushed forever, an avowed Papist ascended to the throne in the person of James II. He gave new life to the hopes and energies of the emissaries of Rome. He was a man bigoted to his sect, and resolved to re-establish Popery on the ruins of Protestantism. His efforts to accomplish this object were different from all that had gone before. He proposed to encourage the growth of Popery — not by persecution as in the days of Mary (for the nation would not bear it) — but by all THE POWER OF THE CROWN and the influence of the Court. He knew that in the state of the nation then, it would not suit his purposes to make an avowed assault upon its Protestantism. He therefore adopted the more gradual and insinuating instrumentality of courtly favor and royal authority.

His reign, like that of Mary, was one continued act of perfidy to the most solemn promises. He had solemnly promised in Parliament, before he came to the throne, that he would cherish his religious principles between himself and his God, and never permit them to interfere with his government of the nation. He had solemnly promised afterward, on opening the first Parliament of his reign, in the speech delivered on that most public occasion, that he would never interfere with the religion of the Established Church. His whole reign was an illustration of how the most binding pledges, and the most sacred promises, can all be violated, with a recklessness that is peculiar to the Church of Rome, whenever her interests are involved in the results. It is as easy to stay the planets in their course, as to find a moral tie, either of promises, or pledges, or oaths, that will bind the Church of Rome.

The extraordinary lengths to which this unhappy monarch was led by Father Petre, and those other Priests to whose guidance he so implicitly committed himself, awakened the dormant spirit of this nation. His measures respecting the Judges of the land, his proceedings among the Officers of the Army, his attempts against the Universities, his attack upon the Bishops, his claim of a dispensing power, indeed, his whole proceedings could not but compel the nation to look to its civil liberties, and its religious freedom; and to take measures for the preservation of the former against a Despot, and of the latter against a Papist.

⁷ These confessions together with an account of the whole conspiracy, will be found in the Appendix to this Edition of the Acts and Monuments.

The Revolution was the consequence.⁸ And thus ended, in the triumph of civil and religious liberty, the fourth great effort of the emissaries of Rome to re-establish Popery in England.

The principles involved in the Revolution were carried out during the reign of William III. The civil and religious institutions of the country became inseparably blended in our National Constitution. The Protestantism of the Church of England became amalgamated with the State, and it was designed that one should be as lasting as the other. Well, nearly a century and a half has elapsed since that glorious event, and the experience of every added year only unfolds more manifestly the wisdom of those principles on which the Revolution was founded.

But although a century and a half have developed the wisdom of those great principles, and have elicited and secured the attachment of the people of England to the doctrines of the Reformation, yet it could scarcely be expected that the intrigues of the Church of Rome could have remained stilled and quiescent during the lapse of so many years — not where the wealth of so great a nation, and the influence of so scriptural a Church, were the objects to be secured and the prize to be obtained.

The nation had scarcely settled into tranquility after the storm of the Revolution, and the ground-swell was not yet wholly at rest, when the intrigues of the Order of Jesuits were brought into action in a totally new direction. That profound and subtle Order applied all its energies to corrupt the teaching of the Church of England, by tainting the fountains of education, by corrupting the youth at the Universities, and so making the Ministry of the Church of England the means of her own destruction. They had already tried every external resource. They had tried persecution, invasion, treason, and arbitrary power, and they had failed in all. And now they were resolved to scatter the seed of Romanism in the very seats of Academic learning, in the hope that they might reap in time an ample harvest, in the Romanizing spirit and principles of the Ministry of the Church herself.

This design, so analogous to the system working among us at the present day, deserves attention in a place like this. It was exhibited in the reign of Queen Anne, and is thus alluded to by Bishop Burnet in his “History of his own Times,” Book vii, the year 1712:

“There appeared at this time an inclination in many of the Clergy to a nearer approach to the Church of Rome. Hicks, an ill-tempered man who was now at the head of the Jacobite party, had promoted in several books the notion that there was a proper sacrifice made in the eucharist, and he had on many occasions studied to lessen our aversion to Popery. The supremacy of the Crown in ecclesiastical matters, and the method in which the Reformation was carried, were openly condemned. One named Brett had preached a sermon in several of the pulpits of London, which he afterwards printed, in which he pressed the necessity of priestly absolution in a strain beyond what was pretended to, even in the Church of Rome. He said, no

⁸ The English Civil War (1642–1651) ended with the Parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester on Sep 3, 1651. The Civil War led to the trial and execution of Charles I, the exile of his son, Charles II, and replacement of English monarchy with the Commonwealth of England (1649–53), then a Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell (1653–59). The wars established the precedent that an English monarch cannot govern without Parliament’s consent; this was not legally established until the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688. King James II of England was overthrown by a union of English Parliamentarians with the Dutch stadtholder William of Orange. His successful invasion of England with a Dutch fleet and army led to his ascending the English throne as William III of England, jointly with his wife, Mary II of England.

repentance could serve without it, and affirmed that the Priest was vested with the same power of pardoning that our Saviour himself had. A motion was made in the lower house of Convocation to censure this; but it was so ill-supported that it was let fall. Another conceit was taken up of the invalidity of lay-baptism, on which several books have been written. Nor was the dispute a trifling one, since by this notion, the teachers among the Dissenters, passing for laymen, this amounted to re-baptizing them and their congregations.

“Dodwell gave the rise to this conceit. He was a very learned man, and led a strict life. He seemed to hunt after paradoxes in all his writings, and broached not a few. He thought none could be saved but those who, by the sacraments, had a federal right to it, and that these were the seals of the covenant. Thus he left all who died without the sacraments to the uncovenanted mercies of God. And to this he added that none had a right to give the sacraments but those who were commissioned to it; and these were the Apostles, and after them Bishops and Priests ordained by them. It followed upon this that sacraments administered by others were of no value.”

This movement originated at the University of Oxford. And if this account had been written at the present day, it could not more accurately describe the analogous movement of our times; the principles are the same, and the objects are alike. It will be the prayer of every right-hearted friend of Protestant Christianity, that the failure of the latter may prove as complete and perfect as that of the former. ⁹

There is something strange, even to incredulity, that such a destiny could have befallen this church and nation, as that Romish doctrines should be preached by Protestant clergymen, and that Romish ceremonies should be practiced in Protestant Churches. And there is something strange, even to scorn and loathing, that men can be found who sign the articles of the Church of England on the one hand, and the canons of the Council of Trent on the other. They publicly subscribe themselves Protestants, and receive salaries on the faith of their vow to teach only the doctrines of the Church of England — while they surreptitiously subscribe themselves Romanists, and exert all their influence in propagating the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

Yet, strange and unilateral as all this is, it has spread widely and gone deeply among those who have been in process of education in the Universities of England during the last fifteen years, and has gone far to justify the most glowing anticipations of those profound and subtle men with whom the intrigue had originated. We are now treading on the ashes that hide the glowing lava, and the least disturbing cause may let loose the elements of ruin and desolation. The Universities have been unfaithful in being so long indifferent to the propagation of such principles among the youth committed to their care. The Bishops have been unfaithful in having taken no adequate pains to save the flock of Christ from those who were leading them astray. And now he is a far-seeing Prophet, who can foreshow what the end will be.

The Church and nation are now ripening for some great and extensive change. Men’s hearts are failing for fear. Startling facts are continually occurring. Many among the Clergy, and many among the laity, have passed over to the Church of Rome, while all the tendencies and sympathies of many who remain among us, are towards the genius and spirit of Romanism. And the tendencies of political latitudinarianism in the councils of the nation, and the extensive and ill-concealed Romanism of too many of the Bishops and Clergy of the Church

⁹ [The Oxford Movement in the Church of England began in the 1830s and developed into Anglo-Catholicism.](#)

of England, seem almost to invite to the most audacious claims, and to justify the most insidious pretensions of the Court of Rome.

And there is no backwardness on the part of the Papacy. The late Bull of Pius IX annihilating, as far as papal rescript could do so, the whole order and constitution of the Church of England, and establishing a hierarchy under his own exclusive authority in its stead, dividing the whole realm anew into dioceses, and appointing one Archbishop and twelve Bishops with local authority and territorial titles, shows a full consciousness of the state of the Church of England, and knowledge of the fact that her long-trying Protestantism has been for years under a process of being undermined. The conclave that counseled this act of Papal aggression, believed that the whole fabric of the Church of England was ready to sink into ruin, and all that remained was for the Church of Rome to enter on possession.

No appliance is neglected and no means unemployed to propagate the doctrines and the discipline of Romanism among the various classes of the population. There is an unwearied exercise of influence and an unexampled expenditure of wealth to advance the system among us. Over eight hundred Priests of the Church of Rome have been located throughout the country. As missionaries, these either settle themselves in certain localities or move in various directions through the land, everywhere endeavoring to disseminate their principles, through the instrumentality of Sermons, Lectures, Tracts, etc. Their exertions have so far succeeded, that during the last half century (1800-1850) they have increased the number of their chapels from about thirty, to more than six hundred *in* this island. A large number of Seminaries, or Colleges, have been formed with a view to secure the education of our youth. Many Nunneries and Monasteries have been established, so as to become centers for the propagation of the whole system of Popery. The success with which their measures of proselytism have been crowned, has been beyond their most sanguine expectations. And the ignorance of the population on one hand, and the political party to whom the emissaries of Rome have allied themselves, on the other hand, seem to promise still more ample success to their unwearied exertions. They no longer hesitate to avow their expectation that this nation will return to the bosom of the Church of Rome.

This state of things is pregnant with the most disastrous consequences to the Protestantism of England, and demands the mightiest efforts that Christians and Protestants can make for the defense of our faith. They have a mighty adversary in the Church of Rome, against which they have to contend; but they have a still mightier treasure to preserve, in the true religion established among us. It may truly be said of England, as of Israel in the day of her blessedness, that she is a great and understanding nation, that there is no nation that has God so near, or to which He has given such statutes and ordinances, that we might walk in them, and live in them, and be a delightsome land. We have by the REFORMATION, an *English Service* and an *open Bible*. We have by the REVOLUTION, all the *religious liberty* that Christians can wish, and all the *civil liberty* that good subjects can desire.

Shall it be, that such matchless treasures will be lost by our apathy? Shall it be, that by our indifference, we will again be doomed to come under Italian influence, blighting our morals — withering our privileges — destroying our liberties — our homes ceasing to be happy, and our altars ceasing to be free? Shall it be, that the souls of our children, and our children's children, will become the merchandise of Friars, and their morals become contaminated by the Priests of the Confessional? Shall their birthright of an open Bible, and an English Service, and freedom to think and judge for themselves, be taken from them by our apathy or neglect? It would be better that the blast of death sweep through the land, and as of old leave the firstborn dead in every house; and that the wail of the desolate, and the cry of the mourning

be heard on every wind, and echoed from every home, than that a calamity so disastrous as this should befall our fatherland. Then, indeed, the dark spirit of Popery would be traced by the fall of our fanes (temples) and the ruin of our altars; and she would erect her throne amidst the fallen columns, the crumbling arches, and the moldering aisles of the Temple of Protestantism. Then, indeed, the glory of Britain — not the triumphs of her iron-hearted battalions on the battlefield, nor of her bannered masts upon the wave — not the treasure of her gold and silver and precious stones, nor the countless navies that waft to her shores the merchandise of the world — but her truest and her best, *the Glory of her essential Protestantism*, would be departed. If ever such an eclipse should darken it, then “Ichabod” will be written upon her ruins, and “The glory is departed” become the requiem of fallen England. ^{1Sam 4.21}

It is with the view of strengthening the religious principles of Protestantism in the convictions of the People of England, and with the view of exhibiting fully and faithfully before their eyes, a living portraiture of the Papacy, that this FAMILY EDITION of *the Acts and Monuments of Martyrs*, has been published.

It is impossible for a candid and unprejudiced mind to peruse this work and to think otherwise of it, than that it was a noble production for its age, and an invaluable compilation for *any* age. MASTER JOHN FOXE, who was born in the same year that Luther commenced the Reformation, has collected together those scattered registries, and official documents, and original writings, respecting the Martyrs of Protestantism, which had been long since lost to the Church, were it not for his assiduity and zeal. He had access to Diocesan Registries, which are now lost forever; excepting in those extracts which he has made from them. They give the official account of the articles charged against the Martyrs, and their answers to the same, in public courts. He had access to some documents, such as Monitions, and Proclamations, which now are only to be found in the pages of this work; and which illustrate the spirit and tendencies of the times. He had access to many of the Martyrs themselves, and he possessed their own original statements, written by their own bands, detailing the course of their previous sufferings and the methods of their examination. These have all long since passed away forever, except so far as they have been preserved in these *Acts and Monuments*. This is sufficient, of itself, to make this work an invaluable treasure as an extensive compilation of evidences and materials for the general historian; and especially for those who feel an interest in the confessions of those Martyrs of the Anglican Church, who were “slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;” ^{Rev 6.9} and whose blood proved such prolific seed for the Church of England.

The greater portion of the work is a compilation of these original documents. He gives them to the world as such, and exhibits no trace of that vanity which has tempted so many to clothe original materials in more modern phraseology, so as to pass them current as their own; and we are sure that the name of JOHN FOXE will live green in the memory of our children, and our children’s children, when his envious and malicious detractors have passed into oblivion.

It could scarcely be expected that in times like the present, when every effort is being made to bring the character of our Reformers and the principles of the Reformation into contempt and obloquy,¹⁰ a work of such immense importance as that of John Foxe could escape the malicious assaults of the avowed enemies of Protestant Christianity, or the insidious efforts of the traitors now concealed in the cloistered shades of the Church of England. Those assaults

¹⁰ A false accusation of an offense or a malicious misrepresentation of someone’s words or actions; defamation.

and efforts have been made, and have just thus far succeeded in proving that this great production was not the production of absolute inspiration — that the author, compelled like all historians to accept the statements of others on particulars of minute or minor importance, has fallen into some slight mistakes. These mistakes are so slight in their nature, and so few in their number, that there is no historian of either times past or present, who has exhibited a work of the same extent that is so free from errors, or so safely to be relied on in all the grand objects which he contemplated. He lived in the times of which he wrote; and he devoted the greater portion of his work to them. He collected the official registers or original documents. He compiled and published them for the benefit of posterity. And the deference which all learned historians and all sound divines pay to his authority, is a monument to his ability, his learning, and his honesty, which will live forever, when the very names of his detractors will be utterly forgotten. The volume still remains the first, the best, and the most certain authority for either the Historian or the Divine, in all the wide field upon which it enters, in laying open the workings of Romanism at the age of the Reformation.

The work proposes to give a general sketch of the history of the Christian Church — a more detailed account of the Church of England — an accurate portraiture of the rise, and progress, and genius of the Church of Rome — and finally, the fullest and most ample account of the examinations, sufferings, and martyrdoms of those holy men of God who were the strength and ornament of the Protestantism of this land.

*The edition which we now present to the public,
possesses certain peculiarities which require notice.*

I. There is a large mass of official documents and forms which, though interesting to the writers of history, possess no interest or value for the religious or general reader. They seem to have been published by Foxe, more with the view of preserving them as records, than in the expectation that they would be perused by the general reader.

A large portion of these have been omitted from this edition.

II. There is a series of narrations, from time to time introduced by the author, connected with the superstitious credulity of the dark ages. Some of them are absurd, others are marvelous. And Foxe, while he inserts them, does not hesitate to express judgment on them, pronouncing them to be apocryphal.

These have been excluded from this edition, as calculated to injure, rather than promote the interests of religion.

III. There is also inserted in the original work, a variety of Latin quotations, a few from the Greek, and a number of letters and documents, also in the Latin language.

These have been removed from the present edition, as being calculated to encumber it unnecessarily.

IV. Owing to the state of society in the age in which this work was written, there was a coarseness of expression, and an absence of delicacy and propriety in some of the narrations, which render it unfit for family perusal in the present state of society, and which have aided much in consigning the work itself into oblivion.

All these narrations and indelicacies have been most carefully expunged from this edition.

V. There are many errors in the dates, embodied in the original work. Some of these are perhaps the result of those mistakes into which authors of that age were very likely to fall, in

reference to more ancient history. Many of them are merely the mistakes of the printing-press, accumulated through successive editions.

These have been carefully corrected in the present edition, so as to prevent the reader falling into error.

These particulars present the peculiarities of this edition. The object has been to present the Protestant population of this land with a FAMILY EDITION — one that in point of size and cheapness would be accessible to all — one that could be perused without toiling through unnecessary and uninteresting documents — and especially one that could be read with interest and advantage, in the family circle.

In endeavoring to accomplish these objects, every effort has been made to render this edition an available repository of all that was calculated to strengthen the religious principles of the Reformation, in the Protestants of England, and to supply them with as much as possible, that would arm them against the principles and the practices of the Church of Rome — thus making this edition consist of all the information that was valuable in the original work, and all that was likely to be available in the controversy with Rome.

Those who desire an ecclesiastical history of England, will find it here. Those who seek a detail of the iniquities of Popery, both abroad and at home, will not be disappointed. The Christian who desires examples of faithfulness unto death, ^{Rev 2.10} will be amply recompensed in a perusal. And those who wish to obtain a practical knowledge of the controversy with Rome, will find it one of the most useful works in our language.

In order to render the work complete, an Appendix has been added, containing accounts of the massacre of St. Bartholomew — of the Spanish Armada — of the Gunpowder Treason — of the great Rebellion of Ireland in 1641 — all written by authors who wrote immediately after the events which they narrate. There is also an account of the executions in the reign of Elizabeth, proving they were the punishment for treason, and not a persecution of Popery.

M. HOBART SEYMOUR.

BATH, *December*, 1850.