

# MARTYRDOMS FOR RELIGION UNDER QUEEN ELIZABETH AND QUEEN MARY

Church Association Tract 204

THE Parish Magazine for Frocester, Saul, and Whitminster of January, 1894, had an attack upon the Church Association for sending out its vans into such parishes as theirs. It tells us that the Vicar of Frocester is the Rev. W. Symonds, MA., while the Rector of Saul is the Rev. R. Hall, MA. And as Frocester comes topmost, we may suppose that the teaching of this magazine emanates from the former of these gentlemen: though it may be that it is a joint production, and that Saul also is among the prophets. Anyhow these divines have the joint responsibility of putting before their people such statements as the following, which appears at page 3:—

“They have painted on their vans sundry well-known names, of Hooper, Ridley, &c., put to death under Queen Mary—persons with whom they have about as much to do as they have with Hannibal. To furbish up the controversies of 350 years ago has much the air of acting a play. But if we act a play, we should act it right. It is a *disingenuous sampling of history* to set forth the heroes of the Church Association as if they were the only persons put to death for their religion in Reformation times. Those who suffered under Mary and Elizabeth were not far from being equal in number; and a great part of the Roman Catholic victims were hung, drawn, and quartered, and disembowelled while they were alive. It is our good fortune that such things have come to seem incredible.” [*sic*].

The villagers who depend for their “sampling of history” upon these two Gloucestershire divines will naturally infer from the above statement that much greater cruelties were practised in the name of religion by protestants than by the co-religionists of their Vicar: and thus they may come to hate the very name of “Reformation,” and aid their pastors in promoting the “re-union of Christendom.” Yet, inasmuch as “no lie thrives,” some of them may learn by-and-by that Elizabeth reigned forty-five years, while Mary only reigned five years, so that even though “religious” murders had been “equal in number” under Elizabeth as under Mary, that would still leave the title of “bloody” to the elder sister. The discovery of that fact may lead them to inquire still further, and they will then find that for the first nineteen years of Elizabeth—a longer period, be it observed, than Mary’s entire reign—not a single human being lost his life in England on any “religious” quarrel or pretext. They will naturally ask, What then could have led to such a change in Elizabeth’s policy?

They will then discover, in the words of Dr. Ingram,<sup>1</sup> that—

“With the reign of Elizabeth began, on the part of the Popes, a series of aggressions against England, which is without parallel in history, and which entailed the most disastrous consequences on the Roman Catholics of the kingdom. For upwards of thirty years, the Roman Pontiffs directed all the moral *and material* resources at their command to the destruction of England, and her conquest by the King of Spain. During those long years they never rested a moment from their hostile attempts. Laying aside all pretence of acting as spiritual teachers, they took in their hands the temporal sword. They invaded English territories with their own troops; encouraged rebellions; instigated conspiracies; fomented civil wars; taught that religion was to be restored by blood and violence; preached crusades against England; organised confederations of the ‘Catholic’ Powers against her; and despatched missionaries to teach the new faith, which was not the Catholic faith, but a corrupt compound of religion and treason.” (*England and Rome*, Preface xiv.)

And when comparing the two reigns we must remember that—

“In Mary’s reign, bishops, gentlemen, artisans, servants, women and boys were burned for opinions in speculative matters, without the least pretext of the violation of any civil duty, while in the reign of her successor’ (Elizabeth) ‘all classes of the laity were corrected for non-conformity by a fine of twelve pence. If we remember that Elizabeth made no examination into conscience, but, at the most, required an outward conformity, and if we compare her conduct with that of *contemporaneous* sovereigns, we are constrained to acknowledge, that the compulsory uniformity of the reformed government of

England was THE MOST WONDERFUL AND SUDDEN ADVANCE IN HUMANITY RECORDED IN HISTORY.” (*Ibid.* 223.)

This comparative forbearance is the more striking if we remember that not only renewed attempts at assassination, and repeated conspiracies directly fomented by the Pope, had threatened to overturn the English Government, but that—

“In 1572, the whole reformed world was horrorstruck by the news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. For upwards of forty years, the Protestants of England had been hearing of the burning, beheading, and burying alive of tens of thousands of dissidents from the Roman faith in the Netherlands by the Spaniards. The memory of their own persecution in the time of Mary was still fresh, and its revival was an ever-present terror before their eyes. They were well aware that the Pope and the King of Spain were plotting the invasion of their country, and the destruction of their institutions. They believed that the success of these plans would entail persecution upon them as severe as those in the Netherlands and in Spain. While they were in this state of mind, the news suddenly arrived that fifty thousand French Protestants had been shot, stabbed, and hacked to pieces at their own firesides by their countrymen, and that the homes of the victims had been polluted by every crime which attends the taking of a city by storm. But this was not all. It was known that the Pope had adopted the massacre; that, on receiving information of it from the Cardinal of Lorraine, he had set apart a day of public thanksgiving to God the just avenger, and had published a bull of extraordinary indulgence to such as should pray for the heavenly assistance to the King and kingdom of France; and that he and his cardinals had walked in procession from sanctuary to sanctuary to celebrate the great event. One thought flashed through the mind of all Protestants. Was there then a universal plot among the Roman Catholics of Europe for the general murder and extermination of the Reformed?”

The cruel punishment for treason (the infliction of which, as described in the *Frocester Magazine*, itself shews that “heresy” was *not* in question, for that always involved burning) was imposed under an old statute of Edward III. passed when England was entirely Papal. Yet—

“So anxious was Elizabeth’s government to save these men, and to avoid the obloquy of their execution, that it drew up six questions, in their nature wholly civil, and entirely unconnected with faith or discipline. Speaking of these questions, a Roman Catholic author, Charles Butler (*English Catholics*, I.-429), said, in 1822: ‘Among the six questions there is not one which the Catholics of the present time have not fully and unexceptionally answered in the oaths which they have taken in compliance with the Acts of the 18th, 31st, and 33rd years of his late Majesty’s reign.’ An answer to the effect that Elizabeth was their lawful queen, and that her subjects were not dispensed from their allegiance by the bull of Pius, would have saved them all, as it did actually save three of them, even after their conviction. Cardinal Allen himself admitted that those who were put to death after their answers to the six queries suffered for maintaining the deposing power.” (*Ibid.* 281.)

The peril in which England was kept by Jesuit machinations, is well shewn from a speech of the Prime Minister, Cecil, in the very last Parliament of Elizabeth. He said—

“The King of Spain had put four thousand of his best expert soldiers into Ireland under a gallant and hardy captain. . . His presence and cause of war there is to defend the Catholic cause—I mean, to tear her Majesty’s subjects from her; for, I may say, she hath no Catholic obedient subject there, because she standeth ‘excommunicate’ at this present by power of two bulls of this Pope’s—by which her subjects are absolved of their obedience... Remember that you do this *pro aris et focis*; and for a prince that desireth all your prosperities . . . not these five, or seven, or ten, but for three and forty years.” (*Paton’s British History and Papal Claims*, I.-108.)

Lastly, the inquirers will discover that the revival of “the controversies of 350 years ago” was not in any way due to the Church Association, but to the Tractarians, every one of whose arguments is taken directly from the writings of Bp. Gardiner, Harding the Jesuit, Thomas Aquinas, and other approved teachers of the Romish faith: while the answers now given to the Puseyites may similarly be all of them found in the writings of Cranmer, Jewel, Hooper, and the rest of “our heroes.” Even villagers can see that an attack must have preceded a defence, that a reply implies a previous

argument. The Church Association was not even founded until the English Church Union had been in existence for more than five years. It is the old fable of "The wolf and the lamb" over again. "We have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy (Papa) father's house." If Hooper and the rest are our "heroes," it follows that we have more to do with them than we have with "Hannibal." If there be any intelligence among the Gloucestershire villagers, they will refuse to follow guides so blind or so disloyal as the writers of some of their Parish Magazines have shewn themselves to be, and they will continue to welcome an occasional visit from one of our Vans to dispel the fog and malaria into which "hireling shepherds" are seeking to lead their unhappy flocks.

Endnotes:

- 1) Ingram's *England and Rome*, p. 263. See Review of this work in *Church Intelligencer*, April, 1894, p. 63.