

**NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE
REV. GEORGE TOWNSEND, M.A. TO THE
NEW EDITION OF FOX'S
MARTYROLOGY; PART I: ON THE
MEMOIR OF FOX ASCRIBED TO HIS SON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649176304

Notes on the contributions of the Rev. George Townsend, M.A. to the new edition of Fox's Martyrology; Part I: on the memoir of Fox ascribed to his son by S. R. Maitland

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

S. R. MAITLAND

**NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE
REV. GEORGE TOWNSEND, M.A. TO THE
NEW EDITION OF FOX'S
MARTYROLOGY; PART I: ON THE
MEMOIR OF FOX ASCRIBED TO HIS SON**

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF
THE REV. GEORGE TOWNSEND, M.A.
FRENCHMANS OF DURHAM, &c.
TO THE NEW EDITION OF
FOX'S MARTYROLOGY:

BY THE
REV. S. R. MAITLAND,
LIBRARIAN TO HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

PART I.
ON THE MEMOIR OF FOX ASCRIBED TO HIS SON.



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, FLEET MALL.

1841.

LONDON :
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

TO THE
LIBRARY OF
AMERICA



AM 10-18-2005

BR1607

F62M3

MAIN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NOTES,

&c.

THERE are many things in Mr. Townsend's contributions to the new edition of Fox's Martyrology which require notice; but they are of such different kinds, that it may be better to keep them in some degree distinct.

The object of this publication is merely to point out what appears to me to be one great error—the cause of many others—in his Life of Fox; I mean his adopting, and treating as genuine and authentic, the legendary Memoir which has been ascribed to Samuel Fox, the son of the martyrologist. I know that several writers who have had occasion to speak of Fox, have done the same; but that such a mistake should be committed by one who has been so many years engaged to write the Life of Fox, seems to me very remarkable. Speaking of the martyrologist, Mr. Townsend says:—

“His principal biographer is his son; and though many interesting circumstances of his more active life, after he left the

A 2

university, are to be derived, as we shall see, from various sources; it is impossible, at the distance of three centuries, to collect any information respecting his early years, but that which his son has recorded. In the Preface to the Reader, prefixed to his account of his father, his son informs us, that 'he had been solicited by many persons to gratify posterity with a history of his father's life, which he had written thirty years before.' He had, however, continually 'to refuse to publish it; and he should have persevered in doing so, if he had not perceived that many who were mere strangers, and utterly ignorant of his conversation, had presumed to write his life.' The deficiencies and inaccuracies of these unauthenticated publications induced him 'to preserve his memory from wrong, and to place it in its true and proper light.' 'The importunity of both those who admired, and those who disapproved, also, of his father's opinions and conduct, were additional reasons,' he informs us, 'for writing;' and he trusts 'that his narrative may be regarded as free from the suspicion of intentional falsehood, or partiality, though it was compiled by a son.' He had written it originally 'for his own private satisfaction; and it was now given to the world because it was deemed worthy of publication by others rather than by himself.' None of the spurious works to which Mr. Fox here alludes are known, I believe, to exist at present; and we must consequently be content with a few brief notices of his early life, till he was expelled the university of Oxford for heresy, as they are related in the Memoir by his son."—p. 45.

Now, what does this involve? The hypothesis of Mr. Townsend, and of all who believe in the Memoir, is this:—That about twenty-four years after his father's death, his son Samuel wrote his life,—that he did this merely for his own satisfaction; and for that same satisfaction, kept it by him for thirty years more;—that he was then prevailed on to publish the

Memoir thus written and preserved, because of the spurious lives put forth by others ; of which spurious lives, Mr. Townsend confesses that he can find no trace. This is a singular story to begin with.

A few pages forward, Mr. Townsend says : " It is much to be lamented that the Memoir of Foxe, by his son, is written without a proper attention to dates." True ; but if Mr. Townsend had paid proper attention to a date which he has himself given, he would have seen that the document which he was quoting could not have been written by Samuel Fox. This Preface to the Reader, whence Mr. Townsend quotes, purports to be written in 1641 ; and at page 205 of Mr. Townsend's Life, we read that " Samuel Fox died in 1629, about Christmas." The Preface, therefore, which Mr. Townsend has quoted is clearly not the work of the person to whom he ascribes it, and naturally leads to a suspicion that the same may be the case with the Memoir to which it is prefixed. That this should not have been perceived by Mr. Townsend, even when he was trying to patch up the " discrepancies in the narration," by suggesting that Samuel Fox " published the Memoir when he was old¹," is very strange.

In this matter Mr. Townsend will not complain that I am indulging in that minute criticism which is so annoying to random writers. Every one who looks, even in the most cursory way, at his Life of

¹ P. 60.

Fox, will see that the authenticity and genuineness of this Memoir is a point of great importance ; and that if Mr. Townsend's want of discrimination, and acquaintance with his subject, has been imposed on, the mistake is one which ought to be pointed out. I believe it is nearly true, though I should not have ventured to state it so dogmatically as Mr. Townsend does,—for I have always a hope that truth will come out,—that “ it is impossible, at the distance of three centuries, to collect any information respecting his early years, except that which his son ” [or whoever was the writer of the Memoir] “ has recorded.” If Mr. Townsend can say this after the years which he has been at work, and if it should appear that the Memoir is not to be trusted, I hope I shall not be blamed if I make free with some things which rest on its single authority.

If we look at what is supposed to be the original manuscript, and which is now in the British Museum², we find various marginal corrections, in a hand quite different from that of the text, which have been, I believe, generally followed in the printed copy. Whether these marginal notes are the work of some other person, correcting the author of the manuscript ; or of the author, correcting some copy of his own text not in his own hand-writing, is of little consequence ; all that I wish to be observed is, that where there is a variation between the text and the margin,

² Lansd. No. 388.

the *text* represents the original or earlier statement of the two. Let us look at one or two of these variations.

For instance, the want of dates of which Mr. Townsend complains, was more deplorable as the Memoir was originally written. None was assigned to the birth of Fox, until the marginal corrector added, "anno Salutis humanæ 1517." Did not Samuel Fox know when his father was born? Has not Mr. Townsend given "an inscription by his son," which states that the martyrologist died in April, 1587, being "jam septuagenarius?" Could not he have given some sort of guess, by deducting 70 from 1587? I suspect that this is what the marginal corrector did;¹ and that he thus originated a date which has been followed ever since; but which Samuel Fox, if he had written or corrected the Memoir, would not have set down as that of his father's birth. He might very well, in the epitaph, state him to have been "septuagenarius," even if he supposed him (as I think he did) to have been born in 1516². Twelve years before it is pretended that this Memoir was written, a grant of arms had been made to the Fox

¹ I am sorry that Mr. Townsend has adopted a style of controversy which makes it necessary for me to remind the reader that I am not here discussing the question whether Fox was born in one year or another, or in that interval which might be described as either. The question is, What would Samuel Fox have written? and it is asked merely to help us in judging whether he wrote what Mr. Townsend says he did.