Prefatory Note

THIS VOLUME contains the sermons preached by Donne during his first year and a half as Dean of St. Paul's, from the beginning of 1622 to the middle of 1623. For the first time he had become a figure of national importance, and his sermons were eagerly heard. The period was a troubled one politically, and feeling ran very high over the vexed question of the Spanish marriage proposed for Prince Charles. I have decided that for this one volume it is best to replace our usual type of Introduction by one which gives a bird's-eye view of the historical background of the time, and a brief sketch of the London which Donne knew and to which he preached. I have drawn largely on such contemporary documents as Chamberlain's *Letters*, Arthur Wilson's *History of... the Life and Reign of King James the First*, Donne's own *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, the *Familiar Letters of James Howell*, and the translated manuscript of the Venetian Ambassador, Orlando Busoni. I am also indebted to such recent historical works as D. H. Willson's *James VI and I*, and Wallace Notestein's *Four Worthies*, which includes an admirable account of John Chamberlain and his circle.

My warmest thanks are due to Lord and Lady Sandys, who allowed me to examine their portraits of Sir Edwin Sandys and of other members of the Sandys family at their family seat at Ombersley Court, Worcestershire. I must also thank the Librarians of Christ Church and of Merton College, Oxford, for their kindness in allowing my assistant Mrs. Holtby and myself to collate at leisure their quartos of the three issues of the sermon on *Judges* 5.20 (No. 7 of this volume) and the two editions of that on *Acts* 1.8 (No. 10). The collations of the quartos in the libraries of Harvard, Yale, and Huntington were made by George Potter, who was also responsible for the collations of the Wilfred Merton manuscript for Sermons 1 and 3, while those of the Ellesmere and St. Paul's Cathedral were made by myself. I have found Mrs. Holtby's help of the utmost value in preparing the text of this very difficult volume. I am also most grateful to Miss Elizabeth Wade White, who procured for me the engraving which

is here reproduced of the portrait of James Hay, first Earl of Carlisle, which was formerly in the possession of the Earl of Kinnoull.

My thanks are extended also to Mr. Richmond Maury, President of the William Byrd Press, of Richmond, Virginia, and to Mr. John Jennings, Director of the Virginia Historical Society, for making possible our reproduction of the portrait of Sir Edwin Sandys: it is from a photographic negative, now in the possession of the Virginia Historical Society, which was used in preparing a plate for *A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture*, edited by A. W. Weddell. And I am indebted to Sir Ronald Lechmere, Bart., of Severn End, Hanley Castle, Worcs., for permission to use this copy of the original portrait, which is in his possession.

EVELYN M. SIMPSON