

FOXES' BOOK
of MARTYRS

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JOHN FOXE

edited by PAUL L. MAIER
and R. C. LINNENKUGEL



ABRIDGED *and* EDITED *with* COMMENTARY

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Foxe's Book of Martyrs by John Foxe
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This abridged and revised edition, edited by Paul L. Maier and R. C. Linnenkugel, is based on the 1570 edition of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, now commonly known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

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Introduction



John Foxe's history of Christian martyrs is a monumental three thousand pages long—more than twice the size of the Bible. It was the largest publication in its day since the invention of printing, and remained so for some centuries. This huge work, which would shatter an editor's nerves today and inflict massive losses on the publisher, became—incredibly—a sixteenth-century bestseller and helped shape the English church. A familiar claim lists it as one of the ten best-selling books in all of history, right up there with the Holy Bible. While it is nearly impossible to establish such a list, surely that claim was justified in Foxe's sixteenth century.

One of Foxe's opponents, however, called it (in the colorful language of the day) "a huge dungpile full of stinking martyrs," while the British government decreed that it should be placed in every cathedral and parish library, along with Holy Writ itself, and that it should sail on all ships of the Royal Navy. Beyond any debate, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* became one of the most influential writings in history, even as it surely was one of the great top sellers of the past.

The author himself was not writing for fame or fortune. In fact, at first Foxe received no royalties whatever from publication of his *magnum opus*, since present-day author-publisher relationships had not yet been developed. Why would he then not rest on his literary laurels but go on to revise and augment his great book not once but four times in English, after two editions in Latin? Foxe was busy enough with other projects, including devotional writings, preaching, and pastoral ministry, and, especially, campaigning for humanitarian causes. What drove Foxe to keep working on his massive martyrology was a burning desire to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by those who gave their lives for the sake of their Christian faith lest they be forgotten. Clearly, this intention was

born, fostered, and intensified by Foxe’s witnessing the persecutions and martyrdoms of his own day, especially under Queen Mary I (aka “Bloody Mary”).

Foxe’s Era

John Foxe (1516–1587) was born the year before Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg, inaugurating the Reformation, and died a year before the now-Protestant navy of Queen Elizabeth I defeated the Catholic Spanish Armada in the waters off Britain. It was a time of profound change. The still-new printing press allowed for sharing of different ideas and theories on a far wider scale. People began to question the theology and authority of the Medieval Roman Catholic Church. Answers that had sustained their ancestors no longer satisfied many. A religious revolution was in the making.

Those who were warriors in this revolt faced the loss of property, exile, imprisonment, torture, and death. The Spanish Inquisition taught other royal houses how to amass more wealth by defending the Catholic Church, which, of course, also financially benefitted from this cleansing of “faulty theology.” The enforcement or intensity of such religious intolerance varied from country to country and from ruler to ruler. In England, from Henry VIII and after, for example, non-Catholics were persecuted, tortured, and burned. Thomas More was noted for his enthusiastic persecution of Lutherans in England, and other Protestants who were tried and convicted could be sure of a death penalty.

After Henry’s break with Rome and the founding of the Church of England, however, there was a period when Catholics faced the same terrors. The pendulum swung back again when Henry’s daughter, Mary, took the throne. Mary, the daughter of a Spanish Catholic, Catherine of Aragon, Henry’s first wife, quickly earned her name most known to history: Bloody Mary. During her reign John Foxe found the material for much of his writing. His issues with the Catholic Church began well before Mary, but her reign was the epicenter of his world of martyrs. And his champion, of course, was the next queen, Elizabeth I, who was Protestant.

During Mary’s reign, Foxe removed himself and his family from England to save his life. He began to gather materials to write the first Latin edition of *Acts and Monuments* (Acts = accounts; Monuments = documents). In these writings he remembered also the many martyrs throughout the life of the Christian church, beginning with the founder, Jesus Christ, but especially those of the Protestant movement in England. Foxe understood the political world in which he lived, and he believed in the faith that



Queen Mary I by Hans Eworth (1520–1574).
Courtesy of Dcoetzee.

he shared with those protesting the Medieval Church. This volume, necessarily an abridgment of the vast original, offers a glimpse into the lives of the many martyrs of the church set into the context of church history to determine who martyred them and why.

Who Was John Foxe?

In 1516 Foxe was born into comfortable circumstances in Boston, Lincolnshire, but his father died when John was young. His mother married a prosperous yeoman, Richard Melton. Thanks to this financial security, John entered Brasenose College, Oxford, from which he earned his Bachelor's Degree on July 17, 1537. He became a probationer (beginning his advanced studies) in July 1538, and Full Fellow in 1539 at Magdalen College, Oxford. In July 1543, he was awarded a Master of Arts Degree at Magdalen.

University life was then, as it is now, a time for exploration of ideas and development of personal philosophies and creeds, as well as the opportunity to establish lifelong friendships. Foxe's roommate at Brasenose was Alexander Nowell, the future Dean of St. Paul's in London and Foxe's supporter throughout his life.

During this time Foxe had become a committed Protestant, due to his zealous study of the Scriptures (among his papers is his defense against charges of belonging to a "certain new religion"). Foxe was in an evangelical minority that was under pressure from the conservative majority at Magdalen. While not called a heretic, his views were questioned because of his "Bible Study," deemed, incredibly, a capital offence at the time!

By 1545 Foxe prepared to resign from Magdalen. To remain, every Fellow was expected to be ordained as a Catholic priest within one year after his Master's Degree was awarded. Foxe began to refer to Magdalen as a prison and told a friend that he could not stay at the College "unless I castrate myself and leap into the priestly caste." It may have

been the end of a promising academic career, but it began his life as a committed "Gospeller," as he referred to those now called "Protestants." By leaving the university, however, he was unemployed and with little promise of financial security in his immediate future.

His stepfather provided assistance and encouraged his search for employment. He secured a position as tutor for the household of Sir William Lucy at Charlecote, Warwickshire. Foxe must also have made time for a social life of some sort, since on February 3, 1547 he married Agnes Randall, the daughter of a Coventry merchant. Shortly after the wedding, he left the Lucy household for unknown reasons, although his evangelical fervor may have become an issue.

The Foxes moved to London. Almost certainly through one of his evangelical contacts, he became tutor in the



Magdalen College, Oxford: the tower. Courtesy of Wellcome Images.

household of the Duchess of Richmond, where his charges were the children of her brother, the Earl of Surrey, who had been executed in January 1547, by Henry VIII for treason. There is evidence, however, from the dedication of his translation of a sermon by Martin Luther, which suggests that he had been living in the area before his employment by the Duchess and was not destitute. In fact, Foxe seems to have been translating other works for the evangelical printer Hugh Singleton during this time.

Between 1548 and 1553 Foxe included among his students Thomas, Charles, and Henry Howard, and their sister Jane. They resided at the home of the Duchess of Richmond first in London, then at Reigate. The Duchess's supportive friendship was Foxe's entrance to the ranks of the Protestant elite of England.

On June 24, 1550, Nicholas Ridley, then Bishop of London, ordained him a deacon. At this time, Foxe met John Hooper and became friends with William Turner and John Rogers (their later martyrdoms would touch Foxe deeply). Importantly, he also met John Bale at this point. It was Bale who loaned Foxe many, many manuscripts and encouraged the composition of the first martyrology.

In 1548 Foxe established himself in a radical departure from traditional thought by publishing a tract entitled *De non plectendis morte aduteri consultatio* (*That Death Be Not the Penalty for Adultery*). Many strongly opposed this stand, including one George Joy, who argued that excommunication and other ecclesiastical sanctions had fallen into disuse and ought to be reapplied. Foxe's tract, however, did open discussion on the issue, and he even carried the encounter with Joy to a new level in the tract, *De censura sive excommunication ecclesia sticarectoque iususa* (*It Is Right That the Church Use Excommunication as Censure*), which, however, argued that a revision of canon law was overdue. The work was dedicated to Thomas Cranmer, who sponsored and directed the proposed revision. Parliament rejected it in 1553, but Foxe attempted to rescue and relaunch the project years later.

And then Mary became Queen in July of 1553.

The Escape to Europe

By 1554 Foxe began to fear the future in England. That spring he took his pregnant wife and sailed to Nieuport (Belgium), traveling from there to Antwerp, with a pilgrimage to Rotterdam to see the birthplace of Erasmus. He moved on finally to Strasbourg, arriving in July of 1544.

By July 31 of that year he had published *Commentaria in rerum in ecclesiastestaturum* (*A Commentary on Church Affairs*), dedicated to Duke Christopher of Wuerttemberg (in a failed attempt to gain patronage). From the press of Wendelin Ribelius, Foxe produced a two-hundred-and-twelve-page book that was the forerunner of *Acts and Monuments*. Much of this initial material, including texts that John Bale had provided in England, was incorporated into the larger document.

For the remainder of 1554 and into 1555, Foxe was in Frankfurt. There, a colony of Protestant English debated regularly. One faction was headed by John Knox, Foxe's favorite; the other by Thomas Lever. The issue was whether to use the Revised Prayer Book (favored by Knox and Foxe) or to use only the unrevised Prayer Book. On August 31, 1556, a "final" meeting was held to settle the issue, at which no decision was made. In some disgust, Foxe left for Basel and arrived by September 22, the day his daughter Christina was baptized. There Foxe was reunited with John Bale.

Foxe now began working at a print shop in Basel. While the pay was low, it had other advantages. He was at the center of current Protestant scholarship and was meeting the great minds of Europe. One of Bale's circle was Heinrich Panteleon, a Protestant physician, whose own martyrology was to become entwined with Foxe's.

There was further benefit in working for Oporinus (Johann Herbst), the printer. It facilitated the publication of Foxe's own works. The over-optimistic Foxe had told his printer and his friend, Edmund Grindal, that he would have another history of martyrs, in Latin, ready to coincide with an a nearly identical English version of the same that Grindal (future Archbishop of Canterbury) was to prepare. Foxe seems to have had his own ideas from the onset as to the content of this project, however. While Grindal intended to cover only the Marian persecutions, Foxe (and Bale) planned to cover the Lollards¹ and the pre-Marian reformers as well. Grindal had hoped to have the publication ready for release after the summer of 1556 but never finished it. Foxe did not finish until the late summer of 1559 and then only by drastically reducing his original plans. Grindal passed the considerable collections of documents, which had been assembled, over to Foxe, and he was able to use these in the preparation of his own English *Acts and Monuments*. This became a work of about 1,800 pages.

Prior to publication, on September 8, 1558, Foxe's daughter, Dorcas, was baptized. On November 17, 1558 the English Protestants were relieved by the death of Queen Mary. Her successor, Elizabeth I, had been raised Protestant so when the terrible bloodshed ended, Protestants on the continent began returning to their homes in England. Foxe, however, remained in Basel working on his martyrology, despite the Duke of Norfolk's encouragement to return and promises of patronage.



Queen Elizabeth I. Courtesy of Dcoetzee.

Foxe was trying to gain information on the non-English martyrs, but in the end, with the exceptions of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, he was restricted to the English martyrs. Even then, however, he was planning on further volumes on the continental martyrs and saw the English Reformation very much in its European context. The winter of 1557–58 marked the first time Foxe complained to friends about his failing health.

On January 25, 1560, his friend and now Bishop of London, Edmund Grindal, ordained Foxe a priest in the English church. If not for the suspiciously Puritan views he held, Foxe might have had a high church office. As it was, he preached at Paul's Cross and other churches, and he held the prebend of Shipton in Salisbury cathedral and is said to have been rector of Cripplegate for a short time.

1. followers of John Wycliffe.

These duties provided a regular and adequate income and allowed him the time to commit to his work. He moved from the Duke of Norfolk's mansion in Aldgate to Norwich. He was doing research in Norfolk and Suffolk, which would be included in the first edition of *Acts and Monuments*.

The First Edition

On December 31, 1560, Foxe's first son Samuel was born in Norwich. By August 1562, the family was back at Aldgate so that Foxe could commute on a regular basis to the nearby print shop of John Day to oversee the printing of his martyrology. On March 20, 1563, Day published the first English edition of *Acts and Monuments*. It was a massive edition of some 1,800 pages. The bulk of it covers English Church history from John Wycliffe until the accession of Elizabeth I, with an introduction covering the early church including the papacy, from AD 1000 to his era. The large scale of the work is explained in part by the massive range of sources that Foxe used. Of course he returned to his favorite researchers and authors such as Bales and Flacius, but he included Johannes Cochlacus's history of the Hussite wars, and various martyrological essays of Jean Crespin (who plagiarized from Foxe originally). He expanded on his own writings of the Marian martyrs and greatly extended his use of eyewitness accounts and oral testimony. He had done all of this before on a smaller scale, but this time he printed the archival material. His most important source was the London Episcopal registers that, by the time the *Acts and Monuments* was completed, he had mined thoroughly from Mary's rule back to 1520. He had to rely on friends who sent him relevant extracts from a thorough search at Norwich, Coventry, and Litchfield.

The huge tome must have been a financial success since printer John Day moved for a second edition. One of the incentives, also for Foxe, was the opportunity to correct errors, of which there were many. Translations that had been done by others were often unsatisfactory, and there had been no chance to check the texts and eliminate passages that ran contrary to the main messages of the book. Day, a shrewd businessman, would never have agreed to—let alone have suggested—a second edition if the first had not been a sales success. Much to Foxe's chagrin, the magnum opus was known as *Foxe's Acts and Monuments*.

Foxe was given a new prebend at a new parish at Shipton-under-Wychwood. His income was now £40 a year, a comfortable stipend at the time. Since his last prebend, Foxe had matured and developed a pastoral method of serving his church. He appointed his friend William Masters as vicar. Masters, too, had been an exile and was unusually well educated for such an office, and wished to please his patron. The regard was mutual. Foxe gave permission to Masters to cut the vicarage timber, an offer so generous that Masters was reluctant to take advantage of it. Foxe clearly was willing to do what was necessary in order to keep a godly minister and preacher in the parish for which he was responsible.

Plague and Pastoral Ministry

Plague broke out, again, in London in the summer of 1563. Foxe remained in the city to minister to the afflicted, reflecting further his new sense of pastoral calling. He wrote *A brief exhortation . . . in this heavy tyme of Gods visitation on London*. It was meant

to offer solace to the afflicted and bereaved, but also contained a forceful plea to the civil authorities to come up with financial aid for the sufferers. In January, 1564, Bishop Parkhurst wrote a letter to Foxe offering condolence for an unspecified bereavement. Perhaps one of his daughters had died, or it was in recognition of the passing of John Bale the previous November. With his death, Foxe lost a valued friend and mentor. His Latin martyrology had been largely based on Bale's work. Most importantly, it had been John Bale's interpretation of Revelation which had inspired Foxe's view of history as the struggle between the True and the False churches. Foxe wove the Lollards and other medieval reformers into this Protestant pattern because of Bale's influence.

At the same time, Bale's passing freed Foxe to develop his philosophies in different directions. A complete edition of Wycliffe's writings, which Bale had been urging him to write, was dropped and he turned his attention to more pastoral work. This would be far removed from Bale's interests.

Foxe developed a new partnership with Henry Bull. Bull had published a collection of many of the letters of the Marian martyrs, but without any notes or connecting narrative, in 1564. Apparently, Bull began his research independently of Foxe, but by 1562 or 1563, they were exchanging information. Bull used some of Foxe's material, but Foxe made more use of Bull's materials. Many of Bull's letters of the Marian martyrs were incorporated into the following editions of *Acts and Monuments*. This made Foxe's book more of a compilation than an authored work. Bull edited the texts of the letters that he printed, and Foxe followed these changes faithfully.

His response to the plague seemed to consume much of his time. Aside from two minor works, most of his literary energy was spent on research for the second edition of his martyrology.

The Second English Edition

In January 1566, Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury during Mary's reign, published, under the name Alan Cope, a 250-page attack on *Acts and Monuments*, referring to some Protestants killed as "pseudomartyrs." Foxe was mortified. This was the first attack of a sustained and systematic nature, the only such in Foxe's life. While he dedicated the second edition to Queen Elizabeth, he confronted Harpsfield in the dedicatory epistle. Where Harpsfield was justified demonstrably, the offending passages were quietly removed. Where he could, however, Foxe mounted a vigorous counterattack, burying his opponent's arguments under piles of documents. Harpsfield, for example, had attacked Foxe's account of Sir John Oldcastle in two pages, but Foxe answered in thirty-four pages of rebuttal.

As he continued to edit and add to the second edition at Aldgate, Agnes Foxe gave birth to their second son, Simeon, on February 2, 1568. Shortly after that, Foxe moved the family to a newly purchased house on Grub Street in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate. Perhaps to be closer to Day's print shop, he spent the rest of his life here. Or did he move to distance himself from the indiscretions of his patron, the Duke of Norfolk?

In the summer of 1569, Foxe wrote Norfolk a frank letter, warning him that his relationship with Mary, the Queen of Scots would lead him to "noe great good." In 1572, of course, Norfolk was convicted as a traitor to Queen Elizabeth and to the faith. Prior to his execution, Foxe and his old classmate, Alexander Nowell, now Dean of St. Paul's, ministered to him and attended him on the scaffold. In spite of his status,

the Duke was able to direct his heirs to pay Foxe £20 a year for life, and, according to Simeon, that obligation was faithfully discharged.

Meanwhile, the second English edition had been printed. The revision appeared in two large volumes. While this 1570 edition incorporated much of the first edition, it was so thoroughly rewritten as to constitute a separate work. This issue expanded to include the early church, and the entire first volume covered pre-Reformation history. Foxe made a concerted effort to cover the entire European continent. If his attempt at printing verbatim accounts of the trials of all continental martyrs had never been accomplished, the balance between English and the continental martyrdoms would have met his goal. As it was, he incorporated much new research from revised Protestant works, and also drew on such Catholic historians as Pope Pius II and Johannes Cochlaeus. This edition was further expanded with scores of pamphlets, tracts, and sermons. Most of the letters published by Bull, together with others collected by Foxe himself, were also included.

The format and size of this edition of *Acts and Monuments* exceeded any previous English historical or religious publication. In addition to all the other materials, Foxe was able to access the vast collection of manuscripts assembled by Archbishop Matthew Parker. The two men were not always in agreement, but the Archbishop did see the enormous potential of *Acts and Monuments*. It destroyed the credibility of the Catholic Church as an ecclesiastical system and supported Parker's view that the Church of England was of apostolic origin, independent of Rome. According to Parker's theory, the corruption of the Catholic Church in England began with Augustine of Canterbury, and increased with the bishops foisted on the church with the Norman Conquest. He believed that the "foreigners" brought those abuses such as transubstantiation, clerical celibacy, and auricular confession that then became established in England.

Parker used Foxe's work to bring this message to his audience. His own *Testimonie of Antiquitie* was actually incorporated into the martyrology. Foxe's single most important source for medieval England was Matthew Paris's *Major Chronicals*, borrowed from Parker. He also lent Foxe the *Anglo-Saxon Chronical*, Gervase of Canterbury's *Chronical*, the Saxon law codes and other pre-Norman ecclesiastical documents. Through Parker, Foxe became friends with William Lambarde, whose *Archianomia* was also reprinted in *Acts and Monuments*.

The Parker materials were only a part of the wealth of new research that had been added. After consulting the London diocesan records, Foxe went on to the Canterbury registers, those in the diocese of Herford, Lincoln, and Rochester, as well as extracts from Bath, Wells, Chichester, Durham, and York. He was also able to make use of the Royal Archives, particularly those in the Tower, probably through the offices of Sir William Cecil. More than all of this, he made great use of oral sources.

After publication of the first edition, personal testimonies flooded in unsolicited. People sought either to exonerate themselves, or to accuse or eulogize others. So much of this new material was added that some parts of the first edition were not reproduced. The successive editions of *Acts and Monuments* are not cumulative. In fact, much highly significant material never made it to the nineteenth-century editions, and thus those that followed, because they were based upon the 1583 text. The reasons for these major deletions: considerations for space; the effects of attacks by Harpsfield or others; a determined effort to airbrush away blemishes in doctrinal orthodoxy of those whom he wished to present as the martyrs of an Edwardian Protestant church. The serious scholar must look at all four of the English originals.

John Day, the Printer

In spite of any cuts, Day's printing operations buckled under the weight of the second edition. Most seriously, he underestimated its size (which ran to some 2,300 pages), and he ran out of paper. Smaller sheets had to be pasted together to complete the work. For that reason Foxe's ambitious appendix on the continental martyrs was never printed. Day's commitment to the project was immense, and Foxe was very fortunate to find such a crucial ally. Day made considerable sacrifices to produce *Acts and Monuments*: the huge amount of paper, the need for additional workmen, income lost while his presses were committed to this massive book, and the 150 woodcuts to illustrate it. He personally underwrote this extravaganza, although Lord Cecil was also a supporter, and he was in a position to insure that the printer received some important favors, such as the permission to exceed the legal quota of foreign workers and lucrative monopolies for the printing of primers and metrical psalms. Day took huge risks for this project: if he eventually made money and gained credit for his efforts, it would be worth the risk. If not, he would be bankrupt. His success was earned, and it gained him a place in history that he could not have imagined.

Without Day, Foxe's book would surely have been a much less impressive work with gutted text and far fewer, if any, illustrations. This massive project was very much a collaborative effort. It was constructed from materials collected by Bale, Grindal, Bull, and Parker, as well as Foxe. He had copyists who transcribed official and ecclesiastical documents, as well as field workers who pored over archives or interviewed their neighbors. Foxe set the tone, the emphasis, and organized the massive whole.

All this was true in varying degrees for each of the editions for which Foxe was responsible, but it is particularly true of this 1570 edition. Internal evidence proves that this text was rigorously proofread and impeccably cross referenced. Isolated errors were even corrected by hand in individual copies before they left the print shop. No effort was spared to eliminate error, particularly typographical or doctrinal, from this edition.

Even with a supporting team, the energy that John Foxe expended on this enormous task was phenomenal, and his health, already affected while he was on the continent, declined further. The dedication in the 1570 edition claimed that he spent his health on the martyrology. This time it appears to have been no exaggeration. His son Simeon, by now a physician, claimed that as a result of his father's mind being "overstrained" he fell into "that withered leanness of body in which many afterward saw him," never returning to that pleasing and cheerful countenance which he had before.

Foxe, the Celebrity

This second English edition also made Foxe England's first literary celebrity. Strangers wrote to him. Some of these letters survive among his papers. They were asking advice on personal matters and theological issues. He also earned a reputation as a popular, influential London minister, in spite of never holding a benefice there.

Clearly, Foxe, the man, did not in reality resemble his image as often seen in paintings of the time.



John Foxe. Courtesy of Dcoetzee. Painting given to the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 1858.

The stern-faced, dour man under the black Puritan hat cannot have been that cold and unwelcoming. In reality, with his personal charisma and lack of an institutional base, Foxe was the harbinger of later Puritan leaders such as Richard Greenham, William Bradshaw, and John Ball, whose personal influence and moral authority far outstripped

his ecclesiastical rank. Eventually, this did make him less popular with his ecclesiastical superiors than he was with the Privy Council. He burnished his reputation by preaching the Paul's Cross sermon on Good Friday, 1570. This would have been a major event in any year, but in 1570 it had a particular significance because Pius V had issued his Bull *Regnans in excelsis* (*Reigning on High*) in the previous month, excommunicating and deposing Queen Elizabeth. The aim of his *Sermon of Christ Crucified* was to contrast Catholicism with "true religion" and to convert Catholics to the gospel. It was so popular that it was printed six times in Foxe's lifetime and was translated into Latin in 1571.

Other Irons in Foxe's Fire

It must be remembered that in spite of his acclaim and the size of the 1570 Revised Edition, Foxe continued on other works. His first major project after the appearance of the Revised Edition was to edit the code of ecclesiastical law drawn up by Cranmer in 1552. Foxe's interest in Canon Law went back twenty years to his *De censura*, but this project was a deliberate attempt to secure the enactment of the code which had failed in Parliament in 1553. When he titled this work *Reformatio legum ecclesiasticarum* (*Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*), he indicated that this was going to go further than Cranmer's work. The introduction explicitly called for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer and apparently was meant to support a plan by Thomas Norton and Laurence Humphrey to remove all "popish remnants" from the liturgy. If that was the aim, it failed. Neither the law code nor the revision was ever implemented.

In the autumn of 1572 Foxe received his second and last preferment. His friend from his Basel days, James Pilkington, was now Bishop of Durham, and Foxe was presented a prebend in Durham cathedral. He was installed by proxy on October 14, but resigned a year later. Apparently, there was a purge of non-residents in preferments (appointments).

Foxe had promised that he would edit a collection of the works of William Tyndale, John Frith, and Robert Barnes. This book appeared in January 1573, neatly combining two themes that were to preoccupy Foxe for the remainder of his life. One was the apologetic—the desire to convert, by logical, theological, and historical arguments, Catholics and Jews from their "superstitions" to the gospel. The second was to offer spiritual guidance to readers of all types and ages.

Foxe expressed the hope that those who "be not wonne to the worde of trueth, setting aside all partialitie and prejudices of opinion, would with indifferent judgments bestow some reading and hearing likewise of these [three authors]." He chose these three because he valued their polemic exchanges with Thomas More, John Fisher, and Stephen Gardiner. For spiritual guidance he advised young readers to study Firth; the middle aged, Tyndale; and the older, Barnes. The reformers and martyrs of a previous age supplied models for the godly readers of the present.

Similar pastoral concern guided a series of translations edited by Foxe and Henry Bull. The first and most important was an English version of Luther's commentary on Galatians. An introduction, which was addressed to "all afflicted consciences which groan for salvation" and which extolled Luther as a comforter of troubled consciences, further demonstrated the purpose and intended readership of the work. These statements and others were made about Luther in *Acts*, and the repetition of comments made over twenty years before in a translation of one of Luther's sermons established Foxe as the author of this introduction and his

involvement in the translation. There were at least six additional editions issued in Elizabeth's reign, with Foxe's influence, if not participation.

Foxe, then, was a superb organizer. He put together a series of works by earlier reformers designed to comfort the spiritually afflicted as part of his pastoral calling. He even ventured into the field of demonic possession. He most notably led a group in prayer, commanding the devil to depart in the name of Jesus, from one Robert Briggs, who immediately regained his senses. A few days later he suffered another seizure but was fully restored when the bystanders used a prayer that Foxe had left for just such an emergency. His seizures ended, and he was judged to be healed. This, of course, caused a sensation. At least four manuscript accounts survive detailing this "healing."

Other English exorcists were greatly influenced by Foxe's example. Archbishop Parker, however, was very much a skeptic and investigated thoroughly, finding that indeed there had been a fraud in a specific case brought to his attention. Two girls did penance at Paul's Cross and confessed that their possession had been a fraud. The mother of one was imprisoned. Parker, ostensibly, was concerned about fraud and superstition, but was probably also alarmed by the sudden rise in the prestige of Foxe who, because he was unbeneficed (had not held church-appointed position), was nearly immune from ecclesiastical supervision. In the Archbishop's view, all such demonic possessions were fraudulent and those who claimed to expel demons were sorcerers. Thus Foxe ended his expulsion of demons. He continued his extensive ministry among the spiritually afflicted, however, and many might contend that this, in itself, was a form of exorcism.

The Third English Edition

A third edition of Foxe's great tome was planned in 1576. John Day's son, Richard, returned home from Cambridge and began to work with his father. He seems to have been put in charge of the new edition. It was a sudden decision, with none of the prior planning that had gone into the 1570 edition. There were/are many typographical errors, and no evidence of proofreading which had been so obvious in the 1570 edition. The investment was also significantly less, fonts were smaller, paper cheaper, and Foxe's editorial input was much reduced. To assume that this was merely a reprint of the 1570 edition, however, would be incorrect. Information from oral sources was introduced, particularly relating to the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, but there were no substantial deletions and little evidence of extended new research. Yet this edition may be said to represent the highest level of Foxe's radicalism.

Samuel Foxe and Magdalen College

In 1581 Samuel Foxe, John's youngest son, was suddenly expelled from Magdalen College. Samuel had not been a sterling student and only through his father's intervention with the President of the College, Laurence Humphrey, did he last as long as he did. Foxe denounced those responsible for his son's expulsion as "factious Puritans," claiming that Samuel had been expelled not for any fault of his but because he was a supporter of Humphrey. This incident opened a chasm between Foxe and his former Puritan allies. In part it was a familiar matter of the older generation becoming more conservative and the new young generation being more aggressive. Samuel was re-admitted, and after a leave of absence to go to Europe, he did return to Oxford.

Heretics, Catholics, and Jews

For the last decade of his life, Foxe was preoccupied with ministering to the pastoral needs of the godly and the conversion of those who had not embraced Protestant Christianity. He tried to intervene on behalf of a group of Flemish Anabaptists. Some recanted, others were banished, but two remained in prison under sentence of death. Foxe detested their beliefs and wrote to them, urging them to abandon their heresies. He certainly believed that they should be punished but not by death. He was profoundly opposed to the death penalty for heresy and wrote to the Queen, Lord Burghley, the Privy Council, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, urging that their sentences be commuted. His efforts were to no avail. Both Foxe and his former protégé, John Field, were present for the execution as the dissidents were burned at on July 22, 1575. He did not, for a moment, believe that Anabaptist doctrine should be tolerated, but he did believe that in time all misbelievers could be converted by persuasion. There was no merit—or salvation—in an enforced conscience.

On April 1, 1577, Foxe preached at All Hallows on Bread Street in London. The occasion was the baptism of a convert from Judaism. The sermon was expanded, translated into Latin, and published in 1578. This sermon approached Judaism as he had Catholicism, appealing to the Jews to embrace the gospel. He recognized that the conversion of the Jews was one of the signs of the Last Days. He ended on a characteristic note by appealing to all Christians to remove idols and ceremonies from the church as major obstacles to the conversions of the Jews.

In 1580 Foxe published again (this time anonymously) an anti-papal polemic, *Papa confutatus* (*The Pope Refuted*). The papal Antichrist is addressed by the persona of the True Church denouncing the Petrine succession and papal primacy. Foxe again denounces the errors of the Catholic Church, particularly on the doctrine of justification and Eucharistic presence. He further repeats his claims about the similarities between Catholicism and Judaism. This was followed by another anti-Catholic document, *In thanks for the Justification of Christ*, in 1583. Throughout his optimistic attempts at convincing Jews and Catholics of their errors, Foxe was certain that they could be converted by the force of argument—his!

The Fourth English Edition

The fourth and final edition of *Acts and Monuments* appeared in 1583. This edition had been carefully planned for some time. Laurence Humphrey passed on to Foxe the suggestions that he had received for improvements: better paper, more legible type, more extensive references, and the reintroduction of much of the material previously discarded. Foxe and Day followed some of these suggestions. They purchased better paper and planned on more legible type. But only some of the excised material was restored. Actually, more deletions were made, but to offset that, more archival material was added. The additions included Tower records and the Acts of the Privy Council. There was additional oral material, and a highly personal digression.

This new edition ran to 2,100 pages, and even with all the care taken and the improvements made, it was a hasty printing in the end. John Day's health was deteriorating fast, and he was anxious to complete it in his lifetime. This was achieved. He lived until July 23, 1584. But there was a certain cost to the edition. One document added

to the text was dated July 25, 1583, only weeks before publication. Proofreading and corrections were nonexistent, and cross-referencing suffered terribly. Some notes in the fourth edition direct the reader to places in the third edition.

This was the last edition of *Acts and Monuments* in John Foxe's lifetime. It has probably acquired too much prestige. Five further unabridged editions were to appear over the years, each of which would contain significant additional material, largely accounts of subsequent persecutions and introductory commentary. All of this represents the agenda of subsequent editors. Under the popular title *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, his *Acts and Monuments* continues to be a living text long after the original creator.

The Death of John Foxe

John Foxe was working on a commentary on the Book of Revelation. Son Samuel returned to London in spite of his studies at Oxford, to help with his father's last project. On April 18, 1587, at seventy years of age, Foxe died while the work was still in progress. His continuous workload of ministry and writing had taken a final toll on his already weakened body. He was buried at Cripplegate. What had been written was published before the end of the year. Samuel had neither the knowledge nor the inclination to finish it, and although it ran to 396 pages, it stopped at the seventeenth chapter. It was this long because of the amount of historical material Foxe felt necessary to include. He held that the events described in Revelation before the second coming of Christ were actually prophecies of the course of human history that had already occurred. The second coming was now imminent and this appeared to be a guide to understanding Revelation, as well as a guide to *Acts and Monuments*.

After John's death, Agnes continued to live in the same house on Grub Street. A letter from Samuel to her there, dated 1592 or 1593, remains among the family papers. She is most certainly the "Mother Foxe" who was interred with John at St. Giles, Cripplegate, on April 22, 1605.

Foxe was, in no way, impartial either to his faith or to his time in history. He did not hold to any notion of neutrality or objectivity. He presented that which would serve to aid in the salvation of those not saved and reinforce the beliefs of those who were.

Acts and Monuments was chained beside the Bible in cathedrals, parish churches, bishops' residences, and even guildhalls. It was read and quoted by both clergy and laity. It graced the halls of Oxford and Cambridge, sailed with English pirates, and heartened the men of Cromwell's army. As for impact, Gordon Rupp called it one of the *Six Makers of English Religion*.

By the end of the seventeenth century, sadly, Foxe's *Acts* tended to be abbreviated to include only the most sensational modes of torture and death, giving to Foxe's work a "lurid quality which was certainly far from the author's intention."² That his great *Book of Martyrs*, however, is still widely read, quoted, reprinted, and translated is testimony to its enduring importance. John Foxe would be pleased that his work is still meaningful, but would probably be saddened that his massive book had been reduced so significantly to focus so frequently on the "lurid" aspects of the tortures and deaths. However, if that is what was needed to draw readers into

2. Thomas Freeman, Sheffield University.

appreciating those who believed so deeply in their faith that they would die for it, perhaps even that is not so gross a negative.

This Present Edition

This volume is based primarily on Foxe's Second English Edition, published in 1570, for reasons previously explained. This was the edition that corrected previous errors and was the best prepared of Foxe's four editions. Sadly but inevitably, it must join the list of abridged versions, but it will differ from all of them in this important respect: Under the guiding principle that no martyrdom should be forgotten, all who gave their lives for the faith will be included in these pages, their first appearance in bold letters. Details of their martyrdoms are abridged according to the following criterion: In most cases, the amount of detail will be in direct proportion to the historical importance of the victim involved.

Further abridgement was achieved by not deviating from Foxe's central purpose—even if he himself did rather frequently, in fact—and that is martyrology, telling the story of the Christian martyrs. In doing so, however, Foxe often got so involved in the historical context that he became a church historian as well. While this is not an unjustified detour from his purpose, others also reported on the events of that day but not, in any detail, the martyrdoms. Other reductions in his text were achieved by abbreviating some of Foxe's polemic against Roman Catholicism, since such objections are well known ever since that day. Trial records, while important evidence to support Foxe's claims, had to be abbreviated. Any other material oblique to the central thrust of this account, such as the letters written by martyrs and other detailed documents, were also surrendered.

The reader will surely note that the book or chapter divisions in this volume are very uneven in terms of size. The early chapters are much longer, while the remaining chapters taper down dramatically in length. Two reasons will explain this phenomenon: 1) After Harpsfield and others attacked Foxe's first edition, targeting primarily his coverage of the Marian persecution, Foxe loaded his next edition with documentation, most of which was abridged or cut here to reduce the vast quantity of text; and, 2) Foxe actually presented less central material in his later chapters. Please note that whenever larger abridgements are made, they are summarized in italics and bracketed.

Anyone who wishes to study one or all of the four English original editions of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* may go to www.johnfoxe.org—a website mounted by the University of Sheffield in England. This is the premier source for the original Foxe documents, woodcuts, illustrations, and general information regarding Foxe.

Historically sensitive readers may well be disappointed at the number of errors regarding the earliest martyrs that remain in the 1570 edition. Most of these are corrected in the footnotes on each page, and the reader would do well to remember that Foxe did not work from sources that were critically accurate in terms of modern methodology in matters historical or chronological. He could only make do with the sources from antiquity that were less than reliable in some cases, but those of his own day he used fairly and with hardly any error. In later centuries leading up to events contemporary with Foxe, then, his material becomes progressively more accurate, with even eyewitness authority.

ACTS

and Monuments

of these latter and perilous days,
touching matters of the Church,

wherein are comprehended and described
the great persecutions and horrible troubles
that have been wrought and practiced by
the Romish Prelates, specially in this
Realm of England and Scotland
from the year of our Lord a
thousand, unto the time
now present.

Gathered and collected according to the

true copies and writings, certificates as well
of the parties themselves that suffered,
as also out of the Bishops' Registers,
which were the doers thereof,
By *John Foxe*

Imprinted at London by John Day,
dwelling over Aldersgate.

Cum privilegio Regie Magestatis.

The Year of Our Lord Fifteen Hundred and Seventy

To the true and faithful congregation of Christ's universal Church, with all and singular members thereof, wheresoever congregated, or dispersed through the Realm of England, a Protestation or petition of the author, wishing to the same abundance of all peace and tranquility with the speedy coming of Christ the spouse, to make an end of all mortal misery.³

3. This is a facsimile of the title page in the 1570 edition, upon which this condensation is based. Spelling has been modernized.

Above all, it must be understood that the qualities demanded of modern historiography—unbiased detachment, objectivity, dispassionate neutrality—simply do not apply here. Nor did they to any writers of that polemical period. Authors wrote with passion and purpose in that day, and John Foxe especially so. And while bias may add color to a historical event, this does not necessarily mean that any falsehood is involved. Finally, although it would have been simple to translate and update Foxe's Elizabethan English into today's prose, this was done only in the case of archaic spelling, not sentence structure. Foxe's text was changed only where his sixteenth-century wording is not readily understandable. It is hoped that the reader will enjoy the well-aged flavor of Foxe's actual wording, which is easily digested today, five hundred years later.

Hopefully, this condensation will provide a convenient roadmap into the vast material collected by Foxe for his 1570 edition, but with "no martyr left behind." It should also enable the reader to see into the mind and the world of John Foxe, a brilliant scholar and historian—albeit a clearly biased one, but a martyrologist with gifted, colorful pen.

In Christ's time, the congregation and councils of the Pharisees were the Orthodox Church.⁴ Yet Christ had another Church on earth. It was not so manifest in the sight of the world yet, but it was the only true Church in the sight of God. This is the Church which Christ meant He would raise in three days, when he spoke in the temple. And yet after the Lord was raised, he showed himself only to his elect few. This same Church, after that, increased and multiplied mightily among Jews, yet many did not have eyes to see God's Church, but persecuted it. And at length, their nations were destroyed.

After the Jews came the heathen emperors of Rome. These had the entire power of the world in their hands and used that power to attempt to extinguish the name of Christ and his Church. This violence continued for three hundred years. All the while the true Church of Christ was not in open sight, but abhorred everywhere. Yet the same small flock, so despised, was highly regarded by the Lord and he preserved that flock. For, although many of the Christians did suffer death, their death was not felt as a loss to them and was not a detriment to the Church. The more they suffered, the more their numbers increased.

In this age of emperors, the land of Britain was the home of many Christian men and women. The faith was uncorrupt for the length of four hundred years. But many of Britain's preachers were slain by the Saxons. Slowly, even these Saxons began to enter the faith. And during this time the Church of England was not governed by the Bishops of Rome.

But the Church of Rome began to decline from God. Riches begot ambition. Ambition destroyed religion. Out of this corruption sprang in England a type of monk, sent by the Church of Rome, being more drowned in superstition and ceremonies. This was about 980. Of this swarm were Egbertus Aigelbert, Egwine, Boniface, Wilfrid, Agathon, Dunstane, Oswald, Duke of Eastangles Aethelwine, Anselme, and others.⁵

And yet at this time, also through God's providence, the Church did not lack better knowledge and judgment to weigh with the darkness of those days. For although King Edgar, with his son Edward, seduced by Dunstan and other monkish clerics, had embraced much of the superstition and erected as many monasteries as there

4. Foxe means "established religion" in this context.

5. In listings such as this, replete with obscure names, no attempt is made to provide identifications or dates, since this would destroy the flow of the text.

are Sundays in the year, they did not last long. After the death of Edgar came King Ethelred and Queen Elfhred, his mother. They displaced the monks and restored the married priests to their possessions. Soon after that came the Danes who overthrew the monasteries as fast as Edgar had set them up.⁶

And so stood the True Church of Christ, not without some difficulty, yet in truth and strength. Then in the time of Pope Gregory VII, about 1080, and again Pope Innocent III⁷ in 1215, these popes turned the True Church upside down. All order was broken, discipline dissolved, true doctrine defaced, Christian faith extinguished. Instead was set up the preaching of men's decrees, dreams, and idle traditions. And where before truth was free to be disputed among learned men, now liberty was turned into law, argument into authority. Whatever the Bishop of Rome denounced was to be received without opposition; what was contrary was heresy to be punished with fagot and fire.

Then the sincere faith of this English Church, which held out so long, began to waver. The clear sun of God's Word was overshadowed with mists and darkness, appearing like sackcloth to the people, who could neither understand what they read nor were permitted to read what they could understand. In these miserable days, as the true Church began to shrink, a new set of clerics were introduced. Scholarly doctors, canonists, four orders of Friars, other monastic sets, and fraternities of infinite types were sent to England. What they preached stood as truth. What they approved was Catholic. What they condemned was heresy. Whomsoever they accused, almost no one could save. And so these continued to reign in the Church for the space of now four-hundred-odd years. During that time the true Church of Christ, although it does not openly appear in the face of the world, oppressed by tyranny, was not so invisible or unknown; but by the providence of the Lord, some remnant remained from time to time. This remnant showed secret good affection to sincere doctrine but also stood in open defense of truth against the disordered Church of Rome.

Many in the Church were condemned to the fire for attempting to segregate themselves from the Church of Rome, even before Pope Innocent [III]. The martyrs of Asia [Minor], Waldensians, and many individual preachers and writers as well as monks, clerics, including large groups from towns and villages were persecuted and died for the true faith. Of these were the one-hundred and forty, as well as forty from the province of Narbon⁸ and the twenty-three at Paris in the year 1210.

Proceeding further, we see the beginning descent of the Church into the year of 1501. That year the Lord began to show, in parts of Germany, tokens and bloody marks of his Passion: the bloody cross, his nails, spear, and crown of thorns—as they fell from heaven upon the garments of men and women. By these signs, Almighty God previewed what grievous afflictions and bloody persecutions were to begin to assail His church for His Gospel's sake.⁹

6. The people in this paragraph, though more important, will be further defined by Foxe later in the text.

7. Foxe did well in choosing these two popes. Gregory VII (1073–1085, regnal dates here and henceforth), was the powerful reforming pope of the Investiture Controversy, who took on Henry IV of Germany at Canossa. Innocent III (1198–1216) was “the arbiter of Europe,” the most powerful pope ever.

8. Narbonensis in Gaul, modern Provence.

9. Clearly, Foxe shared in the credulity of the late Medieval world.

And now by the passing of years we are come from 1501 to 1570. The full seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity draw to an end if we count from the appearance of the bloody marks above. If we reckon from the beginning of Luther¹⁰ and his persecution, then we yet have sixteen years. Now what will the Lord do with this wicked world, or what rest will he give to His church after these long sorrows? He is our Father in Heaven. His will must be done on earth as seems best to His divine majesty.

In the meantime let us, in all patient obedience, wait upon His gracious leisure and glorify His holy name. Edify one another with all humility. And if there cannot be an end to our disputing and contending against one another, let there be a moderation in our affections. Since it is the good will of our God that Satan thus should be let loose among us for a short time, let us strive, while we can, to amend the malice of the time with mutual humanity. Let those who are in error not disdain to learn. They who have greater talents of knowledge, let them instruct simply to those who are simple. England is a commonwealth, and God has so placed Englishmen here in one Church as in one ship together. Let us not divide the ship, which would perish if divided. Every man needs to serve in his position with diligence. They, who sit at the helm, need to keep well the compass point. The direction must be guided by God's word and will never fail. They who labor at the oars do what they can to keep from the rocks. Others take heed that they do not cause sedition or disturbance against the rowers and mariners. What countries and nations, what Kingdoms and empires, what cities, towns, homes have seen discord dissolved their unity?

May the Lord of Peace, who has power of both land and sea, reach forth His merciful hand to help those who begin to sink, bear up those who stand, to still the winds and seas of discord and contentions among us. While we profess one Christ, may we unite ourselves into one doctrine, one Ark of the True Church. May we continue steadfast in faith and be conducted to the joyful port of our desired landing place by His heavenly grace to Whom both in heaven and on earth be all power and glory, with His Father the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

To the virtuous, most noble Princess Queen Elizabeth, our Lady, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, defender of Christian Faith and Gospel, and principal governor, both of the Realm and also over the Church of England and Ireland, under Christ the supreme head of His Church. John Foxe, her humble subject, prays daily for the increase of God's Holy Spirit and grace, and for a long reign, perfect health, and joyful peace, to govern His flock committed to her charge in the example of all good Princes, the comfort of His Church and the Glory of His Blessed Name.¹¹

When I first presented these *Acts and Monuments* unto Your Majesty (most dear sovereign Queen Elizabeth, our peaceable Salome) which your majesty's rare clemency received in such gentle part, I well hoped that these my travails in this kind of writing had been at an end, and that I thought I might return to my studies again, to

10. Foxe calculates here from Luther's posting of the Ninety-Five Theses in 1517.

11. What follows is a greatly abbreviated summary of the thirty-four-page rebuttal Foxe presented regarding the criticisms against earlier editions of *Acts and Monuments* in which he was accused of publishing lies and total falsehoods.

other purposes, after my own desire, more fit than to write histories, especially in the English tongue. But certain evil disposed persons, of ill-tempered tongues and adversaries to good proceedings, would not suffer me so to rest. They fumed and fretted and raised up such miserable exclamations at the first appearing of this book as was wonderful¹² to hear. A man would have thought Christ to have been new born again and that Herod with all the City of Jerusalem had been in an uproar. Such blustering and stirring was then against that poor book through all quarters of England, even to the gates of Lovaine. No English Papist in all the realm thought himself a perfect Catholic unless he had cast out some word or other to give that book a blow.

Whereupon, I considered within myself, what should move them thus to such rage? First I began with more circumspect diligence to look again at what I had done. In searching thus, I found what the fault was, where it lay, and that it was not so much in the book itself as in another mystery and working. The critics' issue was with the revelation of the cruel and unjust murder of martyrs in and near our own day, by those who would claim to be faith-filled Catholics and followers of Papist doctrine. To quote Joannes Auentinus, "Who being ashamed, belike to hear their worthy stratagems like to come to light, sought by what means they might the stopping of the same."

And because they could not work it by public authority (the Lord of Heaven long preserve you, Noble Majesty), they renewed again an old wonted practice of theirs, doing as they did for some time to withhold the English Bible in the days of your renowned father, King Henry VIII, who, when they neither by manifest reason could not longer oppose the matter contained in the book, nor yet abide the coming out thereof, then sought by subtle devise to deprave the translation, notes and prologues, claimed that there was in it a thousand lies. There were not such lies in it, but because the coming of that book would betray *their* falsehoods and they thought best to begin to make exceptions against it.

In the same way they tried to deal with me and this book. With like sophistication they also cannot abide to hear their own treacherous doings declared. But I do not excuse myself or defend the book as though nothing in it were to be amended. I have ventured upon this story of the church and have spent not only my pains but my health to bring it to this. Your Majesty will see that much effort and energy has been spent in correcting my own erroneous proclamations, and as much energy as been spent in providing documentation for those areas most attacked in our prior effort. But as for the "lies" which they proclaim, they are most stridently reinforced and restated in this edition. Those who stalwartly withstood the pains of torture and horrid death for the truth of Jesus Christ are listed here, as are their murderers.

To the true Christian reader, what utility is to be taken by reading these histories?

Seeing that the world is full of an infinite multitude of books of all kinds of matters, it may seem superfluous and needless for me to set forth these histories. There, indeed, may be a lack of readers for the books that exist, and some may think it rash for me to attempt this enterprise. I considered, however, the memorable Acts and famous doings of this latter age of the Church: the patient sufferings of the worthy

12. "Astonishing," in a negative sense.

martyrs. I thought that these precious Monuments of so many should not lie buried through my fault under the darkness of oblivion. Something must be said of them for their well-deserved honor, and again for benefits of those who read of their deeds. But above all else, nothing so much stirred me, as did the need of presenting these Monuments or stories of martyrs which I have framed in the English tongue for the English church, and which simple people could best understand.

At first by reading these stories we may learn a lively testimony of God's mighty working in the life of man. In these men and women we have a much more assured and plain witness of God, both in their lives and deaths, which appear as manifest declarations of God's divine working; even while, in such sharpness or torments, we behold in them strength so far above man's reach, such patience in imprisonment, such Godliness in forgiving, cheerfulness so courageous in suffering, besides the manifold sense and feeling of the Holy Ghost, which they tasted in their afflictions. What man reading the miseries of these Godly persons would not look at his own life? For if God gives adversity to a good man, what may the better sort promise themselves,¹³ or the evil person fear? By reading these stories we are made perhaps better in our living and better prepared for conflicts should God will them to happen to us. Perhaps we shall be wiser by their doctrine and more steadfast by their example.

I see no reason why the martyrs of our time deserve any less commendation than those of the primitive Church. They are assuredly not inferior to them in any point of praise whether we view the number of them that suffered, or greatness of the torments, or the constancy in dying. Consider the fruit that they brought to posterity and the increase of the Gospel. They watered the Truth with their blood. They taught us by their death to overcome such tyranny. Ought we not learn from their example, we who are now the posterity and the children of these martyrs, and being admonished by their examples? If we cannot express their charity to all men, let us give no cause of offense to any. And let us keep from shedding of blood, and our tongues from hurting the fame of others. Let us not shrink from martyrdom if the case so requires, following their example.

13. The pragmatic view of Foxe's Puritanism drives his desire to make the examples of the martyrs, throughout his book, examples of faith and guides to strengthen the reader's own faith.