THE MARTYR AS MODEL IN JOHN FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

THE MARTYR AS MODEL IN JOHN FOXE'S

BOOK OF MARTYRS

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For Andrew and Irene Eben and Victor and Marcella Schlottman,

who have already joined the saints before the throne.

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PREFACE

In his final preface to *Acts and Monuments*, John Foxe writes, "If by reading profane stories we are made the better in our livings . . . , how much more meet for us to accept and embrace the lives and doing of the most constant martyrs . . . which may serve as to garnish the life . . . to instruct the mind in all kinds of godliness."[1] In the execution of this project, I have been blessed to have my life so instructed by these mild and constant martyrs, and for that I am grateful.

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[1] John Foxe, "A Declaration Concerning the Utility and Profit of This History," in *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, 1563 ed. (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), 15, http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe.

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CHAPTER 1

THE MARTYR AS MODEL IN JOHN FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS

John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments of These Latter Perilous Days Touching on the Matters of the Church* is without doubt one of the most influential books of the English Reformation. Under its more colloquial name, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," there is hardly a student of English literature or history who has not encountered this book or its influence. Scholars of early modern England widely acknowledge that it was so broadly read and embraced as to attain the status of a "quasi-biblical text,"[1] achieving an "influence second only to that of the English Bible."[2]

Ironically however, the book's massive success has served to obscure its original intent. As Foxe's history gained wide acclaim, it began to be adapted for use in political and polemical purposes.[3] Foxe's book, once released from his pen, would be used to condemn and vindicate all manner of individuals and movements, some of which, Foxe had never even encountered. Within the space of a century, the book would be used to both defend and overthrow the Crown, forge national identity, villainize foreign armies, and prophesy popish plots. Unsurprisingly then, much of the scholarship on the

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[1] Damian Nussbaum, "Laudian Foxe-Hunting? William Laud and the Status of John Foxe in the 1630s," in *The Church Retrospective: Papers Read at the 1995 Summer Meeting and the 1996 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1997), 329.

[2] Leonard J. Trinterud, ed., *Elizabethan Puritanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 41. The book's influence upon popular piety can clearly be seen in its adaptation into pocket folios, pulpit editions, and even folk songs. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 90.

[3] Glyn Parry, "Elect Church or Elect Nation? The Reception of the Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, ed. David M. Loades, John Foxe Colloquium (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 170.

book has been interested in the effects of the book rather than its intent. A great deal of scholarship has focused on the reception history of the book. At the same time, while many scholars have looked at the effects of the book, others have looked to its sources. Since the work of S. R. Maitland in 1837, much of Foxian scholarship has turned to text critical issues within *Acts and Monuments*, exploring the wealth of sources behind the text and variously criticizing or defending Foxe's accuracy and motives in using them.[4]

In the wake of all this, however, there has been comparatively less focus on Foxe's own intentions for the work.[5] In fact, the abundance of scholarship searching for meaning behind and before the text of Foxe's book has in some cases served to obscure the work itself. Foxe and his work have been described as propagandist, nationalist, royalist, or any number of other monikers. These do not adequately describe, and some even distort, the true context and intent of Foxe and his work.[6] Striking by their absence are modern scholarly assessments of Foxe's work in light of what he held most dear: his theology and piety. That is the goal of this dissertation.

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[4] Maitland's project was self-consciously deconstructive, accusing Foxe of widespread and deliberate inaccuracy. Foxe's seminal defender was J. F. Mozley, who in the eyes of many scholars defended Foxe's approach but also opened significant avenues of scholarship into the questions of Foxe's sources and the redactional history of TAM. See Samuel Roffey Maitland, *A Review of Fox the Martyrologist's History of the Waldenses* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1837); J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Macmillan, 1940); Donald T. Williams, "John Foxe," in *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought*, ed. Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 117–38; C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944); Thomas S. Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm: Reading and Misreading Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 1 (1999): 23–46.

[5] Mark Breitenberg gives an excellent summary of how much of scholarship has come to be dominated by these two major polls; see Mark Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word: Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *Renaissance and Reformation* 25, no. 4 (1989): 381–407.

[6] Foxe biographer V. Norskov Olsen decries this tendency when he writes, "Foxe's life and work have many facets; he was Foxe the Historiographer, the Martyrologist, the Humanist, the Erasmian, the Puritan, the Anglican, the Elizabethan Eusebius, the Gospeler, the ecclesiologist, the Erastian, the precursor of Elizabethan nationalism, the Lutheran, and so on. If any of these are enlarged at the expense of the others, or if any single one is considered without reference to the rest, then the true picture of him is distorted." V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 29.

Thesis

This project will argue that to be rightly understood, *Acts and Monuments* needs to be considered in light of its theological background and pastoral goals. With *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe was seeking to make a deliberate contribution to an established tradition of devotional literature with the goal of promoting further reformation, both personal and public, and to provide the martyrs as models of godly piety to this end. This is not a typical modern approach to Foxe or *Acts and Monuments*.

Foxe himself specifically identifies the promotion of Protestant piety as a primary purpose of the work. Comparing his work to the popular works of Greek mythology, he states, "How much more then is it meet for us to accept and embrace the lives and doings, not of rough warriors, but of most mild and constant Martyrs, which may serve, not so much to delight the ear, as to garnish the life, to frame it with examples of great profit, and to instruct the mind in all kind of Christian godliness."[7] The purpose of "instructing the mind in all kind of Christian godliness" accords well with Foxe's own life and vocation. From his conversion on, Foxe was a passionate reformer. Furthermore, he was not indifferent to the Reformation conflicts over spirituality. Under Henry VIII's reign, he rejected holy orders out of a desire for reform. When he was finally ordained, he refused the surplice and avoided promotion into any office that would require the wearing of vestments for the remainder of his ministry.[8] Under Edward VI, he stood with Nicholas Ridley and John Ponet as one of the chief proponents of discipline as an

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[7] John Foxe, "A Declaration Concerning the Utility and Profit of This History," in *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, 1563 ed. (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), 15–16, http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe. Note: In quotations of early modern sources I have retained archaic and obsolete vocabulary. I have modernized the spelling and expanded contractions and abbreviations. Words appearing in square brackets represent editorial insertions, not in the original text, that have been added to aid in comprehension. I have left the original punctuation intact, except in rare instances where it is misleading. I have substituted modern text for printers' symbols that are no longer in use. In rare cases, I have updated a word when its usage is so obsolete as to be misleading. Words that are clear but antiquated I have noted and defined in the footnotes. All definitions and substitutions have been made on the basis of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2024, https://www.oed.com/.

[8] Trinterud, *Elizabethan Puritanism*, 43.

essential mark of the church.[9] Under Mary I, he fled to the continent, where he quickly allied himself with the continental reformers. In Frankfort, he met and allied himself with John Knox, and on Knox's departure, he became a key leader in arguing for the further reformation of the worship services there.[10] When he returned to England after Mary's death, this reforming impulse remained. Under Elizabeth I, he published his own edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, arguing for further reform of the service and the removal of Roman Catholic elements from worship.[11] Far from being a political mover, Foxe devoted a great deal of his time to ministry. His theological affinities would remain as well; till his death, he kept a significant correspondence with several continental reformers, even expressing a desire to return to Switzerland.[12] John McNeill goes so far as to state that Foxe "must be classed with them [Ridley, and Ponet] among the founders of Puritanism."[13] It is, therefore, without doubt that Foxe gave much of his life to the promotion of Protestant piety.

Nevertheless, the issue of Foxe's piety is often glossed over in modern studies of *Acts and Monuments*. The two most recent significant studies of *Acts and Monuments* are typical in this regard. Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman devote two chapters to Foxe's printing career but scant few pages to Foxe's life outside his printing and no particular attention to his religious convictions.[14] John King gives no attention to the

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[9] John T. McNeill, "John Foxe: Historiographer, Disciplinarian, Tolerationist," *Church History* 43, no. 2 (1974): 220.

[10] McNeill, "John Foxe," 218.

[11] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, ed. Paul L. Maier and R. C. Linnenkugel (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 17.

[12] McNeill, "John Foxe," 220.

[13] McNeill, "John Foxe," 220.

[14] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33–101.

biography of Foxe at all.[15] It would seem that as the sources and compilation of the book have taken the forefront of modern scholarship, study of the man himself has faded significantly. However, greater awareness of Foxe's sources and community should only serve to strengthen the argument for piety as a profound motivation for the work. The men most closely associated with shaping the text—men like Edmund Grindal, John Bale, John Day, and many others who will be explored later—were all convictional Protestants, deeply interested in the reformation of personal Christian practice. As the book grew in popularity in its later printings, friends and family of other Protestant sufferers sent in their own letters and stories that followed the same typical models, adding to this compendium of Protestant spirituality. As he received them, Foxe added them to future editions, often editing them to fit the developing Protestant ideal.

Furthermore, Foxe and his community were profoundly inspired by a covenantal view of history: a belief that history had proven that England had a special place in God's plan and with this a responsibility to respond with personal reformation or face the consequences. This belief motivated Foxe, and his community, to use the book to promote just such a personal reformation. It is no surprise that Foxe sees the book as "for the use of Christ's church, utility of your realm, and the glory of his holy name."[16] In Foxe's eschatological understanding, the success of England depended upon its devotional faithfulness: the "use of Christ's church" and the "utility of your realm" were inextricably intertwined.

Additionally, the book's genre is not insignificant to this thesis. Foxe was self-consciously stepping into a long tradition of martyrology designed to inspire godly living. Martyrologies were already an established genre of literature with "broad commemorative, ethical, and ideological purposes . . . overwhelmingly rhetorical in their

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[15] John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[16] John Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 8.

nature."[17] Seeking to unseat the most popular devotional literature of the day, the saints' stories that he saw as false and spurious,[18] Foxe sought to construct a new heroic model of piety.[19] And there is good evidence that the book was received devotionally. Food particles and candle wax in the troughs of existing copies indicate that some readers would sit for extended periods of time meditating upon the stories and images.[20] The woodcuts took on particular interest, displayed in homes and discussed in local taverns.[21] The stories from and allusions to Foxe were used extensively as illustrations and commonplaces in sermons.[22] Foxe's book, whatever its other components, was profoundly a book of Protestant piety.

Discovering Piety in *Acts and Monuments*

This discussion of lay piety during the English Reformation is one fraught with difficulty. It cannot be denied that the Reformation ushered in massive changes in religious practice. Before the Reformation, parishioners believed that salvation came through good works such as charity, donations to saints, and participation in church efforts. As the reformers promoted a changed understanding of salvation, changed understandings of piety necessarily followed. Foxe specifically used *Acts and Monuments*

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[17] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 26.

[18] John Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

[19] John Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[20] I am indebted to Mark Rankin, who revealed this insight in a private conversation. His study of several early print editions of TAM held at the Ohio State University revealed bits of bread, cheese, and candle wax in the gutters of the books, particularly on those pages containing woodcuts. He concluded this was evidence of the book's being studied, discussed, and meditated on in taverns and private settings with food and drink present.

[21] Ruth Sampson Luborsky, "The Illustrations: Their Pattern and Plan," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 67; Margret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram, "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. D. M. Loades, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1997), 66–70.

[22] John Frederick Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640–1648* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 173.

to argue against the Roman Catholic understanding of piety centered sacred ceremonies and spaces, and for a protestant definition of piety; namely, any action that flowed from the power of the Spirit to Love of God and neighbor. The stories and documents in *Acts and Monuments* are specifically selected and edited by Foxe to put this change in definition on display.

How to track these changes in the larger culture, however, is a topic of significant debate.[23] The works of revisionists such as J. J. Scarisbrick have argued that the reformation of lay piety in England was late and reluctant, dating true reformation among the laity to well within the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603).[24] Key to this argument is the paucity of textual evidence of evangelical spirituality among the lower classes, leaving the argument to be decided largely on the evidence of lay donations to, and participation in, church efforts.[25] I argue, however, that *Acts and Monuments* may be brought to bear obliquely as a resource for discovering lay piety in the English Reformation. As research increasingly shows, *Acts and Monuments* was not merely the work of one man but a compendium of sources motivated, shaped, and contributed to by a broad Protestant community. Therefore, *Acts and Monuments* provides a window into the piety of that community. I am not arguing that Foxe's martyrs are statistically representative of all Christians in sixteenth-century England. The debate will still rage on regarding the "unlettered" public whose voices are truly lost to history. Nevertheless, the martyrs do provide a window into the Protestant community. The martyrs were not

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[23] Clair Schen gives a helpful summary of the debate over which historical sources should be used in assessing lay piety. Claire S. Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500–1620*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 1–21.

[24] John Joseph Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Christopher Haigh, ed., *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). These revisionist works place the true Reformation among the laity late in the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

[25] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, 1st ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

extremists but exemplars; the piety they exhibited represented the piety Protestantism was ideally meant to produce. Their beliefs and values were not aberrant; had they been so, their community would not have strongly encouraged them to persevere, as they so clearly did.[26] Rather, the martyrs were an expression of a community's ideal, an ideal that would capture the cultural imagination as the book's impact suggests. This "community of the book" included those among both the lower and the upper classes, dating back as far as the Henrician Reformation (1521–1547) and as far forward as the publication of Foxe's last edition (1583).[27] Thus, this project's reading of *Acts and Monuments* sheds light on voices not regularly considered in this debate and opens the door for further research in that direction.

History of Research, Publications, and Interpretation

Because *Acts and Monuments* is a highly polemical work, deeply intertwined with English politics and national identity, its publication history, its reception history, and the history of its scholarship are inextricable. The publication history of *Acts and Monuments* could form a book-length treatment of its own, seeing as *Acts and Monuments* has gone through more than one hundred English language editions, including adaptations, abridgments, expansions, and transformations into songs, mnemonics, and short story pamphlets.[28] Even so, the publication history must be at least cursorily examined to understand the book's reception, as its publication was motivated by contemporary events from its inception.

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[26] Protestants extensively exchanged prison letters, encouraging one another to persevere to the end. See Thomas S. Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2009): 133–46.

[27] While the Henrician Reformation began formally in 1533 with the passing of the Statute in Restraint of Appeals, it had its roots in the Protestant book trade and the Cambridge Protestant movement dating back to the early 1520s. J. D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors: 1485–1558*, Oxford History of England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 343.

[28] Warren W. Wooden, *John Foxe*, Twayne's English Authors Series (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 93.

Sixteenth-Century Publications and Interpretation

Begun while Foxe was in exile during the reign of Mary Tudor, the work that would become *Acts and Monuments* was originally intended as a memorial of sorts for the Lollards. Once Elizabeth took the throne and Foxe returned to England, Foxe's research was quickly adapted, at least partially, to promote the new and beleaguered Elizabethan government.[29] This, of course, makes its publication and reception inherently political, though not to the exclusion of religious motivations. Foxe and his associates saw Elizabeth's reign as an essential part of God's plan to save England and thus saw supporting the Queen as a profoundly theological act. Unsurprisingly, then, upon *Acts and Monuments's* publication, it was swiftly given the explicit support of the government, with a decree requiring all members of the clergy own a copy.[30] The book experienced an immediate backlash from Catholic writers. Nicholas Harpsfield, former Archdeacon of London and famously the first biographer of Thomas More, attacked *Acts and Monuments* in a pseudonymous work for alleged historical inaccuracy and the scandal of including Lollards among the orthodox martyrs.[31] Thomas Harding, Nicholas Sander, and Robert Parson soon added their voices to the fray as well.[32] All offered

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[29] Evenden and Freeman trace the book's political connections through the career of William Cecil, Elizabeth's secretary of state, who arranged funding for much of the project. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 32, 66–67, 112.

[30] There is a debate as to the extent as to which these orders mandating the spread of *Acts and Monuments* would have been carried out. Regarding the privy counsel's order that the book be placed in every church, Leslie Oliver argues that there simply would not have been enough copies in print to accommodate the order, instead estimating that half the parish churches may have owned a copy, in addition to private copies in circulation. See Leslie M. Oliver, "The Seventh Edition of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 37, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 1943): 245–48. Nevertheless, contrary to Oliver's research, the Privy Council did issue the order, which has now been found in the archives of the Borthwick Institute. Institution Act, book II, pt. III, fol. 85v, Borthwick Institute; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, "Print, Profit, and Propaganda: The Elizabethan Privy Council and the 1570 Edition of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *English Historical Review* 119, no. 484 (2004): 1289. Regardless of the exact number of copies in actual circulation, government patronage and promotion did advance public knowledge of the book significantly, which in turn contributed to the publication of cheaper abridgments and adaptations that proliferated among the population. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 90.

[31] Nicholas Harpsfield [Alan Cope (pseud.)], *Dialogi Sex* (Antwerp, 1566).

[32] Thomas Harding, *A Reioindre to M. Iewels Replie* (n.p., 1567); Nicholas Sander, *De Origine Ac Progressu Schismaticis Anglicani Liber* (Cologne, 1585); Robert Parsons, *A Treatise of Three*

similar attacks expanding on the themes of alleged historical inaccuracy and the scandal of calling perceived heretics martyrs.[33] Foxe responded with both correction and defense, updating mistakes with newfound evidence and writing his own defenses in the prefaces of subsequent editions. However, the argument was far from over. The main objections from and responses to these early attacks would shape the next four hundred years of Foxian scholarship.

While Catholic objection continued, Protestant popularization efforts began. In 1589, Timothy Bright published the first abridgment of the book, with the express purpose of bringing the cost of the work within reach of the masses.[34] Numerous other popularized versions followed, from novelty abridgments, short story pamphlets, and even printed songs and mnemonic devices to aid the reader in memorizing martyr stories.[35] These cheaper popularized versions did much to disseminate *Acts and Monuments* far beyond the reach of the large and expensive volumes authorized by Foxe and his printer John Day. After popularization came adaptation. As will be seen, Foxe walked a careful line throughout his editions between supporting the Crown and critiquing it. Soon after his death, however, nonconformists began adapting Foxe as their own, adding to and editing his work to support their more radical positions.[36] Protestant

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Conversions (n.p., 1604). J. F. Mozley calls this last work the "locus classicus of the anti-foxian case." Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 227.

[33] For a summary of the early anti-Catholic response to Foxe, see Glyn Parry, "John Foxe, 'Father of Lyes,' and the Papists," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 295–305.

[34] Timothy Bright, *An Abridggement of the Book of Acts and Monumentes of the Church Written by That Reverend Father Maister John Fox: And Now Abridged by Timothe Bright, Doctor of Phisicke, for Such as Either through Want of Leysure or Ablity Have Tho the Use of So Necessary a History* (London: Windlet, 1589). See also King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 133–35.

[35] Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 90; David Scott Kastan, "Little Foxes," in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 117–32.

[36] Damian Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition of Acts and Monuments," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 178–91.

nonconformists such as William Prynne, George Fox, and—most famously—John Bunyan were all influenced by these appropriated editions.[37]

Seventeenth-Century Publications and Interpretation

The seventeenth century saw the oddity of *Acts and Monuments* being appropriated for both royalist and Puritan purposes, each cause seeking to use the same book to swing the public the opposite direction. In 1610, James I commissioned a new edition in the midst of the unrest following the Gunpowder Plot. Edited by James Bulkeley, it promoted English solidarity by emphasizing the nationalistic elements of the text and adding stories from the French wars of religion to further villainize England's long-lasting enemy.[38] In 1632, two years after the beginning of the personal rule of Charles I, Puritans produced an edition with other villains in mind.[39] In this edition, the editors added a section encouraging readers to prepare to suffer at the hands of their own English rulers, thus painting the reign of Charles in the same light as that of Mary I.[40] In 1641, Puritans produced another edition to celebrate the failure of Laudianism and William Laud's fall from grace. This edition papered over Foxe's clear support of Elizabeth's monarchy, focusing instead on the apocalyptic elements of the text that framed the Puritan cause as part of the cosmic Christian struggle.[41] As the Puritan cause failed, so too did the Puritan editions, and in 1685, the Stationers' Company published another royalist edition to celebrate the accession of James II. Predictably emphasizing

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[37] D. M. Loades, ed., introduction to *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 5.

[38] Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom," 178.

[39] The Personal Rule of Charles I, also known as the Eleven Years of Tyranny, denotes the period from 1629 to 1640 when Charles ruled without the involvement of parliament. This period was marked by the hardening of Charles toward his political opponents, notably in this context the Puritans, as well as the accession of William Laud to bishop of London, and then archbishop of Canterbury, and his subsequent campaigns against Puritanism.

[40] Nussbaum, "Appropriating Martyrdom," 182.

[41] Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word," 384.

the conservative and nationalist elements, it was the last complete edition to come to print before the nineteenth century.[42]

As the Glorious Revolution eased English anxieties and brought national stability, *Acts and Monuments* was no longer recruited as a weapon against English political opponents, and as the Enlightenment took hold in Europe, the religious enthusiasm and apocalyptic message of the martyrologists waned in popularity. What remained, however, was the popularity of the stories. Abridgments, short story pamphlets, and packets of grisly illustrations based upon *Acts and Monuments* continued to proliferate well into the nineteenth century.[43] Thomas Freeman describes the character of these late-seventeenth-century abridgments as including only "the most sensational episodes of torture and death," giving Foxe's work "a lurid quality which was certainly far from the author's intention."[44] Detached from their original context, the martyr stories continued to fascinate, if not always to motivate.

Eighteenth-Century Publications and Interpretation

In the early eighteenth century, no complete edition of *Acts and Monuments* came to print. David Loades attributes this to a shift in English attitudes toward history, focusing on concerns "antiquarian rather than polemical,"[45] as histories like John Strype's *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion* and Charles Dodd's *The*

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[42] D. M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1970), 269.

[43] Erwen Nicholson notes sixty such publications between 1660 and 1830, showing the significant continued popularity of the stories of TAM. Erwen Nicholson, "Eighteenth-Century Foxe: Evidence for the Impact of the Acts and Monuments in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 149.

[44] Thomas Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10050.

[45] Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word," 383.

Church History of England replaced Foxe in the printing houses.[46] This is not to say that *Acts and Monuments* had fallen out of the public consciousness in the eighteenth century. On the contrary, there is a broad tradition among historians acknowledging that by the eighteenth century, *Acts and Monuments* had become "a seminal influence upon the development of an English 'Protestant' self-image."[47] A quantitative measure of *Acts and Monuments's* actual circulation in this period has proven impossible to obtain;[48] however, "citations of and borrowings from Foxe" provide the evidence of a widespread consciousness of *Acts and Monuments's* stories.[49] The woodcuts within *Acts and Monuments* had come to be particularly iconic, becoming according to one author "the most influential of all English book illustrations."[50]

Nineteenth-Century Publications and Interpretation

Near the turn of the nineteenth century, unrest in Europe revived interest in *Acts and Monuments* and with it the polemical battles that had always surrounded it. Full

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[46] John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England, during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1824); Charles Dodd, *The Church History of England, from the Year 1500, to the Year 1688,* 3 vols. (n.p.:Brussels,1737). Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word," 383. Breitenberg states that Dodd was actually a pseudonym for Hugh Tootel.

[47] Nicholson, "Eighteenth-Century Foxe," 142. See also John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660–1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 72–75; J. R. Jones, *Country and Court: England, 1658–1714*, New History of England (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 199; Edward Hodnett, *Francis Barlow* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 40; Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 30; Nicholas Rogers, "Crowd and People in the Gordon Riots," in *The Transformation of Popular Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, ed. Ekhardt Hellmuth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 42; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 25–29; Geoffrey S. Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: Late Stuart and Early Georgian Britain, 1660–1722* (London: Longman, 1993), 120; Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714–80: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 28; J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47–48; Michael Mullett, *James II and English Politics 1678–1688* (London: Routledge, 2016), 2.

[48] Nicholson, "Eighteenth-Century Foxe," 144–45.

[49] Nicholson, "Eighteenth-Century Foxe," 147.

[50] Edward Hodnett, *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature* (London: Scolar Press, 1982), 30.

editions of the text came to print in 1782 and 1784, and twelve more abbreviations came out between 1790 and 1810.[51] In response, Catholic priest John Milner published *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical, and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester*.[52] By finding inaccuracies in Foxe's depiction of Tudor Winchester, Milner sought to discredit the whole of the book. In 1818, he expanded his scope with his work *The End of Religious Controversy*.[53] Just as Foxe had had his popularizers, the early nineteenth century saw anti-Foxian pundits. In 1820, Catholic priest T. Baddeley published a short pamphlet arguing that Foxe's martyrs were not spiritual sufferers but common miscreants executed for civil crimes.[54] In 1824, Catholic printer William Andrews published *A Critical Historical Review of Fox's Book of Martyrs, Shewing the Inaccuracies, Falsehoods, and Misrepresentations in That Work of Deception*. Interestingly, Andrews sought to combat Foxe's visual appeal by commissioning woodcuts of his own, an ironic if hostile testimony to how much *Acts and Monuments* had shaped public consciousness.[55]

The Maitland-Mozley Debate

While popular debate continued, changes in English politics sparked the most significant scholarly shift on Foxe heretofore. Catholic Emancipation and the subsequent "Oxford Movement" provoked unease amongst Protestants.[56] In response, many highly

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[51] Loades, introduction to *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 8.

[52] John Milner, *The History Civil and Ecclesiastical, and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (Winchester, 1798).

[53] John Milner, *The End of Religious Controversy in a Friendly Correspondence between a Religious Society of Protestants and a Roman Catholic Divine* (London, 1818).

[54] T. Baddeley, *A Sure Way to Find out the True Religion in a Conversation between a Father and His Son* (n.p., 1820).

[55] William Andrews, *A Critical Historical Review of Fox's Book of Martyrs, Shewing the Inaccuracies, Falsehoods, and Misrepresentations in That Work of Deception* (London, 1824).

[56] Catholic Emancipation refers to a group of political changes in the early nineteenth century that removed many of the restrictions that were earlier placed on Roman Catholics in England by the Act of Uniformity, the Test Acts, and the Penal Laws. In this period, many of the laws that required members of

placed Protestants sought to strengthen English Protestant identity, and again Foxe was marshaled to the task. In 1837, Anglican rector Stephen Reed Cattley sought to create "a new and complete edition."[57] His goals were both scholarly and polemical. Regarding scholarship, Cattley sought to create a single definitive edition that would encapsulate Foxe's vision for *Acts and Monuments*. *Acts and Monuments* had been published in four editions within Foxe's lifetime, each expanding and editing the text. Publications of *Acts and Monuments* after Foxe's death had taken selectively from these editions, adding material to achieve their own ends, which left a huge disparity in the material between earlier and later editions. Cattley and a team of students sought to compile the five earliest editions into one definitive edition with marginal notes. Polemically, he hoped that a new publication of Foxe would defend the integrity of the reformed Church of England in the face of a changing religious landscape.[58] Unfortunately for Cattley, both his scholarly and polemical efforts regarding Foxe were largely judged as a failure.

Regarding his scholarship, in his effort to create a modern and definitive edition of *Acts and Monuments*, Cattley has been largely judged to have obscured, rather than clarified, the original text of the work. Warren Wooden opines that Cattley's editions

> modernize much of Foxe's text, rearrange portions of it, add supplemental and transitional material without regard to the integrity of the text, and select from the various versions of the five Elizabethan editions without attempting either collation or consistency . . . the resulting text, complete with notes reflecting the editors'

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municipal corporations and government-office holders to receive the Lord's Supper in the Church of England were repealed, and political ties between the Anglican Church and the government were weakened. Subsequently a movement arose at Oxford University seeking a renewal of Roman Catholic thought and practice within the Anglican Church. These changes provoked significant religious and civil unrest in England and Ireland.

[57] Stephen Cattley, ed., *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1837), title page.

[58] D. Andrew Penny, "John Foxe's Victorian Reception," *Historical Journal* 40, no. 1 (1997): 111–14.

> strong Protestant bias, is thus a hodge-podge composite unlike any of the five complete Elizabethan editions.[59]

Subsequent scholarly assessments have pointed out further problems, such as the lack of a scholarly apparatus and significant bowdlerization, which remove the possibility of studying intertextual relationships and veil connections to Foxe's original sources.[60] Thus, though Cattley's editions were adequately successful at the bookseller, they are largely rejected by modern Foxe scholars.

Regarding his polemical goals, Cattley's editions drew out the most significant scholarly opposition to *Acts and Monuments* since its early Catholic opponents. English historian and Lambeth Palace librarian S. R. Maitland responded to Cattley's work with a series of magazine articles alleging that Foxe had fabricated sources, willfully distorted evidence, and presented information he knew to be untrue. His skill as an archivist allowed him to extensively access early modern English documents never before studied, seeking to find as many factual conflicts in Foxe as possible.[61] Cattley and Foxe biographer George Townsend replied with a blanket rebuttal of Maitland as failing to be impartial, but Maitland's archival skill won the day. The sheer volume of Maitland's archival sourcing created the illusion that Foxe had been entirely discredited. Sidney Lee's article on Foxe in the 1921 *Dictionary of National Biography* influenced a generation of scholars, presenting Foxe as self-evidently inaccurate.[62] The 1929 *Encyclopedia Britannica* showed the state of the argument when it put forward uncritically that Foxe was guilty of "willful falsification."[63]

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[59] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 111.

[60] Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm," 23-29.

[61] For a helpful summary and interaction with Maitland's objections, see Penny, "John Foxe's Victorian Reception."

[62] Sidney Lee, "Foxe, John," in *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 7:581–90.

[63] "Foxe, John," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (London: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1929), 9:573.

For nearly one hundred years after Maitland's work, *Acts and Monuments* was basically discredited among scholars as a source of history, leaving one nineteenth-century historian to write, "It may be said with truth, that he [Maitland] ran him [Foxe] to the death, for no one with any literary pretensions has since ventured to quote Foxe as an authority."[64] With Maitland's argument ascendant and opinions on English historiography radically shifting, *Acts and Monuments* was largely dismissed until well into the twentieth century, largely halting the production of new editions.[65]

The answer to Maitland came in 1940 from J. F. Mozley.[66] Mozley met Maitland's scholarship with his own extensive and detailed research. Mozley reexamined documents contemporary to Foxe and worked through Foxe's formerly unexamined records and correspondence, giving a close study to the key episodes in which Foxe was most often accused of misrepresenting facts. Mozley was able to show that Foxe was quite careful in his handling of sources, following the best historiographical methods of his time. While acknowledging the care needed to assess *Acts and Monuments* in light of Foxe's own biases, Mozley largely succeeded in restoring interest in Foxe as a historical source, leading Wooden to state, "Modern historians no longer feel constrained to apologize automatically for evidence and examples drawn from the *Acts and Monuments*."[67] Mozley's work sparked several similar but independent investigations

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[64] Dominic Trenow, *The Credibility of John Foxe, the Martyrologist* (London: Thomas Richardson and Son, 1868), 12.

[65] David Loades points out that as Foxe's history had from its inception been intertwined with English self-identity, the coinciding of the decline of the British Empire and the decline of interest in Foxe should not be seen as merely coincidental. Loades, introduction to *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 11.

[66] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (1940).

[67] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 110. For more recent assessments of the arguments of Maitland, see also D. Andrew Penny, *John Foxe, Evangelicalism, and the Oxford Movement: Dialogue across the Centuries*, Studies in Religion and Society 54 (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2002); Patrick Collinson, "Truth, Lies and Fiction in Sixteenth Century Protestant Historiography," in *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century*, Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 2014), 216–43. Both Penny and Collinson agree with Mozley, concluding that TAM, taken in light of its context, holds significant historical value.

into Foxe's historiographical methods and handling of documents.[68] These studies expanded on the conclusions of Mozley, further exonerating Foxe of willful misrepresentation. The arguments of Mozley and Maitland exposed the scholarly community to the sources and documents behind *Acts and Monuments*, opening new avenues of study that would come to dominate much of the study of *Acts and Monuments* up to the modern day.

Modern Directions in Scholarship

After Mozley and Maitland, the scholarship of *Acts and Monuments* has divided largely along the lines of those who have continued to study the book as a whole and those who have delved deeper into the study of Foxe's sources. In the prior camp, there has been a further divide into two sub-camps: those who view Foxe's motivation in publishing *Acts and Monuments* as largely spiritual and those who see Foxe's motivation as largely nationalistic.[69] As has been shown, the fate of *Acts and Monuments* has always been intertwined with English politics and identity, so it should not be surprising that as modern historical scholarship has tried to distance itself from religious controversy, nationalistic interpretations should rise to the fore. The first and most influential of these interpretations was that of William Haller.[70] Haller exposited Foxe's background and community to argue that Foxe wrote to promote a national self-consciousness among the English. As Foxe had set the zenith of his historical schema at the accession of Elizabeth

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[68] J. A. F. Thompson, "John Foxe and Some Sources for Lollard History: Notes for a Critical Appraisal," in *Papers Read at the Second Winter and Summer Meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society 1963*, Studies in Church History 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 251–57; A. G. Dickens, "Heresy and the Origins of English Protestantism," in *Britain and the Netherlands*, vol. 2, *Papers Delivered to the Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference*, ed. John S. Bromley and Ernest H. Kossman (Gronigen, Netherlands: J. B. Wolters, 1964), 53; John Fines, "A Note on the Reilability of Foxe, an Appendix to Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfiled, 1511–12," *Journal of Eccesiastical History* 14, no. 2 (1963): 174; Charles Butterworth, "Erasmus and Bilney and Foxe," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 57 (1953): 575–79.

[69] I am indebted to Mark Breitenberg for this insightful division of the modern scholarship. See Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word," 383.

[70] William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

I, Haller argued that Foxe saw England as an elect nation, second only to Israel, and a lighthouse to lead the rest of the world back to truth. This sparked a number of studies into Foxe's background and relationship to the development of English nationalism.

The most significant response was that of V. Norskov Olsen, who argued that Foxe's eschatology, seen largely in his Latin drama and his commentary on Revelation,[71] was the key to understanding Foxe's motivation.[72] Olsen argued that in Foxe's eschatology, it is the universal church, not the English nation, that is vindicated, and he pointed out Foxe's use of continental martyrs in *Acts and Monuments*. This, in turn, opened up avenues of study into Foxe's eschatology. Along this line, Thomas Betteridge argued that Foxe was motivated by his own apocalyptic view of history to form a national ideal.[73] Several other studies have explored the origins of Foxe's eschatology and its effect upon his historical understanding.[74] Since the work of Olsen, others have tried to nuance Haller's thesis, pointing out that regardless of Foxe's original intentions, *Acts and Monuments* did have a significant influence on the development of English national identity.[75] Thus, many have continued to interpret Foxe upon largely secular political and

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[71] John Foxe, *Christus Triumphans* (London, 1551); Foxe, *Eicasmi, Sev, Meditationes, in Sacram Apocalypsin* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1587).

[72] Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church*, passim.

[73] Thomas Betteridge, "From Prophetic to Apocalyptic: John Foxe and the Writing of History," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 210–32.

[74] Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); David Keep, "John Foxe's Last Word," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 94–104; Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Andrew Penny, "John Foxe, the Acts and Monuments and the Development of Prophetic Interpretation," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 252–77; Betteridge, "From Prophetic to Apocalyptic," 210–32; Palle J. Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no. 4 (1994): 600–624.

[75] Benedict Scott Robinson, "John Foxe and the Anglo Saxons," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 54–72; Parry, "Elect Church or Elect Nation?," passim.

nationalist lines, as evidenced by D. M. Loades's study in which he calls the Oxford Martyrs "revolutionary leaders whose ideology was temporarily eclipsed."[76]

Among those who propose a more spiritual motivation for *Acts and Monuments*, Helen White, a literary scholar, produced a work positioning *Acts and Monuments* as an evolution of the literary type of the "saint legend," arguing that Foxe uses the same literary tools and tropes of this earlier genre.[77] Similarly, Alice Dailey argued from saint legends and late medieval morality plays that martyrdom accounts like Foxe's served as a sort of living script for contemporary sufferers to lay over their own lives.[78] John Knott compared Foxe to Protestant separatist writings, arguing that *Acts and Monuments* is part of an evolution of the Protestant ideal of heroism,[79] and Brad Gregory has examined Foxe alongside Roman Catholic and Anabaptist martyrdom traditions to show the similarities.[80] On the whole, these integrated studies of Foxe have been far fewer in number compared to the next stream of scholarship considered.

As stated above, Mozley and Maitland opened the door to the study of Foxe's sources. Subsequently, the lion's share of scholarship has proceeded upon those lines due largely to a growing consensus that Foxe should be seen largely as a compiler rather than an author.[81] Significant in this development was the John Foxe Project, an effort by the British Academy begun in 1992 under the direction of David Loades to produce a modern

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[76] "The Oxford Martyrs" is the name commonly given to Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and Thomas Cranmer, who were tried at University Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the official church of the University of Oxford, and burned just outside the Oxford city walls. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs*, 36.

[77] Helen C. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963).

[78] Alice Dailey, *The English Martyr from Reformation to Revolution*, ReFormations: Medieval and Early Modern (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

[79] John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also Knott, "John Foxe and the Joy of Suffering," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 3 (1996): 721–34.

[80] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., Harvard Historical Studies 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[81] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 21–37.

edition of Foxe that would enable scholars to access the original Foxian editions of *Acts and Monuments* in all their intricacy. The result was not a new physical edition but a digital one: *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* which allows researchers to access the original text of the four Foxian editions plus a critical apparatus.[82] As part of this project, the Academy hosted four colloquia, which, in turn, resulted in four published volumes of articles exploring aspects of *Acts and Monuments*, especially its sources and background.[83]

Drawing upon Foxe's extensive quotations from other sources and a growing awareness of Foxe's significant collaboration with an entire community of Protestant contributors and editors, scholars in this stream have begun to extensively research the sources behind Foxe and the means, manner, and motivation of their acquisition and compilation. Publication in this stream has been so significant as to merit categorical distinction. First, there are those who have studied specific sources of Foxe, researching their background and the impact they made upon his text.[84] Second, are publications

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[82] Foxe, *TAMO*, http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe.

[83] Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (1997); Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective* (1999); Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World* (2002); D. M. Loades, ed., *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004).

[84] Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm," passim; John N. King, "Fiction and Fact in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 12–35; Brett Usher, "Essex Evangelicals under Edward VI: Richard Lord Rich, Richard Alvey and Their Circle," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 51–62; Thomas S. Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," *Historical Journal* 43, no. 3 (2000): 601–623; Thomas S. Freeman, "Research Rumor and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's Book of Marytrs," *Historical Journal* 38, no. 4 (1995): 797–819; Susan Wabuda, "Henry Bull, Miles Coverdale, and the Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood, Studies in Church History 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 245–58; Thomas S. Freeman, "'The Reformation of the Church in This Parliment': Thomas Norton, John Foxe and the Parliment of 1571," *Parliamentary History* 16, no. 2 (June 1997): 131–47; Thomas S. Freeman and Sarah Elizabeth Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2001): 1165–96; Korey Maas, "Confession, Contention, and Confusion: The Last Words of Robert Barnes and the Shaping of Theological Identity," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 42, no. 3 (2011): 689–707; Matthew Phillpott, "The Compilation of a Sixteenth-Century Ecclesiastical History, the Use of Matthew Paris in John Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *Medieval Chronicle* 7 (2011): 205–22; Magnus Williamson, "Evangelicalism at Boston, Oxford and Winsor under Henry VII: John Foxe's Narratives Recontextualized," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 31–46; John S. Craig, "Reformers, Conflict, and Revisionism: The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Hadleigh," *Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (1999): 1–23; Matthew Phillpott, *The Reformation of England's Past* (New York: Routledge, 2018); David Daniell, "Tyndale and Foxe," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 15–28.

focused on Foxe's community: those individuals and groups who shaped the text through influence, patronage, or direct contribution.[85] Third, are studies which have explored the relationship of Foxe with other martyrologists of his time and the interrelated nature of the texts they produced.[86] Fourth, there are those who have looked specifically at the printing process of *Acts and Monuments*, a not insignificant topic as *Acts and Monuments* was the largest and most complex English printing project of the sixteenth century.[87] Fifth, and finally, John King, Elizabeth Evenden, and Thomas Freeman have recently

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[85] Devorah Greenberg, "Community of the Texts: Producing the First and Second Editions of the Acts and Monuments," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 3 (2005): 695–715; Devorah Greenberg, "'Foxe' as a Methodological Response to Epistemic Challenges: The Book of Martyrs Transported," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 225–36; Mark Greengrass and Matthew Phillpott, "John Bale, John Foxe and the Reformation of the English Past," *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 101, no. 1 (2010): 275–88; J. W. Martin, "A Sidelight on Foxe's Account of the Marian Martyrs," *Historical Research* 58, no. 138 (November 1985): 248–51; Donald R. Kelley, "Martyrs, Myths, and the Massacre: The Background of St. Bartholomew," in *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*, ed. Alfred Soman (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1977), 181-202; Brett Usher, "Backing Protestantism: The London Godly, the Exchequer and the Foxe Circle," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 105–34; Anthony Martin, "The End of History: Thomas Norton's 'v Periodes' and the Pattern of English Protestant Historiography," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 37–53; Cynthia Wittman Zollinger, "'The Booke, the Leafe, Yea and the Very Sentence': Sixteenth-Century Literacy in Text and Context," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 102–16; Thomas S. Freeman, "Publish and Perish: The Scribal Culture of the Marian Martyrs," in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. Julia C. Crick and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 235–54; Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," passim.

[86] Alec Ryrie, "The Unsteady Beginnings of English Protestant Martyrology," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 52–66; David Watson, "Jean Crespin and the First English Martyrology of the Reformation," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 192–209; Andrew Pettegree, "Haemstede and Foxe," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 278–94; Guido Latre, "Was van Haemstede a Direct Source for Foxe? On Le Blas's Pijnbanck and Other Borrowings," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 151–56; David M. Loades, ed., introduction to *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, xii; Thomas S. Freeman and David Gehring, "Martyrologists without Boundaries: The Collaboration of John Foxe and Heinrich Pantaleon," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69, no. 4 (March 2018): 746–67; Janice Devereux, "A Case for Luke Shepherd as a Source for John Foxe," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 85–93; Susan Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[87] Mark Rankin, "John Day's Production of Woodcut Prints from John Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *The Library* 23, no. 1 (2022): 25–46; Mark Rankin, "The Ridley Hall Foxe (1583) as a Reformation Miscellany," *Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 16, no. 3 (2018): 371–400; Mark Rankin, "Accuracy and 'Error' in the Production of John Foxe and John Day's Acts and Monuments," *The Library* 24, no. 1 (2023): 25–50; Julian Roberts, "Bibliographical Aspects of John Foxe," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 36–51; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, "John Foxe, John Day and the Printing of the 'Book of Martyrs,'" in *Lives in Print: Biography and the Book Trade from Middle Ages to the 21st Century* (London: Oak Knoll Press, 2001), 23–54; Elizabeth Evenden, "The Fleeing Dutchmen? The Influence of Dutch Immigrants upon the Print Shop of John Day," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 63–77; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, "Print, Profit, and Propaganda: The Elizabethan Privy Council and the 1570 Edition of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *English Historical Review* 119, no. 484 (2004): 1288–1307; Kastan, "Little Foxes," passim; David Scott Kastan, "Size Matters," *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000): 149–54.

sought to combine these growing insights to create comprehensive histories of the compilation of the book.[88] As King points out, the study of Foxe's sources and their compilation has received more recent attention than all other aspects of his work.[89]

There are other aspects of *Acts and Monuments* that have received comparatively less, but not insignificant, study due to their importance to British or printing historiography. The woodcuts and their iconography, for example, have sparked studies from both historical and literary perspectives.[90] Foxe's depiction of women has also received attention, as the voices of women have received greater attention in recent historiography.[91] Foxe's reception also remains a perennial topic because of its significance for the history of the English Civil War, English anti-Catholic sentiment, Puritan New England, and English history generally.[92]

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[88] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*.

[89] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 21.

[90] Aston and Ingram, "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments"; Luborsky, "The Illustrations," passim; Andrew Pettegree, "Illustrating the Book: A Protestant Dilemma," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 133–44; Thomas Betteridge, "Truth and History in Acts and Monuments," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 145–59; Deborah Burks, "Polemical Potency: The Witness of Word and Woodcut," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 263–76.

[91] Megan L. Hickerson, "Commentary: Anne Askew," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1258 (apparatus); Megan L. Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Megan L. Hickerson, "Gospelling Sisters 'Goinge up and Downe': John Foxe and Disorderly Women," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1035–51; Susan Monta, "Foxe's Female Martyrs and the Sanctity of Transgression," *Renaissance and Reformation* 25, no. 1 (2001): 3–22; Annie Morphew, "'Every Man May Ghesse What a Woman She Was': John Foxe and the Problem of Female Martyrdom," *A Journal of History* 1 (2017): 7–23; James Truman, "John Foxe and the Desires of Reformation Martyrology," *ELH* 70, no. 1 (2003): 35–66; Dale Hoak, "A Tudor Deborah? The Coronation of Elizabeth I, Parliament and the Problem of Female Rule," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 73–90; Sarah E. Wall, "Editing Anne Askew's Examinations: John Bale, John Foxe and Early Modern Textual Practices," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 249–62; J. Christopher Warner, "Elizabeth I, Savior of Books: John Bale's Preface to the Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Brytanniae . . . Catalogus (1559)," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 91–101; Marsha S. Robinson, "Doctors, Silly Poor Women, and Rebel Whores: The Gendering of Conscience in Foxe's Acts and Monuments," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 235–48.

[92] Francis J. Bremer, "Foxe in the Wilderness: The Book of Martyrs in Seventeenth-Century New England," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 105–16; John Arblaster, "John Foxe in the Low Countries, 1566–1914," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 137–50; Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 90-101; Robert Daniel, "'To Make a Second Book of Martyrs': Re-Appropriating Foxe in the Nonconformist Prison Writings of Seventeenth-Century England" (paper presented at "Remembrance and Re-Appropriation: Shaping Dissenting Identities," International John Bunyan Society, Keele University, Staffordshire, UK, April 13, 2018); Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 202; Ramona Garcia, "'Most Wicked Superstition and Idolatry': John Foxe and His Predecessors and the Development of an Anti-

However, what remains a surprising lacuna in the area of Foxe studies is significant work on the spirituality of *Acts and Monuments*. Some limited work has been done looking at Foxe's "shaping" of readers, arguing that Foxe was seeking to set ethical norms with the techniques he used to present the martyr stories,[93] and studies of Foxe's appropriation of the Lollards touch upon their piety.[94] Several studies mentioned above explore themes of piety while expositing *Acts and Monuments's* place among other devotional and martyrological literature.[95] However, no modern study has explored the significant role that the promotion of Protestant piety played in the shaping of *Acts and Monuments*. This omission may be explained by several factors: the increasing interpretation of *Acts and Monuments* as a compendium of documents rather than as a coherent whole (as explained above), the general lack of literary criticism done with regard to *Acts and Monuments*,[96] and—perhaps most of all—a dismissal of martyrdom as suspect and martyrology as fanatical and partisan.[97] Even among Protestant historians, the "Book of Martyrs" is often cited as profoundly influential for English Protestants with

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Catholic Polemic in the Sixteenth-Century Accounts of the Reign of Mary I," in Loades, *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, 79–90; Isabelle Fernandes, "'The Deformed Imp of the Devil': John Foxe and the Protestant Fashioning of the Catholic Enemy," *Angles* 10 (2020): 1–16.

[93] Susan Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 52–65; John N. King, "Guides to Reading Foxe's Book of Martyrs," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, nos. 1–2 (March 2005): 133–50.

[94] Margret Aston, "Lollardy and Reformation: Survival or Revival," *History* 49, no. 166 (1964): 149–70; Susan Royal, "Reforming Household Piety: John Foxe and the Lollard Conventicle Tradition," in *Religion and the Household: Papers Read at the 2012 Summer Meeting and the 2013 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. John Doran, Charlotte Methuen, and Alexandra Walsham, Studies in Church History 50 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2014), 188–98.

[95] White and Gregory give a chapter-length treatment of TAM in their larger works on martyrdom. They both acknowledge theological and pious motivations in TAM, but due to their length they do not explore the complexity of the composition of the book or the community behind it. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 132-196; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 141-197.

[96] King, "Fiction and Fact in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 12-35.

[97] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 9–15.

little explanation as to what that influence was.[98] This leaves *Acts and Monuments* ripe for a reexamination in light of the Protestant piety it sought to promote and describe.

Questions of Accuracy in Accounts of Martyrdom

The history of Foxian interpretation in general, and the Maitland-Mozley debate in particular, reveals two key and perennial questions of Foxe studies. Are the martyrological accounts verifiable, and if not, what is their value to history? Or put more colloquially, did martyrs actually do the deeds attributed to them, and does it matter? Foxe was not unaware of the problem. The popularity of *Acts and Monuments* provoked its Catholic opponents to seek to discredit the work. Precisely because *Acts and Monuments* was a polemical work in an unstable period, Foxe was forced to meticulously cite and defend his sources. Donald Williams is correct when he states that *Acts and Monuments* itself is "a veritable library of transcriptions of every original source Foxe could procure."[99] Foxe and his associates did procure a massive amount of original source material.[100] Mozley is not exaggerating when he observes that Foxe "ransacked documents of all kinds, ancient and modern, printed and unprinted."[101] Foxe is constantly telling the reader whence he obtained his information. He continually defers to the authority of his sources with the words "as my author sayth."[102] Even scholars who are more critical of Foxe's historical value acknowledge the sheer immensity of Foxe's work

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[98] For a recent example, see Nick R. Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power*, vol. 3, *Renaissance and Reformation*, rev. ed. (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 365.

[99] Williams, "John Foxe," 125.

[100] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 15–33.

[101] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 130.

[102] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 163, 167, 755. Many more examples could be given, along with variations on the phrase.

as a compiler of documents.[103] F. Smith Fussner even lauds Foxe for making "a distinct contribution to historiography" by reprinting original sources within a work aimed at the popular level.[104] One is forced to conclude that Foxe cannot be criticized for lacking source material. The question, then, is no longer whether Foxe was a counterfeiter—he was obviously meticulous in his sourcing. Instead, the question is this: What does one make of Foxe's sources and his selection and redaction thereof?

Answering this question is far more complex than it may at first seem. The Maitland-Mozley debate reveals one complicating factor since almost all major martyrologies, Foxe's included, are compilations. Therefore, the question of historical accuracy must be posed not only to the book but also toward every source, and possible source, that contributes to the martyrology. Furthermore, witnesses of religious deaths are never truly objective. Friendly sources that record the deaths of religious martyrs do so because they view the martyr as a close friend or righteous exemplar. Unfriendly sources view the martyr as a damnable heretic and his or her fate as a precautionary tale. This is to say nothing of the profound political implications that surrounded many of the martyrdoms, particularly in Tudor England. Martyr accounts were often written for social and political reasons. Indeed, in the English Reformation in particular, the social, political, and religious spheres could hardly be separated. These challenges have caused some historians to take a skeptical stance toward many of Foxe's sources. This is the approach of Thomas Freeman, one of the current leading scholars of Foxe. He argues that some of Foxe's sources were provided for less than pious reasons: "some of the anecdotes of divine retribution printed in the *Acts and Monuments* were sent to Foxe in pursuit of local feuds and private grievances, arising from personal hatreds and prospects

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[103] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 346; King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 15–33.

[104] F. Smith Fussner, *Tudor History and the Historians* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 27.

of material gain as well as religious conflict."[105] Freeman rightly points out that some of Foxe's informants may have supplied information with "conflicting objectives."[106] Indeed, within the English Reformation, social power and religious reform were so intertwined that this is hardly unexpected, and in many cases, private and religious enemies could not be distinguished. Doubtless, many stories of persecution were shared on both sides with mixed motives. Occasionally, the historian cannot prove conclusively what the source intended, let alone what definitively occurred.

But was Foxe a religious idealist uncritically accepting any and all stories that advanced his presuppositions? There is no question that Foxe was partisan. He self-consciously dedicates the work to Christ for the advancement of the Protestant church in England.[107] Neither are his biases hard to detect. Foxe explicitly delights in stories of the triumph of Protestants and equally revels in stories of the punishment of "papists." Indeed, Freeman indicts Foxe not for printing inflammatory stories to pursue personal vendettas but for an "unwavering interest in stories that showed divine providence at work."[108] Freeman contends that "providentialism was in fact, a central rather than a peripheral concern of his and it may be added of many of his readers."[109] Freeman's charge is that Foxe was less discerning regarding—and thus more likely to include with less scrutiny—stories that reveled in the providential acts of God. Freeman's contention is not hard to argue: Foxe explicitly delights in stories that in his opinion reveal God's works on behalf of England's Protestants.[110] He is sometimes skeptical of stories of

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[105] Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 601.

[106] Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 601.

[107] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[108] Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 603.

[109] Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 603.

[110] His delight is clear in his tone, which is always reverential when referring to acts of divine providence in favor of Protestants. For example, see Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1775–76.

Protestant failure.[111] With Foxe's obvious predispositions, it is not difficult to imagine, as Freeman does, that he may have been quicker to include stories that reveled in providential acts. Freeman is correct. In fact, one can push his point even further. Foxe's interpretation and presentation of events is profoundly shaped by his faith and that of his readers. Providentialism is only one part of that faith. He is also shaped by his eschatology, ecclesiology, piety, and other aspects of his faith. The question remains whether this destroys *Acts and Monuments's* usefulness as a historical source.

Even given his religious bias, Foxe is not a propagandist. Foxe was motivated not only by promoting the Protestant movement but also by critiquing its shortcomings and promoting the moral reformation of its members. Foxe quotes as instructive the assessment of Cyprian of Carthage as to the spiritual cause of persecution:

> Saint Cyprian showeth other causes more special, and Ecclesiastical, in his fourth book . . . . "We must understand and confess that this turbulent oppression & calamity . . . riseth chiefly of our own wickedness & sins: while we walk not in the way of the Lord, nor observe his precepts left unto us for our institution . . . and thus we are scourged, and worthily."[112]

Foxe shared the same assessment of England, seeing the persecutions as a divine warning of the need for moral reform.[113] Thus, he includes as warnings not only stories of victorious martyrs but also stories of those who failed the test and succumbed to fear.[114] Neither do Foxe's religious motivations make him entirely susceptible to the charge of

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[111] For example, Foxe speculates without evidence that the recantation of Cranmer was a forgery, even though he later prints the story of Cranmer's dramatic recommitment. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 589.

[112] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 91, quoting Cyprian, *Letter* 11 ("To the Presbyters and Deacons"), book 4, epistle 4. Foxe here refers to the edition of Cyprian printed in Antwerp in 1542: Cyprian, *D. Caecilii Cypriani Episcopi car-Carthaginensis et martyris Opera* (Antwerp: Joannes Crinitus, 1542), 185. See John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. Josiah Pratt, 8 vols. (London: Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 1:193n1. For the modern English translation of Cyprian, see Cyprian, *Letter* 11 ("To the Presbyters and Deacons"), in *Letters of Saint Cyprian of Carthage*, vol. 1, *Letters 1–27*, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers 43 (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 76.

[113] This is seen most explicitly in his prefaces, which are addressed extensively in chapter 4 of this work.

[114] For example, he includes a section on those Christians who caved under pressure during the Decian persecution. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 87.

gullible providentialism. Throughout the book, Foxe subjects supernatural stories to the standard of historical evidence. Though he reports the story of Paul's martyrdom from Abdias of Babylon, he rejects as mythical the report that Paul bled milk instead of blood.[115] When reporting the martyrdom of Clement of Rome, Foxe informs his readers that his sources are late and therefore less credible.[116] Though he wants to print the miracles of Alexander of Rome, he restrains himself because he lacks ancient sources.[117] He tests his sources, rejecting those that show evidence of forgery or anachronism.[118] Even if one is critical of his interpretations, one must acknowledge his methods.

Foxe's historical standards and explicit statement of the same are no accident. He was well trained in the humanist tradition and part of a movement of humanist scholars who had become impatient with the incautious historical methods of the medieval hagiographers.[119] He went to great pains to prove that his history was not of that type. In fact, Foxe explains his own standards of history in his Latin preface to his learned readers:

> Indeed, as far as concerns my martyrology, I would like it to be made manifest to all that I have taken pains to ensure that there should not be anything legendary in the work, or of such a kind as either could have been invented by me, or could not be everywhere very unlike that Golden (I should rather say Leaden) Legend. To this the matter itself and the natural appearance of the history will be able to bear

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[115] Foxe states, "Abdias reporteth, that as his head was struck off, instead of blood issued out white milk and that at laying down his head he signed himself with the sign of a crosse in his forehead; but this being found in no other history, Abdias seemeth either to add of his own, or else to borrow out of the Legend as he doth many other things besides." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 58.

[116] Foxe argues, "Forasmuch as I find of his martyrdom no firm relation in the ancient authors, but only in such new writers of later times, which are wont to point out the lives and histories of good men, with fained additions of forged miracles, therefore I count the same of less credit, as I do also certain decretal Epistles, untruly (as may seem) ascribed and entitled to his name." Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 75.

[117] Foxe writes, "Diverse miracles are reported of this Alexander in the Canon Legends, and lives of Saints: which as I deny not but may be true: so because I cannot avouch them by any grave testimony of ancient writers, therefore I dare not affirm them, but did refer them to the authors & patrons thereof, where they are found." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 61.

[118] Foxe observes, "First by the uniform rudeness and style of all those decretal letters, nothing savoring of that age, but rather of the later Dunstical times that followed. Also, by the matter and argument in those letters contained, nothing agreeing with the state of those troublesome days." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 75.

[119] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 77–79, 132.

> witness, whose whole fabric will be able to seem drawn and conflated from the very archives and registers of bishops, and partly from the martyrs' own letters. Although in this history I do not demand that the individual examples here should be regarded as oracles, yet we have given the effort in accordance with our strength, to the end that if we might not fully achieve it, yet we might approach as close as possible to that old law of history, that we should avoid two things, the particular plagues of history, namely fear and flattery, of which the one always says less and the other always adds more to the narrative than is proper. But it is more honourable that reliability in this matter be built up from the work itself than from my recommendation. For truth itself has its own simple and natural appearance, which it will not be difficult for the reader who is not thick in the head to understand, either from the very character of the utterance, or from the appearance of things or from other characteristics of circumstances.[120]

Foxe's appeal to his learned readers is telling. He realizes his work will be scrutinized by humanist standards, and indeed he feels it must meet these standards to accomplish the task he intended for the book. While one may still ask if Foxe's history lives up to modern standards of historiography, many modern historians contend that Foxe's historiographical standards met or exceeded those of any of his contemporaries.[121]

If Foxe was a religiously motivated but careful historian, then what of his sources? Should Freeman's critique be more broadly applied and thus disqualify, or at the very least promote a posture of skepticism toward, Foxe's sources generally? While each source needs to be scrutinized when it is used as evidence for a specific historical assertion, generally Foxe's sources have proved surprisingly robust. They, too, had to face highly motivated contemporary efforts to overthrow them, especially those that were particularly damaging to the image of their subjects. One would expect that if the sources were largely written from perverse motivations, then Foxe's most sensational stories would be full of exaggeration and thus easily overthrown. But this is not the case. As

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[120] John Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 6.

[121] Marshall Knappen calls Foxe "well up to the average historical accuracy in his day." M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 495. McNeill says of Foxe's historiography it is "a type of historiography that has been outgrown. But it well deserves the respect of modern historians." McNeill, "John Foxe," 229. Patrick Collinson calls him "surely the greatest English historian of his age." Patrick Collinson, "John Foxe as Historian," in *TAMO*, apparatus, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/index.php?realm=more&gototype=&type=essay&book=essay3.

Geoffrey Elton pithily states, "[Foxe] did not have to invent the persecution."[122] Time has borne out that base facts of the atrocities reported of the Marian persecutions did occur. Indeed, one finds that Foxe's most sensational stories have been confirmed. One of the most scandalous, and consequently one of the most maligned, accounts is that of the Guernsey martyrs. Foxe tells the story of three women executed for their beliefs in 1556.[123] The horror of the story comes in the fact that one of the women was pregnant when executed. Foxe relates the shocking events that followed:

> For as the belly of the woman burst asunder by [the] vehemency of the flame, the infant being a fair man child, fell into the fire, and eftsoones being taken out of the fire by one W. House, was laid upon the grass. Then was the child had to the Provost, and from him to the Bailiff, who gave censure, that it should be carried back again and cast into the fire.[124]

The story was immediately attacked as a lie by Thomas Harding in 1567 and again by Robert Parsons in 1604. However, Mozley utilized archives in both Guernsey and London in 1940 to prove the event very likely happened as printed.[125] This story is not unique in its verification. Raw inventions and gross exaggerations within Foxe would have been easy to discover in his own time; as Patrick Collinson argues, "Foxe's *dramatis personae* were capable of storming into his publishers and demanding 'is Foxe here?'"[126] Therefore, if Foxe had readily included spurious sources, he knew he would have to answer for them.

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[122] G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation—England, 1509–1558* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 386.

[123] The three women were Catherine Cauchés and her daughters Guillemine Gilbert and Perotine Massey.

[124] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1969. "Eftsoons" is an archaic expression for "soon after."

[125] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 223–35.

[126] Patrick Collinson, "Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in *Clio's Mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands: Papers Delivered to the Eight Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference*, ed. A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse (Zutphen, Netherlands: De Walburg Pers, 1985), 33.

There are a few notable instances of Foxe's contemporary antagonists disproving aspects of his stories. Foxe printed modifications and defenses of many in his subsequent editions. Most disputes, however, are over minor details, not the substance of events.[127] One humorous example saw a Kentish man seek to exonerate himself by adding to Foxe's story. The man, one John Drainer, had been dubbed by Foxe "Justice Nine-Holes" for cutting nine holes in the roodloft of his parish church so he could spy on suspected Protestants during Mary I's reign. Drainer's argument to unseat Foxe was that he had cut only five holes and those to "look upon fair wenches."[128] Such humorous stories aside, the fact that the majority of his tales survived contemporary scrutiny shows the general quality of his sourcing. With few exceptions, Foxe's over three million words have proven surprisingly resilient.[129]

Even if Foxe was a careful historian by the standards of his time, and his sources are of historical value, there remains another complicating factor to address, which will be discussed at length in chapter 3. Martyrologies were consciously written as genre pieces; that is, they deliberately follow set structures and commonplaces to present the martyr as a model to be followed. There is a long tradition of training Christians for martyrdom. Christians who studied past martyrs knew that certain actions, statements, and even quotations were expected of them at the stake. This means that in each account, both the martyr's genuine actions and the written record are shaped to varying degrees by a predetermined understanding of what a martyr ought to be. This happened at every stage in the development of the account. Soon-to-be martyrs shared letters encouraging

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[127] Collinson summarizes thus: "There are mistakes of both person and place, mistakes of dating in plenty, faults of transcription and in proofreading. But the only elements of pure invention (and not primarily Foxe's own invention) occur in the recounting of sundry extraordinary 'providences' and other acts of divine judgement visited upon those responsible for the deaths of the martyr . . . . But here Foxe was following in a tradition which was in a literal and strict sense fabulous." Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 35.

[128] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2136.

[129] Mozley provides the most extensive summary and rebuttal of the accusations of inaccuracy within TAM. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*.

one to behave according to a shared understanding of martyrdom.[130] Their friends who recorded the original accounts shared this same understanding and recorded accordingly.

I will argue in chapter 3 that the tradition of martyrological literature made it entirely expected that Foxe would shape martyr accounts to conform to a shared ideal. Because of this expectation, it is difficult to discern which accounts might be affected by this tendency and to what extent. The martyrdom of Hugh Latimer (c. 1485 – 1555) and Nicholas Ridley (c. 1500 –1555) provides an excellent case study into how the expectations of martyr piety may have shaped the transmission of a martyr account. In one of the most famous passages within *Acts and Monuments*, as Latimer and Ridley are led to the stake, Latimer turns to Ridley and states, "Be of good comfort M[aster] Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as (I trust) shall never be put out."[131] However, this famous phrase is not recorded in Foxe's first edition, indicating that Foxe was most likely unaware of it in 1563. The question then arises: Did Ridley say it, and did Foxe's first source fail to record it, only for the quote to be rediscovered later? This is possible as Foxe was known to gather sources between his editions. John King makes a plausible proposal that the words may have come from George Shipside, Ridley's brother-in-law, who was in attendance at his execution, or they may have come from Augustine Bernher, Latimer's secretary, who wrote an account of his martyrdom to accompany a posthumous publication of Latimer's sermons.[132] However, these men were already collaborating with Foxe on his first edition, so it is unlikely Foxe would have left this out of his first edition had they recalled it to him. Conversely, did Ridley fail to say it, but a popular legend arose due to the expectations surrounding martyrdom? This, too, is quite possible. Latimer's words are a

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[130] Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," passim.

[131] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 1976.

[132] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 55.

clear quotation of the voice from heaven reported at Polycarp's execution.[133] Furthermore, it is likely an allusion to 2 Samuel 10:12 and 1 Corinthians 16:13,[134] and Latimer is not the only individual in the book to use these words.[135] They seem a very plausible commonplace to have become attached to such a notable martyr. Did Foxe add it as an inspiring homage to Polycarp to add impact to one of his book's most beloved stories? There is no direct evidence he did, but it is not entirely implausible given the book's genre.[136] As Thomas Freeman states, "The fact that Foxe allowed such details to be included, however, does not mean that he invented them or added them to shape reports supplied by his informants."[137] Instead, John King proposes that the phrase may have been a production of the entire community:

> They may reflect typological commonplaces that permeated thinking within a sizeable community engaged in the writing and dissemination of stories that heroize latter-day martyrs. These individuals included the martyrs themselves, surviving witnesses, and reporters, in addition to Foxe and those with whom he collaborated in compiling the Book of Martyrs.[138]

It is very likely that the true source may never be known with certainty. Where do the martyr's actions end and the editor's additions begin? Ultimately, it is impossible to ascertain with complete certainty. What is clear, though, is that Foxe and his community certainly thought the phrase fitting of a martyr and included it with enthusiasm from 1570 on.

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[133] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 65.

[134] Rendered "quit thee like a man" and "quit you like men," respectively, in the Great Bible (1539).

[135] Austen Bernher speaks these words to Robert Glouer, another Marian martyr. Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 1930.

[136] For an explanation of how the genre of martyrology might justify such an addition, see chapter 3.

[137] Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm," 42.

[138] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 56.

Foxe also seems to have gently shaped the theology of some of his characters to better fit Protestant expectations. Much work is still to be done in understanding the details of Foxe and his community's editorial methods, but Freeman is probably correct when he states, "It is unlikely Foxed added much, if anything, to the material supplied by his informants."[139] Instead, it seems that the community's editorial influence was mostly negative, removing and shaping already present material for reasons of rhetorical effect, theological consistency, and cultural etiquette.[140] Foxe is known to have suppressed the more objectionable beliefs of some of his martyrs. This is especially true of those martyrs who came out of the free-will conventicles in the region of Kent, where several of the Foxian martyrs can be shown to have denied aspects of the Trinity.[141] Elsewhere, Foxe and other editors involved in the compilation seem to have veiled certain doctrinal disputes within the Protestant camp to present a united front.[142] Notably, some of this redaction had probably taken place before the documents even reached the collaborators' hands.[143] This means it was not only Foxe but also many of his collaborators who shared these ideals and sought to spread them. Given these redactions and others like them, was the pious ideal presented in *Acts and Monuments* less than entirely true?

While there are obvious propagandistic implications to such edits, there may be a parallel motivation—namely, conformity to a pious ideal. While Foxe and his

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[139] Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm," 40.

[140] For discussions of the various evidences of the editorial methods of Foxe, Bale, and others, see King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 31–33, 54–69; Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 44–47; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 51; Freeman and Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text," passim.

[141] William Prowtyng claimed at trial, "It is no article of our faith that there is one God and three persons" and John Symes and Robert King denied that Christ was consubstantial. Harleian MS 421, fols. 94v.–95r., British Library. C. H. Smyth and Phillip Hughes argue from the broader context that such views were widespread in the Kentish region. C. H. Smyth, *Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 3; Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. 2, *Religio depopulata* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1954), 261–62.

[142] Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 45.

[143] Freeman, "Publish and Perish," 252; Freeman, "Fate, Faction, and Fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," passim.

compatriots edit some theological heterodoxy, they seem to emphasize and dramatize pious behavior.[144] Pettegree observes of these stories, "Much of its effectiveness as narrative comes from the introduction of elements which were almost tropic, stereotypical devices; devices, furthermore, which recur repeatedly in the narratives of all the major martyrologies. Many of them evoke clear biblical, early church and contemporary paradigms."[145] With the long history of martyrology being edited for pedagogical value, it is perhaps conceivable how this profoundly passionate community could skew theological error in its ranks as "non-culpable ignorance"[146] while reveling in stalwart acts of piety as "atmospheric rather than essential fact."[147]

This mindset would explain the addition of historically dubious but piously inspiring emendations into the stories, such as the story of Hugh Latimer's repeating the words of Polycarp at his execution, as explained above. Protestant motivations to see the pious ideal presented in ancient stories recapitulated within their own histories can explain why Foxe and other contributors found such additions permissible. Based upon ancient martyrology, they knew these demonstrations of piety were how martyrs were "supposed" to act, and the spiritualistic nature of their history, combined with the history of pedagogical editing within the genre of martyrology, shaped their plausibility structures. The community repeated such scenes to the point of tropes within their martyr stories, and they sought to conform themselves to this ideal and teach it to others.[148] While this makes *Acts and Monuments* troublesome as "pure history," it justifies the investigation of the piety of the community that was preserving the book. Pettegree is

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[144] Freeman and Wall have shown how Foxe used paragraph breaks to dramatize Anne Askew's trial memoir. Freeman and Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text," 1176-1177.

[145] Pettegree, "Haemstede and Foxe," 288.

[146] Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 44.

[147] Pettegree, "Haemstede and Foxe," 287.

[148] Pettegree, "Haemstede and Foxe," 293.

right when he questions whether such accounts are "too perfect," and it is impossible for the modern historian to adjudicate the "atmospheric" details that make up so much of the piety presented in the martyr accounts of *Acts and Monuments*.[149] However, the value to the original community seems to have been as aspirational stories, crafted by a community eager to define its pious ideal.

This editing creates a dilemma in defining the authorial boundaries of the book. On the one hand, *Acts and Monuments*, in the four editions composed by Foxe during his lifetime, does represent a product of his final editorial authority: He was likely in the publishing house daily checking the proofs.[150] On the other hand, *Acts and Monuments* represents a library of thematically bound material written by hundreds: a window into the literature of a developing sub-culture that inspired Foxe and his compatriots. The source of the book's piety must fall heavily into the latter category. Foxe did not invent the pious ideals enshrined in his book. The self-conscious identification with ancient figures, the prolific quotation of Scripture, and the urgent pious imperatives were already present. He and his community of contributors gathered the stories they found to resonate with their growing self-identity. They edited these works to reflect what they felt was the pious ideal already nascent within them.

Granting the redaction that occurred because of the community's pious motivations, does this make the work merely an aspirational fiction, portraying a Protestant piety and theology that never really existed? To claim this would venture much too far. Regarding piety, most of the Protestant martyrs' conspicuous acts of piety are confirmed by hostile witnesses. Brad Gregory writes,

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[149] Pettegree, "Haemstede and Foxe," 287.

[150] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 24–25. Roberts and Rankin have each explored how the presence of slip cancels and replacement leaves in the extant copies of TAM give evidence to Foxe's editing the book even as it was being printed. Roberts, "Bibliographical Aspects of John Foxe," 36–51; Rankin, "Accuracy and 'Error' in the Production of John Foxe and John Day's Acts and Monuments," 25–50.

> In fact, hostile writers repeatedly described the deaths of false martyrs in terms recognizably like those of sympathetic martyrologists . . .. No sustained literature casts doubt on their comportment in general. Even if our evidence of martyrs' behavior relied exclusively on hostile sources, we would have to conclude that they usually died with a joyful resolve that often impressed onlookers.[151]

Gregory also makes a wider point regarding modern skepticism toward martyr accounts that is worth quoting at length for its insights into both the problems and promise of these accounts:

> Neither these sources in general, nor their depictions of martyrs' public behavior, are inherently suspect due to their authors' ideological commitments. Indeed, something quite the opposite is very likely true: precisely because these writers wanted to promote their respective causes, they strove to make their interpretations, however highly charged, however shaped by literary conventions, fit the best available information about executions. Facts, not fabrication, best served propaganda. This would explain why martyrologists admitted ignorance and requested materials from readers. It also accounts for why entries on martyrs in the major collections vary in quantity and detail from single sentences up through dozens of folio pages. There is no reason in general to doubt that martyrs really sang psalms en route to their deaths, joyfully ascended the gallows, quoted scripture to the crowd, repeated Christ's dying words, or stood unflinching in fires that were burning them alive. Unless there is cause to question a particular account, we have good reason to trust reports of such behavior, extraordinary as it is. The underlying problem is less early modern invention and credulity than modern or postmodern skepticism and cynicism.[152]

If, then, the martyrs' acts of piety are largely confirmed, was their theology an invention of Foxe? Here, again, such a proposal would go too far. Regarding the issue of the heterodox Kentish martyrs, Collinson points out there is strong evidence to suggest that the Reformation was not as widely heterodox as the Kentish martyrs would suggest. Thus, according to Collinson, Foxe's redaction of their errors was not an attempt to recreate the theological landscape of Protestant England; rather, Foxe was attempting to conform "confused and poorly informed Christians" to a magisterial orthodoxy that was "the dominant tendency" among English Protestants.[153] If Collinson is right, then Foxe's

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[151] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 18.

[152] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 21.

[153] Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 43–44.

decision, though failing modern historical standards, was intended to summarize rather than to obscure.

So, in final analysis, it is clear that Foxe was meticulous in his data but profoundly religiously motivated in his editorial decisions. He did not deliberately falsify or invent evidence, but he was selective in how he presented it. Does this exclude Foxe as a source of history? For some historians, it does; as Collinson rightly points out, "The conclusion cannot be anything but discouraging to historical positivists. . . . We cannot and never shall be able to see the events he describes except through his spectacles."[154] What historians have done with this fact has varied. William Schoedel helpfully summarizes the various scholarly reactions to this problem. Much of Catholic scholarship, exemplified by the extensive work of Hippolyte Delehaye, has been focused on seeking to distance Christian accounts from non-Christian literary influences and structures and thus find the "underlying continuity of Christian truth" within the tradition. In contrast, Protestant works, exemplified by Hans von Campenhausen, seek to stress the discontinuity between the biblical faith and the more fantastical elements that adorn some of the martyr stories. Both approaches reveal much, but neither entirely resolves the question of historicity.[155]

For others, myself included, these observations do not remove the historical value of martyrology but move it into another arena. Martyrologies in general, and *Acts and Monuments* in particular, were cherished artifacts of the communities that produced them. They were, as Foxe's title shows, figurative "monuments" to the faith of the community. The stories, quotes, and commonplaces represent, if not what every martyr

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[154] Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 50.

[155] William Schoedel, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol. 5, *Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), 47–48; Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962); Hans von Campenhausen, *Die Idee Des Martyriums in Der Alten Kirche* (Gottingen: Dandenhoed and Ruprecht, 1936).

actually did and said, then what their communities expected a true martyr to do and say. This has its own historical value in understanding the beliefs of the community of the book. If the martyrs were, as I contend, meant to be exemplars of the ideal Christian, then the final form of the martyrology provides a window into the ideal spirituality of the community of the book: those who read, contributed to, and promoted the book.[156] Regardless of whether an account was true or false, each account within *Acts and Monuments* is an expression of the piety of Foxe and his community. This approach to the book is similar to that of William Haller, who in seeking to understand Foxe's view of the English nation within *Acts and Monuments* wrote, "Whether the facts and the meaning of the facts were in every respect what he made them out to be we need not inquire."[157] For Haller and others studying how the book shaped English national consciousness, the question is not the veracity of every fact but the views underlying the book and how it shaped the nation.[158]

This approach is especially germane to the study of the history of piety. Concerning the faith of the martyrs, no one objects that Protestants who died for being Protestant were being insincere. Some modern interpreters go so far as to question their sanity, but this line of thinking is based upon the observations that the martyrs were taking extreme actions in service of their faith.[159] There will always be those who think the martyrs' beliefs were absurd, but martyrdom itself proves that they did indeed hold to their beliefs. What of their reporters? Unfriendly testimony confirms that the martyrs did show surprising piety in their deaths, and even if these did not exist, using the martyr

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[156] The makeup of that community is the subject of chapter 2.

[157] Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, 14, 187.

[158] The following studies all take a similar approach: William Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603–60* (London: Macmillan, 1969); William Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2006); Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*.

[159] Gregory is right to point out that this interpretation is hardly historically sound and, furthermore, has little bearing on this study. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 9–12.

accounts as a window into the piety of the community would not be invalid. Protestant reporters held up the martyrs as heroes. If they sometimes idealized their heroes, that all the more reveals their ideals. I agree with Quentin Skinner, who gives the following as an essential element of the "appropriate method by which to study the history of ideas. . . . The understanding of texts . . . presupposes the grasp both of what they were intended to mean, and how this meaning was intended to be taken."[160] It is my contention that an essential element of Foxe's intention, and by extension an intention of his sources and collaborators, was to present the martyrs as exemplars of piety. Thus, to truly understand the text, this aspect must be accounted for. Skinner continues,

> The essential question which we therefore confront, in studying any given text, is what its author in writing at the time he did write for the audience he intended to address, could in practice have been intending to communicate by the utterance of this given utterance. It follows that the essential aim, in any attempt to understand the utterances themselves, must be to recover this complex intention on the part of the author.[161]

If Skinner is right, then it is an essential aspect of history to discover the intention of the author in writing a work. *Acts and Monuments* presents a particular challenge as it is not the work of one singular author. However, this does not exclude Skinner's observation. One of the key motivations—indeed, I will argue, the most important motivation—that united the community that produced *Acts and Monuments* was the promotion of a shared faith and piety. Thus, reading the text to discover that piety is a historically legitimate and fruitful task. Therefore, for the sake of this project, I will treat the accounts as presented as accurate to the intentions of the author and, by extension, his community, regardless of scholarly questions regarding each account. It is my intention to examine the type of piety Foxe was seeking to engender through his portrayal of the martyrs, not the exact

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[160] Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 48.

[161] Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding,* 48

details of what occurred in each case. In this sense, then, the historical accuracy of each individual account is not germane to this study.

As the scholarly reception of *Acts and Monuments* has evolved over time, it has followed a course not dissimilar from scholarly interactions with the Scriptures. Although *Acts and Monuments* has always had antagonists, its original readers received it devotionally and uncritically. As its polemical use increased, so too did critical readings, until the present day where the majority of scholarly interest has taken a text critical mode, engaging more with the sources behind the text than with the text itself. Some have even gone so far as to argue that true engagement with the text as written is basically impossible.[162] This dissertation defies that assessment. Though Foxe's accuracy has been weighed, and found largely sound, it is inconsequential to this thesis if other inaccuracies are found. Whatever historical accuracy *Acts and Monuments* contains or lacks, it represents an artifact of the spirituality of the early modern English Protestant community that surrounded, shaped, and contributed to it. The stories of Christian piety contained in its pages were generated by that community, curated by Foxe to match a coalescing ideal, then used to shape a growing English Protestant community for generations to come.

My thesis is not entirely unique; others have noted the place *Acts and Monuments* holds in the stream of martyrology. Helen White, John Knott, Brad Gregory, and Alice Dailey have all made contributions that my thesis will build upon. White argues that the "saint legend" is a literary type, begun in the ancient church, developed in the Middle Ages, and modified by Foxe and other early modern martyrologists to serve Protestant aims. She observes literary commonplaces from these earlier hagiographical works that continue in modified forms in Foxe and others.[163] This observation grounds

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[162] Ryan Netzley, "The End of Reading: The Practice and Possibility of Reading Foxe's 'Actes and Monuments,'" *ELH* 73, no. 1 (2006): 187–214.

[163] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, passim.

Acts and Monuments in the stream of devotional literature and thus reinforces my claim that Foxe should be seen as promoting piety in keeping with the purposes of his chosen genre. Knott builds upon this insight by studying the continued trajectory from the saint legend, through Foxe, and on to Elizabethan separatists like Henry Barrow, John Greenwood, and Puritan preacher John Bunyan. From the similarities he finds in these writings, he argues that the genre of Protestant martyrology was drawing on primitivism and producing a new ideal of Protestant heroism—that of righteous suffering.[164] Knott's thesis is insightful, but I seek to expand upon his insights by arguing that Foxe's piety goes beyond the question of primitivism and theme of suffering to other aspects of Christian duty and theology. Gregory supports these observations by drawing connections with the *Ars Moriendi* and *Imitatio Christi*, two late medieval standards of devotion. He shows that these works form a tradition of "good death" that Foxe further draws upon in his own martyrology, further establishing Foxe as a work of devotion. In two works, Dailey further expands upon the work of White, Knott, and Gregory, arguing that both Foxe and his subjects were self-consciously drawing upon biblical, patristic, and medieval hagiographic formulations to create a body of gestures, utterances, and actions, that serve as a kind of script for Protestant martyrs.[165] This further supports my thesis that Foxe was presenting these martyrs as models of Christian devotion. The content of these models serves as the final section of my own argument.

Two more streams of scholarship bear mentioning as background to my thesis. John King and Susan Felch each argue that Foxe exhibits ethical expectations of his readers by the way in which he introduces and structures Acts and Monuments. King argues that the prefaces of *Acts and Monuments* serve as "guides to reading," telling the reader what kind of reception he expects of them. I agree with and advance this thesis by

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[164] Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, passim.

[165] Dailey, *The English Martyr from Reformation to Revolution*. Alice Dailey, "Typology and History in Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *Prose Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 1-29.

arguing that the kind of reception Foxe desires specifically from the laity is a response of greater piety.[166] Felch argues that *Acts and Monuments's* structure exhibits a model of education that emphasizes the promotion of moral training rather than the inculcation of formal tradition.[167] This comports with my own thesis—that Foxe is seeking to promote a Protestant piety. Finally, Susan Royal and Margret Aston have specifically studied Foxe's use of the Lollard martyrs.[168] In their works, they touch on aspects of Lollard piety and theology that I will explore in my own work. Each of the works just mentioned touches on aspects of piety and contribute to the thesis that Foxe was seeking to promote it in *Acts and Monuments;* however, none has gone beyond the scope of a chapter or article to describe the motivations to piety and content of that piety. That is the goal of this dissertation.

Methodology

To advance and defend my thesis, I will show the pious motivations evident in both the background to the work and the work itself. Recent scholarship has begun to acknowledge and explore Foxe's significant use of source documents, informants, and collaborators.[169] Building upon these insights, I will survey Foxe's background and community for evidence of its pious motivations. Because Foxe was deliberately contributing to a popular genre of the time, namely martyrology, I will examine contemporary works of devotion and martyrology. Comparing Foxe's methods to other

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[166] King, "Guides to Reading Foxe's Book of Martyrs," passim.

[167] Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," passim.

[168] Royal, "Reforming Household Piety," 188–98; Aston, "Lollardy and Reformation," 149–70; Susan Royal, *Lollards in the English Reformation: History, Radicalism, and John Foxe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

[169] See King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 23–24. See also Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm," 23–46; Wabuda, "Bull, Coverdale, and the Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs," 245–58. Greenberg gives a helpful summary of the scholarship as it stood in 2005 and calls for new readings of the text in light of the emerging consensus. Greenberg, "Community of the Texts," 695–715.

similar contributions to the genre will show that Foxe was attempting to provide a model of piety.

Finally, I will perform an inductive study of *Acts and Monuments* itself to provide a systematic understanding of the pious model Foxe presents. Foxe personally oversaw the publishing of *Acts and Monuments* in four editions spanning the twenty-one years from 1563 to 1583. In each edition, Foxe expanded and corrected the work. The University of Sheffield has made the text of all four editions available online with limited critical notes.[170] This will allow for a critical study of changes in the text where appropriate. However, for the purposes of understanding the piety of *Acts and Monuments*, the 1583 edition will serve as my primary source. Elisabeth Evenden and Thomas Freedman have shown that Foxe saw the 1583 as the final and definitive edition of his career, and it is the largest and most developed of his editions.[171] As such, my inductive work will focus on the 1583 edition, unless changes between the editions significantly contribute to my thesis.

In this chapter, I have set forth the need for this dissertation and introduced the thesis, defining piety and showing its basic significance to understanding *Acts and Monuments*. I have also explored the current state of Foxian scholarship, the place of my project within it, and the need for an exploration of the piety contained in *Acts and Monuments*.

In chapter 2, I will explore Foxe's personal piety, giving a sketch of Foxe's life, focusing especially on Foxe's own beliefs and motivations as they relate to the practice of a holy life. These will be explored through his actions and associations leading up to the publication of *Acts and Monuments*, especially his schooling, his ministerial service, his resignation from said service because of Protestant convictions,

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[170] Foxe, *TAMO*, http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe.

[171] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 295-308.

and finally his actions throughout his religious exile during the reign of Mary Tudor. I will also explore elements of Foxe's theology and beliefs that pertain directly to my thesis, namely his Protestant convictions, which were often at odds with both the Henrician Church under which he was trained and the Elizabethan Church under which he published. Of particular interest will be Foxe's apocalypticism, which saw England as a covenant nation at risk of judgment if it did not reform, a belief he self-consciously cited as a reason for the publication of *Acts and Monuments*.

In chapter 3, I will argue that the genre of martyrology that Foxe elected to publish *Acts and Monuments* within, was inseparable from the promotion of piety. To prove this thesis, I will explore the development of martyrology through the history of the church. In the early church period, I will show how martyrs took on the role of ethical exemplars. In the Middle Ages, I will show how these exemplars evolved into legendary saints and came to dominate medieval piety. In the early modern period, I will demonstrate how growing concerns with the convergence of devotion and death served to heighten interest in the martyrs as exemplars of piety, thus providing the literary background to *Acts and Monuments*.

In chapter 4, I will begin exploring *Acts and Monuments* itself. In this chapter, I will argue that Foxe deliberately structured *Acts and Monuments* to promote piety. There is some debate as to Foxe's motives with the work, with the most prominent modern Foxe scholars arguing for primarily political and academic motivations. I will argue that these interpretations are mistaken based on the work's history, structure, and stated intentions. To accomplish this, I will briefly examine the structure of each of the four editions Foxe produced in his lifetime. Working through the history of Foxe's editions, I will show that despite changing political and academic situations, the promotion of piety was always a primary motivation in each edition. Then, I will explore a decision that profoundly impacted the book's audience more than any other: the decision to publish in English. While many modern interpreters argue that Foxe's

decision was begrudging and politically motivated, I will argue that it was deliberate and profoundly spiritually motivated. Next, I will look at the two most critical structural schemas that shaped *Acts and Monuments*: apocalypticism and martyrology. I will show how these two genres function within *Acts and Monuments*. I contend that apocalypticism was used to motivate personal reform and martyrology was used to provide the models for the same.

In chapter 5, I will explain the theology of piety in *Acts and Monuments*. I will argue that Foxe used the overarching concept of the "two churches" to sift piety and present a truly Protestant form. Using Protestant theology and the concept of the two churches, he created four dichotomies that divided true piety from false piety: (1) spiritual versus fleshly piety, (2) grace-driven versus law-driven piety, (3) love-driven versus hate-driven piety, and (4) spiritual versus ceremonial piety. By means of these dichotomies Foxe sought to argue against the Roman Catholic understanding of piety centered sacred ceremonies and spaces, and for a protestant definition of piety; namely, any action that flowed from the power of the Spirit to Love of God and neighbor. Because that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit lies at the heart of this definition of piety, the martyrs functioned as ideal models of this piety. The martyrs had been traditionally seen as uniquely Spirit-filled, and thus they served as perfect exemplars of Foxe's Spirit-filled piety. Furthermore, the martyrs read their lives through a metaphor of cosmic battle. This metaphor could be used to apply equally to severe persecution as well as everyday Christian experiences such as conversion, repentance, and sanctification. This made the martyrs ideal models even to Protestants not suffering under persecution.

In chapter 6, I will show how Foxe used these models. First, I will show how the martyr story functions within *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe evokes a specific structural pattern in telling his martyr stories. He drew this pattern from the ancient martyr stories but modified it to promote distinctly Protestant priorities. Examining the story of John Rogers, Foxe's "protomartyr," I will show how this pattern functioned to display

Protestant piety in the life, trial, and death of the martyr. With this established, I will use this pattern as a lens to explore piety in the rest of the book, examining the lives, trials, and deaths of a variety of Foxe's Marian martyrs. This lens will reveal a variety of Protestant priorities, but most importantly, it will reveal the emphasis on the learning and application of Scripture as the heart of Protestant practice.

In chapter 7, I will conclude with a summary of my thesis in light of the above argumentation and provide a final reflection.

CHAPTER 2

"A LIFE BEARING CONTINUALLY TRUE AND SOLID FRUITS": PROTESTANT PIETY IN THE LIFE AND THEOLOGY OF JOHN FOXE

Rarely has a book dominated the life of its author more than Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. For nearly the entirety of his scholastic career, Foxe was involved in some way in researching, compiling, writing, and rewriting the "Book of Martyrs." Because of this, in many ways, the contours and priorities of Foxe's life cannot be separated from the contours and priorities of *Acts and Monuments*. Therefore, my goal in this chapter is to show how the life of Foxe, and thus *Acts and Monuments*, was shaped by a desire for the advancement of Protestant piety in England. I will show how he discovered this passion in his conversion, how it was shaped by his discovery of and tutelage in apocalypticism, how it was refined and combined with martyrology in his exile, and how it was exercised in his pastoral career upon his return to England.

I will begin by exploring Foxe's early life and conversion, especially focusing on how he came to his evangelical convictions and the role that history and personal piety played in the shaping of his faith. Then, I will explore his actions and associations leading up to the publication of *Acts and Monuments*, especially his schooling, his ministerial service, his resignation from said service because of Protestant convictions, and finally his actions throughout his religious exile during the reign of Mary Tudor. Through the lens of his biography, I will show Foxe's connections to the two most important networks that would shape his life and the publication of *Acts and Monuments*: the London Protestants and the Marian exiles. Others have explored these connections for

their political and social significance.[1] I will seek to show that these connections were far from merely political or social; indeed, they were founded upon deeply shared beliefs about theology and holiness.

I will also explore elements of Foxe's theology and beliefs that pertain directly to my thesis: namely his Protestant convictions that were often at odds with both the Henrician Church under which he was trained and the Elizabethan Church under which he published. Of particular interest will be Foxe's apocalypticism, which saw England as a covenant nation at risk of judgment if it did not reform, a belief which he self-consciously cited as a reason for the publication of *Acts and Monuments*. Finally, I will explore Foxe's conflicts with Puritanism, arguing that Foxe's conflict with the movement was not an indication of a weakening resolve for evangelical reform.

Foxe's Life

The life of Foxe has not yet been adequately explored given his influence.[2] In 1983, Warren Wooden wrote that Foxe was "the last major Elizabethan author to be rediscovered in the modern age . . . an author prolific, talented, and enormously popular with the Renaissance public whose works have gone out of print and whose name threatens to drop out of Elizabethan literary anthologies."[3] Though scholarship of Foxe's book has continued since Wooden, focus on his life has not expanded. Since Wooden, there have been no scholarly biographies of Foxe. In fact, the changing approach to

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[1] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[2] The last book-length treatment of Foxe was that of Warren Wooden in 1983. See Warren W. Wooden, *John Foxe*, Twayne's English Authors Series (Boston: Twayne, 1983). While thoughtful, at just over one hundred pages, it does not extensively interact with other scholarship of the period or the growing field of TAM studies. The most recent effort is that of Thomas Freeman in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Freeman is well versed in the field but is constrained by the length of a dictionary article at just over fourteen thousand words. See Thomas Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10050.

[3] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 1.

Foxian scholarship noted in chapter 1 seems to have discouraged the production of a major biography. Led by the notion that Foxe was a compiler rather than an author, modern scholars of *Acts and Monuments* commonly gloss over Foxe's life in favor of focusing on *Acts and Monuments* itself. The two most recent and significant books on *Acts and Monuments* are exemplary of this trend. Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman do chart Foxe's life, but almost entirely in reference to the physical production of *Acts and Monuments*, with very little attention given to his religious convictions.[4] John King gives no biography of Foxe at all, electing instead to launch directly into the compilation of the book.[5] In an irony of history, the book has obscured the man.

Early Life: 1517–1533

John Foxe was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1517, the same year Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses, sparking the Reformation on the continent.[6] In 1517, there were no particular indications that Boston should be the birthplace of a prominent reformer or the hotbed of reformed activity that it would later become. Rather, it was a strongly Catholic community into which Foxe was born.[7] Nevertheless, the town was primed for significant changes during the course of the Reformation. A rapidly growing

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[4] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England* (2011).

[5] John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[6] There is some small dispute over the date of Foxe's birth. The patent of arms granted to the Foxe family in 1598 and printed by the college of arms in 1692 gives John's birth year as 1516. It is likely that this date was provided by John's elder son, Samuel. J. F. Mozley points out, via comparison with contemporary documents, that Samuel was less reliable in the matter of particular dates than his younger brother, Simeon, who penned his father's biography and provides the date of 1517. J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 12.

[7] In 1517, Boston was the family seat of Sir John Hussey (1465–1536), First Baron of Sleaford and prominent member of Henry VIII's court. A devout Catholic, Hussey was Chamberlain to Princess Mary, later Queen Mary Tudor, and a prominent supporter of the Catholic monasteries in his region. In 1536, when Henry ordered the dissolution of the monasteries, Lincolnshire was the site of a significant Catholic uprising wherein on October 12 Catholic protestors occupied the Lincoln Cathedral, demanding the retention of Catholic worship and the reinstatement of the monasteries. Norman Doe, "Hussey [Huse], Sir William (d. 1495), Justice," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14271; Michael Laccohee Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace: A Study of the Rebel Armies of October 1536* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 7–12.

port town, it was primed to experience significant upheaval during the Reformation period. Foxe was born into the middle classes, "of the commonality of that town, of good reputation, and in respectable circumstances," according to his son Simeon.[8] Given the nature of early sixteenth-century Boston, this would have certainly meant a respectable Roman Catholic family.[9] Foxe's father died when John was very young, and his mother was re-married to Richard Melton, with whom Foxe spent the rest of his childhood.[10] Simeon describes John's childhood state as highly devout, even using scriptural terms, writing in a marginal note of his original memoir, "When work was over and the boys went out to play, John would stay behind; and when search was made, he was found in church at his prayers or deep in a book."[11] His studiousness did not go unnoticed, and it was Melton and several unnamed friends of the family who enabled his studies and sent him to Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1533.[12]

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[8] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," in *The Acts and Monuments of the Church*, by John Foxe, ed. M. Hobart Seymour (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1855), xi. A short word must be said about Simeon's biography of his father. It was originally published partially anonymously under the attestation "by his son" in the preface to the second volume of the 1641 edition of TAM. The first version was written in Latin much earlier, around 1611, and is preserved in this form in the British Library in the Lansdowne archives manuscript 388. Simeon later translated his own manuscript and gave it to the Stationers Company for publication. Due in part to its anonymous nature, S. R. Maitland attacked it as untrustworthy and spurious, an opinion that persists among some Foxe scholars to this day. Some of the skepticism of the manuscript orbits around its somewhat hagiographic language and the retelling of several supernatural and providential events in Foxe's life that are discounted by modern secular historians. Nevertheless, Mozley adequately defends the memoir and provides clarity as to its author, Simeon Foxe, the younger of John's two sons. Using internal and external evidence, Mozley shows that Simeon was the president of the Royal College of Physicians in London when the Stationers Company first published the memoir as well as that Simeon was a far too well-known and public figure to have a fraud published uncontested "under his nose," as it were. Maitland also attacked some notable mistakes and omissions in the document, but Mozley adequately defends them as the work of a loving son who was not a trained historian. On the whole, then, Simeon's memoir should be taken as trustworthy, though supported, corrected, and clarified with other sources when available. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 1–11.

[9] His father was a *plebian*, though his mother was of the higher class of *illustrior*. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 12.

[10] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," ix; Wooden, *John Foxe*, 1.

[11] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 13.

[12] In a 1579 tract dedicated to his stepfather, Foxe wrote "for a dear father of mine one Richard Melton, to recompense him with some fruit of my studies for the church which he, more like a natural than a stepfather bestowed upon me in setting me to school." Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 13; Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," ix.

Education and Conversion: 1533–1545

Foxe excelled academically and socially at Oxford.[13] This first step in Foxe's academic career was enabled by Oxford fellow, and later principal, John Harding—the first individual Foxe would call "patron," foreshadowing a pattern of his entire career.[14] His letters during this period express joviality toward many of his fellow students.[15] His ardent spirituality is in evidence in his letters as well. In several of his letters, he presents his own religious tracts to friends for their edification, and in one particularly affectionate missive, he sends a hand-drawn picture of Zacchaeus with the following inscription:

> I wished, excellent man, to compose something for you as a token of my longing for you: but I had nothing to send more fit than Zacchaeus in the gospel, whether because he was wonderfully zealous in Christ or because he was very little in stature, in both points not unlike to you, who are not only devoted ever to the glory of Christ, but also not much different in size of body. Therefore, since this little history of Zacchaeus in the gospel, owing to the striking and simple modesty of the man, ever pleased me by a certain hidden genius and it also so graphically agrees with your nature, I determined for my friend's sake to draw the excellent man with my pencil and to send you the sketch. Here you may contemplate not only his image but your own and my devotion towards both, and Christ's tenderness to us all.[16]

In 1537, Foxe earned his Bachelor of Arts degree,[17] and soon after, he was elected fellow of Magdalen College, a distinct honor given that he was not a student of the more prestigious college.[18] In 1539, he was appointed to a lectureship in logic and began his studies in divinity. Simeon attests that by this point, Foxe had "read over all that either the Greek or Latin Fathers had left in their writings, the schoolmen in their disputations, the councils in their acts or consistory in their decrees, and acquired no

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[13] Mozley argues based upon evidence from Foxe's letters and the Oxford ledgers that it may have even been John Hawarden, fellow and later principal of Brasenose, who discovered and later recruited Foxe because of his notable scholastic ability. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 13–16.

[14] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 13. Foxe acknowledges this relationship in the dedication of his *Syllogisticon*, where he thanks Harding, dubbing him his much loved patron in Christ. John Foxe, *Syllogisticon Hoc Est Argumenta, Seu Probationes & Resolutiones* (London: John Day, 1563), STC 11249.

[15] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 18.

[16] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 19.

[17] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 1.

[18] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi.

mean skill in the Hebrew language."[19] During this time, Foxe also became a convinced humanist and admirer of Erasmus, who was highly regarded by the Oxford faculty at the time.[20] That Foxe adopted this methodology is evidenced by the fact that his letters from the time and after are filled with quotations and allusions from classical literature.[21] His later works on toleration rely heavily on Erasmus's work on the same topic.[22] Well-liked and excelling in both the curriculum and culture at Oxford, Foxe was granted his Master of Arts degree in 1545.

While his academic career excelled, Foxe's exposure to Reformation ideals began a season of great distress for him as he wrestled with the implications of this newfound theology. It was at Brasenose where Foxe was first exposed to the Reformation in earnest. His roommate at Brasenose was Alexander Nowell.[23] Nowell would go on to join the prominent circle of London Protestants with Edmund Grindal and Matthew Parker, ultimately being appointed Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral under Elizabeth I.[24] When Foxe met Nowell, Nowell was already interested in the Reformation ideals that had been circulating among England's university students, and doubtless he shared these ideas with Foxe.[25] At Magdalen, Foxe became even more deeply connected to Reformation thinking as he became friends with a growing circle of young reformers, including Hugh Latimer, John Faulkner, Robert Crowley, Robert Bertie, and John

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[19] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[20] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 2.

[21] John T. McNeill, "John Foxe: Historiographer, Disciplinarian, Tolerationist," *Church History* 43, no. 2 (1974): 221.

[22] V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 198–202.

[23] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi.

[24] Stanford Lehmberg, "Nowell, Alexander (c. 1516/17–1602), Dean of St Paul's," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20378. Nowell and Foxe would go on to become lifelong friends, as evidenced by letters exchanged later in life and their sharing in Marian exile in Frankfort. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 17.

[25] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 1.

Cheke.[26] The importance of these connections should not be underestimated. His friendship with the "Oxford evangelical network" would shape much of his career, not to mention *Acts and Monuments*.[27] Not only did it expose him to evangelical ideas, but it also connected him to the Protestant patrons who would direct and empower his scholarly endeavors for the rest of his life. Additionally, though no less importantly, these friendships would give Foxe a deeply personal stake in the persecution that was soon to come upon the Protestants of England. Some of the most impassioned passages within *Acts and Monuments* tell of the martyrdoms of Foxe's personal friends. Despite the massive influence of this growing Protestant community, according to his son, it was not Foxe's friends but his historical studies that most definitively influenced his conversion to Protestantism.

When exactly this began is difficult to pinpoint. Simeon places the beginning of Foxe's transformation as coincident with the early stages of Henry VIII's break from Rome, stating, "This was the time when Henry VIII, uncertain what course to take, being at variance with the pope, and not resolved in himself thinking the affairs of the church . . . neither in all respects tolerable, nor that it was necessary to wholly alter them."[28] The period he indicates, however, is incredibly broad as he mentions the Act of Supremacy (1534; "For although the pope's supremacy had been renounced, yet his doctrine was still retained"), the dissolution of the monasteries (1536; "when the abbeys were dissolved"), through the time when "the act of the Six Articles was still in force" (1539–1547), and up to the death of Thomas Cromwell (1540), the Duke of Suffolk (1545), and the deposition of Thomas Cranmer (1539).[29] The period is too broad to

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[26] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 2.

[27] Thomas S. Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, by John Foxe (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), apparatus, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/index.php?realm=more&gototype=&type=essay&book=essay1.

[28] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi.

[29] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

narrow a date with certainty, but Simeon seems more interested in the atmosphere of unrest that his father experienced at the university than an exact date. Simeon writes, "Never before were the people in more distraction, or less security of their lives and estates, there being in the laws such contrarieties, as no man could tell what to take to with safety, or what to avoid."[30] It is easy to imagine how such national unrest could provoke a crisis of faith, and it remained in Foxe's memory as he conveyed his conversion to his son, but the period is so broad as to have covered Foxe's entire time at Oxford.

Additional evidence is needed to come closer to an exact date. As Wooden points out, it is unlikely that Foxe would have been awarded his fellowship at Magdalen if he were already displaying Protestant tendencies.[31] As such, it is unlikely that Foxe's spiritual wrestling began before 1539. This coincides with the beginning of his study of divinity. It was in that year that Simeon marks the turning point in his thinking. Foxe's religious studies unsettled his conscience. As the ever spiritually passionate Foxe dove into his divinity studies with "somewhat more fervency than circumspection,"[32] he discovered that the Roman clergy were less passionate regarding holiness than he expected. Simeon reports,

> I have often heard Master Foxe affirm. That the first matter which occasioned his search into the popish doctrine, was, that he saw divers things in their own natures, most repugnant to one another, thrust upon men to be both believed at one time; as that the same man might in matters of faith be superior, and yet in his life and manners inferior to all the world besides.[33]

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[30] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi.

[31] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 2.

[32] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi.

[33] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

This discomfort with the state of Roman piety provoked Foxe to an ardent study of church history with the goal of discovering a pure church.[34]

What he found unsettled him all the more. According to Simeon, "He found the contention to have been of great antiquity, and no age to have been free from some debate in the church. But those first quarrels were rather for dominion and increase of territory."[35] Foxe's discovery of what he deemed the impious and hypocritical history of the Roman hierarchy greatly troubled him. Here, it is helpful to quote Simeon at length:

> The Romans, endeavoring by subtle practices, and pretext of religion to retain under the jurisdiction of a high priest the ancient honour of their city, which by open force they could not defend. Then no sooner did anyone shew himself to differ from them in point of faith, but the hastening of his punishment prevented any infection that might spread itself among others. Thus, by their cruelty, and the patience of princes, who suffered it, the greatest part of these dissensions were appeased.[36]

One can sense in Simeon's description of Foxe's transformation the development of several themes that would deeply mark *Acts and Monuments*: his interest in the purity and piety of the primitive church, a sense of decay in the contemporary church that needed to be reversed, and rejection of the use of cruelty to enforce religious opinion.

The fact that his historical studies confirmed the reformed arguments Foxe was doubtlessly hearing from some of his schoolmates provoked a profound and protracted spiritual crisis for him. Simeon writes, "Near to the college was a grove, wherein for the pleasantness of the place, the students took delight to walk, and spend some idle hours for their recreation. This place, and the dead time of the night, had Master Foxe chosen, with solitude and darkness, to confirm his mind; which trembled at the guilt of a new

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[34] Simeon writes that before 1542 his father had read "all that either the Greek or Latin fathers had left in their writings; the schoolmen in their disputations; the councils in their acts; or their consistory in their degrees." Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii. See also Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 20, for a correction to Simeon's original dating of this study.

[35] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xi–xii.

[36] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

imagination."[37] It cannot be doubted that Foxe's experience of his changing convictions was a profoundly spiritual one, for his description to his son evokes the language of spiritual warfare: "What combats and wrestlings he suffered within himself; how many heavy sighs, and sobs, and tears he poured forth in his prayers to Almighty God."[38]

The exact length of this crisis is impossible to calculate based upon the available evidence, but apparently it carried on long enough to attract the attention of the school authorities. Word of his nightly escapades spread among the other students, some of whom began joining him on his walks. As he wrestled with the implications of his new convictions, he began avoiding the school chapel services. This apparently provoked the ire of a party of Catholics at the college who sought to have him disciplined by the school. In 1544, Foxe wrote to Owen Oglethorpe, the then president of Magdalen, in his own defense. Though Foxe denied the charges, even his defense shows evidence of a spiritual change:

> For five years I have been the victim of these accusations from my enemies . . . . They say I did not hear mass, did not go to church. I deny this; if I did not often go to Magdalen chapel, yet I was present elsewhere . . . . They say I was studying during chapel time. Sometimes certainly, but I was studying the scripture . . . . They say I deserted philosophy for theology. Let them charge this against God and not against me; for God drew me.[39]

Even though Foxe denied the essence of the charges, he granted that his spiritual change was in fact substantive, and so he appealed for clemency rather than exoneration. For his defense, he offered a typically Protestant appeal: "They suspect me to belong to a new religion. Why? Only because they see me study the bible. That is the root. But I am no maker of sects, no lover of strife . . . . I believe in one faith, one truth, one Jesus Christ, one salvation. If I studied the scripture, it was to get medicine for my sick soul."[40]

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[37] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[38] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[39] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 22–23.

[40] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 23.

Foxe's story is typical of the unsettled situation at England's universities at the time. Though Henry VIII had officially broken with the pope, and though Protestant ideas were being widely debated within England's universities,[41] Protestants were far from free to proselytize. Foxe himself had witnessed the burning of William Cowbridge at Oxford in 1539.[42] Cowbridge, a lay evangelist, was arrested and imprisoned in Oxford. There, according to Foxe, the leaders of the divinity school at Oxford had Cowbridge starved and sleep deprived until his health and mind were broken.[43] So afflicted, he was tried under the auspices of a false confession and burned in the Oxford town square.[44] Since Foxe witnessed the event himself, it doubtless contributed to his own unrest at being known as a Protestant during his Oxford years. According to Simeon, Foxe feared for his life while under scrutiny by the authorities at Magdalen.[45]

Despite Catholic opposition, Foxe managed to avoid expulsion—though not public sanction—in 1544.[46] In the following year, however, Foxe was forced to a

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[41] Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution* (New York: Harper One, 2007), 108.

[42] In his rebuttal of Foxe, Nicholas Harpsfield dates Cowbridge's execution to 1538. Nicholas Harpsfield [Alan Cope (pseud.)], *Dialogi Sex* (Antwerp, 1566), 851. Foxe himself was apparently initially unsure of the date, as he placed it as 1536 in his *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*. Regardless of the exact date, the event obviously unsettled Foxe in the midst of his spiritual transformation. John Foxe, *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum, Maximarumque per Totam Europam, Persecutionum, a Vuiclevi Temporibus Ad Hanc Usque Aetatem Descriptio* (Basel: J. Oporinus and N. Brylinger, 1559), 139.

[43] Foxe, *Commentarii*, 139. Freeman and Royal dispute several points of Foxe's account of Cowbridge's death, notably the involvement of the Oxford theologians, on the evidence of Anthony Draycott, chancellor to Ralph Baynes the bishop of Coventry, and the informer who helped Harpsfield write his rebuttal of Foxe's account. Thomas S. Freeman and Susan Royal, "Stranger than Fiction in the Archives: The Controversial Death of William Cowbridge in 1538," *British Catholic History* 32, no. 4 (October 2015): 465. Draycott was an ardent Catholic and noted by Foxe as having persecuted Protestants under Mary; thus, he had ample reasons to undercut Foxe's account. Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1548. Regardless of the exact details of the Oxford faculty involvement in Cowbridge's death, it was certainly enough to remain in the memory of Foxe and unsettle his mind significantly as to his own position.

[44] John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days* (London: John Day, 1563), 267.

[45] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[46] Simeon Foxe's account is somewhat confused at this point, claiming that "by the judgment of the college he was convicted, condemned as a heretic, and removed from the house. Nevertheless his adversaries affirmed he was favorably dealt with by that sentence, and might have been examined for his life, if they had not rather used clemency towards him than extremity." Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii. The college records do not record Foxe being convicted or expelled at this time; indeed,

decision. In 1545, Foxe graduated with his M.A. In keeping with the Magdalen College statues, Foxe would have been required to take priestly orders within one year of his graduation. As the Act of Six Articles was still in force, this would involve taking a vow of celibacy, something Foxe rejected entirely. In the spring of 1545, he wrote a friend, "By the statute of our college I shall not be permitted to stay here beyond Michaelmas, unless I am willing to castrate myself by rushing into the priestly order."[47] Thus, sometime after July 1545, Foxe resigned his fellowship, along with six other reform-minded students as well as Robert Crowley, another noted Oxford reformer. As J. F. Mozley points out, the timing of these resignations were more than mere coincidence and point to a concerted effort to push Protestants out of Magdalen at the time,[48] and Simeon notes that the reasons for the exit were public enough to cause a family scandal.[49] Foxe would later express his frustration with the Act that forced his resignation, calling it "the sixe Articles, which otherwise for the bloody cruelty thereof are called the whip with sixe strings."[50]

Having been publicly forced out of Oxford for holding Protestant views, Foxe found himself in a difficult position. Due to either genuine frustration at Foxe's Protestant convictions or fear of public backlash toward the family, Foxe's stepfather cut him off from the family estate.[51] Thus detached from both family and university, Foxe was forced

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they record his resignation for honorable cause the following year, so Simeon's account must refer to some form of public sanction that took place in 1544. Anthony Wood points out that Foxe's resignation the following year may have been precipitated by further pressure that would have resulted in his expulsion. Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), 530.

[47] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 24.

[48] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 25. For more information on the evangelical situation at Magdalen, see C. M. Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 4–6; Brett Usher, "Backing Protestantism: The London Godly, the Exchequer and the Foxe Circle," in *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, ed. David Loades, John Foxe Colloquium (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 116–17.

[49] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[50] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1160.

[51] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

to seek work on his own. His inclination was to be a schoolmaster, telling one friend he still desired "to become an overseer of sheep somewhere."[52] His association with the unpopular Protestant community at Oxford forced Foxe to seek patronage in the community that would dominate the rest of his life: a small but growing society of well-placed London Protestant sympathizers.[53] He sent letters to friends trying to find work, but at first he received nothing back except the gift of one crown and an invitation from Latimer to spend a few months in his house.

Foxe's efforts were not entirely in vain, however, and eventually an opportunity for work came in the form of an offer for him to be the tutor in the household of William Lucy in Charlecote. Lucy was a Protestant and friend of Latimer. The prior tutor was also a Protestant reformer whom Foxe would later travel with as a Marian exile.[54] In this Protestant household, Foxe tutored the Lucy children and met the woman who would become his wife, Agnes Randall, another member of the household.[55] Soon, however, Foxe was again harried by Catholic persecutors. Simeon writes, "Popish inquisitions hastened his departure thence; which now relying on the favour of the laws, were not contented to pursue public offences, but began also to break into the secrets of private families."[56] Foxe's fear of persecution was apparently well founded, as he wrote

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[52] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 25.

[53] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 22–23. George Townsend, "Life and Defense of John Foxe," in *Acts and Monuments*, by John Foxe, ed. Josiah Pratt (New York: AMS, 1965), 1:6. John Foxe's son Simeon attributes this transition to the providence of God through the means of a "mysterious stranger." Thomas Freeman contends that the event was less mysterious, an effect of Foxe's evangelical contacts in the city who led him to employment as a translator for evangelical printer Hugh Singleton and then as a tutor for the Duchess of Richmond. Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *TAMO*, apparatus. John King points out that the Protestant connections within this household extended as high up the social ladder as Hugh Latimer and Catherine Parr. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 33.

[54] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 25–26.

[55] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 3.

[56] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

to his stepfather, who again turned him away after only a short stay for fear that his Protestantism would bring violence upon the family.[57]

Young Reformer: London 1545–1553

What followed was a difficult two years of moving from place to place and living on the charity of others. Foxe spent some of the time with his wife's family in Coventry, but much of it remains a mystery. Simeon explicitly states that his father never spoke of this season in his life because of the pain of the memory. What he does make clear is that Foxe eventually made his way to London, attracted by the larger and somewhat more stable community of Protestants there, where he thought he could again find work as a tutor.[58] He arrived in mid to late 1547 to find his prospects no better than they were in Lincolnshire or Coventry, and so he endured another season of want.[59] At this time, however, Foxe experienced what Simeon described as "a marvelous accident, and great example of God's mercy."[60] Penniless and starving, Foxe was sitting one day in St. Paul's Cathedral; "spent with long fasting, his countenance thin, and eyes hollow, after the ghastful manner of dying men," he was approached by a stranger, who seized his hand and thrust in a gift, along with a word of comfort and a "prophesy" that "within a few days his prospects would be improved, and a more certain condition of livelihood would be secured to him."[61] Foxe never discovered the identity of the man, but better livelihood did follow when three days later word came from the Duchess of Richmond that she required a tutor in her household.

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[57] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiii; Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 28.

[58] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiii.

[59] Simeon gives the date simply as "a few years before the death of Henry VIII," but Mozley narrows it down to 1547. Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii; Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 28.

[60] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiii.

[61] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiii.

Some modern scholars discount Foxe's destitution and the supernatural elements of the story on account of the fact that Foxe had sold a translation of one of Martin Luther's sermons for print in 1547 and that he had a network of evangelical contacts in the city.[62] As Simeon does not give an exact date for the event, a period of destitution cannot be ruled out before or between Foxe's printing successes, and Simeon even speculates that the mysterious stranger may have been a servant of a well-meaning evangelical who had heard of Foxe's plight.[63] Whether one believes in the providential elements of the story or not depends more on the reader's inclination toward the supernatural than the available evidence. For Foxe, however, it was a clear act of God's sustaining providence that both sustained him and prepared him for his labors in London. This providential interpretation of life events was pervasive in both Foxe's understanding of his own life and his writing of history. If, behind the scenes, Foxe's salvation had been worked by sympathetic Protestants, then that only further draws attention to his growing connection to the London Protestant elite.

So it was that within days of his "marvelous accident," Foxe found himself the tutor in the house of Mary FitzRoy, Duchess of Richmond. The house was situated in Reigate, Surrey, about 20 miles from central London. The duchess was a staunch Protestant and deeply connected to the emerging London Protestant circle.[64] Daughter of one of England's most powerful aristocratic families, cousin to both Anne Boleyn and

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[62] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 36–37.

[63] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiii.

[64] The second daughter of Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk and once highly influential courtier to the King, Mary had been a fixture at court from her teens in the early 1530s. For studies on Mary Howard Fitzroy, see Beverley A. Murphy, "Fitzroy [*née* Howard], Mary, Duchess of Richmond (c. 1519–1555?), Noblewoman," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 2, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9638; John N. King, "Patronage and Piety: The Influence of Catherine Parr," in *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985), 43–60; Melissa Franklin-Harkrider, *Women, Reform and Community in Early Modern England: Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire's Godly Aristocracy, 1519–1580*, Studies in Modern British Religious History 19 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 62, 77–78.

Catherine Howard, Mary had been given in marriage to the King's illegitimate but acknowledged son, Henry FitzRoy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset. She had likely been exposed to Protestant ideas while serving Anne Boleyn, and soon she began socializing with prominent highly placed evangelicals.[65] By the 1540s, she was one of the tight circle of evangelical noblewomen surrounding Katherine Parr.[66]

However, by the time Foxe arrived in her household, Mary's fortunes were not what they had once been. Her husband had died young, and with the marriage unconsummated, she was entirely disconnected from the royal line.[67] An ill-fated plot by her father and brother to improve their political position among the Catholic sympathizing nobility had drawn the ire of Henry VIII. Ironically, the Protestant Mary had testified against her Catholic brother at trial, favoring her faith over her family.[68] At the trial, she claimed that he had tried to prevent her from "going too far" into the Scriptures,[69] a reference to Mary's reading the Bible for herself in English.[70] Mary's brother was executed, and his children were transferred into her care.

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[65] Nicola Clark, *Gender, Family, and Politics: The Howard Women, 1485–1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 145–46.

[66] King, "Patronage and Piety," 62.

[67] Murphy, "Fitzroy [*née* Howard], Mary, Duchess of Richmond." When her cousin, Queen Catherine's, premarital sexual indiscretions were disclosed, Mary and her entire family were imprisoned in the Tower for a time. Retha M. Warnicke, "Katherine [Catherine] [*née* Katherine Howard] (1518x24–1542), Queen of England and Ireland, Fifth Consort of Henry VIII," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4892.

[68] Though the family was released from the Tower in 1546, just before Foxe arrived in London, Mary's father and brother were arrested and charged with treason on account of their political machinations. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Thomas's son and Mary's brother, had assumed the royal arms of Edward the Confessor as part of his personal heraldry, a highly provocative act as Thomas had long been trying to maneuver his family into the royal line. The charges were also likely motivated by religious reasons as Henry VIII, possibly influenced by the Seymours, suspected that Thomas and Henry Howard, both Catholics, were seeking to usurp the Crown in order to reverse the Reformation and thus return the English Church to Rome. Peter R. Moore, "The Heraldic Charge against the Earl of Surrey, 1546–47," *English Historical Review* 116, no. 467 (June 2001): 557–83.

[69] Lord Herbert of Cherbury, *The Life and Reign of King Henry the Eighth* (London, n.d.), 627.

[70] Clark, *Gender, Family, and Politics*, 146.

So it was that when Foxe arrived in Mary's household in 1548, it was to tutor the children of Henry Howard. Though there were five Howard children in Mary's household, only four were of age to come under the tutelage of Foxe: Thomas, who would later take on his grandfather's title as the 4th Duke of Norfolk and serve in high office during the reign of Elizabeth I; Henry, who would go on to be the 1st Earl of Northampton and Lord Privy Seal under James I; Jane, later Countess of Westmorland; and Charles, later Lord Howard of Effingham and commander of the British forces against the Spanish Armada. Mary, being a promoter of the Reformation, wanted Foxe to teach the children a Reformation understanding of the Scriptures as well as provide them a classical education in Greek and Latin. Thus, Foxe was responsible for educating four very important young aristocrats.

Foxe grew closest to Thomas, to whom he became a surrogate father, and thus gained a highly placed confidant and patron later in his career.[71] Foxe made a deep impact in the FitzRoy house, and though not all his pupils remained Protestant, his teaching did have a significant influence upon his students.[72] Later, Richard Day, son of Foxe's printer John Day and tutor of William Howard, the son of Foxe's pupil Charles Howard, wrote of Foxe's time as tutor to the Howard children, "It was Foxe that first planted the gospel at Reigate . . . . Many he converted from darkness to light and struck stout blows against idolatry."[73] These were "golden days of felicity" for Foxe, who not

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[71] Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *TAMO*, apparatus.

[72] Henry's Catholic proclivities were a subject of public suspicion during the time of Elizabeth I that kept him out of significant public office. He later curried favor under James I. Jane returned to her Catholic faith when she returned to the care of her Grandfather after Mary I's accession and Foxe's exile. Pauline Croft, "Howard, Henry, Earl of Northampton (1540–1614), Courtier, Administrator, and Author," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13906; Roger N. McDermott, "Neville, Charles, Sixth Earl of Westmorland (1542/3–1601), Magnate and Rebel," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19924.

[73] Unattributed letter of Richard Daye, quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 30.

only found himself employed in one of the most influential Protestant homes in England but also would soon be celebrating the accession of the Protestant Prince Edward VI.[74]

Indeed, the duchess's significant Protestant connections soon ushered Foxe into the upper echelons of London's Protestant society and introduced him to many who would become key contributors to his career and thought in the coming days. London's premier reformers tended to gather at the FitzRoy house, and Foxe had the opportunity to mingle in their midst. Perhaps the most important to Foxe's thought and career was John Bale, whom Foxe met in the summer of 1548.[75] Bale would become a massive influence on Foxe's view of history and martyrology, and indeed he would become a significant contributor to *Acts and Monuments*.[76] This period also marked the beginning of Foxe's evangelical publishing career in earnest. Just before joining the FitzRoy home, Foxe published a translation of a sermon by Luther with Protestant printer Hugh Singleton, shortly followed by translations of Johann Oecolampadius and Urbanus Rhegius.[77] The first was dedicated to his father-in-law, an olive branch for their protracted tensions over the danger Foxe's public Protestantism had brought upon the family during his university years and perhaps an effort to appeal to him with the Protestant gospel.[78]

Foxe followed these in 1548 with *De Non Plectendis Morte Adulteris*, a tract against the death penalty for adultery. This work shows his developing concern for freedom of conscience and passion for the gospel as the remedy for heresy. He writes in the introduction to the work, "I hate contention, but I cannot desert the cause of sinners for whom Christ died . . . . We judge wrongdoers too harshly and forget the charity of the

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[74] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xii.

[75] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 4.

[76] Mark Greengrass and Matthew Phillpott, "John Bale, John Foxe and the Reformation of the English Past," *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 101, no. 1 (2010): passim.

[77] Oecolampadius (1482-1531) was a German protestant reformer in the Electoral Palatinate. Rhegius (1489- 1541) was a German reformer active across both northern and southern Germany.

[78] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 31.

gospel . . . remedy is it which takes away the life of a sick man?"[79] Foxe was quickly becoming an outspoken opponent of capital punishment for religious offenses, even opposing its use by his fellow reformers. In May 1550, he stood against the execution of Joan of Kent, a Eutychian condemned and executed by Cranmer, even publicly rebuking John Rogers, who oversaw the burning.[80] Foxe saw capital punishment as removing the opportunity for repentance. More important to this thesis is where he placed the blame for the unhealth of the church. It was a lack of holiness brought on by hypocrisy in the clergy: "Where are our pastors? The corruption of our times is largely due to the wickedness of priests."[81] For Foxe, hypocrisy was the root—and heresy only the fruit—of the problem in the Church of England.

Foxe continued this theme in his April 1551 publication *De Censura Excommunicatione Ecclesiastica*. Published in response to the fall of Edward Seymour, Duke of Sommerset, and the perceived decline in Protestant piety brought on by the change in leadership, the tract urges the clergy to revive the practice of ecclesiastical excommunication as a means to curb corruption and laxity within the church.[82] The text is shockingly bold in its denunciation of moral corruption in the Church of England. Addressing the bishops, Foxe writes,

> There are many who beg you to remedy the intolerable ills of to-day; otherwise, all will sink into chaos, anarchy will follow hierarchy; and this too in a land where the gospel has found an entrance. You are answerable for the morals of your flock, yet you sit and bear the present state. You have your prayers, psalms and sacraments; you make frequent and excellent sermons; but these are not enough. The rod is needed as well as good counsel. The keys of Peter are committed to you. In every diocese and parish, you should act against flagrant sinners, against greedy, violent and lustful men, against men that misuse divorce or create strife . . . . Cut at the root. Bring up certainly your Christian forbearance and charity but bring your censures

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[79] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 31.

[80] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 35. Eutychianism is a collection of theological teachings which disagrees with Chalcedonian orthodoxy in that it posit that the incarnate Christ had a single nature.

[81] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 31.

[82] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 35.

> too. Cast out from the church the man that lives against the gospel. You sleep at your post; you stand not for the right of the people . . . . You need not wait for parliament; in this matter you are above parliament. Heed not danger, respect no man's person, though he be governor, nobleman, or friend. Yet always be careful that your censures are backed by your good lives. Let not the offender be able to turn upon his parish priest with words: pull out first the beam from thine own eye.[83]

Several things are notable in Foxe's diatribe. First, Foxe's aversion to capital punishment is in no way a concession to licentiousness. Foxe is deeply, even obsessively, concerned with the moral health of the Church of England. The distinction is that the solution he desires is ecclesiastical rather than capital: "in this matter you are above parliament," he writes. Second, Foxe sees England as particularly liable for its moral degeneration. The situation was bad enough in any nation, but it was especially condemnable "in a land where the gospel has found entrance." This idea, that the arrival of the Reformation burdened England with a specific responsibility of reform, became a key cornerstone of both his historiography and his ministry. Foxe saw a decline in piety as a key challenge facing the Church of England.

The timing of *De Censura* suggests that Foxe may have been seeking to promote a larger Protestant project. The commission for the reformation of ecclesiastical laws was convening in October 1551 to consider a Protestant revision of the canon law within England. Thomas Cranmer was leading the charge for the revision, and it was to Cranmer that Foxe dedicated *De Censura*. Unfortunately for Foxe, *De Censura* did not have wide appeal, and the effort to reform the canon law would fail in 1553. Nevertheless, Foxe retained a passion for the reform, and he even attempted to revive it later in his life.[84]

It was also at some point in this period, around 1552, that Foxe began his first foray into martyrology. I have already mentioned that it was in the FitzRoy household that Foxe first encountered John Bale and formed a fast friendship. Recent scholarship

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[83] Quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 33–34.

[84] Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *TAMO*, apparatus.

has illuminated just how profound Bale's influence was on Foxe's martyrological work. Bale, a former Carmelite friar, had a passion for history and had collected a great many manuscripts from his time in Carmelite libraries.[85] However, even more important than his historical collection was his historical approach. Bale was perhaps the most important promoter of Protestant apocalypticism.[86] His commentary on Revelation, *The Image of Both Churches*, radically shaped Foxe's view of history.[87] In it, Bale provided the framework that would both motivate and shape Foxe's martyrological work. Bale's framework viewed all of history through the lens of the true and false church. This, of course, framed the English Protestants as an outpost of the true church, but it also encouraged the searching of history for other expressions of this faithful remnant. Through Bale's influence, Foxe would become a particularly zealous example of a growing community of Protestant historians, interpreting history through the lens of biblical apocalyptic conflict.[88]

Armed with this framework, Foxe turned to the writing of martyrology for the first time. With Bale's urging and help, Foxe began work on the *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum, Maximarumque per Totam Europam, Persecutionum, a Vuiclevi Temporibus Ad Hanc Usque Aetatem Descriptio* ("Commentary on the History of the Church, and a Description of the Great Persecutions throughout Europe from the Times of Wycliffe to This Age"). It was a martyrology of the English Lollards based upon the

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[85] Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 1–30.

[86] Speaking of his importance, Paul Christiansen says, "Predecessors paved the way, but John Bale forged the link between a new Reformation apocalyptic tradition and that of the past." Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 8–9.

[87] Richard Bauckham has outlined the closeness of this friendship and the profound influence of Bale upon Foxe as evidenced in Foxe's apocalyptic play *Christus Triumphans*. Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), 74–77; John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches after the Revelation of John the Evangelist* (Antwerp: Mierdman, 1545), STC 1296.5; King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 37.

[88] Alexandra Walsham, "History, Memory, and the English Reformation," *Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (December 2012): 901.

Fasciculi Zizaniorum, a collection of Lollard documents that Bale had "extracted" from a Carmelite monastery and begun editing for publication.[89] As Foxe would later repurpose large sections of the *Commentarii* for use in *Acts and Monuments*, this could, in one sense, be seen as the beginning of the "Book of Martyrs," and Bale its first contributor.[90] However, for the remainder of Foxe's time in the FitzRoy home, the manuscript remained unfinished.

Foxe's employ in the FitzRoy house also marked his emergence as a public reformer. In 1550, he was ordained a deacon by Nicholas Ridley, then bishop of London, whence he began a notable preaching career.[91] While at the FitzRoy residence, he undertook a preaching campaign against a local cult of the Virgin Mary. A local Madonna called "the lady of Ouldworth" was believed to have healing powers. Foxe railed against the practice of worshiping the statue. Though Foxe was at this point unbeneficed, the bishop of the diocese was the Protestant reformer John Ponet, who apparently gave Foxe free reign to carry out his crusade. Foxe was seemingly quite successful in his campaign, for Richard Day later wrote, "Foxe overthrew her, and she lost her name, her place, her power, and false miracles."[92] Thus in the early 1550s, Foxe's career as a reformer was ascending. He was well connected in the London Protestant elite and beginning to be recognized as a powerful preacher and writer. The ascent was not to

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[89] The *Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wycliff cum Tritico* is a collection of documents related to John Wycliffe, his teachings, and the statutes levied against him. The documents contained in the *Fasciculi* are roughly contemporary with Wycliffe; thus, it is one of the most important sources for the study of Wycliffe and the Lollards. Thought the compiler of the documents is unknown, it was compiled in a Carmelite monastery where Bale discovered and extracted the work for future publication. Anne Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 96n50; James Crompton, "Fasciculi Zizaniorum I," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 12, no. 1 (1961): passim.

[90] Margret Aston points out that because large sections of this work were repurposed for TAM, Bale should be seen as a true contributor to and not merely a predecessor of Foxe's work. Margret Aston, "Lollardy and Reformation: Survival or Revival," *History* 49, no. 166 (1964): 167. For a discussion of the chronology of this collaboration, see Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 40–41.

[91] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 4.

[92] Unmarked letter of Richard Daye, quoted in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 31.

continue, however. In July 1553, King Edward VI died. In just thirteen days, the Protestant succession plan was thwarted and the English magisterial Reformation ground to a halt as Mary Tudor marched on London.

Reformer in Exile: 1553–1559

Foxe had little hope of lying low in a Catholic England. Thomas Howard, whose grandchildren Foxe was educating, was a powerful and politically motivated Catholic. The diocese of Winchester, where the FitzRoys dwelt in the later part of Edward's reign, was the former see of Stephen Gardiner, Queen Mary I's future Lord Chancellor and one of the masterminds of the purge of Protestants that was about to take place. It was almost inevitable, therefore, that the young reformer would be forced out of the house, and soon out of the nation. Queen Mary pardoned and released Howard in August 1553 and restored him to his dukedom. He immediately dismissed Foxe and placed his heir in the household of Gardiner and the other children in Catholic households.[93]

Foxe sought to remain in Winchester, for a time. With other prominent Protestants now in prison, Foxe took it upon himself to be the mouthpiece of Protestantism, penning an impassioned plea to the nobility for clemency toward Protestants.[94] During this time, he took another, unknown, pupil, but more importantly, he continued his, now secret, mentorship of Thomas Howard. The young Howard tried to convince Foxe to stay, thinking he could use his influence to keep Foxe safe. However, Foxe soon suspected that Gardiner, recently restored to the bishopric of Winchester and well aware of Foxe's connection to the young Howard, was seeking to have him followed.[95] By September, leading Protestants were already being imprisoned by Mary,

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[93] Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *TAMO*, apparatus.

[94] See Harleian 417, fol. 123, British Library, in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 40.

[95] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xvi.

and Gardiner, being her chief counselor, was leading the charge against them.[96] It is a testimony to Foxe's care for Thomas Howard that he continued to visit the young man in secret, even sneaking into the Gardiner's lodgings at Winchester House.

Foxe's exit from England, precipitated by one of these secret visits to the young Howard, was just as dramatic as any of the stories he was to include in his book of martyrs. On one of these secret visits, Foxe accidentally walked in on Thomas meeting with Gardiner himself. Foxe immediately made an excuse and hurried out, but Gardiner, evidently having his suspicions aroused, asked Thomas who the stranger was. Thomas answered falsely that Foxe was "his physician, who was somewhat uncourtly as being newly come from the university."[97] Gardiner replied with a veiled threat: "I like his countenance and aspect very well . . . and when occasion shall be, will make use of him."[98] Thomas immediately sent word to Foxe and arranged for a boat to take Foxe and his now pregnant wife out of England.

The boat was to sail from Ipswich harbor, but the weather was poor, so Foxe and his wife were sent to hide with one of Thomas's tenant farmers in the village of Ipswich. Agnes's friends begged her to stay in England on account of her pregnancy, but she insisted on joining her husband. When the weather temporarily abated, John and Agnes boarded the ship. The ship attempted to set sail, but the storm again raged, so the ship was forced back into the harbor; unable to dock in the gale, it was forced to weather the night at anchor. When Foxe and his wife went back ashore, they discovered that Gardiner's men had sacked the farmhouse where they had been hidden. However, having found it empty, they assumed that the couple had escaped, so they gave up the chase and returned to London. Seizing upon their mistake, Foxe hired a horse and, ensuring he was

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[96] Anna Whitelock, *Mary Tudor: England's First Queen* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 187.

[97] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiv.

[98] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiv.

seen, made a great show of riding out of Ipswich. Returning secretly by night, he convinced the sea captain to sail again with the promise of a greater reward.[99] Reflecting his father's providential view of history, Simeon wrote that this event was "a certain course of providence" where "the subtlest deliberations of the wisest heads oftentimes by errors come to no effect, often overthrown by sudden accidents, and now and then thwarted by contrary counsels; and that all this is done to teach men."[100] His own history, as much as the written history he would later produce, Foxe saw as a providential lesson to be read and obeyed.

Two days later, the Foxes landed in Nieuwpoort. From there, they traveled on land to Antwerp, but finding it unsafe, they traveled on with the intent to reach Basel.[101] Their journey to Basel, however, was slow and circuitous. Now that Foxe was free from the fear of pursuit,[102] exile became an opportunity for him to advance his career as a reformer. First was a pilgrimage to the home of Erasmus in Rotterdam, the great humanist whom Foxe had revered since his university days at Oxford. Next, he went on to Frankfort to meet with Johan Froben, Erasmus's Swiss printer and an accomplished humanist thinker in his own right. Coming next to Strasbourg, Foxe sought to revive his printing career and finish the great work that would become *Acts and Monuments*.[103] In Strasbourg, Foxe finally completed the *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum* he had started with Bale in the FitzRoy household. Large sections of the *Commentarii* were essentially copied from the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* and Bale's notes.[104] Foxe managed to

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[99] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xiv–xv; Wooden, *John Foxe*, 5–6.

[100] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xv.

[101] Freeman, "John Foxe: A Biography," in *TAMO*, apparatus.

[102] Simeon calls this period a group "of easy journeys." Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xv.

[103] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 6; Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 42.

[104] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 40.

obtain a printer in Wendelin Rihelius of Strasbourg, and the work came to print on August 31, 1554. Foxe dedicated the work to Duke Christopher of Württemberg for "his piety and his kindness to the destitute English exiles."[105] Foxe was apparently already thoroughly convinced of the value and effectiveness of Protestant martyrology in advancing the Reformation cause, and he intended to hurry on a second volume of the *Commentarii* the following year, but such a volume never came to fruition.[106] Upon completion of the publication, Foxe quickly moved on to Frankfurt to live with a group of like-minded exiles there. He would soon find himself embroiled in a conflict that would further reveal his evangelical convictions.

Upon his arrival in Frankfurt, Foxe would join in on one of the best-documented church conflicts among the English exiles.[107] Though it took place in Germany, the conflict was profoundly English. In fact, it was simply the continuation of the debate that began during the reign of Henry VIII and would culminate in the Puritan movement during the reign of Elizabeth: How far would the English church reforms proceed? The seed of the controversy was planted in June 1554 when William Whittingham (c. 1524–1579), a Marian exile who had studied in Geneva, arrived in Frankfurt with a group of fellow English exiles. Both the church and city authorities welcomed the exiles and allowed them to form their own church and, critically, their own church order within the city. Given this freedom, Whittingham's party seized the opportunity to create the proto-Puritan dream: an English Geneva, albeit on German soil. Whittingham rewrote the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* to conform to the Reformation

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[105] Mozley explains that this dedication, while genuine, was also likely a desperate play by Foxe to obtain the patronage of the duke, an effort that was unsuccessful. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 43.

[106] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 6.

[107] The story of the conflict was recorded and later published by a group of English Puritans in 1574–1575. The publication *A Brief Discourse of the Troubles Begun at Frankfurt* was originally thought to have been compiled by William Whittingham, but it has now been attributed to Thomas Wood. A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 289n14.

he had observed in Geneva, rejecting vestments, the litany, kneeling at the Supper, and many other elements that held the flavor of Roman Catholic piety. Whittingham and his group then proceeded to invite the English exiles from Strasburg and Zurich to join them in the project.

The response they received was less than enthusiastic. The other English exiles feared the response such a radical reform would evoke. The reply from Zurich was subdued, and the reply from the English exiles in Strasburg was critical, urging moderation.[108] At the same time, a conservative group of English refugees arrived in Frankfurt, ardently preferring the unmodified prayerbook.[109] Fearing a reversal of their reforms, in September 1554, the Whittingham church invited John Knox to come from Geneva and lead in ensuring that the church would not be returned to the Cranmer prayerbook. Knox came and initially, on the advice of John Calvin, brokered a compromise, including a temporary order of service amenable to both parties.

When Foxe arrived in the autumn of 1554, he was quickly swept up in the disagreement and involved in negotiating a compromise. However, the fragile compromise was overthrown with the arrival of Richard Cox (c. 1500–1581). Cox, Cranmer's former chancellor, had been one of the chief contributors to the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer*. He ardently lobbied for the restoration of the prayerbook so that the Frankfurt church might "have the face of an English church." Knox pithily replied, "Lord

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[108] An appeal to John Calvin also received a reply of moderation. Calvin counseled that the 1552 prayerbook was a tolerable step on the way to full reform, and he counseled patience with those "whose infirmity will not suffer them to ascend a higher step." Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 290n16.

[109] Notably, Edmund Grindal was among this second group of exiles and on the prayerbook side of the controversy. Though he was part of the party opposing Foxe at this time, he was far more moderate in both his opinions and his approach to controversy than was Cox, and he removed himself as the matter grew more heated. His dispassionate approach to the conflict can be seen in a later correspondence with Bullinger where he vaguely alludes, "The English, I allow, were somewhat troublesome in Germany." Quoted in Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: Cape, 1997), 76. Grindal evidently held no grudge against Foxe as he would soon become a major contributor to Foxe's martyrological efforts, as seen below. William S. Reid, *Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 123.

grant it to have the face of Christ's church."[110] Cox succeeded in having Knox expelled from the city on March 26, 1555. Foxe sought to remain for a time; however, with Cox ascendant and the stalwart Knox exiled from Frankfurt, Foxe, Whittingham, and the remaining nonconformists were forced out of Frankfurt in September 1555.[111]

Foxe's role in the Frankfurt controversy reveals a great deal regarding his convictions that would later shape *Acts and Monuments*. First, Foxe was solidly on the side of the strong reform of the church's practical piety. He was one of the committee of five, along with Whittingham and Knox, who drafted the first Genevan-style order of worship for the Frankfurt English congregation.[112] His support of the Genevan-style prayerbook reveals a preference for a reformed piety even more progressive than that of Edward VI, a preference that would continue to show itself upon Foxe's return to England. In 1571, Foxe would mastermind his own plan for reforming the prayerbook.[113] He would prove a lifelong opponent of the trappings of Roman Catholic piety, especially the surplice.[114] Second, Foxe remained a part of the radical reformists at Frankfurt despite having friends on both sides and a strong aversion to conflict. In a 1555 letter to Peter Martyr, Foxe wrote of his feelings regarding the conflict:

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[110] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 290n17.

[111] Cox had been able to turn the tables of power by accusing Knox of treason against emperor Charles V because of negative statements about royalty in his *Faithful Admonition to England*. With Charles's army housed in nearby Augsburg, the city authorities were forced to firmly side with Cox and exile Knox. Reid, *Trumpeter of God*, 126.

[112] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 45.

[113] The details of this plan are revealed in the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* published in 1571. The *Reformatio* was a proposed revision of the canon law originally been written by Cranmer in 1551–1552. After Elizabeth's accession, Protestants twice tried to revive the reform but were thwarted by Elizabeth, who did not want it brought before parliament, preferring the more conservative settlement she had achieved. Foxe brought a new edition to print anyway in 1571, and in the preface he set forth a plan to reform not only the canon law but also the book of prayer. This bold proposal very likely upset many highly placed Protestants seeking a reproachment with Elizabeth. Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001; Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[114] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 63.

> The unhappy theological warfare and contention which lately arose here, and which made the whole winter barren and unfruitful. As for me, though I was nearly neutral in the matter, yet I could not be a wholly idle spectator . . . so far as I am concerned, I shall everywhere be a promoter of concord . . . if the aggrieved parties will be continent to deal more friendly and charitably with one another, this fire will subside, and peace will return.[115]

Despite his pleas of neutrality, Foxe appears on the side of the radicals whenever he appears in the conflict, even venturing a final attempt at reform after Knox's departure.[116] Neither did he entirely disapprove of the actions of his more forceful associates. Two years later, in a letter to Edmund Grindal, Foxe would decry the mistreatment of Knox.[117] Later, when compiling *Acts and Monuments*, he would redact a portion of a letter from Nicholas Ridley critical of Knox's actions at Frankfort.[118] Despite Knox's well-known truculence, Foxe supported his forceful efforts at reform.

What emerges in the Frankfurt conflict is the picture of a man devoted to the radical reform of the English church's practical piety but acutely aware of the dangers of pugnacity for both the individual and the community. The extent to which Foxe identified with the more radical of the reformers, who would later come to be called Puritans, has been a topic of significant debate, with Foxe being placed by various scholars within both conformist and separatist camps.[119] The primary paradox that drives this debate is that

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[115] Harleian 417, fol. 115, translated in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 47.

[116] Foxe is listed as a signatory on the formal letters sent between the parties both before and after Knox's arrival. He is named among the negotiators when the conflict is in earnest, and he is expressly expelled with Whittingham by Cox, indicating that his remaining would have kept the conflict alive. *A Brief Discourse of the Troubles Begun at Frankfort in the Year 1554 about the Book of Common Prayer and Ceremonies* (London: John Petheram, 1846), 26, 36, 55, 58.

[117] Harleian 417, fol. 113.

[118] Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, 76; Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[119] For example, Torrance Kirby presents the position of Foxe as very pro-establishment due to his efforts in his later career to defend the Elizabethan Settlement both at home and abroad. W. J. Torrance Kirby, *Persuasion and Conversion: Essays on Religion, Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions General 166 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 147. In contrast, Leonard Trinterud places Foxe among the most conservative of the Puritans because of his early antivestrian commitments. Leonard J. Trinterud, ed., *Elizabethan Puritanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 10. John McNeill and H. C. Porter represent well the moderating position. McNeill describes Foxe thus: "Puritan he was in his position on discipline and ceremonial. But with respect to the ministry and structure of church government he was decidedly an episcopalian." McNeill, "John Foxe,"

Foxe consistently held radical convictions with regard to the piety of the church but resisted radical movements that risked a divide in the church. The Frankfurt conflict serves as an excellent window into his mentality. He consistently held to the radical reformist position but showed great concern for what contention does to both soul and church. In a letter to Thomas Lever, another of the Frankfurt combatants, Foxe writes of his concern for what contentiousness will work within the heart: "Temper the vehement course of your piety. Keep the body under by all means, but do not lose the mean. I love your frank probity, but I wish you to be safe."[120] Foxe was thoroughly "Puritan" in his convictions on church piety, but he was unwilling to use contention to implement them. Furthermore, he was convinced that the use of contention was fundamentally ineffective and un-Christlike. In the dedication of his *Commentarii* published in 1554, Foxe writes,

> If we proceed with provocation, enmity, and contention, we may indeed conquer the errors, but we do not conquer the men. When we hate, their stubbornness remains unpersuaded. How much more effective is love! . . . What may not love and gentleness accomplish, such as Christ showed to sinners? . . . How few there are that will go to the man himself, instruct his errors, draw him by kindness to repentance![121]

Foxe was utterly convinced that persuasion was the most biblical method to use to reform the church, a conviction that would become one of the chief motivations of the publication of *Acts and Monuments*. His heroes were always those willing to die for their faith rather than kill for it, the position he thought would be the most persuasive.

Forced from Frankfurt, Foxe moved to Basel, where he rejoined Bale and a group of exiles living in an abandoned convent there. At the peak of the Frankfurt

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220. Porter labels Foxe an "evangelical Puritan." H. C. Porter, *Puritanism in Tudor England* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 9.

[120] Harleian 417, fol. 99.

[121] Foxe, *Commentarii*, translated in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 48.

controversy, the burnings in England had just begun.[122] As Foxe settled in at Basel, his close friends Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were being burned in Oxford.[123] Thus, it is no surprise that Foxe's thoughts were returning to the martyrs. The move to Basel would prove a boon for Foxe's martyrology as it placed him within an impromptu center of Protestant scholarship. In Basel, and through his acquaintances there, Foxe was connected with Alexander Ales, who supplied him with Protestant narratives from the Henrician Reformation; Heinrich Pantaleon, a fellow martyrologist with whom Foxe would trade stories;[124] and Matthias Flacius, whose *Catalogus Testium Veritatis, Qui ante Nostram Aetatem Reclamarunt Papae* (1556) mirrored many of Foxe's themes, influenced Foxe's ecclesiology, and provided material that Foxe incorporated into *Acts and Monuments*.[125] Perhaps most importantly for this stage of Foxe's career, it was in Basel where he became reacquainted with a patron: future bishop of London, Edmund Grindal. Though the two men had been on opposing sides in the Frankfurt affair, there was apparently no bad blood between them, and they soon began working together on a project that would become Foxe's second attempt at martyrology.

Grindal had already conceived of publishing a history of the Marian martyrs and had begun mustering his formidable network of contacts to gather materials for the work.[126] Grindal had envisioned a team of Protestant writers each contributing to this project. Though Foxe would ultimately make the largest contribution, this idea was not

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[122] John Rogers was burned on February 4, 1555. David Daniell, "Rogers, John (c. 1500–1555), Biblical Editor and Martyr," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23980.

[123] Latimer and Ridley were executed on October 16, 1555. Susan Wabuda, "Latimer, Hugh (c. 1485–1555), Bishop of Worcester, Preacher, and Protestant Martyr," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004. https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16100.

[124] Thomas S. Freeman and David Gehring, "Martyrologists without Boundaries: The Collaboration of John Foxe and Heinrich Pantaleon," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69, no. 4 (March 2018): 746–67.

[125] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[126] Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, 73.

completely abandoned; Henry Bull and Miles Coverdale made significant contributions. In addition, Devora Greenberg points to evidence of an even larger group of collaborators, including Peter Martyr and Thomas Sampson.[127] Grindal envisioned two projects, one in English and another in Latin. He commissioned Foxe to take on the Latin version, with the intent that the two projects would run in parallel. Foxe, however, quickly expanded its scope to include his previous work on the Lollard and pre-Lollard martyrs, evidence that his more cohesive view of church history was already taking shape.[128]

The exiles' interest in gathering martyr documents attests to a newly rediscovered and then-growing genre of literature among the Protestants: pious prison literature. The early church had developed this genre, the development and contents of which are explored at length in chapter 3, but particular cultural pressures caused its revival and explosion in early modern England. As the English Reformation progressed, each regent suppressed, but failed to eradicate, religious dissidents entirely. The incarceration of previously ascendent dissidents created a new category of English prisoner: religious prisoners with organized and motivated communities.[129] Added to this were certain social and religious structures that shaped the response of these prisoners to their plight. One such pressure was the shame associated with imprisonment. In a nation built upon the divine right of kings, elite religious leaders thrust from the court and into the ignominy of detention sought to rationalize their condition in light of their

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[127] Susan Wabuda, "Henry Bull, Miles Coverdale, and the Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood, Studies in Church History 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 245–58; Devorah Greenberg, "Community of the Texts: Producing the First and Second Editions of the Acts and Monuments," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 3 (2005): 699–700.

[128] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[129] Thomas S. Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2009): 134.

convictions.[130] Prisoners of the lower classes similarly sought to retain their dignity by providing upright justification for their imprisonment.[131] Drawing up supernatural themes, they rationalized their imprisonments as divine in origin, styling their incarcerations as the building of new communities and their prison cells as supernatural retreats.[132] Another dynamic on the part of prisoners was the desire to encourage and energize their coreligionists outside the prison walls. This was made possible by the early modern English prison system, in which prison wardens purchased their positions and were expected to recoup their incomes from the prisoners themselves.[133] This meant that with enough money prisoners could "import" or "export" nearly anything they wanted.[134] Imprisoned religious leaders used this as an opportunity to continue encouraging and directing their movements from within prison.

The obvious place to turn for inspiration as to how to understand one's imprisonment in light of religious conviction was the writings of Paul. And this is exactly what many of them did. Many of the Protestant prisoners of Mary's reign imitated the Pauline epistles in their basic structure. Based upon the writings of Paul, Protestant prisoners used their writings to explicate the meaning of their suffering, offering

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[130] Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," 140. To understand this honor dynamic and the lengths to which early modern English cultural elites would go to defend their honor, see Pauline Croft, "The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, no. 1 (1991): 43–69; A. J. Fletcher, "Honor, Reputation, and Local Officeholding in Elizabethan and Stuart England," in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 92–115; Adam Fox, "Ballads, Libels, and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England," *Past and Present* 145 (1994): 47–83.

[131] Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," 141.

[132] Ruth Ahnert, "Writing in the Tower of London during the Reformation, ca. 1530–1558," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2009): 168–92.

[133] This is also created a parallel problem for the repression of prison literature. As regimes changed, jailers and governors did not, by nature of their positions being contracted. This meant that prisoners sometimes found themselves with jailors that were sympathetic to their cause and willing to facilitate the spread of the prisoners letters. Freeman, "The Rise of Prison Literature," 141–42.

[134] Stephen Vallenger, a Catholic recusant imprisoned under Elizabeth, was said to have brought into prison a feather bed, a table, a desk, six stools, a large chair, six pillows, two blankets, five sheets, four curtains, three tablecloths, a large rug, and various other household goods. Anthony Petti, "Stephen Vallenger (1541–1591)," *Recusant History* 6 (1962): 257.

consolation and exhortation to their community outside the prison walls. Often, they borrowed the exact language of Paul, applying it to their own situations and circumstances.[135] This apostolic style became such a feature of Protestant prison literature that John Christopherson (?–1558), chaplain and confessor to Queen Mary I, saw fit to denounce it in a diatribe published in 1554: "Let them not then glory in their fetters, as though they were Apostles, and write letters of comfort to another in an Apostle's style."[136] But this is exactly what the Protestant prisoners did, drawing heavily on biblical and ancient literature, both to ground their movement in the past and to exhort their readers to a Protestant form of godliness. For Foxe and Grindal, combining these contemporary "apostolic" letters with biblical and ancient examples of the same genre served a profound and multifaceted purpose. For their Catholic readers, it served an apologetic purpose of defending their movement against the accusation of being novel. But even more fundamentally, it gave their community identity and instruction. It showed them who they were in light of history and how they should act like their present and historical exemplars. Martyrology intrinsically fulfilled the needs as well as fortified the self-identity of the Protestants in exile.

As Foxe was beginning his second martyrology, he was completing another work that clearly displayed the motivation behind his written ministry. In March 1556, Foxe published *Christus Triumphans*, a Latin drama about the fulfillment of John's Apocalypse in the history of the church. Latin drama was a genre growing in popularity among Protestants in the 1530s.[137] Foxe was doubtless introduced to the genre through

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[135] John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 87–89.

[136] John Christopherson, *An Exhortation to All Menne to Take Hede and Beware of Rebellion* (London, 1554), fol. kiiii.

[137] Ruth Blackburn traces the origin of these plays to the fourteenth century "mystery cycle" dramas based upon the gospel story as told through the liturgical calendar. The Reformation-era humanists, who were reencountering the usefulness of classical drama for education, added their newfound insights to further develop the genre into the neo-classical Latin and Greek dramas of the Reformation period. Ruth

his close friend and collaborator John Bale, who has been classified as both the first and most significant Protestant biblical dramatist of the century.[138] Apocalyptic drama, in particular, had garnered a waxing interest due to the social and political unrest in Europe during the sixteenth century.[139] Protestants seeking to make sense of their own historical epoch used the mode of classical drama to place their own experiences within the framework of God's plan through history, especially within the apocalyptic prophesies of Scripture. Drawing heavily on the book of Daniel and Revelation, such dramas usually took the form of dividing the biblical storyline into ages, with the Protestant church placed firmly within the age of the Apocalypse. This allowed Protestants to mine Scripture for images and outlines to define their current experience.[140] The works this movement produced were thus allegorical, but not merely so; they blurred the lines between prophesy and history and saw in the Apocalypse an "all-pervading providence" that revealed the true meaning of history.[141]

As an exile, Foxe was situated in a hotbed of Protestant apocalyptic thinking. He was reunited with his mentor, the most significant of the Protestant apocalyptic playwrights, John Bale. He was in contact with Matthias Flacius, who was applying this philosophy to the Lutheran world in Magdeburg, as well as Jean Crespin, who was attempting similar application to the Reformed in Geneva.[142] At the same time, Heinrich

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Blackburn, *Biblical Drama under the Tudors*, Studies in English Literature (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 7–25.

[138] Blackburn, *Biblical Drama under the Tudors*, 30.

[139] Bauckham points to the sack of Rome, the rise of Turkish aggression, the discovery of the American continent, and the Protestant Reformation itself as factors in fomenting unrest in the minds of early modern Europeans. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, 11–12.

[140] Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 5.

[141] Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*, 80.

[142] Howard B. Norland, "John Foxe's Apocalyptic Comedy, Christus Triumphans," in *The Early Modern Cultures of Neo-Latin Drama*, ed. Philip Ford and Andrew Taylor, Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia XXXII (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 78. Firth characterizes the years 1553–1559 as the most important years from the development of the British Protestant apocalyptic

Bullinger was giving a series of lectures on the Apocalypse that were being circulated among the English exiles.[143] *Christus Triumphans* was Foxe's contribution to the developing tradition, and it reveals the philosophy of history that would guide *Acts and Monuments*.

Christus Triumphans is an allegorical neo-classical comedy that, rather than presenting a unified plot, offers a series of allegorical vignettes through which the reader can interpret present events in the light of God's cosmic plan.[144] The play begins with Eve and Mary the mother of Jesus setting the stage by both lamenting the loss of their sons to the evils of the world. Satan is then introduced, already having fallen from heaven but attempting to work his plans on earth. He is quickly bested by the resurrection of Christ and bound for one thousand years. Here, Foxe shows his apocalyptic interpretation of history, explaining the history of the early church through the present via a series of allegorical vignettes. In each, Satan's lieutenant *Pornapolis*, literally the "whore-city" or the whore of Babylon, seeks to overthrow some representative of the true church but is foiled by divine providence.[145] As Foxe draws nearer to his own time, his allegories become more explicit, revealing his chief concerns for the readers of his drama.

As Foxe introduces the contemporary world of the Reformation, Satan is unleashed from his captivity and reveals his new plan for attacking the church:

> First call to mind, *Anabasius*, that I once took on Christ himself in the desert with temptation; I have only to work on these people with the same weapon. I'll press

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tradition, and Foxe found himself in the center of the movement in both place and time. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*, 69.

[143] Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*, 80–81.

[144] Marvin Herrick and John Hazel Smith classify *Christus Triumphans* as a tragicomedy, but Norland argues convincingly that Foxe's worldview precludes that interpretation. Foxe's interpretation of the Apocalypse is profoundly optimistic, with an emphasis on the inevitable victory of Christ. He thus displays his antagonists as incompetent comic foils who will obviously be overcome by the true church. Marvin T. Herrick, *Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France, and England*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 39 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 61–62; John Hazel Smith, ed., *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe the Martyrologist* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 41–42; Norland, "John Foxe's Apocalyptic Comedy, Christus Triumphans," 77.

[145] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 227.

> upon them all the seductive wealth and delights of the world; I'll offer them all manner of life's pleasures, the Circean cup as it were; to those elixirs I'll add a thousand painted glories, worldly empires, and distinguished titles. No allurement of pleasure will be wanting. I'll inspire them with whatever is lofty in the world, or whatever entices with lechery, like those who sprinkle poison over sugar. So those whom I can't break with force, I'll break with softness. For this is truly the nature of things: men who are won by vices are melted by luxury.[146]

Foxe contends that Satan's great strategy of temptation in the present age is worldliness, pleasure, ease, and luxury. And Foxe goes on to reveal that Satan's first field of conquest is the high ranking clergy.[147] Having thus invaded the church with worldliness, Satan creates a false church in the form of a returning *Pornapolis*, Foxe's surrogate for the Roman Catholic Church in the rest of his drama.[148] From here, *Pornapolis* afflicts the true church, *Ecclesia*, and her children, *Asia*, *Europus*, and *Africus*, on behalf of Satan. The act ends with *Ecclesia* being labeled a heretic, schismatic, Wycliffite, Anabaptist, Origenist, and madwoman and then led off to an insane asylum by officers of the Catholic Church.[149] In the final act of the play, Foxe turns specifically to England, creating allegorical proxies for Mary Tudor, Philip II, Reginald Pole, the Oxford Bocardo Prison, and the Tower of London.[150] Foxe thus dramatizes the current conditions in England. The "ironclad league"[151] of England's Catholic rulers afflict the true church until a chastised *Ecclesia* calls her children to prayer. Foxe places his prescribed solution for England on the lips of *Ecclesia* as she corrects her children for seeking to reform the church by force:

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[146] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 311. Anabasius, Greek for "an ascent," referencing his origin in hell, is one of Satan's minions within the drama. Smith, 226.

[147] Foxe uses the expression "*Eneruiter obsidebis pontificium*"; Smith interprets this as a reference to the College of Cardinals. Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 310–11.

[148] Norland, "John Foxe's Apocalyptic Comedy, Christus Triumphans," 82.

[149] In the narrative, Foxe has *Ecclesia* hauled off to "Bedlam," a pseudonym for St. Mary's of Bethlehem, the London hospital for the insane. Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 331–35.

[150] Norland, "John Foxe's Apocalyptic Comedy, Christus Triumphans," 82. The Barcardo was the Oxford prison where Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer were imprisoned. Latimer and Ridley were executed right around the time Foxe was composing *Christus Triumphans*.

[151] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 349.

> Africus: But I'll shake up the scoundrel's sleep well enough now. Go with me, brother. If I don't beat the brains out of that dog Cerberus! Then I'll raise an army, invade his courts and citadels, and relieve Europe quickly from that hellish Hydra, so that from now on good men need fear no further evil and those fellows won't be able to sleep on their ears.
>
> Ecclesia: That's not right at all. I'll never allow force to be used.
>
> Africus: Why not?
>
> Ecclesia: Because I'll give you a plan which is both better and more proper. All violence must end. We'll change threats into patience, force into prayers. No weapon is more powerful than a single prayer: this is an engine which breaks through heaven itself. Their way is to inflict injustices, ours to endure them: this indeed is the lot of saints and their victory. Except by the coming of Christ, this beast cannot be destroyed. So, we'll let him have this trophy untouched, because as far as I'm concerned, I'm resolved to endure willingly whatever I endure since I endure it for the sake of Christ. He bore greater ills, and we are not greater than he. The stigmas are his; let him vindicate his cause as he will. Though I have suffered for a long time now, yet I hope he who will bring an end to troubles will not be absent long. Meantime, let's entreat him with our joint prayers, since it is the proper time of day.[152]

The final scene unfolds with the arrival of the five faithful virgins of Matthew 25:1–13, who cleanse and prepare *Ecclesia* for the arrival of the bridegroom.[153] The play concludes on a triumphant chorus that ends with an exhortation that serves as instructions for the listening Protestants:

> We see the marvelous preludes: how Satan battles against Christ with all his forces everywhere in the world today, as hard as he did of yore. But the lamb will prevail, triumphant at last, and the bride of the lamb, though her flanks be broken by *Pseudamnus*. Meantime be warned, be on your guard with prudence, I pray. And do applaud.[154]

Christus Triumphans reveals a great deal about Foxe's understanding of the English church and his priorities for its reformation. First, it is worldliness, the "seductive wealth and delights of the world," that first led the church away, only later bringing theological and structural corruption. Second, the true church is found among those

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[152] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 359.

[153] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 361–65.

[154] Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe*, 371. *Pseudamnus*, literally "false lamb," is Foxe's pseudonym for the Antichrist and/or the pope. Smith, 227.

labeled heretic, schismatic, and Wycliffite. Foxe here shows his belief in a continuity of faithful believers, despite the corruption of the official church. Third, the Catholic Church is presented as *Pornapolis*, the whore of Babylon who afflicts the church on behalf of Satan. For Foxe, the Roman Church is not a true church in need of reformation but a false church and envoy of Satan. His firm conviction against Catholic forms of worship expressed in Frankfurt reflect this conviction; false worship was the mark of a false church. Fourth, the solution is not the exercise of martial power, an assumption for which he chastises *Africanus* through the lips of *Ecclesia*. Rather, the solution is fervent prayer and the imitation of Christ. Fifth, it was not the reformation of the church but the return of Christ that is the looked-to goal of Foxe's drama. This explains his later dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan Settlement. It was not the restoration of a Protestant England but the return of Christ to which Foxe looked. Sixth and finally, the purpose of the whole piece, as revealed in the conclusion, is to exhort the reader to prayer, to imitate Christ, and to wait for his expectant return. Foxe presents in his drama the same impulses he would later present in *Acts and Monuments*: The problem facing the church is worldliness brought on by the wiles of Satan. God has always kept a remnant that has been rejected by the Catholic Church, and the solution is the restoration of true piety: prayer and the imitation of Christ.

Foxe published *Christus Triumphans* in March 1556; he then turned his mind more fully to Grindal's proposed project. Foxe worked for two more years when the unexpected occurred. On the November 17, 1558, Queen Mary I died. Foxe's elation can be seen in his tract *Germaniae ad Angliam Gratulatio*, published in January 1559, wherein a personified Germany congratulates England on the restoration of the gospel.[155] Foxe, however, did not immediately return to England, despite expressing a desire to do so. Instead, he pressed on in the completion of his second martyrology, even in the face

[155] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

of Grindal's encouraging him to delay.[156] He remained in Basel, completing work on the project, even as he received more material from his homeland. In August 1559, he completed his *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum. Pars Prima, In qua Rebus per Angliam et Scotiam Gestis, Atque in Primis de Horrenda, Sub Maria Nuper Regina, Persecutione Narration Continetur*. It combined his earlier work with all the material he had been able to acquire on the English martyrs. With the project completed, Foxe returned to England in October 1559.

Literary Celebrity, Reformer, and Physician of Souls: 1559–1577

Foxe's passion for an English martyrology was not dimmed by the accession of a Protestant queen; in fact, it burned even brighter. As will be seen in chapter 4, Foxe did not see Elizabeth's accession as the ultimate fulfillment of the Protestant hope but as an opportunity to press on to greater reformation in England. Foxe saw martyrology as the perfect vehicle to advance that cause. In chapter 4, I will explore the circumstances, and pious motivations, of each of the four English editions of *Acts and Monuments* that Foxe produced. However, the publication of *Acts and Monuments* cannot be separated from Foxe's life, so a comment must be made concerning the effect of the work on Foxe's life and career. Through his connections to the London Protestant elite, Foxe's work quickly came to the attention of highly placed government officials, now elevated under Elizabeth's rule. Edmund Grindal, already elevated to bishop of London upon his return from exile, was well aware of the work, having been involved in its inception in Basel and perhaps having introduced it to others. However, the most important Elizabethan official to take note of Foxe's new work was William Cecil. It is unknown how Foxe first encountered Cecil. The earliest known interaction was in a 1551 letter

[156] Grindal still desired that the work be completed but advised Foxe to delay until "we are able to obtain more accurate and more detailed information from England." Harleian 417, fol. 102.

when Foxe solicited Cecil, a then member of Edward VI's Privy Council, for support in printing a Latin grammar.[157] After this, Cecil falls entirely out of Foxe's correspondence until his return from exile.[158] Cecil was a potent politician but not a particularly zealous Protestant. Courtier to the Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector of Edward VI, Cecil had held various high positions in Edward's government. However, he secretly opposed Edward's Protestant succession plan, fearing Mary I's wrath.[159] The political ploy worked, and under Mary's reign, he remained in favor by conspicuously conforming to Mary's religious orders. Having been the trustee of Princess Elizabeth's lands under the Duke of Northumberland, he remained in Elizabeth's favor throughout Mary's reign, and when she ascended the throne, he was immediately appointed Secretary of State and one of Elizabeth's most important advisors.[160] If Cecil was a pragmatic Protestant, then he was a passionate imperial. His great political ambition was the creation of a united British Isles.[161] This vision doubtless attracted him to *Acts and Monuments*, presenting a history of a united England that culminated in and justified Elizabeth's reign as a blessing of God.[162] Cecil's patronage was a boon for the book not only because of his political clout and deep pockets but also because of his connection with London printer John Day and

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[157] Additional MS 34727, fol. 2r, British Library.

[158] Evenden and Freeman propose that Cecil may be a possible candidate for the unnamed dedicatee of the first draft of the *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*, later publicly dedicated to the Duke of Wurttemberg. However, there is no direct evidence to confirm this hypothesis. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 54–55.

[159] Patrick Fraser Tytler, *England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bently, 1839), 2:201–7.

[160] Herbert Frederick Pollard, "Burghley, William Cecil, Baron," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ed. Hugh Chisholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 4:817.

[161] Jane Dawson, "William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy," *History* 74, no. 241 (1989): 196–216.

[162] Foxe's title page even presented a Protestant imperial fiction describing itself as a history of "this realm of England and Scotland," despite the fact that the Scots had their own monarchy and parliament for the entirety of Elizabeth's reign. Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 17.

his authority over certain aspects of the printing trade that paved the way for *Acts and Monuments*.[163]

It would seem that Cecil may have been responsible for providing much of the funding needed to publish the massive work. Cecil also orchestrated much of *Acts and Monuments's* early spread, being instrumental in spearheading the order to have *Acts and Monuments* placed in every parish church alongside the parish Bible.[164] His patronage was so foundational that his name and face are immortalized in a dedicatory woodcut to all four of Foxe's editions.[165] Thus, Foxe gained in Cecil not only a powerful political ally but also a great deal of political entanglement that significantly shaped the use, reception, and scholarly perception of *Acts and Monuments*. Such powerful political support meant that Foxe's book would be associated with English identity, nationalism, and imperialism, both in his time and up to the present day.[166]

In chapter 4, I will show how Foxe makes clear in his prefaces that his intentions with *Acts and Monuments* were far less political than Cecil's. His life and larger literary output also confirm this fact. However, it must be acknowledged that the production of *Acts and Monuments* was done with the aid and support of highly placed

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[163] Cecil possessed the power to grant certain exclusive printing patents for standard works such as the metrical psalms. These he granted to Day as part of his efforts to support Day's printing house in publishing government approved materials such as TAM. As the project proceeded, Day also provided political cover for other aspects of the work, such as the use of foreign labor for the presses. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 16, 67, 112, 288; Elizabeth Evenden, "The Fleeing Dutchmen? The Influence of Dutch Immigrants upon the Print Shop of John Day," in *John Foxe at Home and Abroad*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 63–77.

[164] There is some debate as to extent to which this order was carried out, with Leslie Oliver arguing that there simply would not have been enough copies in print to accommodate the order. Leslie M. Oliver, "The Seventh Edition of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 37, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 1943): 247–48. Nevertheless, contrary to Oliver's research in 1943, the Privy Council did issue the order, which has now been found in the archives of the Borthwick Institute. Institution Act, book II, pt. III, fol. 85v, Borthwick Institute; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, "Print, Profit, and Propaganda: The Elizabethan Privy Council and the 1570 Edition of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *English Historical Review* 119, no. 484 (2004): 1289.

[165] In a woodcut that introduces the dedicatory epistle "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," Elizabeth is ensconced in a decorative capital "C" for Cecil while depictions of Cecil, Foxe, and Day look on paying homage. "Queen Elizabeth I Sits Enthroned over the Pope," Woodcut, 1563, Atla Digital Library, https://dl.atla.com/concern/works/h415ph65z?locale=en.

[166] For a summary and list of resources, see chapter 1.

Elizabethan Protestant figures for whom politics and religion simply could not be separated. In addition to Cecil, Edmund Grindal and Matthew Parker both had a significant impact on *Acts and Monuments* and would at various times support Foxe in his living, research, and controversies.[167] Nevertheless, despite having patrons and supporters at the highest levels of the Elizabethan Protestant establishment, Foxe stayed upon its fringes. As will be seen, Foxe was devoted more to his vision of the reformed church than its imperfect expression in the Elizabethan Settlement.

With a printer and patron secured, Foxe set to work throughout 1560–1563 to investigate the stories he had begun hearing abroad in exile. Here, his skill as an almost obsessive investigator shines through. He scoured diocesan records, episcopal archives, and private correspondences. He searched out eyewitnesses and cross-examined local authorities. In addition, he kept up correspondences with continental martyrologists, incorporating their material into the final work.[168] In the end, he was forced to go to print while materials from his informants still remained unsorted.[169] The gargantuan effort seems to have damaged Foxe's health, and he would periodically complain of its decline for the rest of his life.[170] However, if *Acts and Monuments* damaged his health, it

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[167] For Cecil's further support of Foxe, see Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 112, 283, 316. For Grindal's support, see Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 63, 77, 98, 130, 244; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 83–85, 107, 143, 232–33. For Foxe's relationship with Matthew Parker, see Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 73, 80, 85, 168; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 149–50, 161–62.

[168] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 104–16.

[169] Foxe complains of the rush in his preface to the learned reader: "Let me add, moreover, with their indulgence, that we have acted quicker than perhaps will suit those very people, who trifle in this way: certainly we have acted more expeditiously than was appropriate for a work of such great importance and size, which demanded a more painstaking interval of time and care in sorting the materials, since, as those who were witnesses to this, who were aware of the time, and were companions in the labour know, scarcely eighteen full months were given over by us to preparing the material, to collecting and putting together items, to comparing copies, to reading books, to re-writing the things which had been entrusted to manuscript, to correcting type, to arranging the history appropriately and to putting it in order, etc." John Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

[170] In "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," he complains that in his work on the first edition, "I have destroyed my health in vainly wearing myself out, damaged my eyes, hastened the onset of old age, and exhausted my body." Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9. His son Simeon reports of his further health struggles attributed to his efforts on TAM. Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," 2.

immortalized his legacy. Upon its first printing in 1563, it was an immediate success, producing the demand for three further revisions in Foxe's lifetime, a fact of no small note as *Acts and Monuments* was the longest English print book of the sixteenth century. Foxe would spend significant portions of the next twenty years editing, expanding, and defending the work. Others have expounded and debated the immediate impact and reception of *Acts and Monuments*, but Warren Wooden sums it up well: "It immediately established Foxe as one of the leading champions and expositors of the Church of England."[171] Ironically, Foxe seems to not have been entirely comfortable with that role.

Foxe remained on the fringes of the Elizabethan Protestant establishment despite his having highly placed friends and *Acts and Monuments* being of incredible utility to the Crown. Foxe was ordained a priest by Grindal in 1560, but although the demand for learned Protestant ministers to fill the posts vacated by Marian Catholic priests was incredibly high, Foxe held only two rather modest prebends and seems to have turned down other prestigious preferments.[172] Why was this the case? The answer seems to be found at the convergence of Foxe's temperament and convictions. His son Simeon wrote of this reality:

> Though his deserts were equal with any, yet he was well contented to keep the conscience of welldoing to himself . . . a life, bearing continually true and solid fruits, but not such as whereon the reader's senses may surfeit . . . a life passed without noise, of modesty at home and abroad, of continuance, charity, contempt of the world, and thirst after heavenly things.[173]

Another indication of Foxe's temperament is his aversion to corporal punishment in matters of religion. On several occasions, he lobbied at the highest levels both to have its use removed from English canon law and for particular offenders to be let off.[174] In each

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[171] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 11.

[172] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 10; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 104; Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 64.

[173] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," 1.

[174] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 86.

case, Foxe argued that it was persuasion, not execution, that would advance the cause of the gospel. It would seem that Foxe's temperament for avoiding conflicts, so clearly seen in the Frankfurt affair, had a bearing on Foxe's decision to avoid high placement. Indeed, the rest of his life would be marked by uncontentious private pastoral ministry. Conviction also seems to have played a part.

Foxe's actions also did not entirely align with his highly placed and political patrons. Despite supporting Elizabeth's government in principle, he continued to advocate for further reform of religious ceremony as he had in Oxford and again in Frankfort. Most notable in this regard is Foxe's antivestrianism. In 1559, Elizabeth issued an injunction mandating that clergy wear the old clerical dress, including Catholic priestly garments.[175] A segment of the Protestant clergy refused to comply. Foxe was evidently among this party, for in 1564 his name appeared on a list of ministers refusing to wear the surplice.[176] In January 1565, the Queen forced the issue by demanding that the bishops impose the clerical dress upon the lower clergy upon threat of charges of contumacy. Parker complied and summoned the clergy under his charge to Lambeth Palace, Foxe included. Thomas Fuller (1608–1661) records the event. According to his account, Foxe was particularly selected for public questioning as it was thought "that the general reputation of his piety might give the greater countenance to conformity."[177] Apparently, Parker thought to take advantage of Foxe's public profile and cooperative nature to ease the conflict over vestments. Foxe's response must have caused some consternation when he produced a Greek New Testament and stated, "To this . . . I will subscribe."[178] When Parker sought to force the issue by commanding subscription to the

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[175] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 73.

[176] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[177] Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845), 4:328.

[178] Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, 4:329.

church canons, Foxe replied, "I have nothing in the church save a prebend at Salisbury, and much good may it do you if you will take it away from me."[179] Foxe did not lose his prebend, largely due to his prominence and reputation, but Parker could not have been pleased with Foxe's very public and courageous nonconformity.

Another incident shows Foxe's willingness to put his convictions regarding piety above his prominent connections. In 1571, parliament took up the question of the reform of the canon law. It had been technically nullified under Henry VIII but never actually replaced. Cranmer had drawn up his own Protestant canon law during Edward VI's reign, but it had never been ratified. With the issue now revived, Foxe was recruited to edit Cranmer's code for presentation to parliament.[180] This was not Foxe's first foray into the subject. As discussed earlier, in 1551 he had published a tract entitled *De Censura* calling for the revival of ecclesiastical discipline and the implementation of a Protestant canon law. Knowingly, he dedicated the work to Cranmer. Foxe's tract, and Cranmer's canon law, would both be rejected as too radical. Sadly, Foxe's new attempt would meet the same fate and for the same reason. Foxe sought to push greater reform with the new canon law. The title hints at the true goal of his project: *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* ("The Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws"). In the new preface, he boldly stated that he could not call the *Book of Common Prayer* "the proper and perfect master of all divine worship" because he would give this title only to Scripture.[181] He went on to call for a Protestant revision of the prayerbook, a move that cannot have pleased Parker. Freeman points out that the *Reformatio* was likely part of a larger scheme by Thomas Norton (1532–1584) to remove "popish" elements from the liturgy, a scheme

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[179] Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, 4:329.

[180] John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion,* 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1824), 2:97; Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 79–80.

[181] John Foxe, *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (London: John Day, 1571), A2, translated in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 80. In pursuit of one of his personal proclivities, he also seeks to remove the death penalty for heresy from the canon law. Mozley, 80.

Foxe would have heartily supported.[182] In the end, Elizabeth foiled the implementation of a new canon law, but the event shows Foxe's continued dedication to the reformation of public piety.

Thus, Foxe's desire for greater reform and, in the words of his son Simeon, to "keep welldoing to himself" kept him on the fringes of the ecclesiastical establishment. This was not to say it kept him out of the public eye. The success of *Acts and Monuments* made Foxe something of an early modern "celebrity pastor." His extant correspondences are filled with letters from complete strangers requesting advice on theological and pastoral issues. Foxe apparently thrived in this role. Simeon describes how Foxe's house would be overwhelmed by strangers seeking spiritual advice: "No man's house was in those times thronged with more clients than his. There repaired to him both citizens and strangers, noblemen and common people of all degrees, and almost all for the same cause; to seek some relief for a wounded conscience."[183] On at least two occasions, Foxe was called upon to cast out demons, and at least one miraculous healing was popularly attributed to him, though Simeon hints that more were rumored.[184] Many letters attest the comfort people received from Foxe's counseling as well as praise for Foxe's own piety.[185] Simeon describes his father's pious life repeatedly throughout his biography: "He bestowed not in sleeping or taking his pleasure, but in praying and studying . . . [making] use of the night silence for secrecy, unless by chance sometimes the vehement groans he mingled with his prayers . . . gave notice how earnest he was in his devotions."[186]

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[182] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[183] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xvii.

[184] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 85–86, 107; Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xvii.

[185] Harleian 416, fols. 95, 116, 120, 143, 191, British Library; Harleian 417, fols. 118, 102.

[186] Simeon Foxe, "The Life of Mr. John Foxe," xvii.

A sample of Foxe's pastoral ministry can be glimpsed in his 1563 pamphlet entitled *A Brief Exhortation . . . in This Time of God's Visitation*.[187] Written in the midst of an outbreak of the plague, Foxe used the tract to encourage Londoners to look to God's providence for comfort. Using his typical technique, he called upon readers to look to Christ and the martyrs for examples of how to act when faced with suffering: "Having before your eyes so many examples of good men which passed the same way before you as the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs of Christ . . . learn thereby to die and not to fear death, not to murmur against God."[188] The themes of perseverance unto death and the willingness to embrace a good death, themes foundational to *Acts and Monuments*, pervade *A Brief Exhortation*.

The rest of Foxe's literary output indicate Foxe's particular interest in topics pious and pastoral. In 1573, he edited a collection of the works of William Tyndale, John Firth, and Robert Barnes. In the introduction to the work, he encourages readers to seize upon the book's subjects as models to follow: "So have I to exhort all studious readers with like diligence to embrace the benefit of God offered, and seriously to occupy themselves in marking and following the valiant acts and excellent writings of the said godly persons."[189] Foxe even goes so far as to create a schema by which readers of all ages can find a fitting model: "If thou be young, of John Firth; if thou be in middle age, of William Tyndale; if in elder years of Robert Barnes, matter here is found, not only of doctrine to inform thee, of comfort to delight thee, of godly example to direct thee."[190] As with *Acts and Monuments*, so with this book Foxe was very concerned with providing models of piety to his readers.

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[187] John Foxe, *A Brief Exhortation, Fruitfull and Meete to Be Read, in This Heauy Tyme of Gods Visitation in London* (London: John Day, 1563).

[188] Foxe, *A Brief Exhortation*, 4–5.

[189] John Foxe, *The Whole Workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Firth, and Doct. Barnes* (London: John Day, 1573), sig. Aiii r.

[190] Foxe, *Workes of Tyndall, Firth, and Barnes*, sig. Aiii r.

The shape of Foxe's pastoral ministry is also shown in Foxe's translations. His selection of works and the introductions he attached to them show a distinct desire to bring continental pastoral works to the English reader. In 1575, he published a translation of Luther's commentary on Galatians.[191] Foxe gives his reason for publishing the work in extoling it as "a treatise most comfortable to all afflicted consciences exercised in the School of Christ."[192] Foxe lifts up not only the work to be read but also Luther as a man to be emulated in the reading: "The Author felt what he spake, and had experience of what he wrote, and therefore able more lively to express both the assaults and the sallying, the order of the battle, and the means of the victory."[193] This adulation echoed his words of Luther from *Acts and Monuments*: "He also illustrated divers other points of Ecclesiastical doctrine. These happy beginnings of so good matters, got him great authority, considering his life was correspondent to his profession."[194] For Foxe, right theology and exemplary lives could not be separated. Luther was one of his favorites to promote, and in 1577 Foxe published a translation of Luther's commentary on the Psalms of Ascent.[195] Foxe again attached an introduction extoling Luther's quality as a model, "[one] most ethically worthy," and the work as "for true comfort and spiritual consolation."[196] A consistent concern of Foxe's pastoral works is a concern for comforting the conscience afflicted by the law. Foxe also provided similar introductions for William Gace's translation of Luther's sermons as well as William Hilton's

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[191] John Foxe, *A Commentarie . . . upon the Epistle to the Galathians* (London: John Day, 1575).

[192] Foxe, *Commentarie upon Galathians*, sig. ij.

[193] Foxe, *Commentarie upon Galathians*, sig. ij.

[194] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 455.

[195] John Foxe, *A Commentarie upon the Fifteene Psalmes* (London: John Day, 1577). Foxe was not the translator of the work, which had been translated by his good friend Henry Bull, but Foxe compiled, published, and prefaced the translation after Bull's death.

[196] Foxe, *Commentarie upon the Fifteene Psalmes*, sig. Ijj r.

translation of a sermon by Urbanus Rhegius.[197] It would seem that during the 1570s Foxe was something of a facilitator for the translation and distribution of devotional works, particularly those addressed to afflicted consciences. His solution was to extol both the works and lives of those who had discovered the gospel as the solution for the afflicted conscience.

Foxe was also an "in demand" preacher, providing sermons regularly as a traveling evangelist, though in keeping with his somewhat retiring personality, he published only two.[198] Both were preached on special occasions and exhibit key themes common to Foxe's other works. *A Sermon of Christ Crucified* was preached at Paul's Cross on Good Friday, 1570. The sermon was of special import as just one month before the pope had issued a bull excommunicating Elizabeth.[199] Grindal, Foxe's old friend and collaborator on *Acts and Monuments*, likely called on Foxe due to his fame and due to the comfort his history provided to the English. The sermon was certainly an English rallying cry, citing as enemies of the gospel the Turk and the Bishop of Rome.[200] However, Foxe did not miss the opportunity to convict the English of their own culpability, saying that the sermon was given to "awake the hearts" of those who had lapsed in their Christian duty in "these drowsy days of carnal security." He even goes so far as to say that the Roman Catholic pressure upon England will "do them some good" by causing their wakefulness.[201] Foxe's admonition was not legalism. The remainder of the sermon was a classical exposition of law and gospel with the cross exalted as the place where "the Son of God, and the Law of God, wresting together . . . both cast down and both slain upon

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[197] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[198] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 83.

[199] *Regnans in Excelsis* was issued on February 25, 1570.

[200] John Foxe, *The English Sermons of John Foxe* (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1978), sig. T3 v.

[201] Foxe, *The English Sermons of John Foxe*, sig. A4 r.

one cross."[202] Christ alone was raised; it was piety, not legalism, that Foxe preached. His second published sermon was *A Sermon Preached at the Christening of a Certain Jew*. Preached in 1577, its occasion is contained in the title. It is another gospel exposition, only here Foxe turned to another of his favorite themes: the true church. Tracing the gospel from the Old Testament all the way through the present history, Foxe argued for the Protestant faith as "the true and sincere church."[203] As with *Acts and Monuments*, so with this sermon he was anxious to show the purity and continuity of the Protestant faith.

The Oxford Controversy: 1577–1580

Though Foxe remained a conformist throughout his life, his actions and writing were always aimed at greater reform. As evident in the Frankfort and antivestrian incidents, Foxe's appetite for conflict was low, though he always sided with the party of greater reform. There is, however, one incident in Foxe's life that put him particularly and fervently at odds with a particular group of Puritans and thus has fed the argument that Foxe was more conformist than Puritan in his leanings. Yet, greater context reveals that Foxe's ardor in this instance arose more out of personal conflict than any change in his piety or desire for reform.

The incident in question revolves around the education of his son Samuel. Little is known of Samuel outside this incident;[204] however, Foxe's letters of the period reveal him to be a troubled student and a bit of a frustration to his father. In London, Samuel had four tutors who apparently achieved little success with the boy, and in 1574, Foxe appealed, in a somewhat desperate manner, to his friend Lawrence Humphrey, president of Magdalen College, to have him admitted to Oxford.[205] Samuel was admitted,

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[202] Foxe, *The English Sermons of John Foxe*, 115.

[203] Foxe, *The English Sermons of John Foxe*, C2 v.

[204] His younger brother Simeon leaves him entirely out of his father's biography.

[205] Harleian 417, fol. 112.

but he got along poorly with his first tutor, causing somewhat of a personal scandal for Foxe, who had to again ask Humphrey to intervene and personally undertake his son's linguistic education.[206] Samuel made better progress with his second tutor but apparently still struggled with the scholar's life, and in 1577, he went truant from Oxford to journey to France, without informing his father or his tutor. Foxe had to learn of his son's absence from a French merchant. In desperation, Foxe again used his public notoriety to intervene for his son, writing the English ambassador to France and asking him to intervene with the prodigal Samuel:

> Hear the matter in a few words and understand my misery. I had here a stripling son, whom, after my small means, I had carefully instructed in polite letters, wherein he for his talent had made no mean progress. Now what has happened? Misled by the persuasion and counsel of a friend he has secretly run away from us, forsaking his college, without consulting his president and tutor leaving his books and studies, without the knowledge of his parents, amid the grief of all his friends and kinsmen, and deserting his country has rushed into banishment.[207]

This letter reveals a great deal of the situation of both John and Samuel Foxe. Though we lack Samuel's testimony, he seems at best poorly motivated to pursue a scholar's life. By contrast, his father is desperate for his son's success and willing to spend a great deal of his public good will in pursuit of it. The situation is made even clearer when the elder Foxe succeeded in having Samuel restored at Oxford, again with the help of Humphrey. The nature of the emotional situation is made clear in Foxe's letter on this occasion, wherein he evokes the language of Paul in his letter to Philemon. Dubbing Samuel his Onesimus and Humphrey his Philemon, Foxe praises Samuel's return to Oxford as his son's being "restored to himself."[208] Foxe very clearly had a great deal of emotional investment in Samuel's success at Oxford, and J. F. Mozley offers a probable factor as to the reason: "Samuel's presence at the university was, as it were a renewal of Foxe's

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[206] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 108–9.

[207] Harleian 417, fol. 116.

[208] Harleian 417, fol. 117.

youth."[209] Indeed, during this period, Foxe visited the university often, even taking an interest in Samuel's friendships, offering gifts and advice. The nature of the depth of Foxe's emotional investment in Samuel's scholarship is essential to understand what would happen next.

In 1580, Samuel obtained a fellowship at Magdalen, much to Foxe's delight, but in 1581, he was expelled. The reasons for his expulsion were personal, political, and religious. In the late sixteenth century, Magdalen College was one of the most influential and fast-changing centers of Puritan activity.[210] Under the presidency of Humphrey, it experienced several significant religio-political controversies. Humphrey was a former Marian exile and had even risked deprivation as an antivestrian in 1564. However, by the mid-1570s, he had significantly moderated his application of reformed principles to the Elizabethan church and thus gained appreciable favor with the Crown.[211] For example, in 1576, he had written to William Cecil admitting that he was willing to enforce the use of vestments at the college if Cecil would add a clause that the vestments were "not so much for an ecclesiastical ceremony, as for a civil policy" and that this concession would "satisfy many in conscience."[212] Humphrey was sorely mistaken in thinking that this pragmatic gesture would salve the consciences of his Puritan students, and his mistake would result in the conflicts that would lead to Samuel's expulsion.

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[209] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 110.

[210] Patrick Collinson has stated that "the puritanism of Elizabethan Oxford has been persistently underestimated, and only rarely has due recognition been accorded to the influence of what was perhaps the most remarkable puritan society in either university, Magdalen under Humphrey's presidency." Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Routledge, 1967), 129.

[211] C. M. Dent describes this change as "the two faces of Lawrence Humphrey," attributing Humphrey's changing behavior to a growing complacency and comfort with his favored position with the Crown: "As his standards of conduct and management declined, so Humphrey's desire to reform the discipline of the ceremonies of the church abated and he settled into a studied mediocrity." Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 48.

[212] Lansdowne 24, fol. 52, British Library, translated in Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 49.

The first rumblings occurred in 1575, when the Dean of Arts died, requiring Humphrey to summon the senior fellows of the college to hold an election for the dean's replacement. Three of the summoned fellows, in protest of Humphrey's leadership, refused to take the oath required to conduct the election. Humphrey expelled them as a result. The expulsions precipitated the division of the college into progressive and moderate factions.[213] The conflict was politicized on two fronts. First, the progressive students resented what they saw as external interference from the Crown, as Humphrey had sought to resolve the issue by referring it to the judgment of a royal visitation.[214] Second, a friend of one of the expelled students was secretary to Francis Walsingham, spymaster to the Queen and principal secretary of the Privy Council. Walsingham was deeply concerned with any religious division that might present a weak front to Rome. He derided Humphrey for poor leadership, thus undermining his position.[215] In the end, the expulsions were upheld by royal visitation, but rather than settling the issue, it only planted seeds of resentment that would bloom in the event that resulted in Samuel's expulsion.

The fruit of the 1575 expulsions was the forming of a party of students and fellows that increasingly used university politics to resist Humphrey's leadership. Humphrey was largely indecisive in response, provoking even more college politicking against him.[216] One of the group's strategies was seeking to expel moderates from positions of authority, and Samuel Foxe became the target of one such successful coup in 1580. Samuel, being an associate of Humphrey and indeed likely seen as something of a sycophant due to his father's repeated intervention with the president, found himself

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[213] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 49–50.

[214] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 50.

[215] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 53.

[216] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 57.

opposed by the progressive Puritan faction and voted out of his fellowship. However, the action was more than purely factional. Among the radical Puritans was Samuel's first Oxford tutor, Edward Gellybrand, who had been so offended by Samuel's transfer out of his care and restoration to the college that he had even threatened legal action against the elder Foxe.[217] Gellybrand's own ongoing animosity toward Samuel doubtless contributed to his expulsion.

Gellybrand's position reveals something of John Foxe's own views on the condition of the college and the larger project of reform. In 1576, Gellybrand, then still in the good graces of the elder Foxe, wrote Foxe a letter asking what to do regarding the question of vestments.[218] Foxe's response was moderating but far more careful and refined than Humphrey's. He distinguished between those items that had been entirely tainted by popish idolatry and those that could be used in specific circumstances. In the former category, he placed chasuble, alb, amice, stole, and maniple. These, according to Foxe, were never to be used in the church. In the latter category, he placed scholarly dress: the gown, cap, and surplice. These were adiaphora and can be used with great care—Foxe delineates an extensive list of considerations—so long as they do not violate true piety or essential doctrine, obscure the glory of Christ, or obscure the marks of the true church.[219] Foxe's letter reveals the essentials of his position. He certainly longed for a greater reformation of English piety but hated fractiousness and dissention. His solution was greater clarity through discourse, not public action.

Gellybrand would not ultimately take Foxe's advice and participated in the party targeting Samuel for expulsion. Foxe reacted with a vehemence befitting the near-

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[217] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 108, 111. Gellybrand's ongoing animosity is revealed in a 1578 letter to Foxe in which he says, "About Samuel I write nothing because I cannot truthfully write what I wish and desire." Harleian 416, fol. 194, translated in Mozley, 111.

[218] MS Rawl. C 936, fols. 7–8, Bodleian Library.

[219] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 59–60.

obsessive emotion he attached to his son's scholarly career. He begged support from nearly everyone in his quite formidable network. He appealed to Humphrey; the college fellows; Grindal; Daniel Rogers, son of John Rogers the martyr; and ultimately to Cecil, then Elizabeth I's lord treasurer.[220] It is these letters that reveal how the attacks on his son affected him. Foxe took the matter deeply personally. In a letter to an unnamed bishop, he expresses his full emotion: "Who could have so adamantine a breast as not to be horrified at this unheard-of cruelty of unthankful men?" He then expresses that his person, rather than any doctrine, ought to have caused them to act differently: "If my old age and poverty moved them not, their own humanity and professional scholarship should have taught them kindness and forbearance." Foxe sees the matter as a direct attack on himself, saying, "They practice this monstrous tyranny against me and my son." In a moment of poignancy, he admits to Samuel's less-than-stellar record but then turns it into an attack upon his opponents' character, evoking Matthew 7:5: "I grant my son is not so pure as are those thrice pure Puritans, nevertheless in these blemishes of his I have not yet found any mote so great as the greater beams which one may perceive in their characters." Foxe then gives his final assessment: "If I were a man to rage with them against the bishops and archbishops, they would never have sharpened these arrows against me. They hate me because I prefer to follow moderation and public tranquility. In this matter you bishops are concerned as well as I."[221] The fact that his moderation could not protect his son's scholarly career had indeed driven Foxe to distraction.

In the end, it was Foxe's appeal to Cecil, through whom he had a direct connection with Elizabeth's government, that resulted in the restoration of his son. Samuel was restored to his post by royal mandate.[222] Nevertheless, it was this event—and

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[220] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 111; Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[221] Harleian 416, fol. 152, translated in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 111–12.

[222] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 61.

the correspondence it produced—that has caused some scholars to categorize Foxe as more moderate and less concerned with reform, especially in his later years. However, a close examination of the event reveals a much more complex picture. First, one must consider the emotional situation. The rocky circumstances of Samuel's early education show Foxe pursuing his son's education with a passion bordering on obsession. His behavior at Magdalen during Samuel's tenure and his appeal to his old age in his letters give credence to C. M. Dent's speculation that Samuel's time at Magdalen was, as it were, "a renewal of Foxe's youth."[223] His letters of appeal confirm something of the kind as they reveal a man deeply aggrieved. At one point, Foxe claims, "My private wrongs I can bear; it is the church's danger that moves me"; nevertheless, in the same letter, his language of "tyranny against me," "arrows against me," and "they hate me" belie the detached attitude Foxe claims.[224] Foxe was personally wounded by young men he had mentored, and he responded accordingly.

Dent and Thomas Freeman also both point out a generational component to the conflict.[225] Foxe and Humphrey were both aged exiles who had suffered under Mary and saw Elizabeth's reign as the miraculous blessing that had brought England back from the brink of destruction. It was an imperfect blessing, to be sure, but a blessing nonetheless, and one they feared could be squandered in fractiousness. They were also older, established, and well connected, due to their roles in Elizabeth's rise. Foxe had ties to powerful bishops and the ability to lobby, if not move, even the Queen herself. This saved him from the anxiety of a younger generation of Puritans who had been divested of power by the antivestrian controversy and saw action as the only way to further reform. Foxe never parted ways with their piety, but this event saw him part ways entirely with

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[223] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 110.

[224] Harleian 416, fol. 152, translated in Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 111–12.

[225] Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford*, 61; Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

their methods. In 1584, in a letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, Foxe would still not support subscription to the prayerbook, but he would express sympathy for the archbishop's harsh reaction to the Puritans.[226]

Final Years: 1581–1587

In 1583, Foxe published the final edition of *Acts and Monuments* released during his lifetime. It was not a revision so much as a reprint, due to the poor production quality of the 1576 edition, over which Foxe had given significantly less supervision.[227] With that task complete, Foxe turned away from martyrology for the last time. His final work was a return to his apocalypticism: a commentary on the book of Revelation entitled *Eicasmi, Seu, Meditationes in Sacram Apocalypsim*.[228] Though not a history, it reads as one. Foxe saw the majority of Revelation as having been fulfilled and the rest as a lens through which to see history. To prove his point, he reprinted nearly forty pages of *Acts and Monuments* within *Eicasmi* as evidence of the fulfillment of the prophesies.[229] This fact reveals a great deal about Foxe's view of history and his goals in *Acts and Monuments* in particular. History was a cosmic drama, revealed in the Scriptures. One only had to choose what role one would play. In the end, the work would be published posthumously and incompletely. Foxe died on April 18, 1587.

Conclusion

In many ways, the contours and priorities of Foxe's life cannot be separated from the contours and priorities of *Acts and Monuments*. My goal in this chapter was to present Foxe as profoundly motivated by the advancement of Protestant piety in England.

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[226] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

[227] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 271.

[228] John Foxe, *Eicasmi, Seu, Meditationes in Sacram Apocalypsim* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1587).

[229] Freeman, "Foxe, John (1516/17–1587), Martyrologist."

There are few scholars who would militate against this, but modern scholarship of *Acts and Monuments* often neglects its emphasis in favor of social and political interpretations of the book. This brief overview of Foxe's life reveals the error in that oversight. Foxe, throughout the entirety of his life, was concerned with restoring English piety to the ancient form that he discovered in his undergraduate study of history and that resulted in his own conversion. When this restoration was challenged, he devoted the majority of his life to writing a historical martyrology, to give both historical context to and models of pure piety. The apocalypticism he adopted early in his theological development provided further motivation for his project, for through it he saw the theological conditions in England as a result of a decline in piety—both its structure, in the incorporation of popish elements in Protestant worship, and its fervency, as Englishmen were lured into spiritual complacency. This is seen in that Foxe devoted his life to the reformation of piety—in college at Oxford, in exile at Frankfort, and upon his return through his ministry and writing in England, not least of all *Acts and Monuments*. Particularly, a study of Foxe's life reveals a man committed to a greater reformation of piety within Elizabethan England, a project in which *Acts and Monuments* played no small part. I have presented a view of Foxe's life that reveals a man far less comfortable with the Elizabethan Settlement than his powerful connections within the Elizabethan elite would imply.[230] Foxe's outward conformity is best explained by his personal temperament and aversion to conflict. Even so, he was passionately devoted to the reformation of piety, with persuasion, not force, as its impetus. It was this passion that motivated Foxe's life and

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[230] Thomas Fuller's *The Church History of Brittain*, a near contemporary to Foxe, presents Foxe as a "moderate nonconformist," on a scale ranging from conformist, mild nonconformist, moderate nonconformist, to extreme nonconformist. Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, 4:328. It is notable that more modern accounts tend to place Foxe closer to the establishment. Contributing to this is the fact that these accounts fall after the nationalist interpretation of Foxe, focus primarily on Foxe's sources, and tend to place less focus the importance of Foxe's piety and convictions and thus downplay Foxe's nonconformism. An example of this interpretation can be seen in Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 103

writing ministry. It was also why he elected to write a martyrology. The martyrs provided a link to the pious past and served as models for the future.

CHAPTER 3

"MOST MILD AND CONSTANT MARTYRS": MARTYROLOGY AND THE PROMOTION OF PIETY

The previous chapter has shown how the contours of Foxe's life shaped the contours of *Acts and Monuments*. The study of Foxe's life reveals a man profoundly motivated by the advancement of Protestant piety in England. His apocalyptic interpretation saw all of history as the fulfillment of Scripture and England's deep troubles under the reign of Mary I as a result of its decline in piety. Finally, Foxe deeply held the view that persuasion, not force, would bring about further reformation. With all this in mind, Foxe's use of martyrology becomes sensible: The martyrs provided both a link to the pious past and served as models for the pious future.

Foxe's use of martyrology is significant for two reasons: First, it was the study of ecclesiastical history and martyrology that had led to his conversion at Oxford. Foxe's conception of Protestantism was that it was the revival of an ancient, pure, and persecuted practice of the faith. Add to this his experience of exile and the martyrdom of close friends, and it is clear that martyrology was foundational to Foxe's perception of Protestantism. Second, when Foxe first ventured to write a martyrology in exile, it was a recently revived and widely popular genre of literature. In the previous chapter, I briefly explored the resurrection of Christian prison literature in the sixteenth century. Indeed, a large part of *Acts and Monuments* was not so much written as compiled from materials that made up this newly resurrected genre.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will explore the development of martyrology through the history of the church. I will show how martyrs took on the role of ethical exemplars very early in the life of the church, then they evolved into legendary saints in

the Middle Ages. In this form, they dominated medieval piety. I will examine how as the Middle Ages gave way to the Reformation, growing concerns with the convergence of devotion and death served to heighten interest in the martyrs as exemplars of piety, thus providing the literary background to *Acts and Monuments*. Each of these periods was significant to the formation of *Acts and Monuments*: the ancient church, which Foxe sought to revive and reclaim; the hagiography of the Middle Ages, which Foxe sought to reject and replace; and the revival of martyrology among Protestants, which Foxe sought to promote. In all this, I will argue that the very genre of martyrology that Foxe adopted and adapted was inseparable from the promotion of piety.

Christian Martyrdom as an Ideological Category

To say that Foxe was seeking to write a martyrology is seemingly so obvious as to be trite. Indeed, in modern times, *Acts and Monuments* has become so synonymous with the genre of martyrology that to most readers it is the first and perhaps only example of the type that comes to mind. Nevertheless, an understanding of the genre and the role it had long played in Christian identity and character formation shines light on Foxe's goals in compiling the book and the tools he used to do so.

The concept of martyrology is less easy to define than it may at first seem. That early Christians died for their faith is well documented and a topic of no dispute. How Christians interpreted these deaths, what they meant to the Christian community, and how these interpretations became a recognizable ideological category are far more complex and debated. There is an oft-repeated maxim that the martyrs were witnesses.[1] While true, the interpretive category of martyrdom would evolve to include much more

[1] This is taken from the Greek word *martyros*, meaning "witness." This word is used in the New Testament to refer to judicial witnesses (Matt 18:16; Heb. 10:28) and eyewitnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 10:41), but it also includes those who testified to their faith (Rev 1:5; 3:14; 11:3) as well as those who died for the same (Acts 22:20; Rev 2:13). For a fuller study of the biblical and Greco-Roman concepts of *martyros*, see Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

than this linguistic tautology implies. Specifically, to the church, martyrs were not mere witnesses but were quickly exalted to the place of pious exemplars.

Historically, there are two major theses regarding the origin of Christian martyrdom as an ideological category. These are most famously argued by W. H. C. Frend and G. W. Bowersock, respectively. Frend argued that martyrdom had its origin in Judaism and was adapted and later superseded by the Christian understanding.[2] Bowersock, on the other hand, argued that martyrdom was not a Jewish invention but arose out of the Roman cultural environment.[3] More recent studies have begun to acknowledge the significant overlap of the Christian and Jewish communities within the Roman world and thus argue for more of a hybrid origin or a "dialog" between the two cultures.[4] Whatever one makes of its antecedents, nearly all scholars of the subject acknowledge that the Christian concept of martyrdom was novel. Bowersock aptly states,

> Martyrdom was not something that the ancient world had seen from the beginning. What we can observe in the second, third, and fourth centuries of our era is something entirely new. Of course, in earlier ages principled and courageous persons, such as Socrates at Athens or the three Jews in the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar had provided glorious examples of resistance to tyrannical authority and painful suffering before unjust judges. But never before had such courage been absorbed into a conceptual system of posthumous recognition and anticipated reward.[5]

The reality of this novelty can be seen in the negative reaction of the Romans to the Christian veneration of the martyrs. Julian the Apostate (331–363) bemoaned Christians "groveling among tombs" of the martyrs.[6] The Romans, as reverential as they were of

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[2] W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Cambridge: Clarke, 2011), passim.

[3] G. W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, Wiles Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), passim.

[4] Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 93.

[5] Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 5.

[6] The original Greek is τοῖς τάφοις προσκαλινδεῖσθαι. For the text and justification of this translation from the context, see Julian, *Letters. Epigrams. Against the Galilaeans. Fragments.*, trans.

their own past, saw this veneration of martyr tombs as distinct from their own cultural experience. This novel practice was based on an understanding of heroic death as something of far greater meaning than earthly significance, and this novel understanding arose out of a uniquely Christian worldview.

The Conception of Martyrdom in the Early Church

The Christian conception of martyrdom was forged in the fires of persecution. Oppression of unwanted groups was not a new reality in the empire. The Christians, however, combined their oppression with their newfound understanding of the kingdom of God. Their deaths were not meaningless suffering but "the consequence of the necessity to give testimony to Jesus and what he represented, namely, the kingdom of God and its arrival to which all earthly powers would be submitted."[7] This kingdom was proclaimed by Christ as "not of this world" (John 18:36) and in constant conflict with the world (Matt 11:12). This conflict had reached its zenith in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, but as Christ's return was not immediate, Christians quickly understood themselves as carrying on this conflict. Theirs was an existence stretched between earthly and heavenly realities, already and not yet.[8] Thus, the martyr was one with a "foot in two worlds,"[9] a calm sufferer in this world but a mighty and victorious warrior on the cosmic stage.[10] In Ignatius of Antioch's (c. 35–110) letter to the Romans, an epistle penned to prepare the church for his impending martyrdom, the bishop styles his arrest and

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Wilmer C. Wright, Loeb Classical Library 157 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 414–15 fn 6.

[7] Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*, Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 2001 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 5.

[8] R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 88.

[9] Helen C. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 4.

[10] Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, 51.

subsequent extradition as a triumphant march played out on a heavenly stage.[11] Elsewhere, he interprets all the struggles of ministry through the metaphor of his upcoming struggle with the beasts of the arena at his death.[12] Using the metaphors of martyrdom, he instructs his readers to look beyond physical appearances to the spiritual reality, with martyrdom as the lens.

Martyrdom had become, in the words of Robin Young, a "public liturgy of combat."[13] This, of course, mirrored the death of Christ, who though defeated in body was victorious in spirit. Because of this, talk of the martyrs took on eucharistic tones. Ignatius anticipates his martyrdom in sacrificial terms: "Grant me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering to God while there is still an altar ready"[14] Likewise, Polycarp of Smyrna (69–155) sees his own martyrdom through a sacrificial lens, and his biographer agrees:

> And he put his hands behind him and was bound, as a choice ram taken from a mighty flock and offered as a burnt-offering acceptable to Almighty God; and said: "O Father . . . I bless thee, that thou hast deemed me worthy of this day and hour, that among the number of the martyrs I may have a share in the cup of Thy Christ, unto the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. And may I be received today among them before Thee, as a rich acceptable sacrifice."[15]

So, too, Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 253), in his early third-century *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, draws a throughline from Old Testament sacrifice through the propitiatory and priestly work of Christ to the death of the martyrs:

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[11] William Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 12.

[12] See Ignatius, *Ephesians* 1.2; *Trallians* 10; *Romans* 5.1–3, in Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 40, 152, 178, respectively.

[13] Young, *In Procession before the World*, 9.

[14] Ignatius, *Romans* 2.2, in Michael W. Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 227.

[15] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* IV.15.32–34, in Hugh Jackson Lawlor and John Ernest Leonard Oulton, trans., *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1927), 120.

> For just as those who served the altar according to the Law of Moses thought they were ministering forgiveness of sins to the people by the blood of goats and bulls (Heb. 9:13, 10:4; Ps. 50:13), so also the souls of those who have been beheaded for their witnesses to Jesus (Rev. 20:4, 6:9) do not serve the heavenly altar in vain and minister forgiveness of sins to those who pray. At the same time, we also know that just as the High Priest Jesus the Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice (cf. Heb. 5:1, 7:27, 8:3, 10:12), so also the priests of whom He is High Priest offer themselves as a sacrifice. This is why they are seen near the altar as near their own place. Moreover, blameless priests served the Godhead by offering blameless sacrifices, while those who were blemished and offered blemished sacrifices and whom Moses described in Leviticus were separated from the altar (Lev. 21:17–21). And who else is the blameless priest offering a blameless sacrifice than the person who holds fast to his confession and fulfills every requirement the account of martyrdom demands?[16]

For Origen, the martyrs mirror the priestly work of Christ, and thus also the Old Testament priesthood, because they offer themselves on the altar of martyrdom. Martyrdom was viewed as an "imitative" sacrifice that mirrored the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ.[17]

Martyrdom as Imitative Discipleship

As the church adopted this view of martyrdom, the spiritual example of the martyr became much more important than the historical facts of the martyrdom. Elizabeth Castelli explains,

> The sacrifice and the sacrificed fuse into a single figure whose pure offering of self-constitutes a complete and acceptable sacrifice. Meanwhile, the actual historical executioners of Christians recede completely from view, those whom they execute rendered the grammatical subjects of a passive construction ("the souls of those who have been beheaded for their witness"), the action itself decisively detached from its agent . . . . It is as though in this sacrificial economy, the realities of the world recede altogether while the crucial exchange between faithful humans and the sacrifice-accepting divine takes center stage.[18]

Because martyrdom was seen as an imitative sacrifice, it was essential that this sacrifice be pure in order to be accepted by the holy God. Drawing on the Old Testament parallel,

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[16] Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom* XXX, in Rowan A. Greer, trans., *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1979), 62.

[17] Young, *In Procession before the World*, 12.

[18] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 53.

Origen points out that both a blemished priest and a blemished sacrifice were "separated from the altar," while the martyr is "the blameless priest offering a blameless sacrifice." For the Old Testament priest, this purity was ceremonial. For the martyr, this purity is doctrinal and ethical. The pure martyr dies with a true confession and "in deep peace, calm, and tranquility."[19] The martyrs' words and actions were seen as proof of the purity of the spiritual sacrifice that they offered as an imitation of all the biblical sacrifices, culminating in the ultimate sacrifice of Christ.

With so precious a death to imitate and proclaim, the martyrs had to take care that their own martyrdoms would give an accurate portrayal. Thus, a culture of training potential martyrs in preparation for their ordeal was born. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Romans, expresses concern that he be "judged worthy" in his martyrdom.[20] Drawing heavily on Pauline language and allusions, he repeatedly speaks of his martyrdom as "attaining God," that is, being an "imitator of the suffering of my God" in martyrdom.[21] It is only in a martyrdom like Christ's that Ignatius will "truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ."[22] Daniel Boyarin writes, "Beginning with Ignatius, [martyrdom] was a central aspect of the imitation of Christ."[23] With this self-effacing language, Ignatius presents himself almost as a student seeking to learn the full imitation of Christ through martyrdom.

If Ignatius presents himself as a student of martyrdom in his letter to the Romans, then he presents himself as an instructor in his epistle to Polycarp. Though Ignatius does not call Polycarp to martyrdom but does urge him to prepare for suffering

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[19] Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom* XXXI (Greer, 62).

[20] Ignatius, *Romans* 1.1 (Holmes, 227).

[21] Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 170, 175, 178, 181. See also Schoedel's defense of the interpretation of "attaining" as imitating Christ in martyrdom and his explanation of the theme of imitation within Ignatius. Schoedel, 29.

[22] Ignatius, *Romans* 4.2 (Holmes, 229).

[23] Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 95.

and death. Using his favored euphemism for death, to "attain God" (εἰς τὸ θεοῦ ἐπιτυχεῖν), Ignatius alludes to his own martyrdom to urge Polycarp to endure.[24] He calls Polycarp to avoid false doctrine and prepare himself for the fear that will inevitably come: "Stand firm as an anvil when struck."[25] Polycarp carries on this tradition of instruction in his epistle to the Philippians. Central to this training was the imitation of Christ's martyrdom. Polycarp begins by thanking the Philippian church for recently aiding a group of martyrs. He then holds up these martyrs as exemplars, stating that the martyrs' chains had become their crowns.[26] The structure of the letter places the main body of his instruction on practical holiness within an inclusio of two exhortations to look to the sufferings of Christ. He concludes the main body of his instruction with the following exhortation: "Let us therefore become imitators of his patient endurance, and if we should suffer for the sake of his name, let us glorify him. For this is the example he set for us in his own person."[27] Thus, Polycarp sums up all the preceding instructions on holiness in the concept of endurance unto death. This is confirmed in the following section when he presents the previous martyrs as the exemplars of the faith:

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[24] Ignatius, *Polycarp* 2.3 (Holmes, 263). Schoedel argues this connection in his commentary on the letter: "For whereas Ignatius' emphasis on the reality of the incarnation is linked with his relatively positive attitude toward the things of this world (see on *Eph*. 8.2), his emphasis on the reality of Christ's passion is connected with his awareness of the marginal position of Christianity in society as a whole (see on *Eph*. 10). Ignatius as martyr embodies this marginality in a particularly striking form; yet it has significance for him primarily as he seeks to divine define his ambivalent relation to the churches—including the church in Antioch (see especially on *Eph*. 8.1; 12.1). Since every bishop is in principle similarly situated, Polycarp too must be prepared to be misunderstood and to bear up under attack. He must be prepared to think of himself as something of a martyr in his own congregation.

Several elements in the passage underscore this point: (a) The situation is one that puts Polycarp under great pressure. He must face dreadful calms and dangerous storms. In this connection the expression ὁ καιρός ("the occasion") is not eschatological… . (b) The result of Polycarp's endurance in responding to the occasion is described in martyrological terms as "attaining God" (see on *Eph.* 1.2). This is the only passage in which Ignatius uses the strengthened form of the verb (έπιτυγχάυω "attain") of anyone other than himself (see on *Eph.* 10.1). The path to salvation for Polycarp, as for Ignatius lies through suffering (a suffering occasioned in both instances by the effort to maintain the unity in the church)." Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 264-265.

[25] Ignatius, *Polycarp* 3.1 (Holmes, 265).

[26] Polycarp, *Philippians* 1.1 (Holmes, 281).

[27] Polycarp, *Philippians* 8.2 (Holmes, 291).

> I urge all of you, therefore, to obey the teaching about righteousness and to exercise unlimited endurance, like that which you saw with your own eyes not only in the blessed Ignatius and Zosimus and Rufus but also in others from your congregation and in Paul himself and the rest of the apostles. Be assured that all these did not run in vain but with faith and righteousness, and that they are now in the place due them with the Lord, with whom they also suffered.[28]

This exhortation shows both that the lives of the martyrs were circulating at the time and that believers were expected to imitate them, not only in their deaths but also in the content of the lives that the manner of their deaths approved. This imitation was not the mere following of abstract virtue for a people living under the rule of "those who persecute you and hate you."[29] Polycarp expected the Philippians, in light of their present persecution, to be prepared to imitate the martyrs' very actions in both life and a not-unlikely martyr's death.

This imitative discipleship unto martyrdom can be clearly seen in Polycarp's own martyr account. William Schoedel argues that even though Polycarp's martyrdom is the first *acta martyrum* of the early church, the text shows evidence that the literary form of "the martyr as a religious type" was already known to Polycarp's church and shaped the presentation of his martyrdom.[30] The entire account is structured to mirror the presentation of the passion of Christ in the Gospels. In fact, the parallels between the two are so strong that some scholars have proposed interpolation as the reason for the theme.[31] The author writes that Polycarp was martyred so "that the Lord might show us

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[28] Polycarp, *Philippians* 9.1–2 (Holmes, 291).

[29] Polycarp, *Philippians* 12.3 (Holmes, 295).

[30] William Schoedel, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol. 5, *Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), 47.

[31] The justification for this proposal comes from the fact that Eusebius's summary of *Martyrdom of Polycarp* edits out some of the more substantial parallels. This line of argumentation, however, is not decisive. Schoedel argues that the presence of the imitation of Christ theme within the New Testament is ample justification for seeing the imitation structure as original to the account. Hans von Campenhausen, "Bearbeitungen Und Interpolationen Des Polykarpmartyriums," *Sitzungsberichte Der Heidelberger Akademie Der Wissenschafte: Philosophische-Historische Klasse* 3 (1957): 5-39; Herman Muller, *Aus Der Ueberlieferungsgeschicte Del Polykarp-Martyrium: Eine Hagiographische Studie* (Rome: Paderborn, 1908); Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5:51–53.

once again a martyrdom in accord with the gospel."[32] The account begins with a preamble that describes the behavior of several previous martyrs, presenting them as models to be followed: "For who could fail to admire their nobility and patient endurance and loyalty to the master."[33] The author even presents a counter-example of a failed martyr who gives in under pressure.[34] The account of Polycarp then begins, following the major movements of Christ's passion. Polycarp's betrayer is compared to Judas.[35] He echoes Jesus's Gethsemane prayer when he is apprehended.[36] He enters Smyrna riding on a donkey.[37] He is martyred as "a splendid ram from a great flock [ready] for sacrifice, prepared as a burnt offering acceptable unto God."[38] The account concludes with the following rhetorically presumptive epilogue: "an outstanding martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate since it was in accord with the pattern of the gospel of Christ."[39] Polycarp's martyrdom was intended to instruct the reader in the imitation of Polycarp and through Polycarp the imitation of Christ.

Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* continues the practice of training by imitation.[40] As with Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, Origen's letter forms an inclusio with exhortations to martyrdom enclosing detailed instruction on holiness.[41] Martyrdom provides the framework of imitation upon which the instruction is built. Young notes,

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[32] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 1.1 (Holmes, 307).

[33] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 2.2 (Holmes, 307–9).

[34] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 4.1 (Holmes, 311; Schoedel, 5:58).

[35] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 6.2 (Holmes, 313).

[36] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 7.1 (Holmes, 313).

[37] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8.1 (Holmes, 315).

[38] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14.1 (Holmes, 321).

[39] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 19.1 (Schoedel, 5:76–77).

[40] Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom* (Greer, 41–80).

[41] Here I follow John O'Meara's sevenfold structure of the work. John O'Meara, trans., *Origen: Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom* (London: Longmans, Green, 1954), 12.

"The entire treatise is a topically arranged collection of biblical texts, the internalization and repetition of which would promote, by a strong pattern of imitation, the stability required of a martyr in facing persecution."[42] The letter, written to encourage an imprisoned Ambrose, would have been intended to strengthen him in light of real persecution. Instructive treatises like Origen's were joined by the *acta martyrum*, a collection of letters circulating among Christians describing the martyrs' trials and the spiritual experiences surrounding them.[43] Young argues that this tradition of training intermingled with the existing Christian epistolary tradition present in the New Testament:

> For two hundred years already, a chain of letters had bound the churches to communicate with each other about the proper way to give public witness . . . the *acta* of martyrs and exhortations to martyrdom can be seen as letters since they were meant for a wide audience of readers and potential performers . . . the letters about and for martyrdom were meant to alert and instruct their readers . . . these letters invite their readers to consider a wide and indeed cosmic vista, to see through the eyes of the martyrs the world gathered under the eschatological panorama of the heavenly court, as one of the first martyrs, Stephen, attests (Acts 7:56–57).[44]

Consequently, the genre of martyrology was formed, from the beginning, to encourage the imitation of martyr piety. Each wave of martyrs was to imitate those who had come before, leading back to Christ.

The Development of Martyrdom as a Devotional Genre

Thus, very early, the martyr story had already taken on a definable form.[45] As new martyrs shaped their actions based upon prior martyr accounts, they took on an

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[42] Young, *In Procession before the World*, 14.

[43] F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., "The Acts of the Martrys," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Oxford Reference online.

[44] Young, *In Procession before the World*, 14–15.

[45] Young places the crystallization of the literary type in the mid-third century. Young, *In Procession before the World*, 8. However, Schoedel argues that the form was already recognized at the publication of Polycarp's martyrdom in the mid-second century. Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5:47–49.

increasingly formal shape. Boyarin suggests the following as the unique marks of the genre:

1. A "ritualized performative speech act with a statement of pure essence becomes the central action" of the martyr story.
2. The martyr is conceived of as fulfilling a mandate, the central aspect of which is the "imitation of Christ."
3. Present are powerful elements such as visionary experiences and a willingness to die out of a passionate love for God.[46]

New martyrs shaped both their actions and their accounts to conform to the pattern that had come before. Thus, martyrdom increasingly became a "ritual," the Christian alternative to sacrifice to the emperor: The sacrifice of one's self in the pattern of Christ.[47] Martyrs mirrored their actions after their predecessors to give themselves strength for the idea, to give themselves a pattern for life and death, and to ensure that they gave an accurate image of the ultimate model, the "martyr-savior."[48] In a world in which following Christ could mean persecution or even painful death, martyrdom was seen as the ultimate act of devotion to Christ, an imitation and recapitulation of his sacrificial death. To imitate the martyrs was to act out literally Christlike devotion.

Thus, martyr accounts came to be inspirational and instructive treatises, visual representations of what true devotion looked like. As the genre took shape, it drew upon a contemporary genre with which the entire culture was familiar, the Greco-Roman classics.[49] Peter Brown writes of the classics, "Exposure to the classics of Greek and Latin literature was intended to produce exemplary beings, their raw humanity molded

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[46] Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 95–96. Schoedel offers a more complex thematic proposal: (1) the martyr's "birthday," (2) the transformation of the martyr to a higher existence, (3) the martyr's possession of preternatural powers, (4) the image of sacrifice, and (5) the imitation of Christ. Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5:48.

[47] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 60.

[48] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., Harvard Historical Studies 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 55.

[49] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 26.

and filed away by a double discipline, at once ethical and aesthetic . . . . Books, therefore, were there to produce persons; any other function was considered vaguely ridiculous."[50] The idea of recording the pious past and the purpose of imitating it were inseparable. Drawing upon this cultural assumption, Christians developed their own genre of inspirational history. By the time of Augustine, these martyr accounts had become a defined genre, accompanied by instructional manuals on how to face death as a martyr. Those trained by these manuals valued martyrdom as the strongest testimony that could be given, and martyr accounts were edited not to obscure their shortcomings but to increase their pedagogical value. Young explains, "[The martyrs] were themselves like letters meant to be read by the community and the world. Letters from Christ that were recognizably like Christ."[51] So, then, martyr accounts were meant to be lived-out lessons: They taught Christians how to live by showing them how to be willing to die.

Martyrology after Constantine

The conversion of Constantine precipitated a significant shift in martyrology. The church was simultaneously victorious over but disconnected from its persecuted past. The early church was defined by its suffering. Both its purity and its propagation were products of the martyrs' endurance, a sentiment aptly expressed in Tertullian's adage "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."[52] However, with official toleration and newfound societal prestige given by the emperor's faith, the church increasingly looked to be very much "of this world." With the end of martyrdom, gone was the barbarous stage upon which to test one's faith and with it the great heroes after whom

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[50] Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 2 (1983): 1.

[51] Young, *In Procession before the World* 10.

[52] Literally, the adage reads, *Plures efficimur, quotiens metimur a vobis: semen est sanguis Christianorum*, but it is often poetically rendered as above. T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, trans., *Tertullian: Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius*, trans., Loeb Classical Library 250 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 226–27.

great Christians modeled themselves. Eusebius of Caesarea expresses this alienation in his commentary on the Psalms, saying, "We, although not held worthy to have struggled unto death and to have shed our blood for God, yet, being the sons of those who suffered thus and distinguished by our fathers' virtues, pray for mercy through them."[53] To bridge the gap between the children and their fathers, Eusebius again turned to the martyrs, memorializing them extensively in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The upper class and educated found their tie to the past in Eusebius's book. The commoners, however, found the connection in the fast-growing martyr cult.

Christians had venerated their martyrs from the very beginning.[54] By the mid-third century, the church had already developed elaborate ceremonies for the martyrs' internment and veneration.[55] However, the fallout of Constantine's conversion altered the Christian martyr ideal. With the Christianization of the empire, the church received a massive influx of former pagans raised on the Roman ideal of the cultic hero.[56] Furthermore, these new believers had not been fired in the furnaces of persecution. Conservative Christians were concerned that new converts were untrained and untested. Imperial favor brought with it moral decline and uncertainty. The church needed exemplars to train the next generation. The martyrs were again called to the task. Brown writes, "Classical literature was ransacked with, if anything, greater attention than ever before, in order to steel the uncertain moral fiber of the average Christian."[57] The martyr cult provided an easy entry into Christian spirituality for former Roman pagans: "Instead

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[53] Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms*, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 23 (Paris, 1857), 949, quoted in Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 90.

[54] Young, *In Procession before the World*, 8.

[55] Augustine describes one such service when he tells of the martyrdom of Cyprian. Augustine, *Sermon* 310, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, pt. III, *Sermons*, vol. 9, *Sermons 306–340A (On the Saints)* (New York: New City Press, 1994), 68–70.

[56] Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, 53.

[57] Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," 6.

of their gods and heroes, they had recourse to the martyrs in all their troubles and their affairs of everyday life. The actual grave of the martyr, or place where one of his relics was laid, formed a centre of supernatural power."[58] Mark Glen Bilby argues that martyrologists of the time deliberately orchestrated this shift in how they presented the martyrs. Of Eusebius, Bilby writes, "Both in his *Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms* and in the *Ecclesiastical History* . . . he explicitly recounts pre-Constantinian martyr accounts, yet places them in the context of post-Constantinian reappraisals of the role of these martyrs."[59] John Knott notes that "Eusebius borrowed from the *Aeneid*, recasting the virtues of epic heroes as a way of portraying the strengths of the martyrs."[60] Of the Christian poet Prudentius, Bilby writes, "[He] transforms the martyred bishop from a caring pastor into a heroic leader of heroes."[61] This merging of literary types distanced the accounts from the factual life of the martyrs, but this only enhanced the expectation that martyrologies were meant to be emulated. Martyrs accounts, like the Greek classical works they now borrowed from, were intended to shape persons.[62]

While the martyrs were used to train new Roman converts, the martyr cult took on other Roman overtones as well. Robert Wilken remarks, "The martyr becomes the embodiment not simply of religious faith but also of civic devotion, even patriotism in the new Christian and Roman civitas."[63] Prudentius says of the martyr Lawrence that he obtained the "civic crown" in the city of the "eternal senate"; Prudentius also calls him a

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[58] Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, 53.

[59] Mark Glen Bilby, "Christendom Witnesses to the Martyrs: Modulations of the Acta Martyrum in Prudentius' Peristephanon, Vi," *Journal of Eccesiastical History* 63, no. 2 (April 2012): 220.

[60] John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34n4.

[61] Bilby, "Christendom Witnesses to the Martyrs," 219.

[62] Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," 1.

[63] Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 226.

Vir ("hero") in the vocabulary of Virgil's *Aeneid*.[64] The language shows that for Roman Christians the concepts of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms were quickly merging. As Christianity became the religion of the empire, the martyrs became imperial. This provided great impetus for the spreading of martyr stories, martyrs being the exemplary citizens of both heaven and earth.

At the same time, the element of mimesis, or learning by imitation, as the heart of piety was being amplified within Christian theology. Gregory of Nyssa wrote extensively on the concept of imitation as the heart of Christian practice, but no place is he more than clear than in his letter *On What It Means to Call Oneself a Christian*, where he defines Christianity as follows: "If man was originally a likeness of God, perhaps we have not gone beyond the limit in declaring that Christianity is an imitation of the divine nature."[65] Brown sees this principle applied in the growing cult of "the holy man." He observes, "In Christian thought, God himself was proposed to man as the exemplar of all exemplars . . . the result of this view was to present human history as containing a sequence of exemplars."[66] This sequence of exemplars was carried from Christ to the martyrs, and now to the quickly emerging idea of the saint or, as Brown dubs it, the "holy man." Brown explains, "The life of the Christian holy man could be treated as a prolonged and deeply circumstantial 'imitation of Christ' . . . hence the crucial importance of the holy man as 'Christ-carrying' exemplar."[67]

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[64] Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 227. See Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom* 2.155 and 1.27, in Prudentius, *Against Symmachus 2. Crowns of Martyrdom. Scenes from History. Epilogue.*, trans. H. J. Thomson, Loeb Classical Library 398 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

[65] Gregory of Nyssa, *On What It Means to Call Oneself a Christian*, in *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works*, trans. Virginia Woods Callahan, Fathers of the Church: A New Translation 58 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1967), 85.

[66] Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," 6.

[67] Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," 7–9.

Socio-Political Aspects of the Martyr Cult

Another development increasingly transformed the layman's relationship to the martyrs. Imperial sanction allowed for construction and celebration not before afforded to churches formerly forced to be in hiding. With newfound political freedom, Christians now built shrines and chapels on the martyrs' resting places.[68] The Christian martyr was increasingly depicted in art forms, both high and low in style, from church mosaics, friezes, and statuaries to household items like lamps and tableware.[69] As the celebration of the martyrs benefited both the church and the state, with imperial Christianity now uniting the empire, their celebrations were given official feast days that multiplied across the calendar. The scope of the celebrations of the martyrs also grew. Simple days of observance grew into multi-day festivals involving nighttime vigils, gatherings of the poor involving public almsgiving, and a service for the martyr involving speeches closer to the classical panegyric or triumph than the Christian service of worship.[70] As martyr festivals multiplied, so did their relics. Martyr relics multiplied across Christendom and were widely commended for their healing and faith-strengthening powers.[71] The expansion of local martyrology further drove this multiplication of festivals. If a particular locale had been the birthplace or home of a prominent martyr, then it fomented local pride and widespread prestige for the community. Bede (c. 672–735) noted this effect on the English village of Heavensfield:

> To this place the brethren of the church at Hexham, not far away, have long made it their custom to come every year, on the day before that on which King Oswald was killed, to keep vigil there for the benefit of his soul, to sing many psalms of praise, and, next morning, to offer up the holy sacrifice and oblation on his behalf. And

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[68] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 15.

[69] Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 92–93.

[70] Martin R. P. McGuire, "The Christian Funeral Oration," in *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory of Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose*, trans. Leo P. McCauley et al., Fathers of the Church: A New Translation 22 (New York: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), vii–xxi.

[71] Augustine, *Sermon* 317 (Rotelle, III/9:142).

> since that good custom has spread, a church has lately been built there so that the place has become still more sacred and worthy of honour in the eyes of all.[72]

Martyr tombs and shrines, with their steady streams of supplicants, also stimulated the economies of the communities that housed them through donations to the shrine and by creating the need for food, lodging, and cottage industries to support pilgrims. This created socio-economic incentives for the proliferation of new martyrs and the promotion of the local martyrs' prestige. The more famous the martyr, the more the community would prosper by association. Spurred on by both earthly and heavenly inducements, local and regional martyrs were quickly added to fill out the calendar, and their tombs, shrines, chapels, and client churches were enlarged and adorned to increase their notoriety.[73]

The growth of the martyr cult both fueled and was fueled by another Roman cultural element that further increased the martyrs' power in the eyes of Christians. Helen White explains, "The Christian had come to feel not only an admiration for the martyr but a deep gratitude to him. From that, it was but a short step in that age, when the relation of the patron and client was one of the basic social relations, for the Christian to take the martyr for his patron."[74] This spiritual patron would offer help both physical and spiritual, attracting even more veneration.[75] As understandings of salvation shifted in the Middle Ages, the aspect of patronage increasingly outshone the aspect of mimesis. Brad Gregory writes that by the end of the Middle Ages, "Martyr-Saints were important less because of their heroic deaths per se than because martyrdom was the source of sanctity that made them God's powerful friends. They in turn could do favors for their friends—

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[72] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Bertram Colgrave and Judith McClure (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1999), 112.

[73] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 16–19.

[74] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 15.

[75] C. Grant Loomis, *White Magic: An Introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend* (Cambridge, MA: Kessinger, 1948), 103.

the laity and clergy devoted to them."[76] Medieval European Christians believed they were in need of merit and favor, and the martyrs were a potent source.

From Martyrs to Saints

The Constantinian Christianization of the empire brought about another tectonic shift in the Christian understanding of martyrdom: the expansion of the definition of martyrdom. Even among the early church "confessors," those persecuted but not executed were often mentioned alongside the martyrs, along with prominent church leaders whose churches or regions had been threatened by persecution. Naturally, many began to see these figures in the same light as the actual martyrs.[77] However, in the fourth and fifth centuries, another category was added, that of the ascetic. Asceticism was not a new category to the concept of martyrdom. Martyrdom had always been seen as an act of incredible self-control and endurance. The concept of asceticism as "spiritual martyrdom" had been around since the writings of Origen.[78] In the post-Constantinian church, with the church ascendant and martyrdom a thing of the legendary past, the contemporary spiritual athletes began to be counted among the martyrs. This shift can be seen in the lives of the ascetics written at the time. Athanasius of Alexandria writes of Antony of Egypt, "When finally, the persecution ended, and Peter had made his witness, Antony departed and withdrew once again to the cell, and there was daily being martyred by his conscience, and doing battle in the contests of the faith. He subjected himself to an even greater and more strenuous asceticism."[79] The parallelism clearly shows the

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[76] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 34.

[77] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 18. This coincides with a significant development in the spiritual elevation of virginity and the veneration of the Virgin Mary; however, that history is outside the scope of this work.

[78] Edward E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1950), 38–41. Malone offers an extensive treatment of the development of asceticism and its merging with martyrdom throughout his book.

[79] Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, Classics of Western Spirituality (London: Paulist Press, 1980), 66.

equation that had taken place in Athanasius's mind. Peter had given his witness—literally his martyrdom—in death, while Antony experienced his martyrdom in ascetism.[80] Athanasius was not alone in this move. Gregory of Nyssa describes his sister Macrina's funeral rites in terms that mirror the funeral of a martyr.[81] Even more explicitly, in his grief he has a dream where he sees the interior of her tomb and describes her body as "truly the remains of a holy martyr, one who has been dead to sin."[82] In his grief, Gregory took comfort in the idea that Macrina's ascetic life had qualified her to be counted among the martyrs. With the churches' external battles removed, spiritual battles now made the martyr. This opened the door for the application of the idea of martyrdom to any prominent bishop, ascetic, or spiritual leader, greatly enlarging the pool of possible martyr patrons. With both spiritual and earthly inducements and more individuals fulfilling the role of "spiritual martyr," the martyr cult greatly expanded.

Development from Martyrology to Hagiography

As the martyrs' cult grew in both size and scope, martyr stories grew with it. Hippolyte Delehaye defines six stages of the evolution of martyr stories that occurred from the early church through the Middle Ages. First, martyr stories circulated as simple reports of trials, often from the hand of the martyr. Second, secondary eyewitness accounts circulated about the martyrs. Third, earlier accounts were gathered, edited, and adorned, thus maturing into the more developed *acta martyrum*. Fourth, historical romances about what known martyrs *may* have done began to circulate. Fifth, historical romances evolved into imaginative romances in which even the martyr was an invention.

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[80] The Greek reads, "Ἐπειδὴ δὲ λοιπὸν ὁ διωγμὸς ἐπαύσατο, καὶ **μεμαρτύρηκεν** ὁ μακαρίτης ἐπίσκοπος Πέτρος, ἀπεδήμησε, καὶ πάλιν εἰς τὸ μονασήριον ἀνεχώρει, καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ καθ' ἡμέραν **μαρτυρῶν** τῇ συνειδήσει, καὶ ἀγωνιζόμενος τοῖς τῆς πίστεως ἄθλοις Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἀσκήσει πολλῇ καὶ συντονωτέρᾳ ἐκέχρητο." Athanasius, *Vita S. Antoni*, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 26 (Paris, 1857), 912 (emphasis added).

[81] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Saint Macrina*, trans. Kevin Corrigan (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 49.

[82] Gregory, *The Life of Saint Macrina*, 37.

Sixth, and finally, plain forgeries began to be circulated.[83] To modern historiographical sensibilities, the latter three steps in this process are alarming. However, it should be noted that the obscuring of history that took place in this process was not deliberate; rather, as the cult grew, the goal of edification outweighed historical precision. The martyrs *acta* were used as the object lesson of a sermon or the pinnacle of a celebration and thus naturally took on panegyric tones.[84] As new martyrs were adopted, their stories were composed on the basis of the familiar formulas. Miraculous acts and merciful deeds, with no actual bearing in history, were attributed to these martyrs as plausible.[85] White explains this sensibility well: "Such a man was sure to have had such and such qualities; indeed, one might be sure that one possessed of such grace as the martyr's would possess all virtues."[86] Thus, the acts of a martyr were generalized, each new *acta* following a similar form with the expected acts of mercy and anticipated signs and wonders.

Another mentality that contributed to this generalizing of the martyr story was medieval understandings of learning and rhetoric. Delehaye describes how rhetorical goals had a generalizing effect on martyr stories: "The epideictic form . . . tended to wipe out personal and concrete traits and replace them by abstract qualities."[87] These abstract qualities would then be applied to all martyrs, with appropriate passages lifted from one *acta* and utilized in another to reinforce the desired lesson via the rhetorical form. Charles

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[83] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 111–15.

[84] Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, 2, 68; Charles Jones, *Saint's Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 59.

[85] James Edward Sherman, *The Nature of Martyrdom: A Dogmatic and Moral Analysis According to the Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1942), 193; Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, 92.

[86] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 17.

[87] Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Passions Des Martys Et Les Genres Litteraires* (Bruxelles: Society of the Bollandists, 1921), 233, translated and quoted in Jones, *Saint's Lives and Chronicles in Early England*, 60.

Jones observes this practice in the late-seventh-century anonymously authored *Life of Saint Cuthbert*:

> The anonymous author of the *St. Cuthbert* introduced verbatim passages from other lives, which he applied as best he could to Cuthbert. So, for instance, the description of Cuthbert's virtues as bishop is a cento of passages from Titus and Timothy, Sulpicius' *St. Martin*, and Isidore's *Church Offices*, which is designed to remind the reader not alone of the words themselves but of the context from which it was drawn [88]

This rhetorical borrowing was not intended to deceive but to remind the reader of similar sources and through this repetition to promote the piety common to all of them. The listener was to hear and conclude that if such works were common to all of the most pious believers, then so too should they be practiced in the life of the hearer. Jones is again helpful: "Duplicate passages, so incongruous to us, stressed their common saintliness, not their peculiarities. The listener received from such passages, read orally, the pleasure of recognition, *anagnorisis*, cultivated by ancient rhetoric."[89] Thus, rhetorical considerations also promoted the evolution of the historical martyr accounts into deliberately generic and repetitive *acta* and *vita* composed not upon historical fact but upon a set of devotionally motivated commonplaces that would train the hearers in piety.

The Cult of the Saints in Medieval Piety

So it was, then, that the martyr cult had, by expansion and modification, evolved into what is now known as the cult of the saints. In this form, it was one of the most important aspects of medieval piety. Brown has shown just how deeply the cult of the saints penetrated the daily life of the Middle Ages.[90] Its impact on the spirituality of England can be seen in the arguments of revisionist historians J. J. Scarisbrick, Eamon

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[88] Jones, *Saint's Lives and Chronicles in Early England*, 60.

[89] Jones, *Saint's Lives and Chronicles in Early England*, 61.

[90] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, New Series 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), passim.

Duffy, and others. In arguing for a vibrant and satisfying spiritual practice in late medieval England, they draw primarily on evidence that the late medieval English laity were enthusiastically participating in the saints' cult.[91] For example, in Duffy's more recent work examining the parish of Morebath, he argues for a vibrant piety primarily through the lens of its expenditures on cultic practices such as the keeping of feast days, the purchasing of shrine candles, and the gilding of altars to the saints.[92] He writes,

> This is piety for practical people, attached to their families, their locality, their parish . . . people for whom Christianity is about living right and dying well, but also about belonging, both to place and lineage, about winning respectability, ensuring safe child-birth, about the best time to prune apples, and the most effective way to ease sciatica or stop diarrhoea [sic].[93]

The exemplar of this "practical" piety is the cult of St. Sidwell, an English regional saint whose cult Trychay apparently brought with him from Exeter and introduced to the people of Morebath. This introduction was a rousing success, as the cult of St. Sidwell evoked many gifts and behests, evidence for Duffy of the motivational power of medieval Catholic piety. In Duffy's presentation of Morebath, medieval piety and the saints' cult are nearly synonymous.

This situation was far from exclusive to Morebath. Everywhere in medieval Europe, the saints dominated the landscape of piety. Gregory illustrates the situation well:

> The saints were everywhere. Time was reckoned in their honor: the days bore their names, memorializing their deaths or the translations of their relics in an annual liturgical cycle rooted in "the calendar of heaven" itself . . . . Places—not only churches and monasteries, but also often streets and towns themselves—were designated after holy men and women . . . . Parents named their infants after saints, co-opting for them important lifelong patrons and guardians . . . . Their woodcut likenesses graced collections of saints' vitae and were stamped on single-sheet

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[91] John Joseph Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), passim; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*, 1st ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), passim.

[92] Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 72.

[93] Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath*, 71.

> depictions . . . . Hundreds of such images were churned out in the fifteenth century, sometimes accompanied by prayers to be said to the saint represented.[94]

Through the saints' *vita* and *acta*, the calendar, the saints' mention in the Eucharist, and the prayerbooks, the cult of the saints was one of the most dominant forms of teaching medieval spirituality.[95]

Even as hagiography dominated medieval piety, it also evolved. Driven on by medieval changes in the understanding of grace, saints took on primarily intercessory roles, as evidenced by the abundance of written prayers to the saints that proliferated at the time.[96] Gregory states, "Imitating their deaths lacked relevance in the absence of active enemies of the Christian faith. But in a world burdened with bodily and spiritual afflictions, Christians direly needed the powers that God had granted his heavenly friends."[97] As the entire sacerdotal system became structured around the reception of grace through various means, the saints, with their abundance of holy deeds, became a favored source. Martyrology, in its evolved and expanded form, dominated medieval piety.

Despite being subsumed into the larger stream of saints, the martyrs retained a dominant place in their number. The *Book of Hours*, a massively popular prayerbook of the late fifteenth century, placed the male martyrs second in the heavenly hierarchy, following only the apostles.[98] Indeed, as shown above, the lives of many non-martyr-saints recount their desire for and fascination with martyrdom. This fascination extended to the general population, as can be seen in the art of the period. Woodcuts of violent

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[94] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 31.

[95] White shows how saints' and martyrs' lives were increasingly tailored to address a variety of devotional issues within the medieval church. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 18–21.

[96] Many of these prayers are printed in Pierre Rezeau, *Les Prieres Aux Saints En Francais A La Fin Du Moyen Age* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1982).

[97] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 34.

[98] Female martyrs were placed among the female saints and not given their own separate ranking. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 37.

martyr deaths proliferated in the late medieval period. The "auxiliary saints," all but one of whom suffered a notable martyrdom, were among the most popular of the saints of the era.[99] Perhaps the greatest evidence for the laity's continued interest in martyrdom, above and beyond their place in popular spirituality, is the popular veneration of martyrs who had not been canonized. As the Middle Ages waned, the papacy canonized fewer and fewer martyrs. Concerned with the public tendency to venerate those who had died violent deaths more on the basis of their notoriety than their orthodoxy, popes increasingly tried to direct popular piety to saints known for their learning and orthodoxy rather than their remarkable deaths. The Christian public was not compliant with this effort. Local "unofficial" martyrs continued to flourish among towns, regions, and even religious orders. Despite papal protest, Dominicans and Franciscans continued to honor as martyrs brothers lost on the mission field.[100] Martyrdom carried more popular weight than papal sanction.

Laypeople idolized martyrs for both popular and theological reasons. Popularly, martyrs remained at the forefront of the cult of the saints due to the sensationalism surrounding their deaths. Books on death were of particular interest in medieval Europe with its high mortality rate, especially among the young. Death was a constant and pressing spiritual concern. Martyr-saints were particularly associated with facing, and protecting one from, death.[101] The death accounts of the martyrs were still massively popular and widely printed in sensational and gory detail. Unlike the modern conception of them, gruesome details were given not to excite readers but to impress upon them the mighty power of God working in the martyr. Theologically, martyrdom

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[99] Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 68; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 35.

[100] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 47.

[101] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 35. See also Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 164–72; Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes toward Death over the Last One Thousand Years*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Vintage, 1981), passim.

retained its perception as the greatest act of devotion. Within the sacerdotal system, it was the holiness of martyrdom that made the martyrs such powerful, and therefore popular, intercessors.[102] Their piety was inseparable from their popularity. Furthermore, the martyrs' extreme suffering for the love of Christ was seen as making them particularly compassionate toward the suffering of ordinary Christians, a popular theme in sermons of the time.[103]

Perhaps most of all, martyrdom remained of particular interest due to its connection to the passion of Christ. As Duffy remarks of the state of late medieval piety, the "tradition of affective mediation on the passion . . . had become without any rival the central devotional activity of all seriously minded Christians."[104] Christ was seen as the ultimate model of martyrdom, and his passion an archetypal passion that all other Christian suffering mirrored.[105] Consequently, the primary and most pervasive image in all of medieval piety, the crucifix, was seen as an image of martyrdom. For example, an anonymous woodcut of the passion printed in Augsburg or Nuremberg in 1507 calls Christ the *marter groß*.[106] The pervasive images of the suffering Christ were deliberately styled in the same ways as the images of the martyrs. The martyrs were seen as carrying on the suffering of Christ and motivating believers to do the same. Thus, the martyrs orbited and echoed the primary locus of late medieval piety, and the contemplation of their deaths mirrored the contemplation of the death of Christ.

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[102] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 45.

[103] See, for example, John Mirk, *The Festyuall* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1519), fol. 148.

[104] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 234.

[105] Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, 68–69.

[106] Richard S. Field, *Fifteenth Century Woodcuts and Metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1965), no. 129. See also a prayer of Albrecht Durer attached to a woodcut of the Crucifixion calling Christ the "*groß marter*." Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500–1550*, ed. Walter L. Strauss, vol. 2 (New York: Hacker, 1974), no. G. 750 (p. 700).

Even though the medieval focus of the martyr-saint cult focused primarily on intercession, mimesis was not entirely lost. Martyrdom remained a "pious dream" for the most dedicated to pursue.[107] Late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century spiritual ascetic and pilgrim Margery Kempe fantasized about being a martyr. Her biographer relates, "She imagined in herself what death she might die for Christ's sake. She thought she would be slain for God's love, but feared the point of death."[108] Villana de' Botti, a fourteenth-century Italian Dominican, while venerating St. Lawrence, prayed that she might experience the same suffering as Lawrence and, feeling an unexplained surge of heat, claimed she had obtained her martyrdom.[109] John of Alverna, fourteenth-century Italian ascetic, had a vision of the death of St. Lawrence on the saint's feast day and heard a voice that instructed him, "No torment should be too grave for a Christian. If you wish for glory and sweetness, bear the harshness of the world patiently."[110] For John, his martyrdom would be the practice of patience rather than the heat of the gridiron. Martyrdom and patience were often associated, and pious Christians often compared their sufferings to martyrdom, using the martyrs' stories as motivation to endure.[111] Catherine of Siena's biographer called her a "martyr of patience," claiming that she had earned the martyrs' crown because she had endured great sickness.[112] Peter of Luxembourg declared himself willing to endure martyrdom, and his biographer declares him worthy of the title

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[107] Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, 67.

[108] Margery Kempe and B. A. Windeatt, *The Book of Margery Kempe* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 65. Margery Kempe was an English woman born c. 1373 who experienced spiritual visions and devoted herself to the life of an ascetic pilgrim. Near the end of her life, she dictated a spiritual autobiography that described her travels, dreams, visions, and aspirations. It remains an important expression of late medieval English spirituality.

[109] *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. August 5 (Paris: Victorem Palme, 1868), 866 C. 12.

[110] *Analecta Franciscana: Sive, Chronica Aliaque Varia Documenta Ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum Spectantia*, vol. 3 (Quaracchi, Italy: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1885), 440, translation from Kieckhefer in *Unquiet Souls*, 68.

[111] Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, 68.

[112] *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. April 3 (Paris: Victorem Palme, 1868), 882 C. 80.

for having borne a long illness faithfully.[113] Martyr-like acts were seen as worthy of merit; some ascetic women even believed the willing undertaking of physical suffering could rescue one's souls from purgatory.[114]

The Golden Legend

Without a doubt the most influential hagiographic work of the late Middle Ages and early modern period was *The Golden Legend*. The *Legenda Aurea* was compiled by Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1229–1298)[115] in the mid-thirteenth century. Arranged around the church's calendar of feast days, it tells of the lives and acts of the Middle Ages' most popular saints and is interspersed with liturgical and doctrinal instruction and exhortation. Voragine, an Italian Dominican and archbishop of Genoa, compiled the book from a wide range of ancient and medieval sources.[116] It was far from the only such compilation, but *The Golden Legend* was to become the most popular by far.[117] Voragine's popularity can be seen in the fact that the *Legend* survives in more than a thousand Latin manuscript copies and roughly another five hundred manuscript

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[113] *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. July 1 (Paris: Victorem Palme, 1868), 454 D. 38.

[114] Christina Mirabilis believed in "a life of dramatic and eccentric sufferings that would free souls from purgatory and at the same time make its tortures visible on earth, winning the conversion of sinners." Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 111.

[115] Jacobus de Voragine is the Latin and most common modern rendering of his name, but he is sometimes cited as Jacobus/Iacobus, Jacopo/Iacopo, Giacomo, or more rarely in their English equivalents Jacob or James. His surname is also cited as Varazze or Varagine. Adding to the confusion is the fact that over the centuries these have appeared in almost every combination.

[116] The most up-to-date and extensive analysis of Voragine's sources has been done in the critical edition of the text by Giovanni Maggioni. Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, vol. 2 (Firenze: Sismel, 1998), passim.

[117] Duffy cites Jean de Mailly's *Abbreviatio in Gestis et Miraculis Sanctorum* and Bartholomew of Trent's *Epilogus in Gesta Sanctorum* as two of the most prominent predecessors, but there were many others. Often, these books were the product of monastic orders set upon preserving their own particular hagiographies. Eamon Duffy, "Introduction to the 2012 Edition," in *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Jacobus de Voragine, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), xii.

translations.[118] Its influence was expanded by its copies as well as its imitators. Duffy writes, "Within two generations, hagiographical compilers all over Europe were adopting Jacobus's framework and lifting material wholesale from his book. Its popularity earned it the nickname the Golden Legend, with the implication that it was worth its weight in gold."[119] Its first influence in England came through an imitator, the *South English Legendary*.[120] However, *The Golden Legend*'s enduring influence in England came from the translation of William Caxton, which first appeared in 1483 but then continued in eight further editions through 1527.[121] The *Legend* was so pervasive that, as William Granger Ryan writes, "it has been said that in the late Middle Ages the only book more widely read was the Bible,"[122] and, in Alice Dailey's words, "the mere popularity of Jacobus's text ensured that its version of these legends, however idiosyncratic in the range of martyrological works composed throughout the church's history, became the definitive representation of martyrdom for late medieval European Christianity."[123]

The saints' lives depicted in *The Golden Legend* are not intended as scientific or impartial history. Voragine intended them to be used devotionally for instruction and edification. Voragine compiled the work while in the midst of composing a collection of

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[118] The sheer magnitude of these numbers are revealed by the fact that the nearest competitors of the genre survive in only a few dozen manuscripts. Duffy, "Introduction to the 2012 Edition," xii.

[119] Duffy, "Introduction to the 2012 Edition," xiii.

[120] The *South English Legendary* is a collection of saints' lives written in rhyming verse. This group of over sixty manuscripts seems to have been written in the west of England at the end of the thirteenth century. "South English Legendary," Cotton MS Julius D IX, Western Manuscripts, British Library. For a discussion of the influence of *The Golden Legend* on the *South English Legendary*, see Duffy, "Introduction to the 2012 Edition," xiii; Manfred Gorlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1974).

[121] Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 4–5.

[122] William Granger Ryan, trans., introduction to *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Jacobus de Voragine, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), xiii.

[123] Alice Dailey, *The English Martyr from Reformation to Revolution*, ReFormations: Medieval and Early Modern (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 12.

model sermons designed to be copied by under-educated or busy priests.[124] His intention for the use of *The Golden Legend* was similar; as Duffy states, "[He] intended his book as an aid for busy priests and preachers in need of a handy source of vivid anecdote, instruction, and edification to bulk out their sermons and catechesis."[125] Of the 160 saints depicted in the *Legend*, 93 are martyrs, taking up nearly two-thirds of the text. In keeping with the tradition, their martyrdoms are presented in excruciating and colorful detail. Though Gregory argues that the significance of the martyrs had been drowned in the wider sea of sainthood, the fact that the martyrs' stories predominate the book in both number and emphasis undermines this conclusion.[126] Even among the saints, the martyrs were retained as the pinnacle of spiritual devotion and thus the standard to be emulated for all wishing to live a truly spiritual life.

Hence, as the Middle Ages gave way to the Reformation and the early modern period, the martyrs remained aspirational models for the most pious, echoes of Christ to the contemplative, and powerful intercessors to worshipers. In their place among the saints, the martyrs held, if anything, a more central position with regard to piety than they had in the early church.

Martyrs in the Late Middle Ages and the Proto-Reformation

When Roman Catholic orthodoxy began to be questioned and nonconformists began to suffer and die for their convictions, their followers quickly adopted the idea of martyrdom to describe their sufferings. Well before the Reformation, proto-reformers were being identified as martyrs by their disciples. For example, in 1412, three young

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[124] Steven Epstein, *The Talents of Jacopo da Varagine: A Genoese Mind in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 66.

[125] Duffy, "Introduction to the 2012 Edition," xi.

[126] As evidence for this, Gregory points to the fact that the titles of martyr and saint are used nearly interchangeably to refer to the martyr-saints throughout the work. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 40.

followers of Jan Hus were beheaded for protesting papal indulgences in Prague. The following day, their fellow Hussites paraded their bodies through the streets on a bier bearing the words *Ita sunt martyres* ("these men are martyrs"). Hus commemorated their deaths with a special mass for martyrs and honored them by having them interred in the Bethlehem chapel where he preached.[127] By the late 1420s, John Oldcastle, John Wycliffe, William Taylor, William Sawtry, and John Beuerly were all being venerated in Lollard writings as martyrs, and shrines were being set up at the sites of notable burnings.[128]

The Lollards and Hussites not only adopted the practice of venerating martyrs; they also adopted the interpretive categories that had come to define martyrdom. In late 1411, a year after his excommunication, Hus had already begun explicitly considering that the martyr's pyre could well be in his future.[129] From this point on, Hus began identifying with the martyrs, repeatedly expressing his willingness to die.[130] Hus expected his own martyrdom, seeing it as God's way of exposing the false teaching of his opponents.[131] When the order was given that his books be burned, Hus appealed to his followers to attend to the example of those who were persecuted and martyred before them: "In the times of the New Testament, holy men were burnt, together with the books of God's law . . . keep these examples before you, that you may not under stress of fear

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[127] Matthew Spinka, trans., introduction to *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 41–42.

[128] Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 172.

[129] In an undated letter written to the College of Cardinals around September 1411, Hus wrote, "I hold in my heart and profess by word and writing, even if the stake be lighted as I am heard." Herbert Workman and R. Martin Pope, trans., *The Letters of John Hus* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 56.

[130] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 96, 119–20. This has even caused a number of his interpreters to conclude that Hus was "a little too fond of these professions of willingness to die." Workman and Pope, 56n2. Rather than make a judgment on the appropriateness of his "fondness" for these proclamations, I think it is more important to note that his frequent readiness to make such statements reveals his state of mind—namely, that in the theological conflict in which he found himself, he drew strength from identifying with the concept of martyrdom.

[131] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 97.

give up reading what I have written and hand over your books to be burnt by them."[132] Hus also drew on the medieval theme of Christ as a martyr. In one letter, he urged his followers to prepare for martyrdom, giving Christ as the quintessential example.[133] Early in 1414, as the theological conflict in Prague escalated, Hus urged his congregation to stand firm even should they be martyred:

> Stand ye in the ways of God, which are the great humility of the Lord Jesus Christ, His mercy, patience, and toilsome life, afflicted and sorrowing even to His foul death for the blessed Saviour Himself saith, "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." And in another place He saith, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." Moreover, the Lord Jesus obeyed His Father even unto death: surely, then, there is all the more fitness for us sinners to do so.[134]

In the same letter, Hus appeals explicitly to Christ as martyr to steel the nerves of those who have been tempted to avoid Hussite gatherings in the midst of persecution: "Therefore, dear brothers and dear sisters in the Lord God, I beg you by the martyrdom of God's Son gladly to attend the preaching, to gather together and hear it diligently."[135] A few lines later in the letter, Hus continues the medieval tradition of using endurance unto death as the ultimate mark of true piety:

> Stand in the way and hear, that you may show a noble penitence; for thus will you attain the heavenly kingdom. For true penitence is health of the soul and restorer of virtue as St. Bernard testifies, saying: "Penitence, health of the soul, restorer of virtue, scatterer of sins, overthrower of hell, gate of heaven, way of the righteous and satisfaction of the blessed." Oh, right blessed is he that loves the penitence of the saintly life and keeps it unto the end of his days![136]

Hus carries on the medieval themes of martyr piety. Standing to the end, in the context of the letter very possibly a violent end, is the mark of true faithfulness. Therefore, the

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[132] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 254–55.

[133] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 96–97.

[134] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 137.

[135] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 138.

[136] Workman and Pope, *The Letters of John Hus*, 138.

martyrs, and ultimately the martyred Christ, are examples to emulate and be motivated by.

In November 1414, Hus was imprisoned in Constance for eight months before he was burned in July 1415. His letters of the period reveal that it was a time of great temptation and testing. He wrote to his friends, "I have had temptations both in body and mind," and "I have felt the greatest fear lest I transgress the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ."[137] To find strength to endure the temptations, Hus looked to Christ and the martyrs. In a letter dated March 1415, he wrote, "Only now am I learning to understand the Psalter, to pray as I aught, to ponder upon the abuse of Christ and the sufferings of the martyrs."[138] As his execution neared, he repeatedly cited different martyrs by name in his letters, appealing to their travails as motivation for his own endurance.[139] Hus's letters show that as his own execution approached he turned to his understanding of martyrdom as a motivation to endure, repeatedly ruminating on the themes of suffering patiently, dying well, and revering Christ's passion. He held up the martyrs as models for both himself in prison and his congregation in Prague.

The Concept of "The Good Death" in Early Modern Piety

Persecuted Protestants were not alone in this renewed focus on martyr models. Because Christian martyrdom was so bound up in the concept of the imitation of Christ, its core themes were promoted within another late medieval piety movement: the *Devotio Moderna*. I have already discussed how by the late Middle Ages the concept of martyrdom had evolved into a spiritual, rather than physical, act. Gregory sums up the results of this evolution well: "Its essence might be seen less as death for Christ—which

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[137] Matthew Spinka, trans., *The Letters of John Hus* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 162.

[138] Spinka, *The Letters of John Hus*, 153.

[139] Spinka, *The Letters of John Hus*, 174, 176–77, 197, 204–5.

depending upon circumstances, might not be possible—than as willing perseverance in whatever adversities one faced. In this light, martyrdom was simply the most radical display of the virtue of patience open to all Christians."[140] The concept of the martyr of patience, the martyr "without iron," or the "martyr secretly in his mind" permeated much of late medieval spirituality.[141] Such was the case with the *Devotio Moderna* movement that began in the Low Countries in the late fourteenth century.

The *Devotio Moderna* achieved its greatest influence in England through the works of Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380–1471), particularly his work *Imitatio Christi* (1420–1427). Born in Kempen in the Rhineland, he became a follower of Gerard Groote while attending school in Deventer. After his training, he spent most of his life as a monk on Mount Saint Agnes in Zwolle, Netherlands, where he wrote several devotional works, including his *Imitatio Christi*, which became the most influential work of the *Devotio Moderna*. It significantly impacted England. It was translated from Latin into English by William Atkinson (?–1509) and Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509), mother of Henry VII, in 1504 and again by Richard Whitford (c. 1476–1542) in 1530. Eleven more translations and three paraphrases followed before 1700.[142] Both Roman Catholics and emerging Protestants valued the book. The entire work is based around the imitation of Christ, as the title implies, but this imitation is the imitation not merely of Christ's character but of his cruciform life. The work begins and ends with the cross and summons the reader to a life of suffering, as ultimately illustrated in the death of Christ.[143] In order to urge the reader to this life of sacrifice, à Kempis repeatedly cites the martyrs as models of the holy life of suffering: "Since the leader of life with all his martyrs have passed by the way of

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[140] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 50.

[141] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 51.

[142] David Crane, "English Translations of the Imitatio Christi in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Recusant History* 13, no. 2 (October 1975): passim.

[143] Robert S. Miola, *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 285.

tribulation and the cross, who so ever intended to come to heaven without the way of tribulation and the cross they err from the right way, for all the way of this moral life is full of miseries and crosses of tribulation."[144] For à Kempis, to live the Christian life was to follow the martyr way.

Not only did à Kempis build his understanding of life around suffering and death, but he also devoted much of his work to preparing his readers for death. Preparation for death and the martyr-saint's role in this preparation were of particular importance to the devout in the late Middle Ages. There has been significant research into the changing Christian understanding of death in the culture of medieval Europe. Late medieval Catholicism focused a great deal on death in the doctrine of purgatory, prayers, masses and indulgences for the dead, funeral rites, burial customs, the cult of the saints, and the art of dying. Several historians have characterized the late medieval culture surrounding death as a web of relations between the living and the dead.[145] At the point of death, saints were called upon to intercede for the living as they went before divine judgment. On the other hand, the living could intercede for their deceased loved ones in purgatory by means of prayer, endowing masses for their sake, and purchasing indulgences.[146] Ritual preparation for death was a focal point of late medieval culture. While early Christians urged one another to approach death with joy and confidence in their eternal salvation (2 Cor 5:8), the Middle Ages replaced this with an attitude of penitence and fear in anticipation of divine judgment.[147] By the late Middle Ages,

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[144] Thomas à Kempis, *A Full Deuoute and Gostely Treatyse of the Imytacyon and Folowynge the Blessed Lyfe of Our Moste Mercyfull Sauyour Cryste Compyled in Laten by the Right Worshypful Doctor Mayster Iohn Gerson*, trans. William Atkinson (n.p.: John Gerson, 1517), 2.12 sigs. [F4v-F5].

[145] Philippe Ariès offers a significant study of these trends in Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*. Paul Binski offers a shorter and more accessible introduction in Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[146] Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. 77–92.

[147] Éric Rebillard, *In Hora Mortis: Evolution de La Pastorale Chrétienne de La Mort Aux IVe et Ve Siècles Dans l'Occident Latin*, Bibliothèque Des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, fasc. 283

opinions had shifted dramatically. Salvation was not assured, and one's spiritual state had to be monitored through "a whole system of *quid pro quo* services" that daily addressed the deficiencies in one's spiritual ledger.[148] This meant that the average believer approached death with a great deal of insecurity, waiting for their eternal fate to be proved at the moment of death by achieving victory over temptation, represented by demons that afflicted the believer at their deathbed.[149] All of life came to be seen as preparation for this final struggle, and à Kempis's view was no different.

À Kempis urged his readers to live with the expectation that life would end abruptly:

> Very soon your life here will end; consider, then, what may be in store for you elsewhere. Today we live; tomorrow we die and are quickly forgotten. Oh, the dullness and hardness of a heart which looks only to the present instead of preparing for that which is to come! Therefore, in every deed and every thought, act as though you were to die this very day.[150]

Holy days and sacred moments were to be used to prepare for death:

> During holy seasons, finally, we ought to prepare ourselves carefully, to live holier lives, and to observe each rule more strictly, as though we were soon to receive from God the reward of our labors. If this end be deferred, let us believe that we are not well prepared and that we are not yet worthy of the great glory that shall in due time be revealed to us. Let us try, meanwhile, to prepare ourselves better for death.[151]

The preparation for death was of reciprocal effect. While Christians were to prepare themselves for death and judgment by becoming more holy, awareness of death provided

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(Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1994), 18–19, 62–63. Ariès argues that this shift can also be seen in church architecture. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 97–101.

[148] Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 58.

[149] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 109. For a discussion of the art of dying in late medieval England, see Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 313–27.

[150] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Nashville: B&H, 2017), 59.

[151] Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 46.

the motivation for holiness in the present life. Those who are blessed, according to à Kempis,

> continually have the hour of death before their sight, and that every day dispose themselves to die . . . . When thou risest in the morning doubt whether thou shalt continue in bodily health unto night. And therefore, dispose thyself to be ready that death never may find the unready [nor] a sleeper . . . . How gracious and happy is that soul that now in his life laboreth to be in that state that is desireth to be found in his death.[152]

To dwell on death was to "keep your heart free to raise it up to God, for you have not here a lasting home."[153] To motivate and explicate this kind of living, à Kempis turned to the ever-present well of medieval exemplars, the saints and martyrs:

> Consider the lively examples set us by the saints, who possessed the light of true perfection and religion, and you will see how little, how nearly nothing, we do. What, alas, is our life, compared with theirs? The saints and friends of Christ served the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in work and fatigue, in vigils and fasts, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many afflictions. How many and severe were the trials they suffered—the Apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the rest who willed to follow in the footsteps of Christ! They hated their lives on earth that they might have life in eternity.[154]

To "consider the saints" was to meditate on true piety.

As à Kempis's word spread among the late medieval literate, another tradition circulated among the commoners: the *Ars Moriendi*. The *Ars Moriendi* is a broad tradition of literature and art that developed out of the medieval concern with death. As early as the sixth century, rituals for the dead were being developed, and liturgical orders were founded to help the dying prepare for death. The chief concern was to offer the infirm forgiveness of sins through the administration of the three deathbed sacraments—penance, unction, and final Communion.[155] By the twelfth century, this tradition had

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[152] Kempis, *A Full Deuoute and Gostely Treatyse*, 1.23, sig. C3v.

[153] Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 62.

[154] Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 41.

[155] Frederick Paxton traces the development of this tradition in Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), passim, esp. 47, 85.

evolved to include various sacramentals, prayers, psalms, and litanies in order to provide believers assurance at the moment of death.[156] However, as the plague ravaged Europe and death rates radically increased, priests were sometimes unable to be present at the deathbed to administer such rites. For this reason, handbooks began to be produced in order to teach laypersons how to provide pastoral care to the dying. These handbooks came to be known as the *Ars Moriendi*. The earliest known of these handbooks is the *Admonitio Morienti et de Peccatis Suis Nimium Formidanti*, also known as the "Anselmian questions" and commonly attributed to Anselm of Canterbury.[157] This short series of questions and answers instructs the reader in how to prepare another for death. These questions seem to have been adopted by Jean Gerson in his pastoral handbook, the *Opusculum Tripertitum*.[158] Gerson's work was highly influential, and multiple adaptations of his treatise on preparation for death began appearing in the early fifteenth century.[159] As these treatises grew in popularity, variations on the theme were published in every major European language, with those variations numbering over one hundred before 1500.[160] Many of these variations, such as William Caxton's *The Arte and Crafte to Know Well to Dye*, played upon Gerson's six-part structure: (1) the commendation of a

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[156] A key example of this elaboration is the Ritual of St. Florian, which gained popularity in the twelfth century. Adolph Franz, *Das Rituale Von St. Florian Aus Dem Zwolften Jarhundert* (Freirburg Im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1904).

[157] [Anselm of Canterbury], *Admonitio Morienti et de Peccatis Suis Nimium Formidanti*, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 158 (Paris, 1866), 685–88. An English-language variant text can be found in *De visitatione infirmorum* in William Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae: The Occasional Offices of the Church of England According to the Old Use of Salisbury the Prymer in English and Other Prayers and Forms with Dissertations and Notes*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Claredon, 1882), 3:413–19.

[158] As the name suggests, Gerson's handbook was tripartite with the first section expositing the ten commandments, the second section expositing the confession, and the third section explaining ministry to the dying. The section on death can be found in *'La médecine de l'ame'* in Jean Gerson, *Oevres Completes*, ed. Palémon Glorieux, 10 vols. (Paris: Desclee & Cie, 1966), 7/1:404–7.

[159] Scott Taylor, "'L'aage plus Fort Ennaye': Scienta Mortis, Ars Moriendi and Jean Gerson's Advice to an Old Man," in *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic*, ed. Albrech Classen, Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 408.

[160] Allen Verhey, *The Christian Art of Dying: Learning From Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 87.

good death, (2) warning of the temptations that accompany death, (3) a catechism for the dying individual, (4) instructions on how to imitate Christ in death and prayers the dying can pray for help, (5) instructions on how to make this a matter of first importance in one's heart, and (6) prayers to be prayed for the dying person.

In the first section, Caxton, like many of the authors of *Ars* variations, looked to the martyrs as the primary exemplars of the good death he extoled:

> The death of the good man is ever precious in the sight of God, what manner of bodily death that ever they die. And thou shalt understand also that not only the death of holy martyrs is so precious, but also the death of all other rightful and good Christian men; and furthermore the death, doubtless, of all sinful men: how long, and how wicked, and how cursed they have been all their life before, unto their last end that they die in—if they die in the state of very repentance and contrition, and in the very faith, and virtue, and charity of Holy Church—is acceptable and precious in the sight of God.[161]

The moment of death was where one proved their being "in the state of very repentance and contrition," and the martyrs were the chief exemplars of passing the test. The martyrs' deaths exhibited one of the most basic requirements of a "good death": *Bene mori, est libenter mori* ("To die well is to die gladly and willfully").[162] Or, as Caxton states is more fully,

> Every good perfect Christian man . . . should not be sorry nor troubled, neither dread death of his body, in what manner wise or for what manner cause that he be put thereto; but gladly and willfully, with reason of his mind that ruleth his sensuality, he should take his death and suffer it patiently, conforming and committing fully his will to God's will and to God's disposition alone.[163]

As will be seen, this standard of the good death remained key to Foxe's presentation of martyrdom.

The second section of Caxton's work, on deathbed temptations, presented death as a significant test. This was typical of the wider *Ars* tradition in which it was

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[161] William Caxton, *The Book of the Craft of Dying, and Other Early English Tracts Concerning Death* (London: Longmans, Green, 1917), 5–6.

[162] Caxton, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, 7.

[163] Caxton, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, 7.

believed that at the moment of death the devil would seek to drag the dying individual down into damnation. This test was typically presented in the form of five temptations, often illustrated in luridly illustrated woodcuts of demons surrounding the afflicted and taunting them with the objects of temptation. The five temptations were (1) falling into error or heresy, (2) despair or lack of hope, (3) impatience with affliction, (4) pride and spiritual complacency, and (5) preoccupation with worldly things.[164] Naturally, the martyr-saints were perfect exemplars of defeating these temptations because they died for orthodoxy with patience and otherworldly zeal. The *Ars* provided an antidote to each temptation, and often part of the prescription was the contemplation of those who had passed the test:

> And it is right profitable and good, as it is used in some religious, when a man is in agony of dying, with an high voice oft times to say the Creed before him, that he that is sick may be mortified in stableness of the faith; and fiends that may not suffer to hear it may be voided and driven away from him. Also to stableness of very faith should strengthen a sick man principally the stable faith of our holy Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also the perseverant abiding faith of Job, of Raab the woman, and Achor, and such other. And also the faith of the Apostles, and other martyrs, confessors, and virgins innumerable.[165]

These "cures" were often presented in woodcuts of their own, sometimes depicting the martyrs' comforting the dying individual and inspiring them to patience and endurance.[166]

Caxton's work and other adaptations of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition proved profoundly influential in England. Editions were circulated so widely that that they

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[164] William Caxton, *Here Begynneth a Lityll Treatise Shorte and Abredged Spekynge of the Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye* (London: William Caxton, 1490), sig. A2–A4v.

[165] Caxton, *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, 11.

[166] This woodcut taken from a Parisian edition of the *Ars* depicts Christ comforting the dying Christian, joined by a group of saints each with their distinguishing mark. St. Barbara holds her tower, St. Lawrence his gridiron, St. Catherine her wheel, and St. Steven his rocks. "Exhortation to Patience," 1492, Woodcut, 1492.

survive in greater number than any other fifteenth-century xylographic book.[167] In addition to books, the woodcuts of deathbed temptations and cures circulated as single-sheet broadsides.[168] Even the illiterate would have almost certainly been familiar with the images and themes of the *Ars Moriendi* as they "circulated throughout the western world, constituting an exceptionally stable group of commonly held notions centering on the death agony."[169] Up to and even throughout the Reformation, the *Ars* were being printed in every major European nation.[170]

The concept of the good death prescribed in the *Ars Moriendi* became so pervasive that it was the measure by which a good life was judged. When the reformer Martin Luther fell mortally ill in 1546, his opponents, in an effort to discredit him, circulated rumors, even before his death, that he had died of drunkenness or had agonized of his plight and committed suicide—obvious violations of a "good death."[171] After his death, Luther's friends and supporters quickly circulated a rejoinder, entitled "Concerning the Christian Departure from This Mortal Life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther," using the same shared standard of the good death to confirm his ministry.[172] Luther's friends maintained that he had died in faithfulness, peace, and passion for heaven, obviously conforming to the standards of a good death. The battle over the narrative of Luther's death shows the persuasive power that a good death held in the late medieval and early modern periods as well as the standard of piety that a good death had

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[167] Xylography refers to the printing of books via carved wooden plates, a method that preceded Johannes Guttenberg's movable text method. Sister Mary Catharine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars Moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 114–15.

[168] O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, 142–43.

[169] Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 42.

[170] O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, 133–80.

[171] Justus Jonas, Michael Caelius, and Martin Ebon, *The Last Days of Luther*, trans. Theodore Tappert (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 18.

[172] Jonas, Caelius, and Ebon, *The Last Days of Luther*, 17.

become. A good death was considered proof positive of a good life and a stamp of the approval of God. This widely held belief provided a foundation upon which Protestant martyrology would build.

As the Reformation transformed understandings of salvation, both in England and on the continent, understandings of death necessarily changed as well. Many historians have described these changes with the metaphor of separation.[173] Protestant funeral rites no longer focused on prayers for the dead but on the preaching of the gospel and the honoring of a good life. Masses for the dead ceased in Protestant principalities. Acts of devotion no longer focused on freeing dead loved ones from purgatory. Physical separation occurred as well. Cemeteries moved from church yards and shrines to the outskirts of towns.[174] Repositing or removing the images of the saints in worship removed the dead from sight.[175] Everywhere one looked, a new relationship with death was apparent among Protestants.

What did not change among Protestants, however, was the preparation for death. Reformers continued to create rituals to aid in the preparation for death and to produce handbooks and sermons to instruct one in the preparation for death.[176] These new Protestant works kept many of the aspects of the earlier preparation manuals but added distinctly Protestant themes of assurance of salvation and joyful submission in death.[177]

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[173] Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars Moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 3. See also Craig Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700*, Early Modern History (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall, eds., *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[174] Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead*, 41–46.

[175] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, passim.

[176] Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying*, 4. With regard to church rituals, see Beverly S. Olson-Dopffel, "Pastoral Care of the Sick, the Dying and the Bereaved in Early Swiss and South German Protestantism" (PhD. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1977), 253.

[177] Susan Karant-Nunn notes these particular themes in reference to her study of Martin Moller's *Manual on Preparing for Death* (1593), but the same themes can be readily seen in Martin

Austra Reinis rightly calls these works efforts to "'re-form' the medieval *ars moriendi*."[178] Under these new and reformed *Ars Moriendi*, the tradition of reflecting on the good death continued into the Reformation period. As Gregory states, the *Ars* tradition would have a direct impact upon early modern martyrdom:

> The values and practices of the Ars moriendi were directly relevant to martyrdom. Whatever the setting, Satan would foment despair of God's grace, seek to pry men and women from their faith, and prompt them to lament their predicament. Would-be martyrs, too, faced temptations to recant—the executions for heterodoxy that accompanied the growing crisis of the 1520s made a public spectacle of the struggle for steadfastness. When crowds gathered to witness the execution of religious criminals, town squares displaced the domestic intimacy of the deathbed. Spectators scrutinized the condemned, looking for behavior to which the Ars moriendi had sensitized them for more than a century.[179]

The *Ars Moriendi* tradition stocked the late medieval mind with clear pictures of the good death—and by implication the good life. As Protestants began to write their martyrologies, they would seize upon these themes to their own ends.

Conclusion

When John Foxe began to compile his book of martyrs, *The Golden Legend* was still in wide circulation, the images and concepts of the *Ars Moriendi* were still common knowledge, and the saints were all still household names. The image of the martyr savior was still the most pervasive image in all of Christian worship, and death was still a pressing and daily concern. The saints and martyrs were still the most prominent and pervasive exemplars of true piety. Foxe was so inspired by this early tradition of martyr writing that he adopted its method as his own. He would adapt his stories to take on the repetitive pedagogical form of the ancient martyrologies,

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Luther's *A Sermon on Preparing to Die* (1519). Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany*, Christianity and Society in the Modern World (London: Routledge, 1997), 165; Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 42, *Devotional Writings I*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Martin O. Dietrich (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 95–115.

[178] Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying*, 4.

[179] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 55.

emphasizing the moral qualities of the characters,[180] even assigning ancient pseudonyms to some of the Marian martyrs to drive home the point.[181] By positioning Protestants as an echo of these ancient examples, Foxe had the Protestant martyrs serve as evidence of Protestantism's legitimacy. Because of the popularity of the concept of a "good death," the constancy of the Protestant martyrs served as evidence of their morality and thus confirmation of their confession. In other words, Foxe's early modern audience would have read *Acts and Monuments* expecting it to instruct them in piety. Foxe's book of Protestant saints, following the conventions of the genre and complete with a celebratory calendar, could not have been seen any other way. In essence, the genre Foxe selected demanded that the book promote piety.

I have explored how Foxe's adaptation of the genre was deliberate and inescapable. Martyrology shaped his conversion, conception of the Protestant faith, and understanding of England. For this reason, I have explored the evolution of the genre that so profoundly defined *Acts and Monuments*: from the early church, when martyrs became ethical exemplars, to the Middle Ages, when saints dominated popular piety, till the Reformation, when Protestants sought to reclaim the genre for their own righteous dead. Foxe used each era of the genre's history to shape *Acts and Monuments*: The ancient faith he hoped to revive, the hagiography he hoped to supplant, and the Protestant martyrology he sought to promote all shaped *Acts and Monuments* and were fundamentally used for the promotion of piety. In the next chapter, I will explore how Foxe adopted and adapted this vibrant tradition to the Protestant purpose of promoting a Protestant piety.

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[180] Gavin Schwartz-Leeper, *From Princes to Pages: The Literary Lives of Cardinal Wolsey, Tudor England's "Other King"*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 202 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 119; Pucci, "Reforming Roman Emperors," 35.

[181] Pucci, "Reforming Roman Emperors," 34.

CHAPTER 4

"THE UTILITY OF THIS HISTORY": THE STRUCTURE OF *ACTS AND MONUMENTS* AND THE PROMOTION OF PIETY

In the last chapter, I sought to show that Foxe's use of martyrology as the genre of *Acts and Monuments* shows, by its very essence, that he was concerned with the promotion of piety.[1] In this chapter, I will argue that Foxe deliberately structured *Acts and Monuments* to promote piety. There is some debate as to Foxe's motives with the work, with the most prominent modern Foxe scholars arguing for primarily political and academic motivations. I will argue that these interpretations are mistaken based on the work's history, structure, and stated intentions. To accomplish this, I will briefly examine the structure of each of the four editions Foxe produced in his lifetime. Working through the history of Foxe's editions, I will show that despite changing political and academic situations, the promotion of piety was always a primary motivation in each edition. Then, I will explore a decision that profoundly impacted the book's audience more than any other: the decision to publish in English. While many modern interpreters argue that Foxe's decision was begrudging and politically motivated, I will argue that it was

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[1] By this, I am not claiming that Foxe was exclusively drawing from the genre of martyrology in forming his book. Indeed, as I outlined in chapter 1, Foxe's use of the genre of ecclesiastical history has been studied extensively. Rather, I seek to emphasize the impact that martyrology made upon the construction of TAM. It is sometimes argued that Foxe should not be read primarily through the lens of martyrology because of a statement he made in book 6 of TAM: "I profess no such title to write of Martyrs: but in general to write of Actes and Monuments passed in the church and realm of England. Wherein, why should I be restrained from the free walk of a story writer, more than others that have gone before me?" John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, 1570 ed. (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), 851, http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe. However, Foxe is here answering an objection to the scholarly merit of his work. Note, a "story writer" in Elizabethan English was not a teller of tales but a historian. Foxe is pointing out that in contrast to the hagiography of his day, he is writing true and verifiable history. Foxe does not, however, seek to remove himself from the genre of martyrology rightly understood. In his preface "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," the longest single defense of his work's scholarly merit, he freely claims the title of "martyrology" for the work, in contrast to the "martyrological legends" he opposes. John Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

deliberate and profoundly spiritually motivated. Next, I will look at the two most critical structural schemas that shaped *Acts and Monuments*: apocalypticism and martyrology. I will show how these two genres function within *Acts and Monuments*. Particularly, I will argue that apocalypticism was used to motivate personal reform and that martyrology was used to provide the models for the same.

The Promotion of Piety as the Motivation to Publish

The *Commentarii Rerum*

As discussed in chapter 2, the essence of the *Acts and Monuments* began with Foxe's first Latin martyrology, *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*.[2] Conceived during the reign of Edward VI, its purpose was primarily to justify the reformed faith. Profoundly influenced by John Bale's *The Image of Both Churches*, it sought to show that Protestantism belonged to the ancient and true church rather than the modern and corrupt church.[3] Consisting only of a short history of the Lollards, it provided a godly remnant to which the Protestants could point as evidence of the continuity of their claim to the true faith. While the work was not as fully formed as it later would be, there is evidence that even this work was shaped to the promotion of piety. Drawing on Bale's concept of the two churches, Foxe saw the primitive church as a more excellent example of purity because it lacked the ceremonial piety that would later come to dominate the church.[4] In the Lollards, Foxe found evidence of an English congregation practicing a more pure form of piety. Foxe's publication of the lives of the Lollards shows his

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[2] John Foxe, *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum, Maximarumque per Totam Europam, Persecutionum, a Vuiclevi Temporibus Ad Hanc Usque Aetatem Descriptio* (Basel: J. Oporinus and N. Brylinger, 1559).

[3] D. M. Loades, ed., introduction to *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1997), 2.

[4] Foxe outlines this argument in his description of the first six hundred years of church history, which directly ties the increase in ceremony and papal authority to the decline of the true church. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 24–28. See especially p. 26, where he argues that the early church was marked only by the teaching of the principles of faith and baptism, not a multiplicity of ceremonies.

immense attraction to the topic of piety, even at this early stage. Foxe's publication of the Lollards drew significant criticism,[5] yet he joyfully published them because of their exemplary practices.[6] The Lollards denunciation of transubstantiation, rejection of images and pilgrimages, and enthusiasm for the vernacular Scripture formed the foundation of Foxe's attraction to them.[7] Though Foxe's martyrology had not come to its full shape at this stage, the subject of Protestant piety already played a significant role in its formulation.

The *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*

Mary Tudor took the throne between the inception and publication of the *Commentarii*, and the subject of martyrology was brought shockingly close to home. Many of Foxe's close personal friends were martyred, Foxe was exiled, and Catholic ceremonies returned in force. Thus, as Foxe constructed his second Latin martyrology, the piety of the Protestant martyrs was not merely a historical touchpoint but a profoundly personal reality. Consequently, when Foxe published the *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*,[8] he was not merely seeking to give a historical defense of the Protestant cause but desperately striving for its reestablishment in his homeland. Thus, the *Rerum* changes to more plainly promote Protestant piety. This is clearly seen in the preface he added to this edition: the Latin preface *Proemium de Historiae Huius Utilitate et Fructu*

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[5] The use of the Lollards was one of the key critiques of Foxe levied by his Roman Catholic opponents. Foxe would have to spend a good deal of space defending his use of the Lollards in later editions. Mark Breitenberg, "The Flesh Made Word: Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *Renaissance and Reformation* 25, no. 4 (1989): 381; Nicholas Harpsfield [Alan Cope (pseud.)], *Dialogi Sex* (Antwerp, 1566), 751-770.

[6] Susan Royal, "Reforming Household Piety: John Foxe and the Lollard Conventicle Tradition," in *Religion and the Household: Papers Read at the 2012 Summer Meeting and the 2013 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. John Doran, Charlotte Methuen, and Alexandra Walsham, Studies in Church History 50 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2014), 188–90.

[7] Royal, "Reforming Household Piety," 189.

[8] John Foxe, *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum. Pars Prima, In qua Rebus per Angliam et Scotiam Gestis, Atque in Primis de Horrenda, Sub Maria Nuper Regina, Persecutione Narration Continetur* (Basel: J. Oporinus, 1559).

("Prologue Concerning the Usefulness and Fruit of This History").[9] Discussed below at length, "The Utility of This History," as Foxe later called it,[10] provides the most transparent and explicit statement of how Foxe intended his work to be received and used.

In it, Foxe describes both his intended audience and what he expects this audience to do with the work. His audience is "every man," with the caveat that the history is "framed chiefly of the English church." This means his primary audience is the whole Church of England, not only the clergy.[11] Then, he gives the most precise and most succinct statement of the use he intends for his history: "to accept and embrace the lives and doings . . . of most mild and constant Martyrs, which may serve, not so much to delight the ear, as to garnish the life, to frame it with examples of great profit and to instruct the mind in all kinds of Christian godliness."[12] Though written in Latin, Foxe makes clear that his exhortation is not only for the educated but for all who benefit from observing the stories of godliness. Critically, Foxe attached this preface to the *Rerum* and to every subsequent edition of *Acts and Monuments* produced in his lifetime, making it a testimony to the earliest and most enduring motivation behind the martyrological project. This shows that a vital and foundational motivation for every edition of *Acts and Monuments* was the promotion of Protestant piety.

The 1563 Edition

Thus, even before Foxe completed his first martyrology in English, he had already conceived of the martyrs as the great exemplars needed for the English church in

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[9] Foxe, *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum. Pars Prima*, sig. a–aiii r.

[10] John Foxe, "A Declaration Concerning the Utility and Profit of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15. Foxe shortens the title to "The Utility of This History" in the heading at the top of the page.

[11] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

[12] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

their time of trouble. When Foxe returned from exile in 1559, he immediately began gathering more firsthand, and thus more trustworthy, information regarding the English martyrs under Mary I. When he had published the *Rerum* in Basel before his return, he subtitled it *Pars Prima* ("first part"). A second part of his second Latin martyrology never emerged; instead, the project evolved into *Acts and Monuments*. Therefore, in many ways, it is right to see *Acts and Monuments* as an expansion of the *Rerum*. Consequently, Foxe retained his preface on "the usefulness" of the work, critically translating it into English for consumption by the general populous.

While I contend that the promotion of Protestant piety remained a crucial and foundational motivation behind *Acts and Monuments*, there is some debate as to the target audience and motivation of the first English edition. At the heart of the discussion lie two factors discussed below: the decision to publish in English and *Acts and Monuments's* ties to the Elizabethan regime. Concerning the first factor, the decision to publish in English, Foxe seems to have done this somewhat hesitantly, leading Susan Felch to argue that Foxe was primarily aiming at a learned readership with the first edition of *Acts and Monuments*.[13] Regarding the second factor, *Acts and Monuments* was published with the aid of several very highly placed Elizabethan officials, leading Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman to conclude that Foxe had primarily propagandistic goals with *Acts and Monuments*.[14] Both of these interpretations fail to account for Foxe's retention and translation of his preface "The Utility of This History," which so clearly points to the promotion of piety as the goal of the book. Not only did Foxe retain his pedagogical preface, but he even went so far as to add a calendar of the martyrs, a didactic tool aimed at reforming the calendar of the saints, which so prominently occupied the piety of the

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[13] Susan Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 58.

[14] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 103.

common man. These elements confirm that Foxe retained the primary motivation of the *Rerum* in the publication of the first edition of *Acts and Monuments*: the promotion of Protestant piety.

This is not to discount governmental and scholarly concerns involved in the publication of *Acts and Monuments*. Elizabeth was only recently ascendant, a woman without an heir and with foreign Catholic enemies and other living claimants to the throne. By the same token, an army of Catholic scholars was ready to excoriate Foxe's work. Accordingly, Foxe added prefaces addressing these concerns. To Elizabeth, he dedicated the laudatory epistle "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty."[15] To sympathetic scholars, he offered the explanatory "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*,"[16] defending the work's academic merit. He offered his critics the apologetic "To the Persecutors of God's Truth."[17] To Christ, he offered the doxological "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*."[18] Each of these prefaces reveal aspects of the work's multifaceted goals and target audience. However, critically, they all emphasize aspects of promoting Protestant piety. Put another way, the promotion of Protestant piety served all of Foxe's multiple intentions of the work, be they political, apologetic, theological, or academic. It is safe to say, then, that in 1563 Foxe was just as, if not more highly, motivated to promote Protestant piety as he had been in 1559 with the publication of the *Rerum*.

The 1570 Edition

The context of the publication of the second edition of *Acts and Monuments* in 1570 was somewhat different. Practically, Foxe used the extra time accorded to him in its preparation to further research and defend the veracity of the information contained

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[15] John Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 5–8.

[16] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9–11.

[17] John Foxe, "To the Persecutors of God's Truth," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 12–14.

[18] John Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1–2.

within it. The result was a book nearly doubled in size. Catholic opponents had viciously attacked the book's veracity, and Foxe had gone to great lengths to defend it. Foxe says as much in a new preface, "To the True and Faithful Congregation."[19] Even this had a bearing on the book's piety. False martyrs were no martyrs at all, and one of Foxe's main critiques of medieval saints was that their deeds were legendary rather than true.[20] To this end, Foxe dropped the martyr calendar of the 1563 edition, with its controversial entailments, and replaced it with a less provocative index of martyrs, along with a scholarly index of sources. This removed the scandal of the calendar while still providing a useful pedagogical tool for the systematic study of and meditation on the martyrs.

The social situation of *Acts and Monuments* had also changed from 1563 to 1570. The intervening years had seen several social defeats for the more progressive reform party of which Foxe was a part. The result was an edition of *Acts and Monuments* that was even more urgent in its promotion of Protestant piety.[21] To that end, there is evidence that Foxe was tailoring the work to make it even more accessible to uneducated readers.[22] Foxe dropped the two Latin prefaces and added a new preface in the vernacular, entitled "To the True and Faithful Congregation" and subtitled "A Protestation to the Whole Church of England." Here, again, he placed the example of the martyrs front and center in the purposes of the work.[23] Foxe begins the preface with a similar statement of intent as the one he included in "The Utility of This History."

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[19] John Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 1–6.

[20] Foxe specifically excoriates medieval hagiography as useless for the task of edification on the basis that it is untrue rather than carefully verified. Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

[21] Thomas Betteridge has labeled this shift as a shift from a more confident "prophetic" tone in the 1563 edition to a more pessimistic and urgent "apocalyptic" tone in the 1570 edition. Betteridge's insight is valuable but linguistically imprecise as he admits that both are expressions of what broader scholarship calls Foxe's overall apocalyptic thought. Thomas Betteridge, "From Prophetic to Apocalyptic: John Foxe and the Writing of History," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 212–13.

[22] John N. King, "Guides to Reading Foxe's Book of Martyrs," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, nos. 1–2 (March 2005): 138.

[23] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 1.

Comparing himself to Solomon at the completion of the temple, Foxe prays a prayer of blessing over the work:

> So all true disposed minds which shall resort to the reading of this present history containing the Acts of God's holy Martyrs, and Monuments of his Church, may by example of their life, faith, and doctrine, receive some such spiritual fruit to their souls through the operation of his grace, that it may be to the advancement of his glory, and profit of his Church.[24]

The title and contents of this preface make clear that Foxe's primary audience and goals remained from his earlier editions: he wanted the "Whole Church of England" to see the example of the martyrs' life, faith, and doctrine. The apocalyptic elements of the work also increased in their intensity. The glorification of Elizabeth as a new Constantine was dropped, with the focus placed less upon England and more on the faithful remnant around the world as the proper object of the apocalyptic prophesies.[25] The changes reflect Foxe's growing dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan Settlement. With Elizabeth's reformation slowing, Foxe looked to the true church in all the world for hope.

The 1576 Edition

After 1570, there is evidence that Foxe may have thought himself done with *Acts and Monuments*.[26] His attention turned to publishing sermons and devotional literature and to his reform of the canon law. The impulse to publish the next edition came from John Day rather than Foxe, who remained engaged in other projects throughout the publication process, starkly contrasting his nearly obsessive engagement with the first two editions.[27] The result, in 1576, was an edition that was a nearly exact reprint of the 1570 edition—as such, Day retained the same prefaces from the 1570

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[24] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 1.

[25] Glyn Parry, "Elect Church or Elect Nation? The Reception of the Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, ed. David M. Loades, John Foxe Colloquium (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 169.

[26] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 232.

[27] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 256–59.

edition without change. The only notable addition was a new table to assist in interpreting historical events in the light of *Revelation*.[28] Foxe's interest in the apocalyptic only increased as he aged, and this table was evidence of that increase within *Acts and Monuments*. As will be seen, his apocalyptic interest was a significant impulse toward promoting piety.

The 1583 Edition

The 1583 edition, the last of Foxe's life, seems to have arisen out of dissatisfaction with the physical quality of the 1570 edition. Richard Day, John Day's son, had overseen significant cost-cutting measures in the making of the 1570 edition, which included a reduction in paper quality and print size. The result was a physically inferior edition, a fact that provoked letters of complaint from Foxe's contemporaries.[29] Therefore, it seems that both Foxe and Day saw the need for a fourth and physically improved printing quite quickly after the third emerged from the presses. Foxe's increasing apocalyptic concerns may have also been a factor. Because the 1576 edition was largely a reprint of the 1570 edition, it reveals very little of the changing mood among Protestants. However, the intervening years between 1570 and 1583 held several significant events of Catholic aggression, which increased the anxiety of English Protestants. Not least on this list was the papal bull proclaiming the excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572. These events shook the confidence of apocalyptically minded English Protestants. Foxe responded by publishing an anti-Catholic apologetic work entitled *Papa Confutatus* in 1580. Drawing heavily upon *Acts and Monuments*, *Papa Confutatus* exhibits the schema of the true and false church that had shaped Foxe's work back to his partnership with Bale in the 1550s.

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[28] Foxe entitled the table "The Mystical Numbers in the Apocalypse Opened." Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 125; Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 263.

[29] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 270–74.

The work shows the apocalyptic urgency that Foxe felt during this period; the world was soon coming to an end, and England needed to be ready.

In this period, Foxe began the study that would lead to his final work: a massive historical commentary on Revelation. This was also the period during which Foxe experienced the upheaval at Oxford, discussed in chapter 2. The dichotomy of his sympathy with Puritan goals but frustration with their methods contributed to a feeling of unease with the fracturing occurring in the English Reformation. For Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* was an answer to all these problems: history provided the framework, apocalypticism the impulse, and martyrology the models for true reform. In essence, the popularity of the first three editions of *Acts and Monuments* provided Foxe the opportunity to address the pressing issues of his day with a guaranteed audience. Though his political and preaching influence were slight compared to the other spiritual greats of his day, *Acts and Monuments* was "metaphorically, one of the greatest pulpits in England." Thus, Foxe used it to reassert his message.[30]

These impulses created a book that was more "monumental" than innovative.[31] Foxe was not changing or expanding his argument but reasserting it in a troubled time. As such, neither the form nor the piety of the book changed in this edition. Foxe added very little in the way of new sources or material, and he retained all his prior prefaces, even retrieving the Latin prefaces dropped from the 1570 and 1576 editions.[32] Especially notable was the return of the controversial martyr calendar and the addition of a new English preface entitled "Four Considerations Given Out to Christian Protestant

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[30] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 296.

[31] Betteridge, "From Prophetic to Apocalyptic," 212.

[32] The reintroduction of this material may be related to the printing house's having access to a greater amount of paper during the printing of the 1583 edition, as earlier paper shortages had necessitated cuts in the prior two editions. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 301–2.

Professors of the Gospel."[33] The new preface was largely a warning for Protestants to not grow spiritually complacent in the prosperity of Elizabeth's reign and to not be divided by fractiousness amid external pressure. Foxe lists the blessings England has received through the Reformation. England lacks nothing save full obedience. Foxe's solution is predictable—consider the martyrs:

> Let us call to mind, considering thus with ourselves: These good men and worthy Martyrs in those dangerous days, tasting as they did, the heavy hand of God's sharp correction, beginning commonly with his own house first . . . ; well-beloved, these things being so, let us call ourselves to mind, considering the times that have been, the times that be, and times that may come, how we stand, and by whom we stand. If it be the favor of God only, that doth support us in the midst of so many enemies, let us beware, in no wise we provoke his indignation.[34]

This preface reveals a great deal about Foxe's intentions with regard to the final edition of *Acts and Monuments* in his lifetime. As he grew older, his concern for the spiritual health of his nation increased. His growing dissatisfaction with the incomplete reformation of the Elizabethan Settlement and his increased interest in the Apocalypse all reflect this trend: He was concerned that England was improperly reformed and inadequately passionate in its piety and that this state might bring upon them the judgment of God. In all this, he saw the contemplation of the martyrs as medicine for the ailing spiritual health of England, and so he continued to shape his book to that end.

Though the circumstances of the four Foxian editions precipitated certain idiosyncrasies in their production, a common theme runs throughout: the need for further reformation, a call to wake up from complacency, and the exaltation of the martyrs as the models for this reformation. These elements were always present in Foxe's stated intentions in the prefaces and implied intentions in the structure of the book. Both show

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[33] John Foxe, "Four Considerations Given Out to Christian Protestant Professors of the Gospel," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 20.

[34] Foxe, "Four Considerations to Protestant Professors," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 20.

that one primary goal of the work was always the promotion of Protestant piety. It is to those intentions that I now turn.

The Decision to Publish in English

The decision to publish in English is a clear indicator of Foxe's desire to use *Acts and Monuments* as a tool for promoting Protestant piety. While the decision may seem obvious to the modern reader, Foxe repeatedly expressed anxiety over the decision, as exemplified in a letter he sent along with a copy of *Acts and Monuments* to the Magdalen College library in 1563.[35] It is obvious from this letter, and his defense of the decision in the preface "To the Learned Reader" in the 1563 edition of *Acts and Monuments*, that his anxiety centered on the idea that his work, and by extension his person, would be seen as less than scholarly for having published in the vernacular. To Magdalen, he writes that work will sound less "pleasant" in English.[36] To the "learned and pious reader," he appeals to "that humanity of yours, with which I know that you are endowed from your study of the *literae humaniores*,"[37] that they will judge gently the "dangerous and hazardous thing" of sending the book to the public. A large part of his anxiety rested in the fact that he knew his Catholic opponents would meticulously and harshly scrutinize his work. Thoroughgoing humanist that he was, Foxe was at pains to present his book as a work of genuine scholarship, and publication in the "unpleasantness of the language" of English was a strike against the seriousness of the work before it had even been read.

Why, then, with such deep anxiety concerning the vernacular, did Foxe choose to make the rather "scandalous" decision to publish in English? Evenden and Freeman

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[35] The letter is reproduced in facsimile and then transcribed in Josiah Pratt, ed., *The Church Historians of England*, vol. 1.1 (London: George Seeley, 1870), 42, [20]. Mozley provides a partial translation into English in J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 136.

[36] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 138.

[37] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

speculate that it was William Cecil's involvement, stating, "The needs of propaganda . . . dictated this decision," and asserting, "It can be safely assumed that the decision to write the work in the vernacular was less than satisfactory to Foxe."[38] Cecil was deeply involved in the publication, but Evenden and Freeman's speculation goes too far. Foxe never attributes the decision to Cecil. Instead, in his letter to Magdalen, he states, "The needs of the common people of our land drove me to the vernacular."[39] Were the "needs" in view propagandistic, as Evenden and Freeman imply? Susan Felch and C. L. Oastler attribute the decision to John Day, pointing to a monetary motivation.[40] Again, there is no direct evidence to this claim; rather, it is the speculation that Day stood to profit from the change and, therefore, must have proposed it.[41] What, then, truly drove the decision?

First, it should be noted that Foxe had already been introduced to the concept of English martyrology while in exile when he was not in contact with Cecil or Day. It was Edmund Grindal who first proposed the composition of a martyrology in English to be undertaken by the English exiles in Basel.[42] This was to be assembled not by an ascendant Protestant community seeking to establish a regime but by an afflicted and exiled Protestant community seeking to encourage its followers amid persecution. In 1555, when Foxe was discussing the project with Grindal in Basel, Mary I was unquestionably ascendant, and there was no feasible path to a Protestant monarchy. The

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[38] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 103.

[39] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 136.

[40] Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," 58; C. L. Oastler, *John Day: The Elizabethan Printer* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1975), 26.

[41] Felch cites Oastler (*John Day*) as the source of the belief that it was Day who promoted the printing of TAM in English, but Oastler cites no evidence other than Day's enthusiasm for the work. In fact, Oastler, in his footnotes, points the reader to an earlier preface of Foxe that shows that he had already conceived of writing in English in 1559, four years before TAM was released by Day. This preface gives the same reasoning for writing in English as the preface to TAM, namely, that it puts the life and work of exemplary Christians at the disposal of the populous. Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," 58; Oastler, *John Day*, 26n4; Ridley, Nicholas, *A Friendly Farewell* (London: John Day, 1559), "To the Reader" (unnumbered).

[42] Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: Cape, 1997), 73.

very motivation for a vernacular martyrology was the need to commemorate and make sense of the Protestants being burned in town squares across England and the flood of their prison letters to English Protestants on the continent. It is far better to see the first conception of an English martyrology arising not out of political ambitions or monetary concern but out of the then recently revived and rapidly growing genre of martyrology and prison literature that was written primarily for encouragement and devotional use among Protestant coreligionists.[43] Therefore, it is clear that the concept of a martyrology in the vernacular did not arise out of primarily political or economic soil.

When Foxe returned to England after Elizabeth's accession, Foxe's martyrology was certainly used to promote the regime, but that was not his primary intention. It has already been shown that Foxe himself claimed to make this switch "for the needs of the people." In his prefaces, he clarifies what "needs" he had in view. First, context must be taken from his preface "To the Learned Reader." This Latin preface, addressed to his intellectual peers, is largely an apology for the scholarly value of the work. Foxe expresses anxiety that the work will be especially scrutinized because many of its subjects, some of whom Foxe has put in a very negative light, are still alive: "Such an historical theme of history, as does not relate only to events of earlier years recalled from the distant past, but touches upon this very age of ours, and men of our race who are even now present and alive, rubs on them, and points them out in such a way as has of necessity to be done in this kind of subject."[44] Pointing these men out is "necessary" because his history is not only descriptive but also ethical. It describes the true and false churches at work in England.

Nevertheless, Foxe argues that he is not merely spiritualizing history or forcing the facts to fit the narrative; rather, he has written a true and verifiable history rather than

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[43] For discussion of the rise and use of this genre, see chapter 2.

[44] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

a mythical one.[45] His vocabulary here is deliberately ironic as it allows him to contrast his history with that which he sees as his book's primary opposite—"that entirely fabulous golden legend."[46] *The Golden Legend*, as discussed in chapter 3, was far and away the most popular of the medieval hagiographies, so popular as to become as synonymous with the genre as *Acts and Monuments* would eventually become with Protestant martyrology. Foxe's description of the work, however, is telling:

> Your Golden Legend, which all of us know, nor do you yourself not know, to be a book abounding with unnatural monstrosities of lies and most empty inventions—I should not even wish to compare it with the stories of Homer: so far is it removed from having anything in common with the serious and weighty history of the Church.[47]

His evocation of Homer here is not accidental but instead connects this preface to another of Foxe's prefaces: "The Utility of This History."

In "The Utility of This History," critically an English preface translated from an earlier Latin version attached to the *Rerum*, Foxe lays out how he expects his history to be used to "the common utility, which every man plentifully may receive by this our history or martyrology."[48] What is the utility? Namely, the attaining of godly models. For his point of comparison, he turns to classical Greek literature:

> For if we be wont gladly to occupy ourselves in other Chronicles, that do only entreat upon matters of policy, and do (as a man would say) rejoice to behold

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[45] It is important to note that Foxe's use of the word "legend" does not bear the derogatory implications it would come to have not long after his publication. At the time of his writing, both it and its Latin counterpart *legenda* bore the meaning of "A book of readings for use as lessons in church services; a lectionary, esp. one containing saints' lives" or "The story of a saint's life, esp. as a source of spiritual edification." The year 1581, just two years before Foxe's final edition, saw the first use of the word to mean "a fable or myth." Ironically, Foxe sought to replace *The Golden Legend* with his own, more historical, stories for spiritual profit, and within his lifetime, the word "legend" took on mythical overtones in keeping with his goals. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Legend (n.)," June 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3105254236.

[46] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9. Foxe's use of "fabulous" does not mean "wonderful" but is an antiquated use of the word meaning "of the nature of a fable or myth, full of fables, unhistorical, legendary. fabulous age, fabulous period, etc.: one of which the accounts are chiefly or entirely mythical." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Fabulous (adj.)," July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7396375726.

[47] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

[48] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

> therein the diverse happenings of worldly affairs, the strategies of captains and men of war . . . how much more then is it mete for us to accept and embrace the lives and doings, not of rough warriors, but of most mild and constant Martyrs.[49]

To make clear that it is the classics he has in view, he states, "For undoubtedly these martyrs are much more worthy of this honor, then 600 Alexanders, Hectors, Scipios, and warring Juliuses."[50] Taken together, the two prefaces paint a picture of Foxe's intention for the work and why he chose to put it in English. History teaches ethics. It is no surprise that Foxe, neo-classical dramatist that he was, appeals to the classical understanding of history that was meant to "form persons" as much as transmit information.[51] This was the utility of the classics, and now it was the utility of his history. In fact, he argued, because his history was both true and dealing with the acts of God, it was of even greater utility than the classical martyrology. His slight toward *The Golden Legend* in "To the Learned Reader" is that it was more incredulous than even Homer and thus was useless to this task. Foxe was attempting to present a true and better alternative. It is not surprising, then, that in light of the incredible popularity of the *Legend* among the common man, Foxe chose to put his corrective in English. This comports with other statements in "To the Learned Reader." True history, as an exercise of God's providence, has ethical implications that men are required to observe. For Foxe, this is a story that England must hear; therefore, Foxe chose to publish in English.

In the preface "To the True and Faithful Congregation" published in the 1570 edition, Foxe confirms the impulse that drove him to print in English: "As for me and my history . . . the cause no less urgent also, which moved me to take this enterprise in hand. For first to see the simple flock of Christ, especially the unlearned sort, so miserably

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[49] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15. "Wont" is an archaic word meaning "in the habit of." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Wont (n.1)," March 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2897252117.

[50] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15. Foxe here references the great heroes of Greco-Roman history and myth: Alexander the Great, Hector of Troy, Scipio Africanus, and Julius Caesar.

[51] Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 2 (1983): 8.

abused, and all for ignorance of history."[52] Foxe specifically says that it is "unlearned sort," those who would not have the scholar's facility in Latin, who so desperately need this history. The knowledge of history he desires to spread is not merely the knowing of facts but "knowing the course of times," a reference to the apocalyptic scheme he saw within history, and knowing the "true descent of the Church," the decline of the Catholic Church and the remaining remnant of Protestantism. One can see here Foxe's desiring for the nation something of his own conversion experience at Oxford. Having discovered Protestant principles within his study of history, he experienced a spiritual conversion as a result. He hoped *Acts and Monuments* would accomplish something of the same for the nation.

Foxe seems to have something of the kind in mind with his new preface to Elizabeth in the 1570 edition, where he explicitly explains to the Queen why he published in English:

> And though the story being written in the popular tongue, serveth not so greatly for your own peculiar reading, nor for such as be learned: yet I shall desire both you and them, to consider in it the necessity of the ignorant flock of Christ committed to your government in this Realm of England. Who, as they have been long led in ignorance, and wrapped in blindness for lack, especially of God's word, & partly also for wanting the light of history, pity I thought but that such should be helped, their ignorance relieved, and simplicity instructed.[53]

Foxe's reasons here are pastoral rather than polemical: "I considered they were the flock of Christ, and your subjects, belonging to your account and charge, bought with the same price, and having as dear souls to the Lord as others."[54] Here, as always, Foxe is concerned with not only the knowing of history but also its use. He likens the teaching of history to the preaching of the Word, and says,

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[52] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 2.

[53] John Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 9.

[54] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 9–10.

> The knowledge also of Ecclesiastical history, which in my mind ought not to be separate from the same: that like as by the one the people may learn the rules and precepts of doctrine: so by the other they may have examples of God's mighty working in his church, to the confirmation of their faith, and the edification of Christian life. For as we see what light and profit commeth to the Church by histories in old times set forth of the Judges, Kings, Maccabees, and the Acts of the Apostles after Christ's time: so likewise may it redound to no small use in the Church, to know the Acts of Christ's Martyrs now since the time of the Apostles.[55]

In conclusion, the notion that Foxe chose English for propagandistic rather than pious reasons arises from a skeptical rather than earnest reading of Foxe's clear intentions. This is a reading that the circumstances do not require. It is better, taking the whole of Foxe's intention, to see Foxe's presenting the book in the vernacular so that the common man might understand the spiritual truth revealed in it.

Apocalyptic: The Impulse to Reform

Chapter 2 has already shown how apocalypticism deeply affected Foxe's life and thought. I now turn to show how it shaped *Acts and Monuments* and provided the impulse for pious reform. Key to the apocalyptic view was the observation of prophesy within history. Foxe was especially enthusiastic in this regard and thus put forward several overlapping schemas of history.[56] Though Foxe's schema are complex, changing, and inconsistently dated, even within each single edition of *Acts and Monuments*, they show several persistent themes that were essential to Foxe's view of history. First, history was apocalyptic; that is to say, it could be interpreted meticulously by the apocalyptic prophesies of Scripture. In each scheme, Foxe interprets the events of his history through biblical prophecy. Second, history was largely a cautionary tale of declension and

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[55] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 10.

[56] Palle Olsen traces these schemas in detail in both Foxe's apocalyptic drama and TAM. They consist of a twofold schema focused only on the binding and loosing of Satan; a threefold schema that Olsen dubs decline, desolation, and reformation; a fourfold schema that subdivides the age of desolation; and finally a fivefold division of suffering, flourishing, declining, suffering, and reforming. Foxe's dating of the bounds of each period is inconsistent and develops over time, defying the effort to define any one definitive periodization. Olsen shows that the schema do not conflict but show the development of Foxe's apocalyptic thinking as he sought to systematize his growing knowledge of Scripture and history. Palle J. Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no. 4 (1994): 600–624.

persecution. The apostolic church is always viewed as the pure church to which later churches are called to return. Third, history is a story of two churches, the true and the false; thus, the work of God in history must be discerned not only by its ascendance but also by its purity. Fourth, the period of the Reformation was not only in the end times but more specifically within the final period of the end times. Christ's millennial reign preceded the Reformation, and the return of Christ was imminently in view.

In the 1563 edition, Foxe had envisioned a twofold division of history centered around the binding of Satan at the resurrection and the loosing of Satan 1000 years later.[57] The twofold division was primarily pessimistic, seeing the church in a time of regression and in desperate need of a return to her earlier glory. This is clearly seen in the fact that even the time of Satan's binding is a time of declension for Foxe: "During the whole time of the first thousand years after Christ our Savior, but soon after before the full thousand was expired, certain enormities and absurdities began to creep into the heads of the clergy."[58] Indeed, declension was a defining characteristic of history for Foxe. In the first book of the 1563 edition, Foxe writes a general rule for the interpretation of history: "In sum, to give thee one general rule for all, this thou shalt observe, the higher thou goest upward to the Apostles time, the purer thou shalt find the church: the lower thou dost descend, ever the more dross and dregs thou shalt perceive in the bottom, and especially within these last 500. years."[59] In the 1570 edition, Foxe refines this same thesis of declension, arguing that the church was relatively pure for two early periods: three hundred years from the time of the apostles, critically dubbed the time of suffering and martyrdom, and three hundred years of "flourishing." This was

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[57] Foxe describes this scheme in his summary of church history at the beginning of book 1 of the 1563 edition. His twofold division is seen in how he dates the Reformation as "the time of these 500 years, since Satan broke loose." Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 17.

[58] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 17.

[59] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 22.

followed by three hundred years of decline, culminating with the loosing of Satan and the ascension of the Antichrist, namely the pope.[60] This feeling of declension explains Foxe's identification with Eusebius's affectation that the church had fallen from her fathers.[61] It also explains Foxe's drawing upon the martyrs as exemplars of an earlier age. He saw their age as the earliest and purest manifestation of the church and thus a model to which the later church must attain.

Key to Foxe's theology of history was answering this question: Why had God allowed popish practices to invade his church? So, Foxe questions, "Why God of his goodness would suffer his children and servants, so vehemently to be cruciated and afflicted. If mortal things were governed by heavenly providence (as must needs be granted)."[62] Foxe found his answer in the persecution and ultimate victory of the church described in the book of Revelation: "Whereupon much marveling with myself, I searched the book of Revelation, to see whether anything there might be found. Where although I well perceived, the beast there described to signify the Empire of Rome, which had power to overcome the Saints."[63] The cosmic conflict of Revelation was played out in history, thus making sense of persecution.

In order to map this reading of Revelation onto history, Foxe placed most of the events of the book as having occurred far in the past. In his first attempt, Revelation 20 provided an enticing dichotomy with the binding and loosing of Satan. When Satan

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[60] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 26.

[61] Foxe states in the first preface of the 1563 edition, "For we who are the sons of your Martyrs, and for whom it is particularly appropriate that we imitate our ancestors, now retain almost nothing of our parents." Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1. This is paralleled in Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms*, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 23 (Paris, 1857), 949, quoted in R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90: "We, although not held worthy to have struggled unto death and to have shed our blood for God, yet, being the sons of those who suffered thus and distinguished by our fathers' virtues, pray for mercy through them."

[62] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 124.

[63] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 124.

was bound, the true church was ascendant; when Satan was loosed, the true church was persecuted. To fit this to his history, Foxe stated that the binding of Satan depicted in Revelation 20:1 occurred at the passion of Christ.[64] This binding limited Satan's spiritual power but not did not keep him from harming "the outward bodies of Christ's poor saints (which is the heel of Christ)."[65] Satan then experienced a second external binding with the accession of Constantine and the end of the Roman persecutions.[66] This reveals two important motifs in Foxe's apocalypticism. The first is the link but distinction between the physical and spiritual. Just as Satan was spiritually bound but physically loosed in the apostolic period, so also the martyrs were physical sufferers but spiritual victors. This same dichotomy Foxe will lay over the period of suffering he attributes to the Marian martyrs. The second motif is the profound importance of Constantine in Foxe's schema. To Foxe, Constantine was quite literally heaven sent, the "elect instrument of God"[67] and "a second Moses."[68] Constantine ushered in what Foxe saw as the millennial reign of Christ described in Revelation: a period of one-thousand years free from persecution from Constantine to Wycliffe.[69] Thus, the persecution of Protestants, begun with Wycliffe, was the loosing of Satan described in Revelation 20:7 and the beginning of the

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[64] Olsen argues that this likely an idea Foxe is borrowing from Augustine. Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 608.

[65] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 514.

[66] Foxe writes, "First, by binding and loosing of Satan, seemeth to be meant the ceasing and staying of the cruel and horrible persecution of the heathen Emperors of Rome, against the true Christians, as is to be seen in the 10 first persecutions in the primitive Church above described in the former part of these Actes and Monuments: in the which most bloody persecutions, Satan the devil then raged without all measure, till time it pleased almighty God to stop this old serpent, and to tie him shorter. And thus have you to understand what is meant by the binding up of Satan for a thousand years." Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 931.

[67] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 157.

[68] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 136.

[69] Foxe writes, "Constantius, with the said crosse borne before him, consequently upon the same so vanquished the tyrants, and so established the peace of the Church, that for the space of just 1000 years after that, we read of no set persecution against the Christians, unto the time of John Wycliffe." Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 133.

end. The pope, then, was the Antichrist of the final persecution.[70] This was not merely a provocative title; to Foxe, it was an essential insight for understanding the times. Romish doctrine and practice were nothing less than a satanic apocalyptic affliction. This explains, then, the impetus to reform that was built into *Acts and Monuments*. Catholic practices of public and private piety were not mere adiaphora but idolatrous hangovers of a Satanic age.

As Foxe expanded his history back before the year 1000 in the subsequent editions, he discovered what he felt were popish practices earlier than he had accounted for, and so he felt compelled to change his interpretation of the period of Satan's binding.[71] This precipitated the development of a three-, four-, and ultimately fivefold division of history that he utilized from the 1570 edition onward.[72] He states this new schema in the opening of the body of the 1570 edition: First, "the suffering time or martyrdom of the Church, which continued from the Apostles age about. 300. years. Secondly, of the flourishing time of the Church, which lasted another. 300. years. Thirdly, of the declining or backsliding time of the Church, which comprehendeth another 300. years, until the loosing out of Satan, which was about the thousandth year after Christ."[73] It was in this third period that Foxe placed the decline of the church "from the simple purity of the primitive time" and the slow addition of "superstition and hypocrisy."[74] He dubs the fourth period "the time of Antichrist, or the desolation of the

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[70] Foxe allowed for a dual manifestation of the Antichrist prophesy in both the pope and the Muslim Turks. He justified this by appealing to the dual nature of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:7–9. Olsen argues, however, that Foxe did not see this as distinct from the papal Antichrist but as another manifestation of it, as the rise of one is conflated with the other. For example, the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin marks the rise of the papal Antichrist. Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 608–9; Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 927.

[71] Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 604–5.

[72] Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 613.

[73] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 26.

[74] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 26.

Church," lasting another four hundred years, "in which time both doctrine, and sincerity of life was utterly almost extinguished, namely in the chief heads & rulers of this western church, through the means of the Roman Bishops."[75] This period ended with Wycliffe and Hus, who ushered in the period of the "reformation and purging of the Church of God, wherein Antichrist beginneth to be revealed, and to appear in his colors, and his antichristian doctrine to be detected, & the number of his church decreaseth, and the number of the true Church increaseth."[76] It was this final period to which Foxe's church then belonged.

In the final period, the Reformation in which England then stood, the true church was rising but not yet perfected. Here, again, Foxe drew on the distinction between internal and external oppression. Internally, the true church would be steadily growing; externally, she would still experience periods of suffering on the path to glory.[77] This was, for Foxe, descriptive of England's current state: reformed but imperfect, spiritually alive yet still outwardly afflicted. This explains Foxe's desire for greater conformity to the spiritual ideal. There was another impulsive element to the new schema. The period of Reformation was optimistic but imperfect. The church needed to grow in its purity even as it rejoiced in its reformation. Foxe categorized the period of Reformation as the period of "the saints of Christ fighting and travailing for the maintenance of the truth, and reformation of the church."[78] The period of Reformation, though hopeful, was not one of rest but of travail. Furthermore, the travail was one of discernment, detection, and instruction. Foxe writes that in this period the "Antichrist, through the power of the word of God, being at length either in a great part of the world

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[75] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 26.

[76] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 26.

[77] Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 604–5.

[78] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 515.

overthrown, or at least universally in the whole world detected."[79] This "detection" was a key goal of *Acts and Monuments*, which sought to open the truth of the Apocalypse to the reader so they could see their own history in it and act accordingly. Practically, for the English reader, this meant exposing the Roman Catholic Church as the great cosmic enemy of Revelation and thus inducing the reader out of their spiritual slumber and to the urgency exhibited by the martyrs. Thus, *Acts and Monuments* was, in a sense, an addendum to Revelation or a lens through which Scripture was read. The historical schema contained in Revelation allowed the reader to see apocalyptic prophesy carried out in the life of England. The persecutions described in Revelation can be read in *Acts and Monuments*.[80]

The Presuppositions of Apocalypticism

Foxe's historical schema were not the elements of apocalypticism driving his work. His apocalyptic view entailed a set of presuppositions that shaped his reading of all the events he recorded in *Acts and Monuments*. The first presupposition of Foxe's apocalyptic history was a profoundly providentialist view of life.[81] T. H. L. Parker well summarizes the view as the belief in "the constant and direct intervention of God in human affairs."[82] Not only was every moment in life an act of the providence of God, but also Scripture provided the patterns through which God's actions could be interpreted. This was especially true in terms of God's blessings and judgments. For Foxe, when acts of blessing came upon the godly and ill fortunes came upon the wicked, the direct action

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[79] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 515.

[80] Foxe writes, "First, by binding and loosing of Satanas, seemeth to be meant the ceasing and staying of the cruel and horrible persecution of the heathen Emperors of Rome . . . about described in the former part of these Acts and Monuments." Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 931.

[81] T. H. L. Parker contends that Foxe was confronting not only Catholic opposition but also neo-Epicurean practical atheism that dismissed providentialist interpretations of life and history. T. H. L. Parker, ed., *English Reformers*, Library of Christian Classics 26 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 66.

[82] Parker, *English Reformers*, 65.

of God was most certainly behind them.[83] Foxe clearly exhibits this view throughout *Acts and Monuments*; he repeatedly interprets events within his stories as evidences of God's favor or wrath.[84] As Parker puts it, Foxe expected that men and women could "with the eyes of faith, directly discern the working of God and therefore deduce his particular purposes."[85] For Foxe, each of his martyr stories was evidence of the hand of God.

A second presupposition was that this logic could be extended to the broader narrative of history by using the patterns of God's work in Scripture as "the exegetical tool which illumined the whole of reality."[86] Foxe structured *Acts and Monuments* according to this interpretation. Biblical figures became patterns that were recapitulated within history, thus showing God's continuing work. Michael Pucci observes, "Foxe likens the death of Maxentius to the death of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and likens Constantine to Moses, the deliverer of the Lord's oppressed people."[87] Through this lens, history can be interpreted by the patterns found in the Scriptures to identify where God is still at work. Even more, once God's work is discovered, one can find their place within this history and thus assign spiritual meaning to their successes and failures.

In addition to these personal recapitulations, Foxe also, like many of his contemporaries, saw significant salvation-historical correspondence between the Old and New Testaments.[88] He proposed that the old covenant and new covenant would last the exact same time period, a numeration that implied the final return of Christ within his

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[83] Parker, *English Reformers*, 66.

[84] One clear example is seen in the preface "To the Persecutors of God's Truth," where Foxe contends that the public opprobrium directed at the Marian deputies is direct evidence of God's active and present judgment upon them. John Foxe, "To the Persecutors of God's Truth," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 12.

[85] Parker, *English Reformers*, 66.

[86] Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 241.

[87] Michael Pucci, "Reforming Roman Emperors: John Foxe's Characterization of Constantine in the Acts and Monuments," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 32.

[88] Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 613.

own lifetime.[89] He saw correspondence between the seventy years of Israel's exile and the seventy years of Catholic oppression of Protestants.[90] This correspondence extended beyond recapitulated periods to recapitulated people and ideas. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Turks are all seen as recapitulations of the Antichrist idea.[91]

In this light, *Acts and Monuments* could be described as a spiritual history of England. Foxe intended the book to call its readers to see the spiritual significance behind the events of the recent past and thus define their position before God in the present. Foxe's conclusion, of course, was that God had been mightily at work in England by bringing the Reformation to its shores.[92] This grace, however, demanded a response of godliness from the nation, just as it had from Israel within the Scriptures.[93] In many ways, Foxe's theology of history prefigures the English Puritan covenantal understanding of the nation that would come later and rely heavily on his book.[94]

John Frederick Wilson helpfully frames the contours of this English covenantal understanding of history with several key characteristics: (1) "the idea that God governs the destinies of individuals and nations alike";[95] (2) modern leaders are compared to biblical figures of leadership; (3) the nation was an object of "divine intention";

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[89] Foxe calculated the old covenant to have run 1564 years, from the giving of the law to the fall of Jerusalem. Thus, counting from the passion of Christ to his present day, Foxe predicted that only 33 years remained of the new covenant period. Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 925.

[90] Being typically loose with his numbers, Foxe calculated this period as encompassing either 1501–1571 or 1517–1587. Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 6.

[91] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 921. For an understanding of Foxe's use of Antichrist to describe multiple individuals, see Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," 614.

[92] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in TAMO (1570 ed.), 5.

[93] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[94] John Frederick Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640–1648* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 173; Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8–13.

[95] Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 168.

(4) though the nation is central to this thinking, the church is more prominent in the covenantal interpretation of God's plans; (5) ancient Israel is the most prominent model for understanding God's actions; (6) federal concepts play a major role in the definition of both people and the church, and (7) the recent reformation of England is confirmation of God's work.[96] All of these theological themes, which become mainstays of later English Puritan preachers, play major roles in *Acts and Monuments*. Wilson helpfully characterizes this as a "Deuteronomic interpretation of history." The historian, like the Old Testament prophets, addresses the present by making use of the "Deuteronomic past."[97] Like the prophets, the historian points the people to God's grace in the past, reminds the people of God's law, and then exhorts the people to turn to God on the basis of God's work in their history. With *Acts and Monuments,* Foxe made just such an appeal. He argued that the martyrs were the godly "ancestors" whose path England had left for worldliness.[98]

This Deuteronomic framework makes sense of Foxe's relationship to the nation. Since the work of William Haller, historians have wrestled with the question of whether Foxe thought England to be an elect nation.[99] Subsequent scholarship has shown that Foxe did not believe England to be the new Israel.[100] England, crucial as she was as an island fortress against the foreign popish Antichrist, was merely a player on the cosmic stage. It was the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of England, that Foxe ultimately had in view. Foxe's history was not written primarily to promote England but

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[96] Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* 168–73.

[97] Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 202.

[98] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[99] William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

[100] Patrick Collinson, "John Foxe and National Consciousness," in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 11.

to promote England's repentance.[101] However, his Deuteronomic interpretation of history allowed him to see God's hand at work in his nation nonetheless. Loades is helpful here: "The English Church occupied a special place in God's plan, but it was not a new Israel, and it was the last Days which were in prospect, not the kingdom of God on earth. Foxe's eschatology was apocalyptic . . . ; his vision [was] of England preparing the world for the Second Coming."[102] Haller, then, is partially right in that Foxe did believe that England had been blessed by God and that divine favor would be withdrawn if the nation did not respond with obedience.[103] However, this was not evidence that Foxe believed his island home was God's chosen nation but that his Deuteronomic interpretation of history demanded a response to the blessings God had given. This background makes sense of a major theme in Foxe's prefaces: that the nation has fallen short of its martyred ancestors. Their stories are presented as a prophetic call to remind England of its own Deuteronomic past and to call it to repentance.

The Apocalyptic Appeal

Foxe makes this covenantal responsibility clear in the prefaces to his first edition. He argues in the first preface, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," that the infamy and disgrace that the Marian persecutors are experiencing in Elizabethan England are "preludes to your most just judgment."[104] This judgment is a warning to the nation: "We who are the sons of your martyrs, and for whom it is particularly appropriate that we

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[101] Parry rightly points out that there is a tension between the themes of the persecuted remnant and the triumphant nation of God within TAM. However, Foxe's constant call for the reader to live up to the prior exemplars and his urging for Elizabeth to press on with further reformation show that he had not conflated England with the elect people of God. Parry argues that Foxe drops the comparison of Elizabeth to Constantine in the 1570 edition "to internalize apocalyptic prophesies as 'bound to no one certain nation more than any other.'" Parry, "Elect Church or Elect Nation?," 169.

[102] Interestingly, Loades argues that this theme marks the major departure of Foxe's readership from Foxe himself. The prophetic call to repentance was simply not as appealing as the promise of elected favor, and so Foxe's work was reinterpreted in its reception. Loades, introduction to *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 3.

[103] Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, 119.

[104] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

imitate our ancestors, now retain almost nothing of our parents."[105] Foxe goes on to explain the discontinuity: England has left "the path of discipline" exemplified by the martyrs.[106] Instead of valuing Christ even to the point of "contempt for [their own] life," the English people now aspire "to ephemeral things" such as money and position.[107] The prosperity and peace brought about by Elizabeth's reign has allowed the church to lapse into worldliness.

Foxe continues his appeal in his laudatory preface "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty." Ironically written in English to the Latin-speaking Elizabeth, Foxe doubtless wanted the preface to be read as an open letter so his intentions could be seen by all.[108] It opens with high praise, styling Elizabeth as the English Constantine. A closer reading, however, reveals that Foxe has a much more shrewd or even subversive goal in styling Elizabeth as the great Christian emperor. Employing a classical rhetorical technique, Foxe uses his praise of the Queen as a veil for his more aggressive argument. By presenting Elizabeth as God's appointed ruler, he is implying that she is responsible to God to advance the continued moral and theological reformation of her people.[109] Constantine was brought to the throne by the power of God after a period of great persecution. In the same way, Elizabeth has been installed by the power of God and should continue in the great emperor's footsteps. Styling himself as the Eusebius to Elizabeth's Constantine, Foxe points out that the "spiritually minded" Emperor Constantine commissioned Eusebius to write a martyrology for the spiritual benefit of his

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[105] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[106] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[107] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[108] It is notable that though Elizabeth had facility with Latin, Foxe offers this preface in the vernacular. John King argues that this is another rhetorical choice to place his historical case before the common reader. John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 245.

[109] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 94.

people.[110] Here, Foxe adds his rhetorical twist: If the great Constantine, seeing that God was truly the source of his reign, commissioned a martyrology for the benefit of his people, then how much more will Elizabeth, in his footsteps, "with no less propensity of favor and furtherance," promote this martyrology "for the use of Christ's church, utility of your Realm, and the glory of his holy name."[111] This was not a mere panegyric or fawning request for patronage. It has already been shown what "use" and "utility" Foxe intended. Foxe is calling Elizabeth's attention, and shrewdly the attention of his audience, to the Queen's responsibility for the spiritual health of her realm. She is not merely praised as Constantine but called to fill his shoes.

This pressure is increased in the 1570 edition, where Foxe drops the comparison of Elizabeth to Constantine, instead focusing on Elizabeth's responsibility to Christ: "CHRIST the Prince of all Princes who hath placed you in your throne of Majesty, under him to govern the Church and Realm of England."[112] Foxe asks Elizabeth "to consider in it the necessity of the ignorant flock of Christ committed to your government in this Realm of England."[113] Foxe is sure to tie Elizabeth's majesty to her responsibility. Elizabeth is responsible for the declining spiritual health of her realm and therefore responsible for promoting the story of the martyrs as part of the solution.

The theme of decline drove much of Foxe's apocalyptic thinking. Foxe writes of it as a common ill that plagues all eras after the apostles:

> Although the Church of Christ, and state of religion first founded and grounded by Christ and his Apostles, did not continually altogether remain in his primitive perfection, wherein it was first instituted: But in process of time, began from better to worse, to decrease & Decline into much superstition & inconvenience: partly through the coming in of Mohammed, partly through þe increase of wealth and

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[110] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 5.

[111] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 8.

[112] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 7. Emphasis original.

[113] Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 9.

> riches, partly through the decrease of knowledge & diligence in such as should be the guides of Christ's flock.[114]

The theme is common not only on the lips of Foxe but also among many of the martyrs cataloged in the work. Rowland Taylor uses similar language in his defense before the Marian authorities: "For I do believe that the Religion set forth in King Edwards days, was according to the vein of the holy Scripture, which containeth fully all the rules of our Christian Religion, from the which I do not intend to Decline so long as I live."[115] Themes of judgment and the needed revival of piety often dominate their letters. For example, Thomas Haukes writes to his wife, "But take heed: If ye will not keep his holy precepts and laws, and to the uttermost of your power . . . then be sure to have your part with the wicked world in the burning lake that never shall be quenched."[116] He then proposes the solution: "I exhort you in the bowels of Christ, that you will exercise and be steadfast in prayer: for prayer is the only means to pierce the heavens to obtain at the hand of God."[117] John Noyes writes his wife in answer to a request for "some tokens that you might remember me"; he offers as his tokens nine biblical passages, exhorting her to righteousness, and his final exhortation is "see that ye be diligent to pray."[118] Laurence Saunders writes to a family friend, "Pray we therefore, Lord increase our faith."[119] Rowland Taylor writes his family, "Beware for God's sake, that ye deny not God, neither decline from the word of faith, lest God declines from you."[120] The community represented within Foxe's book saw the resurgence of Roman Catholic practices in England as evidence of the declension of piety, citing superstition, greed, and

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[114] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 167.

[115] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1521.

[116] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1593.

[117] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1593.

[118] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2023.

[119] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1525.

[120] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1524.

incontinence as the reason. Put another way, they conceived of Roman Catholicism as the fruit, not the root, of their problem: Unfaithfulness was the ultimate culprit, though Catholicism was its particular manifestation. The prescribed response, then, was repentance and the renewal of pious fervor.

Martyrs: Models of Reform

If apocalypticism provided the impulse to personal reform, then martyrology provided the models to follow. The previous chapter showed how martyrology and the hagiography it evolved into were intrinsically linked to a piety of mimesis. Early modern martyrologists on both sides of the Reformation divide "understood themselves to be the direct successors of the ancient martyrologists."[121] How Foxe saw his work adapting the genre of martyrology is most clearly seen in the self-conscious foil he chose for the work: *The Golden Legend*. As seen in the last chapter, *The Golden Legend* was the most widely known codification of the saints' stories within late medieval England and thus an essential expression of late medieval piety. Seeking to establish a Protestant martyrological tradition, Foxe directly attacked the legend in the first edition of *Acts and Monuments*.[122] His objections are so strong that it might, at first glance, seem that he is rejecting the literary type. In his Latin preface "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," he calls *The Golden Legend* "entirely fabulous," "abounding with unnatural monstrosities of lies and most empty inventions," and the "Leaden Legend."[123] These vitriolic rejoinders, for a time, shaped how Foxe was interpreted, as Alice Dailey pointed out in 2002: "Modern scholarship has assumed that in discarding the exaggerations of the Golden Legend, Foxe

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[121] Alec Ryrie, "The Unsteady Beginnings of English Protestant Martyrology," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 53.

[122] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

[123] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

made a clean break from the medieval tradition."[124] However, a closer look at *Acts and Monuments* reveals that the book has a much more complex relationship with *The Golden Legend*, and by extension medieval hagiography, than that of mere rejection. Indeed, the relationship is one of deliberate replacement, both of the genre and of the system of piety it promoted.

There are notable points of comparison between *Acts and Monuments* and *The Golden Legend*. Both drew heavily on the martyr tradition, so much so that both are now largely seen as compilers rather than authors.[125] Both would ride the popular interest in hagiography to become one of the most widely read books of their eras. Both are arranged according to the author's theological theory of history.[126] And both would use the commonplaces of martyrology to promote their own vision of popular piety. In order to do this, Foxe retained much of the structure and literary commonplaces of the martyrological tradition expressed in *The Golden Legend*.

Foxe claimed that the distinction between his work and *The Golden Legend* was between the "fabrications of this kind and invented nonsense" and "the serious and weighty history of the Church."[127] Nevertheless, he intended his stories to be just as inspiring: While Foxe felt his martyrs were more realistic, in a literary sense, they were no less legendary than *The Golden Legend*. In Foxe's time, "legend" meant a story

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[124] Alice Dailey, "Typology and History in Foxe's Acts and Monuments," *Prose Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 2.

[125] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, passim.

[126] Jacobus de Voragine states in his prologue to *The Golden Legend* that it has been arranged into four periods corresponding simultaneously to the epochs of world history, the phases of human life, and the movements of the liturgy. Voragine, *The Golden Legend* (2012), 3.

[127] Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 9.

worthy of contemplation for one's spiritual benefit.[128] Foxe's martyrs were intended to inspire spiritual action, just like the heroes of Greek myth and the saints of old.

Nevertheless, Foxe had to make a key shift. Core to his beliefs was the rejection of the intercession of saints. He wanted to present the martyrs as pious models, but he rejected the sacramental power of the saints. Foxe describes this maneuver in an interlude between two sections of the book, where he details how the ancient church came to venerate martyrs with saints' days and suggests what the Protestant church should do instead. In describing the life of William Gardiner (d. 1552), a Protestant missionary martyred in Lisbon during the reign of Edward VI, Foxe argues that Gardiner should be remembered with the same fervency as the ancient martyrs but with a key distinction—the martyrs should receive no glory:

> Let not us then think it any great matter, to requite them with our duty again, by committing them unto memory, a perpetual token of our good will towards them. Albeit, they themselves receive no glory at our hands, and much less challenge the same: but referrer it wholly unto the Lord Christ, from whom it came whatsoever great or notable thing there was in them.[129]

Foxe speculates that ancient feast days may have come to pass for this same theologically benign purpose, "not so much to honor them, as to glorify God in his soldiers."[130] By retaining the category, even the duty, of memory while removing the troubling concept of patronage, Foxe employed the martyrs to provide a bridge between Protestant piety and a devotional practice that was both familiar and precious to the medieval mind. Their stories were filled with the piety that Protestants loved, but those stories could be separated from the doctrines that Protestants found troubling. Keeping mimesis while removing intercession allowed Foxe to retain these heroes of their pious past. This

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[128] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Legend (n.)." It was just short of the end of Foxe's life in 1581 that "legend" would take on its more mythical sense. Interestingly, the evolution of the word coincides very closely with the popularly of Foxe's efforts to discredit *The Golden Legend*.

[129] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

[130] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

allowed Protestants to adopt and adapt already potent streams of piety and fit them to their theological preferences. Saintly veneration could be repurposed as pious mimesis. Dreaded icons could become tools of pious instruction.

Calendrical Martyrs

A key element in the replacing of the saints was the use of the calendar of martyrs in the 1563 edition. A great deal of scholarly scrutiny has been given to the calendar.[131] Most recently, Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman have argued that Foxe disliked and sought to distance himself from the calendar; thus, it should not be seen as shedding light on the book's motivation.[132] However, this argument goes too far on too little evidence. The calendar, printed in red ink in the first edition, sparked great controversy. Once, in a defense added to the second edition, Foxe denied responsibility for the red ink used in the calendar, blaming the "painter," an antiquated word for a print shop colorist.[133] However, rather than disown the calendar entirely, Foxe uses the controversy over the ink color to indict the Catholic persecutors: "And as for coloring the names of certain Martyrs in the said Calendar in red . . . if that be it that so much breaketh his patience, why rather doth not he expostulate in this behalf with the great saint-maker of Rome, who hath redded them much more then ever did I. For he did red and dyed them

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[131] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 126–27; King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 249–67; Damian Nussbaum, "Reviling the Saints or Reforming the Calendar? John Foxe and His 'Kalendar' of Martyrs," in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England*, ed. Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1998), 113–36; Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 341–55.

[132] Evenden and Freeman cite the inclusion of heterodox individuals as well as martyrs not included in the text of the book as reason to assume Foxe disapproved of the calendar. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 126. Evenden and Freeman argue along with John King that John Day may have been behind the construction of the calendar. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 249.

[133] This is likely a veiled reference to either John Day or another of his employees assigned to the coloring who had made the decision.

with their own blood."[134] Evenden and Freeman claim that "Foxe completely disclaimed responsibility for [the calendar]."[135] However, this goes too far. In the same passage, Foxe not only takes ownership of the calendar but affirms the use of the red lettering as well: "whereas *I did but only color them with red letters*. And thus for [the] matter of *my Calendar* enough."[136] It is better to say that even if Foxe did not personally construct the calendar, he certainly took ownership of it, supported its inclusion, and understood its implications.[137] This is confirmed by the fact that though the calendar was dropped in the 1570 edition, Foxe either allowed or advocated for its reinstatement in the 1583 edition.

Regardless of the level of Foxe's involvement in making the calendar, he doubtless understood the implications of its inclusion. The calendar of the saints was the very heartbeat of medieval devotional life, quite literally the means by which religious time was measured. The offering of an alternative calendar, in red letters for emphasis, was as clear as it was provocative: Foxe was offering an alternative to the saints.[138] Foxe excluded from *Acts and Monuments* the great majority of saints from *The Golden Legend*, including only those whose deeds he could redeem according to Protestant and humanist standards.[139] The result was the promotion of Protestant piety in a mode unmistakably recognizable within the mode of the saints that dominated medieval piety. The calendar

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[134] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 715–16.

[135] Evenden and Freeman attribute this view to King as support of their own position, but King does not make such a sweeping statement, only pointing out the above quotation and attributing the red lettering to Day. Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 126n70; King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 257.

[136] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 716 (emphasis added).

[137] This comports with the argument of Nussbaum, who acknowledges that the calendar was likely composed by someone other than Foxe and sees the calendar as serving Foxe's purposes. Nussbaum, "Reviling the Saints or Reforming the Calendar?," 114n3.

[138] The Catholic responses to the calendar make clear that Foxe's unfriendly readers saw this to be the case, and much of the controversy surrounding the calendar focused on Foxe's exclusion of highly regarded Catholic saints. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 256–66.

[139] Foxe rejects those with errant theology or whose deeds he deems as too fantastical to be truthful. See the discussion of Foxe's accuracy in chapter 1.

was a tool for the contemplation of Protestant martyrs rather than Catholic saints. By borrowing a profoundly popular and understood form of piety, the calendar gave implicit instructions to the reader on how to approach the book: The martyrs were to be daily and methodically contemplated like the saints.[140] This comports with Foxe's argument in the prefaces of his work. Expunged of the fantastic elements, the martyrs are not only safe but beneficial for contemplation.[141]

Iconic Martyrs

Another element, borrowed again from medieval saint piety, set up the book as one of devotional contemplation: the book's woodcuts. Their inclusion and proliferation was a massive and expensive undertaking in and of itself. They grew to number 153 illustrations in the 1570 and later editions.[142] Like the borrowing of the calendar concept, the woodcuts of *Acts and Monuments* are '"purified" alternatives to the medieval iconography that pervaded medieval life and piety.[143] Scholars have wrestled with the iconographic elements of this iconoclastic book.[144] The famous frontispiece of the book borrows the form of a medieval doom[145] but tells the story of pious Protestants ascending

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[140] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 266.

[141] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

[142] There were 53 woodcuts in 57 occurrences in the 1563 edition, which grew to 107 woodcuts used across 153 occurrences in the 1576 and 1583 editions. Ruth Sampson Luborsky, "The Illustrations: Their Pattern and Plan," in Loades, *John Foxe: An Historical Perspective*, 69. Ruth Luborsky and Elizabeth Ingram have given an exhaustive catalog of the number and placement of the images in Ruth Samson Luborsky and Elizabeth Morley Ingram, *A Guide to English Illustrated Books, 1536–1603*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998). King summarizes the expense and effort put into the design, acquisition, and printing of so many woodcuts. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 166–75.

[143] King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 162.

[144] Andrew Pettegree outlines the Protestant struggle with iconography in printing and the shape of the modern scholarly response. Andrew Pettegree, "Illustrating the Book: A Protestant Dilemma," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 133–44.

[145] A "doom" is a traditional English term for a popular form of mural depicting the Last Judgment. It most often appeared within a church over the chancel-arch. It usually placed Christ in the top middle of the painting, with hell and the damned on the right and the angels and the redeemed on the left. James Stevens Curl, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), s.v. "Doom" (p. 238).

to heaven with the martyrs while monks at the sacramental altar are dragged to hell by fiends.[146] The images within the body of the book continue this pattern of instruction. Scholars of the images within *Acts and Monuments* have traditionally divided them into three groups.[147] The first were small typical engravings of the martyrs scattered throughout the text, sometimes with different names assigned to the same image.[148] This technique reveals a great deal about how the author intended these images to be viewed. They were not portraits for the identification of specific individuals but icons of the characteristics that all the martyrs shared. Unsurprisingly, then, these images contain typical and repetitive expressions of piety thought to be universal to the true Protestant martyr: facial expressions of peace, the folding of the hands in prayer, the lifting of the eyes to heaven, or the lifting of the hands in praise.[149] The use of these woodcuts show that with regard to pious instruction, the martyrs were seen as so consistent as to be interchangeable. The reader was not meant to identify the man or woman but the piety common to them all. It created a universalizing principle: "to universalize the individual martyrs by graphically reminding the reader how the sacrifice of these countrymen has identified them with all those who have ever died for Christ."[150]

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[146] For an explanation of the significance of pious instruction in the frontispiece, see Carl Trueman, "Reformation: English Reformation II," September 29, 2014, in *The Reformation*, produced by Westminster Theological Seminary, recorded lecture, MP3 audio, 51:30, http://media2.wts.edu/media/audio/ch311-13-21-copyright.mp3. Trueman observes the irony of this transformation, calling the frontispiece "a picture to teach the unreliability of pictures." See also Margret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram, "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments," in Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, 75–76.

[147] Warren W. Wooden, *John Foxe*, Twayne's English Authors Series (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 49; Luborsky, "The Illustrations," 67. Luborsky acknowledges the tripartite distinction but suggests further nuance be added by studying the placement of the images.

[148] For example, the burning of Thomas Rhendon and Richard Wyche are both commemorated with the same woodcut, with the name changed in the title script. So too with the woodcut honoring William White and John Hus. Foxe, *TAMO*, (1563 ed.) 412; (1570 ed.) 831; (1563 ed.) 404; (1570 ed.) 870.

[149] Foxe, *TAMO*, (1563 ed.) 404, 412; (1570 ed.) 870, 887, 938, 1044.

[150] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 49.

This, in effect, drew the Protestant martyrs into the stream of existing martyrology, along with its intended pious implications discussed in chapter 3. It implied that these were models in the long line of models leading back to Christ. These typical martyr illustrations also tugged upon threads woven into the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, discussed in chapter 3. Peace, prayerfulness, and piety while dying were all broadly understood signs of the good death, a confirmation of the sufferer's righteousness and exemplary nature, signs that both confirmed their doctrine and encouraged their emulation. Their repetitive nature also lends to the pedagogy of piety. As the images are repeated with the names changed, their pious reactions become tropeic, a library of responses, common to the martyrs and expected of the reader.

The second group of illustrations have been called "marker" images because they mark major historical events or changes of subject.[151] In addition, these are not merely pictorial but also pedagogical. Rather than being strictly historical, they include allegorical elements intended to instruct the reader. These could include subtle cues, like a woman reading while Hugh Latimer preaches, an image suggesting the importance of reading the Scriptures regardless of gender or class.[152] Or they could bombastic, like the frontispiece of the second volume of the 1570 edition, which featured Henry VIII enthroned with Pope Clement as his footstool. Attending Henry is Thomas Cranmer, to whom he hands a Bible.[153] The iconographic implications were as clear for Henry with his Bible as they were for the medieval St. Lawrence with his gridiron. With these allegorical woodcuts, Foxe was creating a Protestant language of iconography.

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[151] These images are so dubbed by Aston and Ingrahm and then expanded upon by Luborsky. Aston and Ingram, "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments," 80; Luborsky, "The Illustrations," 67–68.

[152] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1422. For an interpretation of this image see King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 180.

[153] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 962.

The final category of woodcuts were more realistic, depicting actual events and individuals.[154] Even so, they were no less instructive. The events were carefully selected to remind the reader of important points in Protestant history, villainize Protestant opponents, or lionize Protestant models. Thomas Bilney is depicted testing his hand in a candle flame to prepare himself for the ordeal of martyrdom.[155] William Tyndale cries out from the stake, "Lord, open the King's eyes."[156] The Catholic bishop Edmund Bonner ruthlessly scourges a prisoner while onlookers avert their eyes.[157] Their selection tells the reader which events are important and which characters are to be emulated or despised.

Again, the medieval tools of teaching piety were transformed in a Protestant mode. These pictorial tools were apparently well studied as extant copies show significant signs of wear and detritus, especially on the illustrated pages, evincing long hours of contemplation over the images.[158] The pedagogical value is repeated by the repetitive nature of the images, which often repeat the most basic elements of martyr piety: quiet prayerful suffering and the quotation of Scripture. The piety of the martyr could be seen even when it could not be read.

Monumental Martyrs

The way in which Foxe structured the martyr stories also lent them to being read as pious contemplation. While in reporting ancient or foreign martyrs he often follows, or even outright copies, the work of others, his reporting of the English martyrs is profoundly shaped by the letters and reports he began compiling while in exile and continued to collect throughout the rest of his career. These letters and memoirs are the

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[154] Wooden, *John Foxe*, 49.

[155] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 534.

[156] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 575.

[157] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1770.

[158] My thanks to Mark Rankin, who shared this observation from his study of over 180 extant copies of TAM.

"monuments" of the book's title, and Foxe presents them to the reader as such. His typical structure in telling the story of a martyr is to present (1) a brief biography in his own hand, (2) the significant events of the martyr's life interspersed with evidentiary documents, and finally (3) any devotional sermons or letters of the martyr that Foxe had obtained. This threefold structure serves Foxe's purpose by presenting the martyr as an example to be followed, validating the martyr's life by his or her actions, and then offering the martyr's "monuments" for contemplation and instruction.

Foxe's presentation of John Careless provides a clear example. First, Foxe gives a short presentation of his life with commentary instructing the reader on what they should observe in the story to follow. Foxe tells the reader that Careless is "worthy to be counted in honor" and possessed of a "willing mind & zealous affection."[159] This has the effect of preparing the reader to examine Careless's life and words as exemplary.

Foxe then presents Careless's examination, particularly focusing on his persistent and skillful defense of Protestant positions.[160] This is an instance where Foxe edited the account to make Careless an even more exemplary martyr. In the 1563 edition, Foxe printed the full account of Careless's examination, but some of Careless's answers revealed theological disagreements among Protestants. The fact was exploited by Nicholas Harpsfield in his attack on *Acts and Monuments*.[161] In response, Foxe simply removed the offending passages from the later editions, presenting Careless as a more idealized, and thus more exemplary, martyr. After the trial, presented in Careless's own words, Foxe reports his death, again reminding the reader that Careless endured "with

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[159] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1943.

[160] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1943–45.

[161] For the original account, see Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1598. For Harpsfield's attack, see Harpsfield, *Dialogi Sex*, 802–17. For an explanation of Foxe's redaction on this point, see the in-text commentary at Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1943.

such patience and constant fortitude, that he longed for nothing more earnestly, then to come to the promotion to die in the fire for the profession of his faith."[162]

Finally, after he reports Careless's death, Foxe reprints a selection of personal letters from the martyr.[163] In keeping with the tradition of early modern prison literature, these letters are filled with quotations of Scripture, exhortations to godliness, and impassioned prayers. By presenting the story of Careless as he does, Foxe tacitly instructs the reader to contemplate the piety contained in these letters. The martyr is presented as an example of godliness, confirmed by the evidence of a true confession and good death, and then their "monuments" are presented for pious contemplation. With this structure, Foxe is instructing the reader on how to receive his book.

Literary Martyrs

Foxe borrowed not only in his calendar and images but most importantly in his literary style. Helen Tudor White has cataloged extensively how Foxe adopted and adapted the earlier literary commonplaces of the medieval tradition into *Acts and Monuments*.[164] One of the clearest indications is the use of recapitulation. Throughout the book, Protestant martyrs echo the words and actions of biblical and ancient figures within their letters and stories. The most famous of these recapitulations comes in the martyrdom of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. The famous proclamation from the lips of Latimer, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as shall never be put out," is adapted from Eusebius of Caesarea's account of the martyrdom of Polycarp.[165] Latimer is presented as

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[162] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1944.

[163] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1921–34.

[164] Helen C. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963).

[165] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1794. The fact that the quotation appears in the 1583 edition but not in the prior editions raises questions as to its authenticity. Foxe may have obtained an additional account of Latimer's martyrdom between his editions. Regardless of the quotation's ultimate authenticity,

a recapitulation of Polycarp. This shows that martyrs and those writing about them saw themselves as walking the same path as their martyred predecessors. Foxe was so inspired by this early tradition of martyr writing that he adopted its method as his own, even assigning ancient pseudonyms to some of the Marian martyrs.[166] His stories took on the repetitive pedagogical form of the ancient martyrologies, emphasizing the moral qualities of the characters.[167] By positioning Protestants as an echo of these ancient examples, Foxe had the Protestant martyrs serve as evidence of Protestantism's legitimacy. Because of the popularity of the concept of a "good death," the constancy of the Protestant martyrs served as evidence of their morality and thus confirmation of their confession.

The literary form of martyrology served a second purpose: promoting a reform of personal piety. In his prefaces "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," Foxe complains of a declension in piety he saw in England and states that the stories of the martyrs are to be the cure.[168] In his second edition, Foxe states that the quality of the martyrs was found not merely in their sufferings but also in "their constancy in dying . . . [and] the fruit that they brought to the amendment of posterity, and increase of the Gospel."[169] Based in a well-established tradition of martyrology, Foxe wrote expecting the reader to observe the work of the Spirit within the martyr and to respond in kind.[170] He writes, "The mild deaths of the saints do much prevail for the attaining of a good conscience, and the contempt of the

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Foxe's inclusion of it shows the mentality behind the composition: Latimer is seen as a recapitulation of Polycarp.

[166] Pucci, "Reforming Roman Emperors," 34.

[167] Gavin Schwartz-Leeper, *From Princes to Pages: The Literary Lives of Cardinal Wolsey, Tudor England's "Other King"*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 202 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 119; Pucci, "Reforming Roman Emperors," 35.

[168] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[169] John Foxe, "To the True Christian Reader," in *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 12.

[170] Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," 55–58.

world, and to come to the fear of God. They confirm the faith, increase godliness, abate pride in prosperity, and in adversity do open a hope of heavenly comfort."[171] The tradition of martyrology as an instructive and pastoral genre shows that Foxe expected the martyr stories to be pedagogical: instructing the English how to live a godly life. As Gerald Sittser states, the stories were meant "to inspire Christians to be faithful, courageous and bold, to remind them of the truth of the gospel, and to challenge them to live for Christ."[172]

It is notable that Foxe saw the story of the martyrs not as an apologetic for his nation but primarily as an example of godliness. Foxe's preface "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*" serves as a dedicatory prayer, but the prayer is used to reveal the heavenly commission that Foxe felt he had received for the work. Foxe begins with thanksgiving to Jesus Christ for giving him the strength needed to complete the work that he began "under your auspices."[173] Foxe explains that he believed Christ himself had commissioned the work because "we perceive how much you value the cause of your martyrs."[174] Foxe goes on to explain that Christ "wanted to declare" the cause of the martyrs for three reasons: (1) to show how honorable it is to die for Christ, (2) to show that the act of martyrdom reveals the nature of eternal life, and (3) to show that serving Christ, even to death, brings a special blessing not otherwise experienced in the Christian life.[175] These special blessings and honors are juxtaposed with the results of irresolution: "In this way we see with how much greater glory Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, John Hooper, Bradford and the rest of the prize fighters in the same company, died fighting in

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[171] Foxe, "The Utility of This History," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 15.

[172] Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 32.

[173] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[174] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[175] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

your army, than if they had abandoned the posts in which they had been placed and put your cause after their own safety."[176] For Foxe, then, the martyrs were to be remembered as the ultimate examples of endurance in the faith, rightly receiving a special honor from Christ.

Foxe makes clear that his use of the martyrs as spiritual models was meant for far more than personal edification; it was also as a warning not to return to past errors. Here, his Deuteronomic view of history comes into play again. It is not only the martyrs who are models; the Marian persecutors are also examples of a negative type. The widespread infamy and disgrace that the Marian persecutors were experiencing in Elizabethan England were "preludes to your most just judgement."[177] The persecutors' present disrepute was merely a revelation of the true and ultimate end of the enemies of Christ and a warning to the readers to turn from their wicked ways. Foxe makes this explicit in his preface "To the Persecutors of God's Truth." Here, Foxe argues that he had actually softened the polemical aspects of the book for the sake of the conversion of his opponents' souls.[178] He compares his own book to Peter's sermon at Pentecost: As the Jews had killed Christ and were now offered an opportunity for repentance, so the Catholics had slaughtered the martyrs and now were being given a similar opportunity to repent.[179] Foxe offers the book not as a diatribe but as a sermon calling them to repent and believe. The fate of the Marian deputies serves as a warning not to return to Catholicism but to press on to the Protestant ideal exemplified by the martyrs.

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[176] Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[177] The "your" in this quotation refers to the persecutors to whom the preface is directly addressed. Foxe, "*Ad Dominum Jesum Christum*," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1.

[178] Foxe, "To the Persecutors of God's Truth," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 12.

[179] Foxe, "To the Persecutors of God's Truth," in *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 12.

Conclusion

The fact that Foxe was seeking to promote Protestant piety should be beyond dispute. The book's background, structure, and literary features all point to this conclusion. The events surrounding the publication of each edition only strengthened the urgency with which Foxe pressed on toward his goal, and the changes to the editions reflect this growing urgency. Foxe's apocalyptic theology, which so shaped his life and profoundly motivated his writing of *Acts and Monuments*, provided an impulse toward personal reform. The presupposition of God's action in history, its intelligibility through the patterns of Scripture, and the expectation of judgment or reward for one's actions all provided motivation toward personal reform. Foxe's historical schema placed the church in a time of urgent action when the schemes of the devil were increasingly being revealed and the church needed to fight personal decline. In the midst of this, Foxe presented the martyrs as a model of the piety needed. They were echoes of the most pure period of the church's growth, heroes of the faith proven by their endurance unto death. They were to be contemplated in the viewing of their pictures and the passing of their days. The "utility" of their lives was to instruct the mind in godliness of both living and doing. In the next two chapters, I will explore the shape of this godliness that emerged from the pages of Foxe's book.

CHAPTER 5

"SUCH SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF PIETY": THE THEOLOGY OF PIETY IN THE BOOK OF MARTYRS

In the last chapter, I argued that Foxe deliberately structured *Acts and Monuments* to promote greater passion and purity in piety. But how did Foxe determine what made piety pure? In this chapter, I will uncover the theology of piety in *Acts and Monuments*. Specifically, I will argue that Foxe used the overarching concept of the "two churches" to sift piety and present a truly Protestant form. Using Protestant theology and the concept of the two churches, he created four dichotomies that divided true piety from false piety: (1) spiritual versus fleshly piety, (2) law-driven versus grace-driven piety, (3) love-driven versus hate-driven piety, and (4) spiritual versus ceremonial piety. By means of these dichotomies Foxe sought to argue against the Roman Catholic understanding of piety centered sacred ceremonies and spaces, and for a protestant definition of piety; namely, any action that flowed from the power of the Spirit to Love of God and neighbor. Because the work of the Spirit lies at the heart of this definition of piety, I will demonstrate how the martyrs functioned as ideal models of this piety. The martyrs had been traditionally seen as uniquely Spirit-filled, and thus they served as perfect exemplars of Foxe's Spirit-filled piety. Furthermore, the martyrs read their lives through a metaphor of cosmic battle. This metaphor could be used to apply equally to severe persecution as well as everyday Christian experiences such as repentance, conversion, and sanctification. This made the martyrs ideal models even to Protestants not suffering under persecution.

Many historians have argued that *Acts and Monuments* should be seen largely as an apologetic for the English Protestant church's antiquity, particularly answering the

question "Where was your church before the Reformation?"[1] This is true of Protestant theology, but the same could be said of Protestant piety. One of the great insights of the revisionist movement of scholars such as Eamon Duffy has been the uncovering of the extent to which average men and women during the Reformation continued to relate to the church not through truth and doctrine but through actions and rites.[2] Indeed, the common person's experience of the church largely revolved around *acts* of piety like penance and the mass. Even more extensive was the significance of the saints' cult, which came to dominate the piety of the high Middle Ages.[3] Protestants thus fought against Catholic structures and theology and the Roman Catholic Church's profoundly ingrained expressions of piety. By excoriating kneeling at the mass, prayer to and the patronage of the saints, and the purchasing of indulgences, Protestants were unseating not only theological positions but also central acts of piety associated with good Christian living. Thus, the Protestant project was about winning people not only to Reformation theology but also to a truly Protestant piety.

Though the modern reader may distinguish theology and piety for the sake of clarity, the medieval reader, raised as they were in the full flower of the saints' cult, could hardly have made such a distinction. Neither could Foxe, who intertwined his understanding of true piety with his understanding of the true church. Foxe defined piety with the help of the same schema that he defined the church. Drawing upon John Bale's *The Image of Both Churches*, Foxe saw history as a competition between not only a true and false church but also true and false expressions of piety. As others have argued, when Foxe was pressed to defend the authenticity of his church in an era when it was in

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[1] This is a large part of the thesis of Matthew Phillpott, who argues that Foxe revolutionized the English idea of history to promote the concept of Protestant antiquity. Matthew Phillpott, *The Reformation of England's Past* (New York: Routledge, 2018), passim, esp. 1–10, 60–71.

[2] Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 71.

[3] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., Harvard Historical Studies 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 31.

practice the schismatic church, he turned to the theology and practices of the primitive church as proof of Protestantism's *bona fides*. With regard to theology, this meant drawing on the example of the church fathers, just as so many of the Reformation's great theologians did. With regard to piety, however, a different tact was needed.

Primitive or Pure: The "Problem" of Pre-Protestant Martyrs

It has become a historical commonplace to refer to *Acts and Monuments* as apologetic for the antiquity of the English Protestant church.[4] Many historians have noted how the entire genre of Protestant martyrology arose in part to show the "conformity of the modern history of the martyrs with that of antiquity."[5] In a sense, this is certainly true; Foxe self-consciously modeled himself after Eusebius, and much of his work with the Lollards was undertaken to show the existence of a faithful remnant within England.[6]

One of Foxe's problems with antiquity, however, was its profoundly mixed nature. Roman Catholic practices were also antique, far more antique than Foxe originally thought when he first started constructing his martyrology. Subsequent editions required Foxe to change his periodization of history as he found impure expressions of piety further back in his timeline.[7] Foxe's solution was to sift what he felt was the true history from the false. Even as Foxe meticulously accessed ancient sources, he often

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[4] S. J. Barnett, "Where Was Your Church before Luther? Claims for the Antiquity of Protestantism Examined," *Church History* 68, no. 1 (1999): 15.

[5] Donald Kelly quotes this from Jean Crespin as indicative of the entire genre, including Jean Crespin, John Foxe, Ludwig Rabe, Heinrich Pantaleone, Johann Sleidan, and Flaccius Ilyricus all as significant contributors. Donald R. Kelley, "Martyrs, Myths, and the Massacre: The Background of St. Bartholomew," in *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*, ed. Alfred Soman (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1977), 1323–25.

[6] John Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, 1563 ed. (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), 7, http://www.dhiac.uk/foxe.

[7] In Foxe's first edition of TAM, he dated the decline of church practices at one thousand years after Christ, coinciding with the loosing of Satan. As his studies continued, however, he discovered Roman Catholic practices earlier in the church's history and thus had to revise his apocalyptic timeline to compensate for this reality. Palle J. Olsen, "Was John Foxe a Millenarian?," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no. 4 (1994): 604–5.

redacted or critiqued those things he felt were untrue or theologically incorrect. He rejected miracle stories that he felt were superstitious or promoted idolatry.[8] He used historical sources to discredit elements of Roman Catholic piety he disliked.[9] He emphasized in marginalia those facts that undermine elements of Roman Catholic piety. For example, when Foxe presented the martyrdom of Polycarp, the original author states, "[Polycarp] was adorned with the crown of martyrdom, and . . . gave in charge, that we should not take & divide his body. For fear lest the remnants of the dead corpse should be taken away, & so worshipped of the people."[10] The original author then gave an explanation, "For why? him we worship as the Son of God, but the Martyrs do we love as disciples of the Lord."[11] Foxe added a marginal note for the reader: "Mark that he sayeth we love them, and worship them not."[12] By use of his marginalia, Foxe was instructing the reader in how he expected them to read this ancient story, retaining the pious behavior of Polycarp but undermining the Roman Catholic practice of collecting relics and worshiping martyrs.[13]

Foxe also edited his more recent figures to present a purer vision of piety. One example is the Lollard John Oldcastle (d. December 14, 1417).[14] Oldcastle is of particular interest to Foxe not least because he was the subject of a martyrology published by

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[8] See especially the martyrdom of Paul, the martyrdom of Clement of Rome, and the miracles of Alexander of Rome. Foxe, *TAMO*, (1570 ed.) 75; (1583 ed.) 58, 61.

[9] For example, he calls into question and casts aspersion on the invention of holy water. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 62.

[10] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 66.

[11] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 66.

[12] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 66.

[13] Susan Felch argues that the marginalia, along with several other structural elements, show that TAM was conforming to a model of education that emphasizes the promotion of moral training. Susan Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. D. M. Loades, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1997), 52–65.

[14] For a biography of Oldcastle and a history of his lionization among early English Protestants, see W. T. Waugh, "Sir John Oldcastle," *English Historical Review* 20, no. 79 (1905): 434–56.

Foxe's mentor John Bale.[15] Oldcastle represented an ideal pre-Reformation English martyr for both Foxe and Bale.[16] Oldcastle embodied the dramatic and well-informed resistance to a Roman Catholic authority Foxe wanted to promote in the Marian martyrs.[17] Nevertheless, Oldcastle presented a problematic model for Protestants on several fronts. First, he affirmed transubstantiation and purgatory, both doctrines Foxe repeatedly and explicitly attacked in *Acts and Monuments*.[18] Second, Oldcastle had rebelled against King Henry V, meaning that Foxe could be seen as promoting a traitor as a model of piety.[19] Nevertheless, rather than remove Oldcastle from his martyrology, Foxe simply ignored his errant beliefs and sought to undermine the accounts of his rebellion.[20] When Foxe presents Oldcastle's trial, he displays Oldcastle as being calm and peaceable, condemned solely for denying the authority of the papacy and confessing the Apostles' Creed as evidence of his orthodoxy.[21] It is possible that Foxe believed, along with Bale, that Oldcastle's rebellion was the fabrication of a Catholic smear campaign, but redaction of Oldcastle's theological errors and amplification of his more acceptable

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[15] John Bale, *A Brefe Chronycle Concemynge the Examinacyon and Death of the Blessed Martyr of Christ Syr Johan Oldecastell* (Antwerp, 1544).

[16] Oldcastle is mentioned in a short list of English martyrs for special consideration by the English reading public in Foxe's preface to Christian readers. John Foxe, "Four Considerations Given Out to Christian Protestant Professors of the Gospel," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 20. Brad Gregory argues that Bale and Foxe fixated upon Oldcastle rather than Wycliffe as the pinnacle of Lollardy because Wycliffe was primarily a university theologian with little public impact on the laity in his lifetime. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 70.

[17] Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, 49.

[18] K. B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London: The English Universities Press, 1966), 164–65.

[19] For details of Oldcastle's rebellion, see McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity*, 168–69.

[20] In both cases, he was likely following Bale, who had accessed the original accounts of Oldcastle's trial, thoroughly edited them to conform to Protestant expectations, and argued that Oldcastle's rebellion was a fabrication of Roman Catholic authorities in an attempt to discredit Oldcastle. Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 123–30; Fairfield, "John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24, no. 2 (1973): 151. For Foxe's attempted rebuttal of Oldcastle's rebellion, see Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 592.

[21] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 592.

piety can only point to another motivation: Foxe was seeking to present pure Protestant piety in the image of a historical Englishman.[22]

In Oldcastle, one can see the tension Foxe felt throughout *Acts and Monuments*. He wanted to present the martyrs with one foot planted in history and another in the Protestant Reformation. His goal was more than merely reviving primitive piety; rather, he wanted to promote what he saw as pure piety.[23] By redacting aspects of the stories and amplifying others, Foxe presents an idealized piety within the martyr stories. But what was the mindset motivating these choices? In other words, how did Foxe sift the wheat from the chaff, the pure piety from the impure? The answer was his concept of "the two churches."

The Concept of the Two Churches and Its Application to Piety

In order to sift pure piety from impure, Foxe employed the same schema that shaped so much of his theology of history: the concept of the two churches. This concept was not unique to Foxe; instead, it had its roots in the thought of John Wyclif and Jan

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[22] In chapter 1, I discussed Foxe's highly debated veracity, including another similar editorial decision to suppress certain theological differences among the martyrs of Kent. In each of these cases, Foxe's editorial method is negative. He does not invent people or events, but he does redact elements he finds concerning for polemic, historical, or theological readings. Patrick Collinson is very helpful in understanding Foxe's mindset with these editorial decisions. Foxe seems to be operating within the realm of what he finds plausible given the combative period in which he lived. Patrick Collinson, "Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in *Clio's Mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands: Papers Delivered to the Eight Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference* (Zutphen, Netherlands: De Walburg Pers, 1985), 44. As Thomas Freeman has pointed out, Foxe is not objective; he is quick to record the victories of Protestants and the judgment of Catholics, but he shows more scrupulousness when the roles are reversed. In the end, Foxe's editorial decisions are comprehensible, even if modern historians would not dub them permissible. Thomas S. Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm: Reading and Misreading Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 1 (1999): 40. For other discussions of specific instances of Foxe's editorial methods, see John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31–33, 54–69; Collinson, "Truth and Legend," 44–47; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 51; Thomas S. Freeman and Sarah Elizabeth Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2001): 1165–96.

[23] John Knott has helpfully observed how the martyrs provide Foxe with heros because of their primitive purity. Knott is correct, but Foxe's relationship with primitivism is not merely positive. His editorial practices reveal a more complex relationship. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, 3–7.

Hus and had been adopted and adapted in various ways by many of the early reformers.[24] Foxe had been more directly exposed to the idea through John Bale's *The Image of Both Churches*.[25] The idea drew heavily on Augustine's concept of the two cities and combined it with the scriptural themes of the elect people, the faithful remnant, and the narrow way. The basic contours of the view were as follows: The world had always contained both a true church and a false church. The true church was the congregation of God, and the false church was the congregation of the devil. The false church was of this world and therefore often had power, prestige, and wealth. The true church was from above and thus was often small, feeble, and poor. The false church, as the creation of Satan, was marked by violence and cruelty. The true church was marked by being the victim of persecution, an element that explains Foxe's interest in the early church. Only when aided by a godly prince could the true church be relieved of persecution. This element accounted, to various degrees, for Foxe's treatment of Constantine and Elizabeth.[26]

The concept of the two churches pervades *Acts and Monuments*. It gives basic definition to Foxe's understanding of the world and the Protestants' role in it: "There were two Churches, one of the wicked flourishing, wherein reigned the pope: the other of

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[24] For an examination of the origin and development of the two churches concept, see Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), passim.

[25] John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches after the Revelation of John the Evangelist* (Antwerp: Mierdman, 1545), STC 1296.5 For Foxe's relationship with Bale and Bale's influence on the thought of Foxe, see Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England*, 38–54. For a broader understanding of the development of Bale's concept of the two churches, see Fairfield, *John Bale*, 51–121; Fairfield, "John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England," 149–50; Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 32–68; Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 13–46.

[26] For a broader understanding of the development of the concept of the two churches, see Fairfield, *John Bale*, 51–121; Fairfield, "John Bale and the Development of Protestant Hagiography in England," 149–50; Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain*, 32–68; Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, 13–46; Leonard J. Trinterud, ed., *Elizabethan Puritanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 44.

the godly afflicted."[27] It provides the turning point of history that separates the primitive church from its later Catholic counterpart.[28] It is a theme that runs from the beginning of the book to the end,[29] and it is found in the voice of Foxe as narrator as well as on the lips of many of the martyrs.[30] Clearly, it is a concept that had been widely and deeply incorporated into the thought of the community of the book.

It was this overarching principle that allowed Foxe to place the Protestant martyrs in the same category as the early martyrs of the church. Critical for understanding Foxe's piety is the fact that the nature of the true church, according to Foxe, was hidden and could be discerned only by true believers and through the correct application of Scripture. Foxe's editorial methods show that he applied this concept not only to the church but also to piety. Foxe saw history as a competition between a true church and a false church as well as a competition between true and false expressions of piety. True piety had to be discerned by the careful application of Scripture and sifted according to that which was true or false. Foxe does so based on four dichotomies that flow from his Protestant theology: (1) spiritual versus fleshly piety, (2) grace-driven versus law-driven piety, (3) love-driven versus hate-driven piety, and (4) spiritual versus ceremonial piety. At the heart of all of these was the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Nature of True Piety

As described above, in formulating *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe faced the great challenge of expressing a piety that was both ancient and pure. This required a sifting of the pious expressions he found in his martyrs into true and false expressions. In order to

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[27] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 415.

[28] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 26.

[29] The two churches is one of the first concepts Foxe introduces in explaining how the reader should understand history, and it runs all the way through the book within the stories of the martyrs. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 26, 1999.

[30] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 946, 1052, 1842, 1987.

do this, Foxe created a schema that sifted piety based upon not only its expression but also its source. Foxe makes this argument most clearly in his preface "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists."[31] As the title indicates, it is an apologetic preface targeted at his Roman Catholic readers. In it, Foxe challenges the Roman claim to the title of "true Church." First, he says they are merely "pretending the name of Catholics."[32] He then condemns them as not being part of the "the spiritual Church of Christ."[33] He gives his evidence for this condemnation in his first question. Drawing upon one of the marks of the two churches, he indicts them on the basis of Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not kill nor hurt, in all my holy hill."[34] In contrast to God's command, in the Church of Rome, there "hath been now so many years such killing and slaying."[35]

Having attacked the visible Roman Catholic Church as a manifestation of the false church, Foxe turns inward to the individual Roman Catholic.[36] In his fourth question, Foxe cuts to the heart of his critique of Roman Catholic piety and the root of how he discerns between true and false piety: "I turn my question to ask this of you, whether the religion of Christ be mere spiritual, or else corporeal."[37] This question draws heavily on the "two churches" distinction. The true church was always from above and spiritual, whereas the false church was from below and focused on the physical. Foxe now applies this schema to the area of piety.

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[31] John Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17–19.

[32] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17.

[33] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17.

[34] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17.

[35] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17.

[36] Foxe's second and third questions touch upon similar issues to the fourth and first questions, respectively. The second question, relating to the inward turn of the fourth, asks Catholics why they do not exercise love toward Protestants, as love is a clear mark of the gospel. The third question, relating to the outward focus of the first, asks Catholics if they will acknowledge the city of Rome as the beast of Revelation. Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 18–19.

[37] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

Spiritual versus Fleshly Piety

To offer his critique, Foxe first enumerates elements of Catholic piety in a list that is deliberately long and laborious: "garments, vestures, gestures, colors, choice of meats, difference of days, times & places, hearing, seeing, saying, touching, tasting."[38] Foxe goes on listing specific pious actions regarding eating, clothing, marriage, birth, death, the celebration of specific festivals and saints days, and of course penance and the mass. After this exhausting, if not exhaustive, list, Foxe offers his great critique of Roman Catholic piety: "All which things above recited, as they contain the whole summary & effect of all the pope's Catholic religion: so are they all corporeal exercises, consisting in the external operation of man."[39] Foxe's great critique is that Roman Catholic piety, at its core, comes from the power of man.

Foxe's view of piety is inseparable from his view of anthropology and soteriology. *Acts and Monuments* is not typically viewed as a work of theology, and the majority of theological analysis has been limited to the discussions of the mass that so dominate the trial memoirs in the book.[40] However, Foxe clearly reveals his theological motivations in his historical introductions and the interpretive commentary he sprinkles throughout the book. In a section entitled "The sum of Saint Paul's doctrine delivered to the Gentles," Foxe makes clear his view of man apart from salvation as "dead" and unable to exercise the spiritual will.[41] Elsewhere, he describes the unevangelized world as under "the bondage of Antichrist, which in that place had full dominion."[42] Man's spiritual inability is a foundational presupposition for Foxe's view of anthropology, soteriology, and piety.

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[38] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[39] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[40] For an example, see David M. Loades, "Foxe in Theological Context," in *TAMO*, apparatus, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/index.php?realm=more&gototype=&type=essay&book=essay4.

[41] Foxe, *TAMO* (1570 ed.), 50–51.

[42] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 900.

Foxe is concerned not only with man's inability but also with God's ability. Foxe argues that because Roman Catholic piety comes from the power of man, it lacks the power of God: "If they can make a perfect right Catholic Christian, then it may be said, that men may be made perfect christians by flesh and blood, without any inward working of faith, or of the Holy Ghost."[43] Here, Foxe's soteriology and piety intersect. True piety is impossible apart from faith, and faith is impossible apart from an active work of the Holy Spirit. Hence, Foxe writes, "This faith, if it be well examined, is such a thing that flesh and blood is not able to attain thereto, unless Gods Holy Spirit from above do draw him."[44] For Foxe, the "inward strength or motion" of the Holy Spirit is the prerequisite of faith and therefore the prerequisite of piety.

Grace-Driven versus Law-Driven Piety

By declaring acts of Catholic piety the "external operation of man" and "without any inward working faith, or of the holy ghost," Foxe is declaring them not only futile but also damning. Foxe makes a hard distinction between man's works and God's works, an extension of the law-gospel distinction that is a key focus of Foxe's thought. Drawn from Martin Luther, whose works Foxe extensively worked to translate and import to English shores, the law-gospel distinction was for Foxe essential to understanding salvation.[45] His *Sermon of Christ Crucified*, one of only two sermons he published, is a protracted exposition of the law-gospel distinction, with an emphasis on the end of the law with the coming of Christ.[46] One of Foxe's methods of teaching this Protestant concept was to quote the theological works of the martyrs on topics about

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[43] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[44] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[45] For Foxe's translation of Luther, see chapter 2.

[46] John Foxe, *The English Sermons of John Foxe* (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1978), 115.

which he wanted to instruct his readers. The "monuments," or documents, of the martyrs contain elements of the martyrs' teaching that Foxe seeks to pass on to the reader as part of the martyrs' testimony. One such example is the *Places* of Patrick Hamilton (1504–February 29, 1528). Hamilton was a Scottish clergyman and early Protestant reformer martyred for Protestant preaching. In 1528, Hamilton published a treatise entitled *Patrick's Places*, which is credited with introducing Luther's law-gospel distinction into Scottish theology.[47] Foxe presents the *Places* along with the articles of Hamilton's confession as an example of how the reader ought to think. Several sections reveal key aspects of Foxe's theology of piety.

The first article of Hamilton's confession is "Man hath no free will," emphasizing the inability that was so key to Foxe's anthropology.[48] His second article, "A man is only justified by faith in Christ," emphasizes Reformation soteriology.[49] Articles 5–7 show the law-gospel distinction and its tie to the practice of piety:

5. A good man doth good works: good works do not make a good man.
6. An evil man bringeth forth evil works: evil works, being faithfully repented, do not make an evil man.
7. Faith, hope, and charity be so linked together, that one of them cannot be without another, in one man, in this life.[50]

The focus on good works was key to Hamilton's law-gospel distinction as he elaborates in his *Places*. In it, Hamilton offers his "doctrine of works," stating, "No man is justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, and we believe in Jesu Christ that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law: For if

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[47] Gotthelf Wiederman, "Martin Luther versus John Fisher: Some Ideas Concerning the Debate on Lutheran Theology at the University of St Andrews 1525–30," *Scottish Church History Society* (1984): 17–20.

[48] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 998.

[49] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 998.

[50] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 998.

righteousness come by the law, then died Christ in vain. Gal. 2."[51] Hamilton's treatise is a simple presentation of Luther's gospel for the Scots, but Foxe goes on to apply it to the debate over piety.

Following his presentation of *Patrick's Places*, Foxe offers his commentary on the work. He first affirms the *Places* as "declaring to us the true doctrine of the law, of the Gospel, of faith and of works, with the nature and properties, & also the difference of the same."[52] He then expounds upon and explains the work, applying it particularly to the Roman Catholic understanding of works. He equates Roman Catholic acts of piety with "the works of the law" of Galatians 2:16.[53] These works, he argues, do not save but "worketh only the anger of God."[54] This shows the connection between piety and soteriology for Foxe. Roman Catholic piety is done to earn salvation; thus, it belongs to the category of law and brings condemnation. In Foxe's words, they "confound the one with the other, making the gospel to be a law, and Christ to be a Moses."[55] For piety to be true, it must be completely grounded in gospel, not law.

Love-Driven versus Hate-Driven Piety

The key to grounding piety in the gospel is found in the concept of faith. In "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," Foxe states that all the blessings of salvation are a result of faith: "Effects do follow after faith, as peace of conscience, joy in the holy ghost, invocation, patience, charity, mercy, judgement, & sanctification."[56] Here, Foxe's reliance on Hamilton's presentation of the law-gospel distinction is again helpful. In

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[51] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1002.

[52] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1003.

[53] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1004–5.

[54] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1004.

[55] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1005.

[56] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

contrast to the damning results of flesh-empowered law keeping, Hamilton proposes that faith results in love-empowered law keeping. By way of explanation, he presents the following syllogism:

> Bar. He that keepeth the Commandments of God, hath the love of God.
> ba. He that hath faith, keepeth the Commandments of God.
> ra. Ergo, he that hath faith, loveth God.[57]

For Hamilton, and by extension Foxe, faith provides the grounds for positive action that pleases God. The connection between faith and love in relation to positive action was a concept Hamilton doubtless drew from Luther, whose theology he was seeking to bring into Scotland with his *Places*. Luther was well aware that his theology of grace tore down much of the framework upon which medieval piety was built; thus, he was quick to provide a Protestant alternative.[58] It was Luther who first brought the German words for "pious" and "piety" into robust religious usage with his translation of the Bible.[59] Luther's use of the words shows his understanding of their connection to his theology of grace. According to Scott Hendrix, "Righteousness and piety meant the same thing for Luther: the fully reconciled relationship to God through faith that manifested itself in love."[60]

This concept of piety as manifest love was drawn from the Augustinian monastic tradition in which Luther had been trained. Augustinian monk and Erfurt theologian Johannes von Paltz (d. 1511) and Augustinian prior Johann von Staupitz (c.

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[57] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1000. The prefixes of Bar. ba. ra. place the syllogism on the Aristotelian square of opposition, which indicates the author's intended relationships between premises. The use of Bar. ba. ra. indicates that Hamilton sees this syllogism as a universal affirmative and thus true in all cases. For an explanation of the square of opposition, see Terrence Parsons, "The Traditional Square of Opposition," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, last updated April 12, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/square/.

[58] Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 57–58.

[59] Walter Sparn, "Warlich, Dieser Ist Ein Frommer Mensch Gewesen!," in *Post-Theism: Reframing the Judeo-Christian Tradition*, ed. H. A. Krop et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 458.

[60] Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 59.

1460–December 28, 1524) revived and propagated the works of Jordan of Quedlinburg (d. c. 1380), Henry of Friemar (d. 1349), and Hermann of Schildesche (d. 1357) among the Augustinian monks. These works of late medieval devotion promoted the essence of piety as love of God and love of neighbor.[61] Thus, among some of the late medieval monastic communities, there was already the conception of a pious believer as one "who eschewed all forms of superstition and demonstrated a faith formed by love."[62] Love of God was a particular mark of the martyr. In his preface "The Utility of This Story," Foxe points out that it is the love of Christ that empowered the martyr to endure unto death.[63] Love was also a key mark of "true religion and godliness," in contrast to the false religion of the persecutors.[64] In Foxe's biography of Rowland Taylor, he describes the love of Christ as producing in him acts of piety.[65] In contrast, in "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," one of Foxe's accusatory interrogatories is why the Catholics hate their opponents.[66] Love was the mark of a true Christian and thus a mark of true piety.

This conception, of piety as expressed love, provided both a bridge to the medieval Augustinian tradition as well as compatibility with Luther's understanding of salvation that clearly appealed to Foxe. In *Patrick's Places*, Hamilton emphasizes that love is a result of faith: "Faith commeth of the word of God: Hope commeth of faith: and Charity springeth of them both."[67] This places acts of love in the category of gospel, not

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[61] Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 12–14.

[62] Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 14.

[63] John Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 16.

[64] In this passage, Foxe uses a visual aid to distinguish between true and false, creating a table in which the persecutors are placed in one column and the martyrs are placed in another, with a third column explaining the cause of their martyrdom. This visual delineation between persecuted and persecutors, both clear markers of the true and false church, respectively, provides the reader with a subconscious reinforcement of the true church-false church distinction and a clear definition concerning who belongs to which. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1022.

[65] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1543.

[66] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 17.

[67] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1002.

law, thus providing a foundation for acts of piety which were not legalistic. In Foxe's commentary on the *Places*, he makes this contention clear: "Therefore, where so ever any question or doubt riseth of salvation, or our justifying before God, there the law, & all good works must be utterly excluded, and stand apart, that grace may appear free, the promise simple, and that faith may stand alone."[68] Thus distinguished, the Christian life can be lived out as a result of this faith:

> So in a christian mans life, and in order of doctrine, there is the law, there is repentance, there is hope, charity, and deeds of charity: all which in life, and in doctrine, are joined, & necessarily do concur together, and yet in the action of justifying, there is nothing else in man, that hath any part or place, but only Faith apprehending the object which is the body of Christ Jesus for us crucified.[69]

Thus, the concept of piety as expressed love safely placed piety within the category of gospel, not law. Protestant piety was an expression of love for God, not the exercise of dead works for justification.

The application of this love to practical piety was made through the twofold Great Commandment of Mark 12:29–31: love of God and neighbor. Foxe describes Christian duty as flowing from justification to love of neighbor:

> After [Paul] hath thus established us in certainty of our salvation through faith in Christ, then after that, he exhorteth us vehemently and with all insistence of good works, shewing the true use and end of good works which is, first to show our obedience and dutiful service (as we may) unto God, who hath done so great things for us. Secondly to relieve our neighbors with our charity and kindness.[70]

In Foxe's presentation of *Patrick's Places*, this concept is even further simplified: "Faith loveth both God and his neighbor."[71] Foxe also saw this as a key descriptor, and quintessential summary, of the lifestyle of a true martyr. When describing the life of

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[68] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1003.

[69] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1003.

[70] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 46.

[71] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1002.

Alban (d. c. 303?), Britian's first martyr and thus of special importance to Foxe,[72] he uses the same structure of faith expressed in love of neighbor. Having no detailed facts about the martyr's life, Foxe offers his own speculative summary: "blessed and faithful martyr of God, . . . And worthy no doubt of condigne commendation, especially of us here in this land: whose Christian faith in the Lord, and charity toward his neighbor: I pray God all we may follow."[73] This was also the content of the Protestants' practical proclamation according to Foxe. When Foxe summarizes Hugh Latimer's preaching, he shows an inward trajectory expressed in an outward love. Latimer preaches that the "principal thing" is to serve God with the heart and to learn the Scriptures "whereby the common people might the better learn their duties, as well to God, as their neighbors."[74] In keeping with the Augustinian definition, Foxe sees piety as expressed love for God and neighbor flowing from faith.

Spiritual versus Ceremonial Piety

The concept of a piety born out of faith was also connected to one of Foxe's great dichotomies of the true versus false church: fleshly versus spiritual piety. In "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," Foxe again evokes the connection of faith expressed in love, but this time he attributes all to the action of the Holy Spirit: "For God for our faith in Christ his son, therefore giveth into our hearts his Holy Spirit . . . whereby man's heart is moved to a godly disposition to fear God, to seek him, to call upon him, to trust unto him, to stick to him in all adversities and persecutions, to love him."[75] The power of the Spirit becomes a key distinguishing feature of the true Christian life for

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[72] Because of the mimetic quality of martyrdom, Foxe assigns special importance to the first martyr of each class. This can be seen especially in the importance he places upon John Rogers as the "protomartyr" of the English Reformation. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517, 1754.

[73] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 112.

[74] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1755.

[75] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

Foxe and a means of determining true versus false piety. The empowering Spirit works not only the inward attitudes of piety, such as trust, endurance, and love, but also the outward acts of piety:

> also to love our brethren, to have mercy and compassion upon them, to visit them if they be in prison, to break bread to them, if they be hungry: and if they be burdened, to ease them: to clothe them if they be naked, and to harbour them if they be houseless. Matt. 25. with such other spiritual exercises of piety and sanctification as these.[76]

Thus, Foxe gives his most basic definition of Protestant piety as follows: "Therefore I call spiritual, because they proceed of the Holy Spirit and law of God which is spiritual."[77] Foxe's most essential definition of true piety is all that proceeds from the Holy Spirit.

In his biographical descriptions of the martyrs' lives, Foxe often notes the work of the Spirit in producing greater piety than natural means alone. For example, in his description of Thomas Bilney's education, he writes, "Thomas Bilney was brought up in the University of Cambridge, even from a child, profiting in al kind of liberal science, . . . But at the last, having gotten a better schoolmaster, even the Holy Spirit of Christ, who enduing his heart by private inspiration with the knowledge of a better & more wholesome sort."[78] The distinction between heavenly and earthly, spiritual and unspiritual, was a common distinguishing mark of the true and false churches.[79] In "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," Foxe sharpens the point into an attack on Roman Catholic piety by making the distinction between spiritual and ceremonial. To remove all doubt, Foxe contrasts spiritual piety with Roman Catholic piety: "Now confrere these Antitheses together, and see whether of these is the truer Christian, the ceremonial man

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[76] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[77] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[78] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1022.

[79] Trinterud, *Elizabethan Puritanism*, 44.

after the Church of Rome, or the spiritual man with his faith and other spiritual fruits of piety."[80] The Protestant is the "spiritual man," while the Catholic is the "ceremonial man." This again calls back to true and false church dichotomy.

In his narratives, Foxe often uses metaphor and irony to mock the superficiality of Catholic ceremony. Jonas Barish has noted the use of theatrical language among many early English Protestants, including Foxe, as a metaphor to condemn Roman Catholic ceremonies.[81] Indeed, pictures of Roman Catholic theatricality pervade *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe describes the mass as the "Popish Pageant."[82] In describing the formal ceremony for laicization of the clergy, Foxe calls it "the pageant of degradation."[83] Many of the key Roman Catholic figures are presented in grandiloquence enhanced to the point of parody. Describing a book burning ordered by Thomas Wolsey, (c. March 1473–November 29, 1530), Foxe paints a picture of excess and pageantry:

> The Cardinal had a scaffold made on the top of the stairs for himself, with 36. Abbots, mitered priors and bishops, and he in his whole pomp mitered (which Barnes spake against) sat there enthroned, his Chaplains and spiritual doctors in gowns of damask and satin, and he himself in purple, even like a bloody Antichrist. And there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs also, for the Bishop of Rochester to preach against Luther and Doctor Barnes: and great baskets full of books standing before them within the rails, which was commanded after the great fire was made afore the roode of Northern there to be burned, and these heretics after the sermon to go thrice about the fire, and to cast in their fagots.[84]

In describing a *Corpus Christi* procession, wherein the bread of Communion was being returned to a reconsecrated church, Foxe describes it in belabored detail, comparing it to an ancient Roman pagan ritual:

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[80] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[81] Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 82, 155–65.

[82] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1543.

[83] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1907.

[84] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1217.

> When this Idol should return home, he went not the straightest & nearest way as other folk are wont to go, but he fetched a windlass about the most part of the town, and roamed through so many of the streets, that it was a large hour and more, ere he could find the way into his Church again. I believe the ancient Romans observed a custom not much unlike this in their procession, when they made supplications at the shrines of all their Gods.[85]

Having described the procession, Foxe concludes with this rather sarcastic condemnation: "Their God being led with this pomp . . . at length settled himself again in his accustomed room."[86] Throughout *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe uses his rhetorical flourish to present Roman Catholic ceremony as excessive and absurd.

In his understanding of the history of the church, Foxe equates the multiplication of ceremonies with the growth of superstition within the church.[87] In fact, the accusation of superstition is one of Foxe's most common critiques of nearly every aspect of Catholic piety, attached to ceremonies,[88] observation of feast days,[89] veneration of objects,[90] vows of chastity,[91] acts of asceticism,[92] and Roman Catholic devotion generally.[93] The accusation of superstition provided Foxe with another connection to the true church throughout history. The early Christian apologists had accused the pagans of superstition with regard to their worship of idols.[94] Augustine connected superstitious

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[85] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1631. Foxe draws much of this account from the translation of Arthur Golding, but Knott argues that Foxe was likely present at the event and thus responsible for the wording of the account. Arthur Golding, *A Briefe Treatise Concerning the Burnynge of Bucer and Phagius* (London, 1562); Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, 72.

[86] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 1632. "Their God" is a derogatory reference to the Communion host based upon the Protestant belief that transubstantiation was tantamount to idolatry.

[87] John Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 11–12.

[88] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 47.

[89] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 56.

[90] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 108.

[91] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 152.

[92] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 282.

[93] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 118.

[94] Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1979), 43–44. On the evolution of the use of terms referring to paganism and superstition in the early church, see

practices to the activity of demonic powers.[95] The question of superstition and paganism within Christian worship weighted heavily in the debate over images in the late seventh and early eighth centuries.[96] In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas reasserted Augustine's prohibition against the practices of idolatry, demon worship, and divination, but he also made the key move of pointing out the possibility of superstitious practices within Christian worship.[97] Proto-Reformation movements like the Waldensians revived these critiques with regard to Roman Catholic practice.[98] It was these critiques Foxe was drawing upon when he utilized the term in *Acts and Monuments.* Modern historians may be hesitant to utilize such language in the discussion of early modern piety, but the Reformation revival of Aquinas's definition shows that the accusation of superstition was a true theological critique, not merely a polemical shibboleth.

Drawing upon Augustine, Aquinas distinguished between three forms of religious superstition: (1) the worship of the true God in an idolatrous way, (2) to commune with demons, and (3) the worship of God with improper actions.[99] Aquinas did not specify which actions would qualify in his third category, but he did reference Augustine, who gave greater specificity referencing magical books, amulets, and articles of clothing and jewelry used in the magical arts.[100] Reformers like Foxe found much in

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Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 1–9, 78–79; Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, New Series 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 17–22.

[95] Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, vol. 11 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, pt. I, *Books* (New York: New City Press, 1996), 2.20.30 (pp. 144–45).

[96] Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 10.

[97] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, vol. 3, *II^{a} II^{ae} QQ. 1–148*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (repr., Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2000), II-II.92.2 (pp. 1585–86).

[98] Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 11.

[99] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.92.2 (Fathers, 3:1586).

[100] Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, 2.20.30 (Rotelle, I/11:145).

Roman Catholicism they thought fit the first and third categories. But even more important to Foxe's perception was Aquinas's further qualification of Christian superstition. Aquinas argued that acts of Christian worship could become superstitious if they were superfluous.[101] Aquinas reckoned as superfluous and superstitious, *superfluum et superstitiosum*, any action that "of itself is not conducive to God's glory, or which does not raise man's mind to his Creator, or temper his bodily desires, or which goes beyond the institution of God and the Church, or against common custom."[102] In summary of his argument, Aquinas made a distinction between internal and external actions:

1. When we speak of giving glory to God, we imply that our actions really are for that purpose, and so we exclude the excess found in superstition.
2. Man's soul is rightly related to God by faith, hope, and charity, and so there can never be too much of them. External actions, however, are different, for sometimes they have no connection with these virtues.[103]

The internal actions of faith, hope, and love toward God are always pure, but external actions are not so; they are to be scrutinized to determine if they conform to the interior goals of worship.

Three key elements of the Augustinian/Thomistic definition of superstition appear in Foxe: (1) the concept of superfluous actions, (2) the interior-exterior distinction, and (3) the foundation of faith, hope, and love. Foxe often draws upon the concept of Roman Catholic piety as superfluous and thus superstitious. Foxe often refers to Roman Catholic ceremonies as excessive, "overgrowing," "heaping," endlessly

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[101] Aquinas writes, "Something can be excessive in two ways. First of all according to absolute amount . . . . Secondly, according to proportional amount, when it does not fit its purpose. The purpose of divine worship is for man to give glory to God and obey him in mind and body. Therefore, whatever a man does that gives glory to God, or that submits his mind to God, and his body, too, by tempering and controlling its lusts, is without excess so long as it be in harmony with the law of God, the rules of the Church, and the customs of those with whom he lives." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.93.2 (Fathers, 3:1588).

[102] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.93.2 (Fathers, 3:1588).

[103] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.93.2 (Fathers, 3:1588).

multiplying, vain, and superfluous.[104] It is not surprising, then, that Foxe regularly equates Roman Catholic ceremonialism with superstition.[105] It is important to note that within the category of ceremony, Foxe includes not only the formal ceremonies of the Catholic Church, like the mass, but also private acts of devotion, like the rosary, observances of feast days, use of images, and anything "except those things necessary mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles."[106]

Regarding Foxe's adaptation of Hamilton within *Acts and Monuments*, Hamilton places faith, hope, and love in contrast to works of the law. The three great virtues all flow from faith, making them a product of the Holy Spirit and part of the gospel, not the law.[107] Faith, hope, and love are the great chain, beginning with the work of God and ending in love of God and neighbor that is the heart of true piety.[108] In keeping with the Augustinian/Thomistic definition, piety springing from faith, hope, and love are pure and not at risk of straying into the excess of superstition.[109] Foxe also draws heavily on the internal-external division found within the Augustinian/Thomistic definition. Foxe regularly identifies ceremonies with outward rather than inward religion.[110] Outward religion is equated with human tradition, the old covenant that

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[104] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 11, 12; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.) 43, 46, 254, 255, 578, 1005.

[105] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 12; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 47, 49.

[106] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 79; see also 43, 46, 47, 49, 147, 647.

[107] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1002.

[108] Hamilton writes, "Faith commeth of the word of God: Hope commeth of faith: and Charity springeth of them both. Faith believeth the word: Hope trusteth after it that is promised by the word: Charity doth good unto her neighbor, throw the love that it hath to God, and gladness that is within her herself." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1002.

[109] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.93.2 (Fathers, 3:1588).

[110] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 47, 448, 864, 1814.

cannot save, and the idolatry of the pagan nations.[111] Foxe condemns all outward religious rites, save baptism and the Lord's Supper, as ceremonial and superstitious.[112]

It is hard to overstate the importance of this internal-external/spiritual-ceremonial distinction in Foxe's conception of true piety. For Foxe, Roman Catholic piety is primarily external, while true piety is primarily internal. This draws heavily on his concept of the two churches that shaped his theology of history. The external, visible, and ascendant church was the false church, while the true church was focused inward on the hidden spiritual realities. Drawing again upon the concept of the two churches, applied to the Reformation concept of the invisible church, Foxe distinguished the true believers within the visible church based upon their inward religion: "The kingdom of Christ in this world I take to be all them which belong to the faith of Christ, and here take his part in this world against the world. The number of whom although it be much smaller then the other, and always lightly is hated & molested of the world."[113] In keeping with Augustine, Foxe saw the visible church as a mixed congregation.[114] The way to discern the true church within this mixed congregation was the inward religion of the individual. The false contingent of the visible church was that which "standeth of such as be of outward profession only."[115] The true church were those "which not in

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[111] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 47, 448.

[112] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[113] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 53. Foxe's emphasis on this point developed from the 1563 edition into his more mature view expressed here. In the 1563 edition, he had structured his history along the lines of childhood and adolescence, but by 1570 and into the final two editions of his lifetime, the schema of the two churches had come to so dominate his thinking that he restructured his section on the theology of history to conform to the two churches schema. Mark Greengrass and Matthew Phillpott see the influence of Luther's adaptation of Augustine's two cities and Bale's adaptation of the two churches described above. The passage cited shows that Foxe blurred and intertwined the two concepts into one philosophy of a hidden true church and revealed mixed church. For Greengrass and Phillpott's commentary, see Mark Greengrass and Matthew Phillpott, "Commentary: The First 300 Years of the Church," in *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 53 (apparatus).

[114] Augustine, *Sermon* 73, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, pt. III, *Sermons*, vol. 3, *Sermons 51–94 (On the New Testament)* (New York: New City Press, 1991), 284.

[115] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 53.

words only and outward profession, but also in heart do truly serve & honor Christ, partaking not only the Sacraments, but also the heavenly blessings and grace of Christ."[116] The only way to discover the true church was through the evidence of the inward life.

As it was with the church, so it was with the man. Foxe equated the inward man with the spiritual man—that is, the man who has been truly transformed by an inward working of faith rather than mere outward observance.[117] Foxe felt that the true essence of religion was the inward life: "For in matters of the Church which are spiritual, all preeminence standeth upon spiritual and inward gifts, (*spiritualia enim spirtualibus comparantur*) as faith, piety, learning & godly knowledge, zeal and fervency in the Holy Ghost."[118] That Foxe gives the label of the "ceremonial man" to the practicing Roman Catholic is profoundly important to Foxe's concept of piety, because he believes that the mixing of ceremony with piety always results in the pollution of the gospel: "And if ye say that ye mixt them both together, spiritual things with your corporeal ceremonies, . . . they ought in no case to be joined together, because the mean cause of all our salvation and remission, is only spiritual, and consisteth in faith, and in no other."[119]

Foxe also identified ceremonies with human ability. In one section of *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe offers a short systematic refutation of select Roman Catholic doctrines, and one argument stands out as pertinent to the discussion of the Roman Catholic piety: his refutation of acts of penance. When refuting acts of penance, Foxe argues that it "(as they teach) may be had by strength of free will, without the law, and the Holy Ghost *per*

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[116] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 53.

[117] Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 11–14; Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 77.

[118] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 45.

[119] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

actus elicitos, through mans own action and endeavor."[120] Here again, Foxe emphasizes the great antithesis: earthly versus heavenly power, ceremonial versus spiritual, the Holy Spirit versus "man's own action and endeavor." Drawing on Aquinas's concept of *per actus elicitus*, an unmediated exercise of the will unaffected by outside forces, Foxe emphasizes the point.[121] Roman Catholics, he says, see the exercise of the ceremonies as a free act of the will apart from the strength of the Spirit. For Foxe, this is fleshly and thus damnable.

Perhaps the strongest test of Foxe's concept of ceremonial versus spiritual faith comes with the advice of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Foxe acknowledges as ceremonial the instructions "that you abstain . . . from blood, and from what has been strangled" (Acts 15:29). In order to keep it within his contrast, he argues that this is a special and temporary ceremony "by the holy ghost to be given, . . . so long as the cause, that is the persecutions of the Heathen Gentiles continued."[122] He is quick to point out that "the Apostles . . . gave no heed nor regard to the observation of days & times, neither bound the Church to any ceremonies and rites, except those things necessary mentioned in the Actes of the Apostles, as strangled and blood, which was ordained then of the holy ghost."[123] Though perhaps inconsistent, it shows Foxe's commitment to the idea of the Spirit as the mark of true piety.

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[120] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 49.

[121] For an explanation of Aquinas's concept of *actus elicitus*, see Anthony Kenny, who defines *actus elicitus* as an unmediated exercise of the will unaffected by outside sources. Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, Topics in Medieval Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1993), 86–87.

[122] Foxe does not attribute this prohibition to Jew-Gentile relations but to Roman laws regarding blood that he thinks may have sparked greater persecution of the early believers. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 79.

[123] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 79.

Final Thoughts

Foxe's commitment to this distinctly Protestant piety shaped the entire book. His dichotomies of spiritual versus fleshly piety, grace-driven versus law-driven piety, love-driven versus hate-driven piety, and spiritual versus ceremonial piety defined what he felt true religion was and dictated what he would present as commendable in a martyr. But why choose the martyrs as the models of this distinctly Protestant piety? As already shown, not all the martyrs were perfect exemplars of the Protestant ideal. Nevertheless, Foxe saw the category of martyr as especially suited to expressing what he called true piety. In the next section, I will show that Foxe used the martyrs as models because the presence and work of the Holy Spirit laid at the heart of his theology of piety. The martyrs were already seen as uniquely Spirit-filled and thus the ideal exemplars of Foxe's true religion. Furthermore, the concept of cosmic battle that had been used to interpret the martyr experience from the earliest centuries of the church served as the perfect bridge to promoting Protestant piety.

The Spirit as the Heart of True Piety

At the heart of Foxe's distinctions between true and false piety was his pneumatology. The genuineness of the church was to be judged by the inward presence of the Spirit. Foxe uses this concept to undermine the concept of apostolic succession as proof of Roman Catholicism's veracity:

> Irenæus, Ambrose, Augustine, and Theodoritus affirm that the Church of Rome is the chief of all other Churches. Ergo, the Bishop and head of that Church is chief and head over all other bishops, & head of all other Churches. But this consequent is to be denied, for that the excellency of the Church or place doth not always argue the excellency of the minister or bishop, nor yet necessarily doth cause the same. For in matters of the Church which are spiritual, all preeminence standeth upon spiritual & inward gifts.[124]

What are the spiritual and inward gifts? Right doctrine and Spirit-empowered piety: "faith, piety, learning and godly knowledge, zeal and fervency in the holy ghost, unity of

[124] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 39.

doctrine."[125] To drive home his point, Foxe parenthetically quotes 1 Corinthians 2:13 from the Vulgate: *spiritualia enim spiritualibus comparantur* ("comparing spiritual things with spiritual things").[126] The Scripture in context clarifies Foxe's view: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14). For Foxe, the "outward" piety of the Catholic Church is natural and fleshly piety.

By contrast, the true church was empowered by the Spirit. For example, it was the Spirit who elected clergy[127] and, most importantly, empowered the sacraments.[128] The true practice of the sacraments was not external but merely a "seal of faith" and "declaration thereof."[129] This is key, for the piety Foxe promoted was not merely internal; he was not promoting the life of the desert ascetic. Instead, its source and working were always internal first, with the external expression of the Spirit's inner working. It always began with the inner change of faith worked by the Spirit, but then it worked out upon a pattern following the Great Commandment: first love of God, then love of neighbor (Matt 22:37–38). In the former place were qualities: "peace of conscience, joy in the holy ghost, invocation, patience, charity, [and] mercy" culminating in love. In the latter place was "for his sake also to love our brethren" with all other "spiritual exercises of piety."[130] In Foxe's words, acts of piety were always "fruits, & effects following" Spirit-worked faith.[131] The work of the Spirit was at the heart of Foxe's ecclesiology and soteriology. Therefore, it had to be at the heart of his piety.

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[125] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 39

[126] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 39.

[127] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 59.

[128] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1403.

[129] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[130] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[131] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

The Spirit and the Martyr

Why did Foxe see the martyrs as models of his Spirit-filled piety? By nature of their experience, they served as a perfect picture of the true, spirit-filled church. They were outwardly persecuted yet persisted in the inward qualities that marked the presence of the Spirit and thus true piety. The acts of the martyrs he declares to be "such manifest declarations of God's divine working."[132] In contrast to Roman Catholic acts of piety that "the flesh & blood, of his strength is able to accomplish,"[133] the martyrs' qualities are "above man's reach."[134] The heavenly nature of the martyrs' endurance, strength, and godliness was evidence of "the holy ghost which they in their lives so plentifully tasted in their afflictions."[135] It was this ready evidence of the Spirit that made their lives worth emulating.[136]

This concept of the martyrs gaining their strength from the Spirit was not something Foxe imposed upon his subjects. It is something the martyrs claimed for themselves. Stephen Knight (d. 1555) gives this exemplary prayer at the stake: "O Lord Jesu Christ, . . . Send thy holy comforter O Lord, to aid, comfort, and strengthen this weak piece of earth . . . that through the strength of thy holy spirit, I may pass through the rage of this fire."[137] Rowland Taylor expresses his confidence that God will give him the Holy Spirit to help him overcome his adversaries.[138] George Marsh (1515–April 24, 1555) says it is the presence of the Spirit in his heart that gives him the confidence that he

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[132] Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

[133] Foxe, "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 19.

[134] Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

[135] Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

[136] Foxe writes, "The manifold sense and feeling of the holy ghost which they in their lives so plentifully tasted in their afflictions, as in reading of their letters evidently we may understand." Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

[137] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1567. The "weak piece of earth" is a reference to Knight himself, an allusion to Genesis 2:7 and Psalm 103:14.

[138] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1544.

will not recant.[139] Just as the martyrs took hope from the presence of the Spirit in their own lives, appeals to the Spirit are also at the heart of their instruction to others. Marsh writes his wife, "My prayer shall be whilest I am in this world, that god which of his great mercy hath begun his good work in you, will finish it to the glory of his name, and by the mighty power & inspiration of his Holy Spirit so strengthen, establish, and confirm you in all his ways to the end."[140] John Hooper (c. 1495–February 9, 1555) urges his followers to "prepare your selves" in the power of the Spirit.[141] Explicit reliance on the Spirit was at the heart of the martyrs' experience and writings, making them excellent exemplars of the piety Foxe was seeking to promote. However, there was another theme of the martyr experience that further contributed to their value as models of Protestant piety: the theme of cosmic battle.

The Martyr, the Spirit, and the Cosmic Battle

The theme of martyrdom as participation in a grand cosmic conflict runs back to the earliest expressions of martyrology. For example, drawing up Eusebius of Caesarea, Foxe describes the martyrdom of Blandina (c. 162–177) as "having the victory of many battles, might triumph over that ugly Serpent the devil; & that she being a weak and silly woman, and not regarded, armed with Christ the invincible conqueror, might encourage her brethren, and by the enduring of this battle might win a crown of incorruptible glory."[142] The Protestants seized upon this same idea to explain their own

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[139] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1585.

[140] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1734.

[141] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1535.

[142] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 70. "A weak and silly woman" seems an odd inclusion for Foxe, who later presents many of the female Protestant martyrs as wiser and more spiritual than their Catholic accusers (see the discussion of female martyrs in chapter 6). Foxe lifted this section of *Acts and Monuments* from Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 5.1.42. The language is, to modern ears, a poor translation of Eusebius who describes Blandina as "ἡ μικρὰ καὶ ἀσθενὴς καὶ εὐκαταφρόνητος." A better modern translation is "small, weak, and despised as she was…" Rather than a slight upon Blandina, it is intended to magnify the contrast between her outward appearance of weakness, and her inward spiritual potency, a theme in which Foxe delights. The emphasis is not on the weakness of the woman, but her spiritual potency to strengthen even her brethren (Rom 13:14). For the Greek text and modern translation see Eusebius.

afflictions. The conflict was not between Catholic and Protestant but between God and the devil. Thus, John Careless, drawing upon the same metaphor of battle with the serpent, urges his fellow prisoners, "I do most heartly commit you, with all the rest of your godly prison fellows, who comfort, strengthen, and defend you with his grace & mighty operation of his Holy Spirit, as he hath hitherto done, that you having a most glorious victory over the subtle serpent and all his wicked seed."[143] By conceiving of their plight not as oppression but as conflict between God and the devil, Protestants both united themselves to the ancient church and found spiritual motivation to endure their sufferings.

This concept of the cosmic battle was used not only to embolden Protestants but also to convict them. The existence of a war precluded the question of noncombatants; all were called to take the field. Thus, the martyrs often called their readers to awaken to the spiritual battle and act accordingly. John Hullier (c. 1520–April 16, 1556), a Protestant preacher martyred under Mary I, writes to his congregation, "Therefore in this time we must needs either show that we be his faithful Soldiers, and continue in his battle unto the end . . . or else if we do not work and labour with these, we are Apostates and false soldiers, shrinking most unthankfully from our gracious and sovereign Lord and Captain Christ, and leaning to Beliall."[144] George Marsh writes to Protestants under Mary, not yet imprisoned for their faith, to participate in the battle even if they are not at its forefront: "And seeing brethren, it hath pleased God to set me, and that most worthy minister of Christ, John Bradford, your countrymen in the forefront of this battle, where (for the time) is most danger, I beseech you all in the bowels of Christ

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Ecclesiastical History, Volume I: Books 1-5. Trans. Kirsopp Lake. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 426-427.

[143] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1950.

[144] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1930.

to help us and all other our fellow soldiers standing in like perilous place."[145] Even if they are not physically attacked, they are to participate in the battle through their "prayers to God for us."[146] Even in his request for prayer, Marsh is acutely aware of the exemplary role he and other imprisoned Protestants play, even before they are martyred. So, he writes, "That we may quit ourselves like men in the Lord, and give some example of boldness & constancy."[147] This constancy is to be "mingled with patience in the fear of God, that ye and others our brethren, thorough our example, may be so encouraged and strengthened to follow us, that ye also may leave example to your weak brethren in the world, to follow you."[148] Even those not yet martyred were aware of their role as exemplars and expected others to follow in their footsteps.

The battle theme as utilized by the Protestant martyrs served a dual purpose. By bridging the physical and spiritual, it enabled Protestants to encourage one another to fight both physically and spiritually. The call to be willing to die was repeatedly used as a call to "love not the world."[149] To follow the model of the martyrs entailed a willingness to suffer death, but it also entailed emulating far more mundane spiritual disciplines:

> Be meek, & long suffering, serve and edify one other, with the gift that God hath given you. Beware of strange doctrine: lay aside the old conversation of greedy lusts, and walk in a new life. Beware of all uncleanness, covetousness, foolish talking, false doctrine & drunkenness: Rejoyce & be thankful towards God, & submit yourselves one to another. Cease from sin, spend no more time in vice, be sober and apt to pray, be patient in trouble, love each other, and let the glory of God and profit of your neighbor, be the only mark ye shoot at in all your doings. Repent ye of the life that is past, and take better heed to your doings hereafter. And above all things cleave ye fast to him, who was delivered to death for our sins, & rose again for our justification.[150]

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[145] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

[146] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

[147] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

[148] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

[149] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

[150] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1595.

In devotional letters like those of Marsh, the martyrs are figures who blur the lines between the physical and spiritual. Thus, they could serve as examples of a willingness to die to self as much as to die for one's convictions. The metaphor extended not only to right behavior but also to right doctrine. The martyrs were examples not just of perseverance but of perseverance in the Protestant truth. The combatants were not only the papal Antichrist and his bishops but also "spiritual wickedness, wicked spirits, spirits of errors, of heresies, of all deceit and ungodliness, spirits of Idolatry, superstition & hypocrisy, which are called of Saint Paul, Principalities and powers."[151] Stalwart Protestant belief was itself an act of spiritual warfare.

The concept of cosmic battle evoked so often by the martyrs was used not only as call to join the fight but also as an indictment of the spiritual lethargy that brought about the fight in the first place. Drawing upon biblical themes of warning, judgment, and retribution, many of the Marian martyrs blamed Mary I's rise on impurity and lack of fervency in England's spirituality. John Bradford, in a letter to his followers, attributes the rise of Queen Mary to the inadequate piety of Protestants before her reign:

> The world my brethren semeth to have the upper hand, iniquity overfloweth, the truth and verity seemeth to be suppressed, and they which take part therewith, are unjustly entreated: as they which love the truth lament to see and hear, as they do. The cause of all this is Gods anger, and mercy: his anger, because we have grievously sinned against him.[152]

Bradford makes clear that the sins he has in view are sins of apathy and impurity with regard to piety: "We have been unthankful for his word: We have contempted his kindness: We have been negligent in prayer: We have been so carnal, covetous, licentious We have not hastened to heavenward, but rather to hellward."[153] Thus, for Bradford, the Marian persecutions are God's "mercy, because he here punisheth us, and as a Father

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[151] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1796.

[152] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1655.

[153] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1655.

nutureth us."[154] Bradford sees the Marian persecution as God's chastisement of England for its lack of true piety and as God's "nurturing' the English godly to "hasten heavenward."

The Martyr as a Model of Christian Living

The martyrs' lives were seen not just as examples of the end of the Christian life but also as models for the whole of it. Of particular interest in this regard is the life of John Glover (d. 1555). Glover's life is instructive because he is one of Foxe's unbloodied martyrs, a category he retained from the medieval tradition. John Glover's younger brother, Robert, was martyred, but John was not. However, Foxe includes John as a martyr because "it pleased God to lay his heavy hand of inward afflictions and grievous passions upon this man."[155] Interestingly, though Foxe excises the "legendary" actions of the medieval martyrs, he retains the category of spiritual martyr. Of John Glover, he writes, "If we consider what inwardly in Spirit and mind this man felt & suffered, and that of so long time, he may well be counted with his brother Robert for a Martyr."[156] Foxe also retains the same categories as the medieval unbloodied martyr—deep internal suffering as well as a willingness to be martyred: "being no less desirous with him of the same Martyrdom: yea, & in comparison may seem to be chronicled a double Martyr."[157] Foxe's retention of the unbloodied martyr concept, even dubbing John Glover a double martyr due to the measure of his internal suffering, shows that the spiritual example of the martyr was still more important than the raw facts of his or her death. It was the

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[154] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1655.

[155] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

[156] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

[157] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

internal struggle and the Spirit's power to sustain the individual through it that made the martyr.

Not only is Glover named a martyr, but also his spiritual life is allegorized according to the shape of martyrdom. For example, in his conversion story, his being convicted of sin is compared to martyrdom:

> He being first called by the light of the Holy Spirit to the knowledge of the gospel, . . . he fully persuaded himself, that he had sinned verily against the holy Ghost: even so much, that if he had been in the deepest pit of hell, he could almost have despaired no more of his salvation . . . . In comparing now the torments of all Martyrs with his pains, I pray you what pains, punishment, and flames would not he willingly have suffered, to have had some reconciliation[158]

Foxe here presents the spiritual pattern of martyrdom as the pattern of conversion: The same Spirit who empowered the martyr to endure the flames of persecution empowered the soul to endure the flames of conviction. Thomas Bilney (c. 1495–August 19, 1531) describes a similar experience:

> As soon as (according to the measure of grace given unto me of God) I began to taste & savor of this heavenly lesson, which no man can teach but only God, which revealed the same unto Peter: I desired the Lord to increase my faith: and at last, I desired nothing more, then that I being so comforted by him, might be strengthened by his Holy Spirit and grace from above[159]

This was a model even the Elizabethan Protestant, not suffering under persecution, could follow: the strengthening of the Spirit to endure the trial of conversion. Many of the conversion stories within *Acts and Monuments* are described in a similar way. They begin with a working of the Holy Spirit in the heart that continues with a great troubling of the heart and then concludes with the Spirit's providing comfort.[160] It is not incidental that this followed the pattern of Foxe's own conversion and that of many other Protestants of the time.

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[158] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

[159] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1029.

[160] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 253.

The Spirit, the Word, and the Truth

Uniquely Protestant to these accounts was that the giving of the Spirit is tied with the study of Scripture. In the case of John Glover, it the giving of the Spirt and the reading of Hebrews 7 that spark his conversion experience.[161] Drawing upon Hebrews 6:4–5, Robert Samuel equates having "become partaker of the Holy Ghost" with having "tasted of the good word of God."[162] In a letter of defense, Laurence Saunders (1519–February 8, 1555) equates being given the Spirit with being "taught of God" and understanding the "true way of salvation."[163] Drawn both from Foxe's own words and the words of the martyrs or their near friends or family, a pervasive theme throughout *Acts and Monuments* is the work of the Holy Spirit in their conversion. In the report of the conversion of John Glover, Foxe writes, "he being first called by the light of the Holy Spirit to the knowledge of the gospel and having received a wonderous sweet feeling of Christ's heavenly kingdom."[164] This connection between Spirit, Word, and conversion runs throughout the book in both the words of Foxe and the martyrs he catalogs.

The connection was a very Protestant application of a truth the Protestants felt was very ancient: the connection between the Spirit and the truth. In a letter defending his Protestant doctrine, John Philpot (1515–December 16, 1555) connects the fullness of the Spirit with a right understanding of the truth:

> The Church here militant ought to consent to the Primitive Church . . . . I understand the unspeakable joy which they have that be at unity with Christ's Primitive Church. For there is joy in the holy Ghost, . . . and having with a greater fullness then we have, now the first fruits of the Holy Ghost, did declare the true interpretation of the Scriptures.[165]

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[161] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

[162] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1729.

[163] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1519.

[164] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1733.

[165] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1864.

Philpot is not alone in making this connection. When describing the conversion of Justin Martyr, Foxe recounts the story of an unnamed old man who convinces Justin "that there was no knowledge of truth amongst the Philosophers, which neither knew God, neither were aided by the holy Ghost."[166] Drawing upon this connection, Protestants were able to justify their interpretations of scripture on the basis that they had received the Holy Spirit. Just so, Robert Smith (d. 1555), in his trial before Edmund Bonner, argues that Protestants are part of the universal Church because they "communicate in that Holy Spirit" who was present in the early church.[167]

This connection between the Spirit and the truth was so directly seen in the model of the martyrs because the martyrs' endurance was so closely tied to their confession. In one sense, this connection is obvious: All the martyrs, both ancient and modern, were killed for the truths they confessed. But for the martyrs within *Acts and Monuments*, this connection between Spirit and truth was not merely a fact but also a source of profound comfort. One of the most common cries in the martyrs' letters is that they would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to hold fast to their confession. This was especially true for martyrs subjected to intensive interrogation and intimidation. George Marsh, a Marian martyr, writes of his experience of several days of interrogation: "And so after much other communication, I departed, much more troubled in my Spirit then afore, because I had not with more boldness confessed Christ, but in such sort, as mine adversaries thereby thought they should prevail against me."[168] Returned to his cell, he writes, "This considered, I cried more earnestly unto God by prayer, desiring him to strengthen me with his Holy Spirit, with boldness to confess him: and to deliver me from their insisting words, and that I were not spoiled through their Philosophy & deceitful

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[166] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1655.

[167] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1715.

[168] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1586.

vanity."[169] Faced with highly educated prosecutors backed by centuries of church tradition, Protestants like Marsh took comfort in the idea that Spirit of truth would sustain them in the face of "vain and deceitful philosophy."

The strength to confess was tied to the strength to endure. The pages of *Acts and Monuments* are filled with Protestant prayers for the aid of the Holy Spirit in enduring a variety of trials associated with the public shame, imprisonment, and ultimate pain of martyrdom.[170] In addition to praying for the Spirit's support, the martyrs attribute their strength to God, specifically, to the Spirit. Robert Glover, writing his own trial account, declares, "To this end (by the mighty assistance of God's Holy Spirit:) I resolved myself with much peace of conscience, willingly to sustain what soever the Romish antichrist should do against me."[171] Nicholas Ridley, in a farewell letter, exclaims, "I trust in my Lord God . . . that he which hath put this mind, will, & affection by his Holy Spirit in my heart to stand against the face of the enemy in his cause, . . . will comfort me, aid me, and strengthen me evermore even unto the end."[172] The martyrs seek the Holy Spirit for strength both to endure the flames as well as for other aspects of their trials. George Marsh, experiencing the pain of being separated from family in prison, prays for the Spirit to aid him in letting them go for the sake of the gospel: "If I might hold them with good conscience, and without the ignominy of Christ: and seeing I could not do that, my trust was that God would strengthen me with his Holy Spirit to lose them all for his sake."[173]

However, the strength to endure need not end in death, as the story of Glover shows. It could be expressed in internal spiritual struggle as well. This is how Foxe

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[169] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1586.

[170] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1534, 1537, 1594, 1680, 1924.

[171] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1735.

[172] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1797.

[173] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1587.

applied the martyrs' wartime spirituality to the lives of peaceful Elizabethans. In *Acts and Monuments*, as the martyrs describe their travails and Foxe adorns these events with his own commentary, dying for Christ and living for Christ are presented without distinction. It is the same spirituality that empowers both. When Robert Glover writes a prayer to his wife, he prays that they both be strengthened by the Spirit.[174] For Glover, this means enduring the flame of martyrdom. For his wife, this means to "give yourself continually to prayer, lifting up as Saint Paul saith, clean or pure hands without anger, wrath, or doubting, forgiving (as he sayth also) if you have anything against any man, as Christ forgiveth us."[175] There is no distinction between the piety that endures the stake and the piety that forgives one's neighbor. The Spirit is seen as the source of strength for both the Christian life and martyrdom.

Furthermore, for both the martyr and the survivor reading their account, this piety was both supernatural and cooperative. It was empowered by the Spirit but required a disciplined response. John Hooper writes to a group of his followers, "Wherefore in the name and in the virtue, strength, and power of his Holy Spirit, prepare yourselves in any case to adversity and constancy."[176] A great many of the letters shared by the martyrs include instructions, exhortations, and prayers for endurance in suffering, but this advice is also freely intermixed with the same regarding sanctification. John Philpot, writing a letter to his sister, mingles instruction on how to endure affliction with instruction on sanctification: "He sanctify you with daily increase of virtue & faith by his Holy Spirit, that you may appear a vessel of sanctification, in the midst of this wicked & perverse

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[174] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1734.

[175] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1734.

[176] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1535.

generation."[177] The "troubles" of persecution are mixed with the "daily temptations," and the solution to both is prayer and daily piety.[178]

While the martyrs used the concept of spiritual warfare to understand their circumstances, Foxe saw the concept only amplified for the Protestants happy and free under Elizabeth. This battle theme was one of Foxe's favorite metaphors to use to appeal to the contemporary Englishman; they should see their lives as a battle, just as the martyrs had: "Moreover, that we being instructed by their example, might be the more prompt and ready in the policies of those wars, to stand more stoutly in battle against our adversaries."[179] With the physical adversaries of the gospel largely banished from England, Foxe pulled heavily on the second application of the spiritual battle metaphor used by the martyrs—that of being separate from the world and battling one's own sin. Speaking of the martyrs, Foxe says, "In considering the end and death of these men, who will greatly long or lust after this life."[180] Contemplating both the martyrs and the biblical figures they echo, he expresses grave concern with the spiritual health of England: "We see so many Prophets of God, even Christ himself the son of God, to be so cruelly and many ways afflicted in this world, turmoiled, scourged and crucified: & yet we laugh, drink, and give ourselves unto all looseness of life, and all lavisciousness."[181] By drawing upon the spiritual half of the metaphor, Foxe is able to make a direct application to the English of his day: "Though we cannot die with them in like martyrdom, yet let us mortify the worldly and profane affections of the flesh, which strive against the Spirit."[182]

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[177] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1859.

[178] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1859.

[179] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

[180] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

[181] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

[182] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1388.

The martyr as model brought this cosmic battle into the life of the believer. It inspired the reader to fight their personal battles with the same urgency and fervency as the martyrs.

The martyrs, then, were a bridge between the physical and spiritual conflict, and they were especially apt as ambassadors of this Spirit-empowered piety because they were seen as uniquely marked by the filling of the Holy Spirit. This, Foxe argues, is the ground of the "utility" of reading martyr stories, namely, "the manifold sense and feeling of the holy ghost which they in their lives so plentifully tasted in their afflictions, as in reading of their letters evidently we may understand."[183] The martyrs exemplified Foxe's "spiritual man" with his inward, heavenly, and anti-ceremonial piety. Thus, they embodied everything Foxe wanted the English church to become in his own time. Foxe argued that by observing the martyrs, one could test one's own piety as in a mirror: "For what man reading the misery of these godly persons, may not therein as in a glass behold his own case, whether he be godly or godless."[184]

Conclusion: The Martyrs as a Bridge

Foxe's presentation of the martyrs' lives reveals his theology of piety. These Spirit-filled archetypes served as the perfect exemplars of Spirit-empowered Protestant piety—a piety that rose not out of the works of man but out of the power of God, and flowed not to sacred spaces and ceremonies, but to love of God and neighbor. The presence of the Spirit defined Foxe's true church and thus allowed him to divide true and false piety. Where the Spirit was, there was Spirit-empowered, grace-driven, love-driven, anti-ceremonial, internal piety. Because the essence of piety was internal and spiritual, Foxe and his martyrs internalized the martyrs' trial, focusing on the martyrs' travail as taking part in a cosmic battle. They applied this battle both to physical persecution and to

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[183] Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

[184] Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15.

the daily struggles of Christian growth. This enabled Foxe to use their actions as models for Christians not suffering under persecution.

The goal of this dissertation is to argue that *Acts and Monuments* must be considered in light of its theological background and pastoral goals in order to truly be understood, namely, that Foxe was using the martyrs as models to promote godly piety and further reformation. This chapter has shown that martyrs within *Acts and Monuments* cannot be understood apart from Foxe's theology of piety. Foxe's presuppositions about what true piety was, where it came from, and how it was expressed shaped the stories he chose to tell and how he chose to tell them. Apart from this background, the book's true intent is lost. Protestant piety is essential to understanding the martyr stories. In the next chapter, I will show how the practice of this piety was expressed in the lives, trials, and deaths of the martyrs.

CHAPTER 6

"EXAMPLES OF GREAT PROFIT": THE PRACTICE OF PIETY IN THE BOOK OF MARTYRS

This dissertation argues that Foxe was seeking to promote Protestant piety with *Acts and Monuments*, using the martyrs as models. In the last chapter, I sought to explain the theology behind that piety. In this chapter, I will reveal how these models functioned. This chapter will demonstrate that Foxe used a specific structural pattern drawn from the ancient martyr stories but modified it to promote distinctly Protestant priorities. To accomplish this, I will illustrate how the martyr pattern functions. Examining the story of John Rogers, Foxe's "protomartyr," I will show how this pattern both legitimizes Protestant martyrs and evokes a genre already understood in order to promote piety. Roger's life reveals the basic structure of the martyr pattern: the life, trial, and death of the martyr. I will explain how each element functions to promote piety, then I will use this pattern as a lens to explore the piety of the martyrs in the rest of *Acts and Monuments*. I will show how in each stage Foxe reveals the distinctly Protestant priorities in his martyr's piety.

The Martyr Pattern

As discussed in the previous chapter, Foxe was particularly concerned with promoting the "pure" piety of the "true church." The martyrs were particularly suited to this because they already had a history of being seen as the clearest examples of the Spirit-filled true church. As Foxe was publishing his various editions, there was already a shared and growing conception of the martyrs as elite exemplars of the true elect and

endowed with special blessings from God.[1] In hagiographies like *The Golden Legend*, this special favor from God was expressed in the merit they could grant to their followers, proved by the power of their relics. For Foxe, however, the special power of the martyrs was expressed in the internal power of the Holy Spirit. Using this understanding of the ancient martyrs as a template, Foxe shaped his presentation of the English martyrs to present them as a continuation of the piety confirmed in the lives of the ancient martyrs. He did this by presenting patterns in the Protestant martyr accounts that emphasized their connection with the lives of their primitive predecessors and thus their legitimacy. This is clearly seen in the life of John Rogers (c. 1505–February 4, 1555). Rogers is a particularly important case because he was the first of the Marian martyrs. Foxe is particularly concerned with the mimetic qualities of principles and pioneers; they become the models whom others of their class are to follow. Constantine is repeatedly exalted as the first Christian emperor and thus the model of Christian emperors to come.[2] John Rogers is presented as the protomartyr of the English martyrs, inaugurating a new class of martyrs that will follow in his footsteps.[3]

Interestingly, this concept of the foremost martyr as the exemplar to all the rest is found not only in Foxe but also in the thought of many others in the Protestant community during the Marian persecution. Just a few days after Rogers was martyred on February 4, 1555, Nicholas Ridley wrote to John Bradford (1510–1555), stating that the manner of Roger's death had revealed the Lord's work and strengthened his own resolve

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[1] Donald Kelly calls this shared understanding the "martyr complex" and charts its development and spread among early Protestants. Donald R. Kelley, "Martyrs, Myths, and the Massacre: The Background of St. Bartholomew," in *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*, ed. Alfred Soman (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1977), 181–202.

[2] John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO*, 1583 ed. (Sheffield: Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), 41, 57, 124, 321, http://www.dhiac.uk/foxe.

[3] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517, 1754.

to be martyred.[4] Within the week after Laurence Saunders (1519–February 8, 1555), John Hooper (c. 1495–February 9, 1555), and Rowland Taylor (October 6, 1510–February 9, 1555) were martyred, Ridley wrote to Augustine Bernher (d. 1565) that he was thankful to know them because "hath holpen those who are gone before in their journey, that is, hath animated and encouraged them to keep the high way."[5] With this precedent, it is no surprise that Foxe continued to use the sentiment to promote the imitation of the martyrs within Elizabethan England.

Thus, when Foxe presents Rogers, it is as "the first Protomartyr of all that blessed company that suffered in Queen Mary's time, that gave the first adventure upon the fire."[6] Roger's blessedness is not simply an affectation but also an indication of God's special favor bestowed upon the ancient martyrs, indicating that Rogers—as all the English martyrs he represented—had joined in their train.[7] Foxe also describes Rogers's travail as an "adventure" to connect Rogers with the theme of cosmic battle that dominated the identity of the early martyrs.[8] The deaths of the English martyrs were seen as evidence that they were entering the spiritual battle, not leaving it. The parallels do not end there. Rogers' trial and execution are shaped to mimic ancient martyrdoms, especially the martyrdom of Stephen, the great protomartyr of the church. When Rogers is called to trial, he begins with a vehement sermon;[9] in prison, he is given a prophesy;[10] and in the woodcut of his burning, he speaks the words of Stephen as he dies: "Lord

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[4] Henry Christmas, ed., *The Works of Nicholas Ridley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845), 378.

[5] Christmas, *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, 380.

[6] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

[7] John Foxe, "Four Considerations Given Out to Christian Protestant Professors of the Gospel," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 20; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 53, 57, 58, 69, 70, 71, 73, 81, 84, 88, 93, 95.

[8] For "adventure" as an indication of battle, see Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 125, 165, 294, 836.

[9] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

[10] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1516.

receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59).[11] By tying Rogers to Stephen, Foxe is connecting all the English martyrs to the same spirit of martyrdom that had come before. Doing so both legitimizes the Protestant martyrs and marks them as individuals to be imitated.

The Martyr Pattern in the Life of John Rogers

Though Foxe uses parallels to place his martyrs in the same category as those of the early church, the martyr stories he presents are profoundly Protestant. Early martyrdom stories exhibited similar patterns but with different goals. William Schoedel describes the pattern in the early martyrs as (1) the martyr's "birthday," (2) the transformation of the martyr to a higher existence, (3) the martyr's possession of preternatural powers, (4) the image of sacrifice, and (5) the imitation of Christ.[12] Key to this early pattern is the elevation of the martyr to a supernatural status and the confirmation thereof by supernatural powers. While this pattern certainly exalts the work of God in the martyr, it places greater emphasis on the prestige and works of the martyr.

Foxe retains the basic structure of birth, life, and imitative death, but he removes a great deal of the supernatural and sacrificial. He is far less concerned with the martyr being exceptional and far more with the martyr being exemplary. Foxe's martyr stories are surprisingly domestic affairs. They often begin with idealistic biographies but focus on birth, child rearing, early devotion, education, conversion experiences, and the ministry of the individual, formal or informal. As the protomartyr, Rogers provides an excellent window into the pattern Foxe uses to explicate the lives of the Protestant martyrs. He begins Rogers' story by "first touching his life and bringing up."[13] This

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[11] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517.

[12] William Schoedel, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol. 5, *Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), 48. The martyr's birthday is placed in quotes because, in some cases, this is not the story of the martyr's birth but of their conversion, discovery, or confirmation of their status, which serves as a substitute birth story, according to Schoedel.

[13] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

section tells the story of the martyr's birth, devotion, education, and conversion. In Rogers' case, lacking information about his childhood, the narrative hurries to his time at Cambridge, but in other cases, Foxe adds descriptions of child rearing and family when he has them. Of particular focus in all the narratives is the martyr's education. Whether formal or informal, Foxe is very concerned with showing that the martyr is educated in the Scriptures and that their godly life flows from this knowledge. Foxe was particularly interested in learning—but learning of a Protestant type in keeping with his distinction between true and false piety. This is typically followed by a conversion narrative, which allows Foxe to present doctrines of particular Protestant conflict to educate his readers. In Rogers's case, this doctrinal conflict comes in the form of his rejection of priestly celibacy.[14]

After the conversion narrative comes a description of the martyr's life and ministry. This section allows Foxe to focus on qualities and actions in the life of the martyr that he sees as particularly exemplary. His praises of Rogers are typical but telling: He is diligent, faithful, of good conscience, honest, and most of all devoted to "true religion."[15] Though none of these praises of Rogers is unique, Foxe's repetition of them reveals the values he seeks to promote. The section on the martyr's life is followed by the circumstances of the martyr's arrest and persecution. Far from mere historical accounts, the facts of the martyr's persecution and arrests are sprinkled with spiritual language that places the martyr's suffering in the context of the conflict between God and the devil. Apocalyptic conflict language abounds in these sections as Foxe stages a drama of the godly hero against "the Antichrist of Rome, with his Idolatry and superstition."[16]

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[14] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

[15] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

[16] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

The persecution section is followed with extensive—and when possible eyewitness—reports of the martyr's trials.[17] The trial accounts present a stage upon which a theatre of piety is played out, as Foxe displays a dramatically different style of life between the martyrs and their persecutors.[18] Next, Foxe often includes any prison writings left by the martyr.[19] These often include further proclamations of Protestant doctrine and encouragement sent by the martyr to their followers or families. These reveal the martyrs applying their spiritual trials in persecution to the daily lives of those outside prison, showing the martyr as a model even before their deaths. In some cases, these writings may include confirmatory supernatural events that harken back to the prison writings of the early martyrs. For example, Rogers receives a prophecy regarding the future of England.[20]

Next, the martyr's death is described. These sections are highly symbolic and serve as the confirmation of the piety that has already been presented in the life of the martyr. In Rogers's account, this section is structured as a recapitulation of Stephen's

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[17] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508–12.

[18] The concept of the trial and execution as a dramatic performance of supernatural realities was one common to both early and Protestant martyrologies. Early martyrs and their biographers often used the language and metaphors of theatre to describe their travails, and Protestants widely picked up this pattern. For a description of this pattern in the early martyrs, see R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 92–93. For a description of wider Protestant reception and use of this theme, see Ritchie D. Kendall, *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380–1590*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), passim.

[19] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1523–16. In some cases, these letters are selected or edited by Foxe to present the content most in keeping with Protestant ideals. Most significant in this regard is Foxe's selection and redaction of the acts and letters of female martyrs to conform to the complex and evolving roles of women in the midst of the Protestant Reformation. A significant number of studies have been done on this aspect of TAM, Marsha S. Robinson, "Doctors, Silly Poor Women, and Rebel Whores: The Gendering of Conscience in Foxe's Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 235–48; Megan L. Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Megan L. Hickerson, "Gospelling Sisters 'Goinge up and Downe': John Foxe and Disorderly Women," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1035–51; Susan Monta, "Foxe's Female Martyrs and the Sanctity of Transgression," *Renaissance and Reformation* 25, no. 1 (2001): 3–22; Annie Morphew, "'Every Man May Ghesse What a Woman She Was': John Foxe and the Problem of Female Martyrdom," *A Journal of History* 1 (2017): 7–23.

[20] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1516.

martyrdom in order to affirm that Rogers's life is of the same quality as Stephen's. The vast majority of Foxe's miracles come in these sections. In contrast to the hagiographic tradition, these are usually miracles of endurance, the martyrs supernaturally facing excruciating pain "cheerfully" and "with wonderful patience."[21]

Finally, in the case of church leaders, Foxe includes the letters of the martyrs as a final testament of their lives and teachings. Though each martyr account differs slightly in presentation, the pattern is obvious and repetitive. In the next section, I will look at how Foxe presents martyr piety in each major division of the martyr story.

Piety in Martyrs' Lives: Birth, Marriage, and Child Rearing

For Foxe to begin with the life and upbringing of the martyrs is not unexpected. This was a typical hagiographic convention of the day exhibited in many of the stories of *The Golden Legend*. However, Foxe's biographies show an important evolution of the form. In *The Golden Legend*, the birth stories are used primarily to point out elements of the saint's story that are extraordinary. For example, *The Golden Legend* reports that St. Christopher is a Canaanite of prodigious size, a righteous inversion of the scriptural Goliath.[22] St. Dorothy is of Roman noble lineage.[23] St. Symphorien is more righteous than the ancient ascetics even in his childhood.[24] In keeping with the saints' meritorious and intercessory roles, *The Golden Legend* uses their biographies to display their exceptionalism. In contrast, Foxe's biographies are designed to present attainable examples. The life of William Hunter (d. March 19, 1555) provides an excellent window into this concept.

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[21] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517.

[22] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, 2 vols., ed. F. S. Elliot, trans. William Caxton, Temple Classics (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1931), 4:53.

[23] Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 7:22.

[24] Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 5:16.

Hunter is of particular interest because of his age. He was martyred at only 19, and Foxe emphasizes his youth as part of his instructional value, entitling his biography "A notable history of William Hunter, a young man of 19 years . . . worthy of all young men and parents to be read."[25] There is a long precedent of special interest in child martyrs and saints within the hagiographic literature, so Foxe may have been interested in presenting something of a Protestant alternative with Hunter. Unlike the hagiographic tradition, however, which tended to focus on child saints for their innocence, Foxe focuses on William Hunter for his upbringing.[26] Rather than pointing to supernatural child godliness, as in the story of St. Symphorien, Foxe emphasizes how William is raised by "godly parents: by whom he was not only instructed in true religion and godliness, but also confirmed by them unto death."[27] Foxe presents William's parents as examples "whereby Christian parents may learn what is to be done not only in their children, but also in themselves, if need at any time do require, or godliness should demand the duty of a Christian man against natural affection."[28] The godliness "against natural affection" to which Foxe refers is the willingness of William's parents to allow him to go to the stake for his faith. In the story, William's father first colludes to hide him,[29] and when he is apprehended, his mother and father encourage him to endure unto death.[30] Foxe credits William's godliness to his parents' instruction.

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[25] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1559.

[26] Patricia Wasyliw provides a summary of the development of child saints, who were increasing in popularity and proliferation in the late Middle Ages due to an interest in childhood innocence. Patricia Healy Wasyliw, *Martyrdom, Murder, and Magic: Child Saints and Their Cults in Medieval Europe*, Studies in Church History 2 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 39–58.

[27] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1559.

[28] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1560.

[29] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1560. When William is accused by the village vicar of having Protestant convictions, his father is sent to find him and bring him for trial. The father feigns cooperation intending to deceive the constable. Unfortunately, he leads the authorities to his son accidentally. Foxe adds the clarifying marginal note that his intent was deception to allow William time to flee.

[30] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1562. Foxe may have in view a righteous inversion of stories like that of Fanius, whose family seek to dissuade him from martyrdom. Foxe, 959.

Though Foxe does not explicitly explain the content of the Hunters' child rearing, the qualities Foxe has in view are obvious from the story: The constant theme is the young man's dedication to Scripture. William is first caught by the authorities for reading the English Scriptures, and when pressed to relinquish them, he refuses because "it is Gods book, out of the which every one that hath grace, may learn to know what things both please God, & also what displeaseth him."[31] William's knowledge of Scripture is presented as more than a match for both his local vicar and the royal examiner at his trial. When William is brought before Commissioner Anthony Browne (1509/10–1567), Browne opens his accusations with "I hear say you are a Scripture man."[32] When pressed to exposit several Scriptures with regard to the Lord's supper, William does so so skillfully that his accuser is forced to repeatedly switch passages until, frustrated by William's knowledge, he seizes William's Bible and throws it down in fury.[33] With his Bible thus taken, William still makes his confession by quoting Scripture from memory.[34] Foxe is clearly presenting William as a young man well trained in the Scriptures. By holding up his martyr story as "worthy of all young men and parents to be read,"[35] Foxe is clearly calling parents to provide the same training for their children and calling children to emulate the training of William Hunter.

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[31] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1560.

[32] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1561.

[33] Foxe writes, "Well, quoth M. Browne, because you can expound that place so well, how say you to an other place, turning to the xxij. of S. Luke? and master Browne said, look here (quoth he) for Christ saith, that the bread is his body. To the which William answered, the text saith, how Christ took bread, but not that he changed it, into another substance, but gave that which he took, and brake that which he gave, which was bread, as is evident by the text. For else he should have had two bodies, which to affirm I see no reason, said William. At the which answer M. Browne was very angry, & took up the Bible and turned the leaves, and then flung it down again in such a fury, that William could not well find the place again wherof they reasoned." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1561.

[34] William makes his bold stand on a quotation of Philippians 3:8. Foxe recounts, "But William answered, I thank you for your great offers: notwithstanding, my Lord, said he, if you can not persuade my conscience with Scriptures: I can not find in my heart to turn from God for the love of the world: for I count all things worldly, but loss and dung, in respect of the love of Christ." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1562.

[35] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1559.

Hunter provides a particularly vivid example of Foxe's and the Protestant martyr's interest with home and child rearing in general. Part of this is the result of clerical marriage, which had only recently become permissible under Edward VI with the Clergy Marriage Act of 1548.[36] Part of John Rogers's conversion reported by Foxe is his realization "that Matrimony is both honest and honorable amongst all men."[37] This statement is not insignificant. Eric Carlson has noted that Foxe was one of the first English Protestants to celebrate marriage as holier than virginity.[38] Foxe displays many martyrs navigating the newfound intersection of marriage, family, ministry, and martyrdom. For example, Foxe reports many of the clerical martyrs' efforts to comfort and provide for their wives and children from prison.[39] Many of the martyrs wrote letters to their wives urging them to passionately keep the faith in their absence.[40] While many of these exhortations are to prepare to endure the suffering of martyrdom, often they are exhortations to daily living as well. Laurence Saunders writes his wife, "Let us in the name of our God, fight lustily to overcome the flesh, the devil and the world. What our harness and weapons be in this kind of fight, look thee unto the Ephesians, and pray, pray, pray."[41] The obvious tension for these martyrs between familial affection and suffering for Christ caused Foxe to append his own advice to Saunders's letter to his wife: "Let all married couples and parents learn to bear in their bosom true affections:

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[36] The introduction of clerical marriage brought significant political and social upheaval, as seen in the work of John Yost and Richard Spielmann. The letters of the Marian clerical martyrs recorded in TAM show further evidence of Protestants seeking to negotiate the complexities of this new domestic condition among the clergy. John Yost, "The Reformation Defense of Clerical Marriage in the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI," *Church History* 50, no. 2 (June 1981): 152–65; Richard Spielmann, "The Beginning of Clerical Marriage in the English Reformation: The Reigns of Edward and Mary," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 56, no. 3 (September 1987): 251–63.

[37] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508.

[38] Eric Josef Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation*, Family, Sexuality, and Social Relations in Past Times (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 58.

[39] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 908, 1508, 1521, 1524.

[40] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1537, 1541.

[41] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1520.

natural, but yet seasoned with the true salt of the spirit, unfeignedly and thoroughly mortified to do the natural works and offices of married couples & parents, so long as with their doing they may keep Christ."[42]

This warning represents a tension in the domestic instruction contained within *Acts and Monuments*: the rejection of earthly relationships to follow God. The martyrs are commended for giving up their families to embrace death, but other, more earthly, rejections are also encouraged. Anne Askew disobeys the authority of a priest to attend a Protestant sermon, and her language shows no little amount of rebellion.[43] Even more shocking is the situation of an unnamed female martyr of Exeter, known only as the "wife of Prest." Foxe describes her family as "much addicted to the superstitious sect of popery: . . . to their Idols and ceremonies, to shrift, to follow the Cross in Procession."[44] The woman comes to Protestant convictions, and Foxe describes a surprising work of the Spirit in her:

> She made her prayer unto God, calling for help and mercy, and so at length lying in her bed, about midnight, she thought there came to her a certain motion and feeling of singular comfort. Whereupon in short space, she began to grow in contempt of her husband and children, and so taking nothing from them, but even as she went, departed from them.[45]

Foxe's speaking of this act with complete approval is surprising in early modern England's patriarchal and highly structured domestic context. But it becomes reasonable in light of Foxe's understanding of martyrdom as participation in the cosmic war between God and the devil.[46] At the woman's trial, she evokes the words of Christ in Matthew

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[42] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1521.

[43] Askew's statement shows that her actions were specifically intended to evoke a response: "I went thither indeed, not being afraid, because I knew my matter to be good. Moreover, I remained there ix. days to see what would be said unto me." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1260.

[44] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2074. To "shrift" is to give confession to a priest.

[45] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2074.

[46] Hickerson makes a similar observation but goes further. She argues that Foxe "did not design these women to serve as models of virtuous behavior for living female members of a godly community; rather, as characters in a historical and cosmic drama." Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in*

19:29 to justify her actions, saying, "Where I must either forsake Christ, or my husband, I am contented to stick only to Christ my heavenly spouse."[47] Accounts like these show that Reformation convictions were causing a change in domestic order as women were called to follow the authority of God over their husbands.

Many of the martyrs' letters, presented as "monuments" of the martyrs' exemplary piety, give instruction on the Christian home. John Hooper writes from prison to encourage his congregation to commit the duties of their homes to God: "He will help the husband, he will comfort the wife, he will guide the servants, he will keep the house, he will preserve the goods: yea, rather then it should be undone, he will wash the dishes, and rock the cradle. Cast therefore all your care upon God, for he careth for you."[48] Thomas Haukes gives his wife specific directives on how to instruct their children in the faith:

> My desire is that they may be brought up in the fear of God, and in his laws. And this is to certify you, that ye deliver in any wise my eldest son unto M. Throgmorton . . . my desire is that it be brought up in the fear of God to the uttermost of your endeavor, with some honest man that hath the fear of God before his eyes.[49]

To the tutor Throckmorton, Haukes writes with even greater specificity:

> Where as the love of God hath moved you to require my son to be brought up before your eyes, & the self-same love hath also moved me in like case to leave him in your hands, as unto a father in absence, I shall require you in Gods behalf according to your promise, that ye will see him brought up in the fear of the Lord, and instructed in the knowledge of his holy word, that he may thereby learn to leave the evil and know the good, and always be pricked forward with fatherly instructions to follow my footsteps, that as almighty God hath made me worthy through his special

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Tudor England, 160. I believe Hickerson goes too far. For Foxe, expecting as he was the imminent return of Christ, the cosmic war and the present experience were profoundly intertwined. Foxe allowed such exemplars of domestic rebellion within TAM not because he thought it could be partitioned off from real life but because he saw their rebellion not as domestic discord but as obedience to a higher authority, which was a key Protestant value.

[47] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2074.

[48] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1506.

[49] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1618.

> grace to work his will in obedience, he may learn to follow me his father in the like, to gods honor and praise.[50]

Thomas Wattes even gives a final charge to his children from the stake: "As the Lord hath given you unto me, so I give you again unto the Lord, whom I charge you see you do obey, and fear him."[51] The birth, child rearing, and domestic aspects of Foxe's martyr stories reveal the Protestant shift from emulating supernatural superheroes to imitating attainable exemplars. They are concerned with the mundane actions of cultivating children, marriages, and homes rather than transcending to a greater plane of sainthood. This continues in Foxe's focus on ministry and community.

Piety in Martyrs' Lives: Ministry, Community, and Conversion

While the martyrs' concern with the household focuses on extreme situations, the ministry of Rowland Taylor and the village of Hadleigh reveals Foxe's concern with domestic life in more ordinary conditions. Foxe describes the village of Hadleigh in his description of the life of Rowland Taylor (October 6, 1510–February 9, 1555). Taylor was born in Rothbury, Northumberland. He attended Cambridge, where he encountered the preaching ministry of Hugh Latimer and was converted. Through Latimer, he became connected to Thomas Cranmer and was ultimately appointed rector of Hadleigh. Foxe's use of Taylor is notable because of Taylor's lack of notoriety. Unlike the Reformation luminaries of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and others whom Foxe immortalized in *Acts and Monuments*, Taylor labored in relative obscurity.[52] Hadleigh was a small town roughly

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[50] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1618.

[51] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1620.

[52] J. C. Ryle notes this peculiarity as well as the dearth of information regarding Taylor outside TAM. J. C. Ryle, *Five English Reformers* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), 71. Until recent years, nothing could be known of his thought outside his trial accounts contained in TAM. The original accounts of his examination that Foxe edited for inclusion in TAM are contained in Harleian 590, fols. 64r–68r, British Library. In more recent years, a handful Taylor's letters have been discovered in the Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge. Western MSS 260 fol. 143; 262 fols. 186v–192. Something of his thought can also be attained through the marginalia of his personal Bible, a study of which has been conducted by John S. Craig. John S. Craig, "The Marginalia of Dr. Rowland Taylor," *Historical Research* 64 (1991): 411–20.

fifty miles from London with no political or religious significance. Though Taylor gains some importance in the narrative through his connections to Latimer and Cranmer, his ministry in Hadleigh was unremarkable by worldly standards. He wrote no books, published no sermons, and was not famous in his time. Nevertheless, Foxe's account of him is vivid and extensive, revealing that Taylor's importance to Foxe was found not in his worldly importance but in the exemplary manner of his life. This makes his story of particular interest for the study of piety because Foxe is not presenting a significant national figure but an ideal parish minister.[53]

The picture of an ideal ministry provides insight into Foxe's ideal piety. Foxe first presents Taylor as a "good shepherd, abiding and dwelling among his sheep."[54] Foxe deliberately points out that Taylor did not practice absenteeism; instead, he left the favored environment of Cranmer's household to labor among his congregation.[55] Clerical opulence, immorality, ignorance, and absenteeism were the chief Protestant complaints aimed at the professional ministry.[56] That Taylor was a university-educated minister who

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[53] Recent revisionist studies have challenged Foxe's view of Taylor as an ideal minister. His involvement in several royal visitations as well as Cranmer's efforts at the reform of the canon law has caused Eric Josef Carlson to describe Taylor as "Cranmer's troubleshooter . . . not as Foxe's ideal pastor." Eric Josef Carlson, "Taylor, Rowland (d. 1555), Clergyman and Protestant Martyr," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27079. Whether Foxe or Carlson is more accurate in his assessment is a matter of dispute, but that does not diminish the value of Foxe's account of Taylor as a window into the Protestant ideal of ministry. For a discussion of my approach to dealing with such difficulties in TAM, see chapter 1.

[54] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542. Foxe adds the marginal note "A good shepherd and his condition" to drive home the point that Taylor is being presented as an exemplary minister.

[55] There is some irony in this presentation of Taylor's rejecting absenteeism since Foxe to some extent practiced it himself. Foxe held two prebends, but his publishing ministry kept him from practicing the pastoral ministry he describes as ideal. He did make special provisions for others to provide ministry to the parishes under his care, but he failed to live up to his own ideals in this regard. Warren W. Wooden, *John Foxe*, Twayne's English Authors Series (Boston: Twayne, 1983), 10; Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 104. J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 64.

[56] Whether lay dissatisfaction with the clergy was a significant motivation for the Reformation is an object of great debate. Traditionalists like A. G. Dickens have painted it as a significant contributor to the lay public's willingness to consider reformation, while revisionists like Christopher Haigh have labeled such interpretations "whiggish teleology." The debate over the complexity of lay opinion will rage on as new evidence continues to be discovered and interpreted, but what is undeniable is that Protestants idealized the local, educated, and active ministry epitomized in the image of Taylor as presented in TAM.

left the halls of political prominence to embrace parish ministry made him an especially fitting candidate to present Foxe's vision of the ideal Protestant minister, as he epitomizes the antithesis of the ministry that Protestants were attacking.

What, then, was the content of the ministry of the clerical paragon? The predominant theme of Taylor's ministry is the study and application of the Word. Taylor is presented as giving himself "wholly to the study of holy Scriptures,"[57] in fulfillment of Christ's command to Peter to feed his sheep (John 21:17). When describing Taylor's regular preaching, Foxe adds the marginal note that the correct interpretation of John 21:17 is "to feed with the word."[58] In fact, Foxe shows by his marginal notes that the entire pastoral ministry is a fulfillment of Christ's command to "feed the sheep." Each section of Taylor's ministry is given a marginal heading of "Feed with . . . ." When Foxe speaks of Taylor's exemplary life, it, too, is a "word . . . unto them," and Foxe adds the marginal note that Taylor's actions "feed with example."[59] The heart of parish ministry for Foxe was the ministry of the Word. This fits Foxe's conception of ministry generally. One can also see Foxe's conception of parish ministry in his printing of Henry's Royal Injunctions of 1538 within *Acts and Monuments*. This document represents another one of Foxe's "monuments" of the Christian religion, printed in full within *Acts and Monuments* to instruct the reader in its contents.[60] These injunctions clearly show the Protestant project for local ministry as they repeal all ceremonial aspects of Catholic

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A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 45–50; Christopher Haigh, "Anticlericalism and the English Reformation," *History* 68, no. 224 (1983): 391.

[57] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542–43.

[58] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1543.

[59] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1543.

[60] The nature of the distinction is clear in the Royal Injunctions as the repeal of the ceremony is placed immediately before the establishment of preaching, showing a clear pattern of removal and replacement. The Royal Injunctions of 1538 were based upon Thomas Cromwell's injunctions of 1536 and represented a significant Protestant victory within the reign of Henry VIII. Thomas S. Freeman, "Royal Articles and Injunctions," in *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 1091 (apparatus).

worship and replace them with educated preaching.[61] The Protestant replacement for ceremonial piety was Scripture-centric piety.

As Taylor is presented as a model minister, so Hadleigh is presented as a model town.[62] Foxe had a particular interest in Hadleigh because of the success of the Reformation there. He reports how the town first received the reformed understanding of the gospel through the preaching of Thomas Bilney (c. 1495–August 19, 1531).[63] In his marginal note, Foxe directs the reader that Hadleigh is to be "commended."[64] Foxe describes Hadleigh as "one of the first that received the word of God in all England."[65] This phrase is telling for two reasons. First, Hadleigh was one of the first towns to receive the Protestant gospel. As seen above in the case of John Rogers, this primacy of place holds great mimetic significance for Foxe. As Rogers becomes a model for English martyrs, Hadleigh becomes a model of how an English town ought to respond to the

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[61] Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 1091.

[62] John Craig has argued that Foxe's depiction of Hadleigh is highly idealized, pointing to continued conflict over the Reformation in the town as evidence that the Reformation was as highly contested in Hadleigh. As Craig points out, the weight of the argument lies upon the revisionist assumption that social relations before the Reformation were "essentially harmonious, cemented together by the reconciling activities of the parish priest and institutions such as guilds and fraternities and demonstrated in the festive and charitable rituals of rogationtide processions, church ales, the distribution of holy bread, and kissing the pax." John S. Craig, "Reformers, Conflict, and Revisionism: The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Hadleigh," *Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (1999): 1–23. In this assessment, the introduction of conflict will always been seen as a downgrade, and Craig presents several ongoing conflicts that Foxe does not report. However, Foxe and Craig seem to be at cross purposes on this point. Foxe's assessment of Reformation progress is found not in a lack of conflict but in the presence of Protestant piety and especially scriptural knowledge. Regardless, there is other evidence beyond the question of conflict that must be taken into account when assessing the success or failure of the Protestant ministry at Hadleigh. For instance, the Protestant project of poverty care seems to have been largely successful. Foxe notes the inception of the ministry under Taylor, and Marjorie Keniston McIntosh has praised the system of poverty care in Hadleigh as "the most complex array of help offered by any English town, one that we may still admire today." Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh, Suffolk, 1547–1600*, Studies in Regional and Local History 12 (Hatfield, UK: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013), 1. McIntosh's study reveals that discussions of the success or failure of Reformation projects are often decided upon which evidences are being studied.

[63] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

[64] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542. For discussion of how Foxe uses his marginalia to instruct the reader, see Susan Felch, "Shaping the Reader in the Acts and Monuments," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. D. M. Loades, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1997), 52–65.

[65] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

gospel. Second, Foxe equates the gracious reception of reformed preaching with "receiving the word of God," a shorthand Foxe uses for the gospel, often in contrast man-made traditions.[66]

Foxe's presentation of Hadleigh is highly idealized, but it reveals his vision of the ideal English parish. He relates that Bilney's preaching "took such root there, that a great number of that parish became exceeding well learned in the holy Scriptures."[67] While any parish preacher might hope for his parish to become familiar with the Scriptures, Foxe's turn of phrase is deliberate. He often uses that phrase either to describe those clergy who are admirable in their knowledge[68] or ironically to describe those persecutors of the reformers who ought to have more understanding than they do.[69] In so doing, Foxe levels the gap between clergy and laity, or rather he raises up the laity to the level and responsibility of the clergy. This empowerment extends to women as well as men and even to servants and children.[70] To press home this leveling of scriptural knowledge, Foxe states that "the whole town seemed rather a University of the learned, then a town of Clothmaking or laboring people."[71] Foxe draws out the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of believers in a profoundly practical way—the people ought to act as educated priests.

Foxe's vision of Hadleigh provides another insight into the type of community Protestant piety was designed to form. Eamon Duffy has done extensive work studying

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[66] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 47, 49, 93, 110.

[67] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

[68] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 904, 1056, 1061, 1542, 1884.

[69] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 630, 873, 1018.

[70] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

[71] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

the effects of Roman Catholic piety on the community of Morebath.[72] Duffy shows how piety centered upon parish activities such as the organization of church guilds to fund ceremonies, the purchasing of candles to place in the saints' shrines, the keeping of church sheep, and the brewing of church ales.[73] Such activities did form a vibrant and robust community centered upon the sanctified spaces, ceremonies, and offices of the church. The parish church provided the holy activity, and the community participated in it. Foxe's vision of a holy community moves the center of piety. As the Spirit and the Word transform the people, clothmaking or laboring people become like clergy, the entire town like a university; sacred space expands from the church and shrine to the entire town. And so it is with sacred activity. For Foxe, piety is all that flows from a pure heart and terminates with love of God and neighbor.[74] Thus, Hadleigh is not marked by piety that terminates upon the church but upon one's neighbor. Foxe notes Hadleigh's system of poverty care as its chief evidence of practical ministry.[75] The contrast between the picture of Morebath and the picture of Hadleigh reveals much about the piety each represents. It is a contrast between acts of ceremony and support for religious institutions and acts of love and service for God and neighbor.

Foxe's metaphor of Hadleigh as a university is particularly interesting given how universities are presented within *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe had a particularly warm relationship with the University of Oxford, seeing it as a seedbed of the Reformation and the cradle of his own conversion. [76] Within *Acts and Monuments*, universities oscillate

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[72] Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

[73] Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath*, 25–44.

[74] See chapter 5.

[75] Foxe notes this in a fairly short commendation of the town's giving of alms for the poor, but external evidence reveals that Reformation Hadleigh had one of the most robust and complex systems of poverty care of any English parish. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542; McIntosh, *Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh*, 1–4.

[76] Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 110.

between being centers of Roman Catholic error forced upon the populace by an educated elite[77] and being cradles of the reformers' faith.[78] Foxe's image of Hadleigh as a university is an ironic inversion, or rather a redemption, of what he thought the ideal university ought to have been. The marks of learning within Hadleigh are that "a man might have found among them many that had often read the whole Bible through, and that could have said a great part of Saint Paul's epistles by heart, and very well & readily have given a godly learned sentence in any matter of controversy."[79] Foxe, through Hadleigh, pictures the true marks of learning as extensive knowledge of the Word, scrupulous memorization of Scripture, and the theological knowledge to answer controversy. This is to be contrasted with the kind of education Foxe accused the Roman Catholic church of cultivating: education full of "men's institutions . . . doctrines and opinions"[80] and constantly in pursuit of "frivolous questions."[81] Here, again, one finds the true and false church shaping Foxe's view of Christian practice.

True learning is a key aspect of true piety for Foxe, who extends the metaphor far beyond factual knowledge to all areas of the Christian life. For Foxe, true learning always results in true piety. This is most clearly seen in the conversion of Thomas Bilney. Foxe describes Bilney as having been "brought up in the University of Cambridge." However, in his conversion gets a better schoolmaster, "even the Holy Spirit of Christ."[82] This true learning then becomes a metaphor for conversion, and study a becomes

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[77] John Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 12; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 345, 414.

[78] Unsurprisingly, Protestant Oxford and Cambridge are two universities given this honor, as Thomas Bilney, William Tyndale, and John Rogers are said to have been "brought up" in their respective universities. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1021, 1098, 1508.

[79] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1542.

[80] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 868.

[81] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 345.

[82] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1022.

metaphor for piety: "He converted his study to those things, which tended more unto godliness then gainfulness as he himself was greatly inflamed with the love of true religion."[83] Many other conversion stories make this connection between the Holy Spirit, true learning, and ultimately piety. John Hooper exhibits a similar transition from worldly education to true and higher learning. He finds "after the study of other sciences" that God had stirred in him a love of Scripture such that "in the reading and searching whereof, as their lacked in him no diligence, joined with earnest prayer: so neither wanted unto him the grace of the holy Ghost to satisfy his desire, and to open unto him the light of true Divinity."[84] True learning results in true religion, which is the essence of piety. John Bradford provides an example of someone converted before university, but the same metaphor is used of him. He is brought up in learning by his parents, but only in his conversion "he was so truly taught, that forthwith his effectual call was perceived by the fruits."[85]

As expected, these conversion narratives are always followed by the praising of the individual's pious lifestyle. The hagiographic tradition also contains similar epideictic sections, which generally exalt the passionate devotion of the martyr or saint. What sets Foxe apart from the hagiographic tradition in these sections is again his distinguishing between true and false expressions of piety. Foxe often praises a martyr's character before his conversion, only to point out that they have discovered a true and better piety after conversion. For instance, Bradford is praised for being honest, hardworking, and studious before his conversion only to "forsake his worldly affairs . . . and with marvelous favor to further the kingdom of God."[86]

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[83] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1022.

[84] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1526.

[85] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1627.

[86] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1627.

Foxe often praises the martyrs' passion for false religion, only to praise their even greater passion for true religion.[87] Laurence Saunders is an excellent example. Foxe describes him before his conversion as diligent and honest, but Foxe's language becomes ebullient when describing him after his conversion. After conversion, Saunders is a man "ravished with the love of learning, and especially with the reading of Gods word," who gives himself "wholly to the study of the holy Scripture."[88] Rather than giving simple and generalized descriptions of Saunders's piety, as he did before Saunders's conversion, Foxe provides an extensive and enthusiastic description of Saunders's personal piety after his conversion:

> In study he was diligent and painful, in godly life he declared the fruits of a well exercised conscience, he prayed often and with great fervor, and in his prayers as also at other times, he had his part of spiritual exercises, which his hearty sighing to God declared. In which when any special assault did come, by prayer he felt present relief: then was his company marvelous comfortable. For as his exercises were special teachings, so in the end they proved singular consolations: wherein he became so expert, that within short space he was able to comfort other which were in any affliction, by the consolation wherewith the Lord did comfort him.[89]

The dual descriptions of Saunders's pre- and post-conversion piety reveal something of Foxe's project. Key to Foxe's entire project is not just promoting piety but distinguishing it. False piety is devout, passionate, and even well-informed, but true piety is the outflow of internal change. Its distinction is qualitative, marked by a rejection of worldly gain[90] and of all acts of superstition,[91] and most importantly marked by the love of Scripture.[92]

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[87] For example, see Rawlins White, Bartlett Green, and William Flower. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1580, 1868, 1597.

[88] This is a favorite accolade of Foxe, who uses the same description for Taylor. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1518; cf. 1543.

[89] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1518.

[90] This is especially noted in the lives of Bilney and Bradford. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1021, 1627.

[91] This is especially noted in the lives of Rogers, Hus, and Marsh. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1508, 242, 1188.

[92] This is especially noted in the lives of Saunders, Hooper, and White. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517, 1526, 2078.

Here, again, Foxe's stories of ministry, community, and conversion show the shift in the martyr pattern to reflect Protestant priorities. Rather than focusing on supernatural feats and superlative persons, Foxe focuses on inner transformation and the cultivation of love of God and neighbor.

Piety in Martyrs' Trials: Education and Exposition

From the very earliest examples of martyrology, the martyr's trial was seen as a place of exhortation and instruction.[93] Foxe's trials retain this aspect but again focus on Protestant priorities, particularly knowledge of Scripture and the marks of "true learning." The most extensive and dramatic of these reports are those of the academic divines who argue on a level playing field with their accusers. Foxe includes a record number of fourteen examinations of John Philpot (1516–1555) in which he combats Edmund Bonner (c. 1500–September 5, 1569) with detailed exegesis, extensive citations of patristic sources, and even several English legal arguments challenging Bonner's right to examine him.[94] Obviously, Foxe does not despise traditional learning. Even so, Philpot self-consciously exhibits the distinction between true and false learning. In his thirteenth examination, he declares to Bonner, "Faith consisteth not only in learning, but in simplicity of believing that which God's word teacheth."[95] This "simplicity" of believing the Word of God is the same true learning exhibited in Hadleigh.

Another exemplar of "learned" simplicity is Hugh Latimer. Foxe was a close friend of Latimer and thus took special care in presenting his life and monuments within *Acts and Monuments*.[96] The Cambridge-educated chaplain to King Edward VI could

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[93] Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 92–93.

[94] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1795–1828. For instance, at one point, Philpot claims he cannot be lawfully examined by the bishop of London because he had not taught within that diocese and had been improperly extradited from his own. Foxe, 1851.

[95] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1848.

[96] Foxe had met Latimer in Oxford, and Latimer had served as a patron of sorts, offering Foxe lodging and facilitating his induction into the circle of the London Protestant elite. Wooden, *John Foxe*, 2;

hardly have been described as unsophisticated. Neither could his preaching, which was highly popular in his time and is still praised for its style and skill.[97] Nevertheless, Foxe presents Latimer as cultivating a simplicity in life and preaching. The first record of his preaching ministry is Foxe's summary of Latimer's lost Christmas sermons of 1529 at Cambridge. Predictably, their contents reflect the internal, spiritual, and anti-ceremonial piety of the rest of *Acts and Monuments*: "For the chief triumph . . . he limited the Heart as the principal thing that they should serve God with all: whereby he quite overthrew all hypocritical and external ceremonies, not tending to the necessary furtherance of Gods holy word and Sacraments."[98] The sum of true religion is, according to Foxe's summary of Latimer sermon, that "the Lord would be worshipped and served in simplicity of the heart and verity" in contrast to the "glistering show of man's traditions."[99] The counter to the "excess" of superstition that Foxe warned against[100] was the simplicity at the heart of Latimer's teaching.

Foxe's presentation of Latimer the man also focuses on simplicity. In another of Latimer's sermons, Latimer presents himself as a simple man: "Let it be admitted for the probation of this, that it might please the king's grace now being, to accept into his favor a mean man, of a simple degree, and birth, not borne to any possession."[101] Foxe exhorts his readers to follow him in this attitude: "Now then, according to the preachers mind, let every man and woman, of a good & simple mind, contrary to the Pharisees

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Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book*, 22–23; John N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33.

[97] For a description of the skill and complexity of Latimer's preaching style, see Michael Pasquarello III, especially chapter 3. Michael Pasquarello III, *God's Ploughman: Hugh Latimer: A "Preaching Life" (1490–1555)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 78-104.

[98] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1755.

[99] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1755.

[100] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 79; see also 43, 46, 47, 49, 147, 647.

[101] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1755.

intent."[102] This concept extends beyond his preaching. In a letter to King Henry VIII advocating for the restoration of the vernacular Scriptures, Latimer describes his prose as "rude, homely, and simple,"[103] descriptors that could hardly be accurately attached to any of Latimer's writings. While such descriptors might seem to be merely self-effacing affectations to sway the King, for Foxe they paint a larger picture of the shape of the man. Foxe presents Latimer at his examination in simplicity against the backdrop of his accusers' extravagance. His examiners are seated in a "high seat . . . trimmed with clothe of Tissue, and cushions of Velvet,"[104] while Latimer appears "wearing an olde thread bare Bristow friars gown girded to his body with a penny leather girdle, at the which hanged by a long string of leather his Testament."[105] The image of one of the most prominent Protestant preachers of the English Reformation kneeling in pauper's robes with the English New Testament quite literally tied to his waist must have delighted Foxe, who directs the reader to take note of it with a marginal note.[106]

Latimer displays a bearing in keeping with his dress. His examiner reminds him of his education and class: "For God's love consider your estate, remember you are a learned man, you have taken degrees in the School, borne the office of a Bishop, remember you are an olde man, spare your body, accelerate not your death."[107] Latimer responds with simple reliance upon Scripture rather than an appeal to his learning. Latimer, always the skilled rhetorician, places the examiner's "many words" in contrast

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[102] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1755.

[103] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1776.

[104] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1781.

[105] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1786.

[106] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1786. Allan Chester's interpretation of Latimer's dress as evidence of a mental breakdown misses the thematic symbolism Foxe was so careful to emphasize. Though Latimer would repeatedly complain of his declining health and ill-treatment throughout his imprisonment, his responses remain clear and deliberate. Allan Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 204.

[107] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1786.

with his surety in "God's word."[108] Latimer engages in several other rhetorical techniques to show the simplicity of his argument. In his written disputation, he claims to "play the child" by simply repeating Pauline arguments and refusing to engage in detailed theological debate lest he fall into the trap of being deceived by vain words (Eph 5:6).[109] Latimer demands to debate in English, claiming his Latin is out of practice,[110] yet when faced with complex Latin argumentation, he responds without difficulty.[111] These appeals reveal that Latimer is concerned more with the rules of engagement than the language; he desires to debate with simple reference to Scripture rather than complex scholastic argumentation. In his disputation at Oxford, he again avoids debate complaining of age, infirmity, and lack of resources, instead pointing to the New Testament in his hand, "which he said, he had read over 7. times deliberately, & yet could not find the mass in it, neither the marrowbones nor sinews of the same. At which words the Commissioners were not a little offended."[112] In his final examination, Latimer appeals to the crowd, summing up his examiners' arguments with a rhetorical question: "What gelding of Scripture is this?"[113] Foxe depicts Latimer, in demeanor, rhetoric, and argumentation, as consistently exhibiting simplicity and reliance upon Scripture.

This characteristic, in contrast to the "frivolous questions" of the Catholic university, marks the true learning on display in the trials of martyrs, both educated and

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[108] Latimer's words are as follows: "Your Lordships gently exhorted mee in many words, to come to the unity of the Church. I confess (my Lord) a Catholic Church, spread throughout all the world, in the which no man may ere, without the which unity of the Church no man can be saved: but I know perfectly by Gods word that this Church is in all the world." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1786.

[109] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1480.

[110] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1478. Even Foxe hints that this reason is alleged and perhaps not entirely forthright.

[111] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1480. A manuscript account of the disputation can be found among Foxe's papers in Harleian 422, fol. 92, British Library. The original reveals a good deal more vacillation between English and Latin in the course of the argument, which Foxe largely removes by translating the majority into English for the sake of the vernacular reader.

[112] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1454.

[113] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1787.

uneducated. Foxe often spotlights the simplicity of his less-educated martyrs as evidence of their purity. Rawlins White (c. 1495–1555), an uneducated fisherman turned lay-preacher, serves as an excellent example. Converted to Protestantism in the reign of Edward VI and martyred under Mary I, White was "altogether unlearned" and, in fact, illiterate.[114] Nevertheless, Foxe describes White as "a diligent hearer, and a great searcher out of the truth."[115] In order to address his inability to access Scripture, White sent his son to school to learn English so that the son could read Scripture to his father. Foxe describes this as a sort of alternative education whereby

> every night after supper, summer and winter, would have the boy to read a piece of the holy Scripture, & now and then of some other good book. In which kind of virtuous exercise, the old man had such a delight & pleasure, that as it seemed, he rather practiced himself in the study of Scripture, then in the trade or science which before time he had used[116]

Through this alternative education and the aide of the Holy Spirit, White received the "singular gift of memory" by which he could not only extensively recite Scripture but do so to a degree "which men of riper and more profound knowledge, by their notes and other helps of memory, could very hardly accomplish . . . such was the wonderful working of God in this simple and unlearned father."[117] White is an excellent example of this "true" learning on display in the life of a less-educated martyr. Such simple, Spirit-empowered learning, lacking the visibility of a worldly education, is founded upon simple belief in Scripture and thus is superior to that of "men of riper and more profound knowledge."

In Foxe's account, White's simple but profound education bears out in his trial as a similar but distinct species of the same kind of true knowledge seen in Philpot's

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[114] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1580–81.

[115] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[116] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[117] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

highly educated defense. When White is informed of his impending arrest for heresy, he is calm but immovable:

> Rawlins nothing abashed for his own part . . . thanked them most heartily for their good will, and told them plainly, that he had learned one good lesson touching the confessing & denial of Christ . . . that if he . . . should presume to deny his master Christ, Christ in the last day would deny and utterly condemn him and therefore (quoth he) I will by his favorable grace confess and bear witness of him before men, that I may find him in everlasting life.[118]

Upon his arrest and imprisonment, White operates as though he were an educated clergyman like Philpot, instructing a congregation of followers who visit him in prison.[119] When White is taken to trial, his examiner's belabored speech is described as "his long tale," but White responds with the simple but firm "My Lord. I thank God I am a Christian man, and I hold no opinions contrary to the word of God, & if I do, I desire to be reformed out of the word of God, as a Christian man ought to be."[120] This simple knowledge of and reliance upon Scripture so clearly exhibited in White is of the same genus as that claimed by the highly educated Philpot. In the end, White embodies the figure of a particularly educated "uneducated" martyr. Yet, Foxe was unashamed to present martyrs of even rougher stock.

John Maundrel (d. 1556) was a farmer of Bullingham, Wiltshire, converted by reading William Tyndale's New Testament.[121] Like that of White, Maundrel's conversion to the gospel is marked by a conversion to learning: "[He] became a diligent hearer and a fervent embracer of Gods true Religion, so that he delighted in nothing so much, as to hear and speak of God's word, never being without the new testament about him, although he could not read himself."[122] Also like White, Maundrel learned Scripture by

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[118] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[119] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[120] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[121] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1918.

[122] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

enlisting others to read it to him, and his memorization of Scripture is also emphasized.[123] Unlike White, Maundrel does not rise to the level of pseudo-clergy in the narrative but remains a layman and perhaps a truculent one. Maundrel was not discovered by the inquisitors for preaching but for repeatedly publicly berating Catholic ceremonies. He was arrested when his local parish priest was preaching on purgatory and Maundrel loudly heckled the priest, calling purgatory "the Popes pinfolde."[124] Maundrel was tried alongside a fellow working-class martyr, John Spicer (d. 1556). Foxe summarizes rather than records most of the men's responses at their trials; thus, their original voices are largely lost. The content of their trial is simple and predictable: their confession of the Trinity, their commitment to Scripture, and their denial of purgatory and transubstantiation.[125] In one notable case, however, Maundrel's voice shines through. When asked about images in worship, Maundrel responds, "Images were good to roast a shoulder of mutton, but evil in the Church."[126] Foxe does not shy away from, but instead spotlights, simplistic and even rude statements of Protestant truth by Maundrel. This rough and tumble farmer represents another species of the "true" knowledge expressed by Philpot and White.

In the last chapter, I explored the nature of the spiritual-ceremonial distinction in Foxe's theology of piety. In the trial accounts, the distinction is often displayed rather than explicated. When Foxe relates the martyrdom of Margerie Polley (d. 1555), an otherwise unknown widow, Foxe dramatically contrasts the ceremonialism of her prosecutor with her simplicity of belief and defense of her faith: "[The] Bishop according

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[123] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[124] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1918. A pinfolde is an archaic word for a pen or enclosure used to house stray animals. A modern equivalent that retains the humor, vulgarity, and alliteration of Maundrel's original intent would be "the Pope's dog-pound." For the historic use of pinfolde in this manner, see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Pinfold (n.)," December 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8022814811.

[125] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1918.

[126] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1918.

to the Pontifical solemnity of that Church, rising up out of the chair of his majesty, in the high swelling stile after his ordinary fashion to dash the silly poor woman, beginneth in these words . . . ."[127] The bishop does not "dash the silly poor woman" with his words. Instead, Polley stands firm upon a simple but precise confession of faith and willingly accepts martyrdom.[128] Foxe likewise shows this distinction in the trial of Rawlins White. When White is brought to trial, the bishop comes with a great retinue in clerical dress, while White—in Foxe's description—appears simple and "poor."[129] The description is far more than incidental. Poverty and oppression are repeatedly identified as marks of the true church.[130] The physical simplicity of the "poor" martyrs served as a visible indictment of Roman Catholic ceremonialism and proof of the martyrs' access to true learning.[131]

This access to true learning was tied to the power of the Spirit at work in the martyr. In Philpot's eleventh examination, he declares, "And I tell thee plain, thou art not able to answer that spirit of truth, which speaketh in me for the defense of Christ's true Religion. I am able by the might thereof, to drive thee round about this gallery before me"[132] Philpot is so confident in the power of the Spirit that he claims that if his arguments were heard by the Queen, then she would be persuaded.[133] Philpot's declaration perfectly embodies the true-false church distinction applied to the area of

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[127] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1703.

[128] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1702–3.

[129] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1581.

[130] John Foxe, "To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 3; Foxe, "To the True and Faithful Congregation," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 11; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 26, 78, 81, 605, 609.

[131] Foxe sees this description as so fitting of the martyrs that he applies it widely, even to circumstances where it was not in worldly terms true. For example, John Oldcastle, knight of the shire, member of parliament, and Baron of Cobham is described as "but a poor knight." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 597.

[132] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1845.

[133] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1845.

learning. Philpot accuses his examiner of having "the spirit of Illusion and Sophistry, which is not able to countervail the spirit of truth."[134] Philpot's examiners represent the external, ascendant, and powerful learning of the world that seems wise but is caught up in speculation, sophistry, and the traditions of man. Philpot's education is "simple" by comparison, at least in his own estimation, but it is empowered by the Spirit, and thus he is able to overcome his interlocutors' formal education. Philpot sees this as an extension of the cosmic battle between God and the devil, comparing himself to the prophet Elijah, who "alone had the truth, when they were four hundred priests against him."[135]

One of the great themes of the trial accounts is that the Spirit grants not only confidence but also a special mastery of the Scriptures. Tyndale's biography within *Acts and Monuments* is instructive for understanding Foxe's expectation for lay Christians' relationship to Scripture. Tyndale is first presented not as the preeminent English Bible translator but as a tutor to children. His teaching angers several beneficed clerics because he teaches "by open and manifest Scripture" and moreover would "show them on the book the places."[136] Foxe places a great deal of emphasis throughout *Acts and Monuments* on a meticulous knowledge of Scripture. The central and most memorable story in the account is when Tyndale's debate with an unnamed Catholic Doctor who argues that the laity would be better with the instruction of the Church than with access to the Scriptures. Tyndale famously replies, "If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the Scripture then thou dost."[137] Foxe, with his eye ever turned to the prophetic, sees the performance of the martyrs in their trials as the fulfillment of Tyndale's prophetic utterance. As already seen in the

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[134] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1845. Philpot's examiner here is Henry Morgan (d. 1559), bishop of St. David's, who aids Bonner in several examinations within TAM. See Foxe, 1415–17, 1535, 1554–55, 2030.

[135] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1825.

[136] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1100.

[137] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1100.

stories of White, and Hunter, and Maundrel, uneducated laity are depicted as having knowledge of the Scriptures equal to or greater than the educated clergy.

It is almost impossible to overstate the martyrs' use of Scripture in the trial accounts. Their speech overflows with scriptural quotation. Anne Askew's trial may be the pinnacle of lay exposition within *Acts and Monuments*.[138] Her trial begins with her examiner asking her if the sacrament is the very body of Christ, a typical shibboleth of Reformation heresy trials.[139] Askew then turns the table on the inquisitor, alternately quizzing and instructing him. In the course of the relatively short examination, Askew quotes or exposits Acts 7:48 and 17:24, Matthew 7:6, 1 Corinthians 14:8, James 5:16, 1 Corinthians 14:33–34, Proverbs 1:5–7, 1 Corinthians 12:8, and Proverbs 19:14.[140]Askew lives up to her own adage: "I had rather to read five lines in the Bible, than to hear five masses in the temple."[141]

Many scholars have studied Foxe's redaction and presentation of the account of Askew.[142] The prevailing opinion of these studies is that Foxe edited Askew's account

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[138] The story of Anne Askew was hugely popular among Protestants in Foxe's time, even before the publication of TAM. The original account exists in two sets of documents, each describing a separate examination of Askew, first published by John Bale in 1546 and 1547, respectively. These first two editions were so popular as to evoke the publication of further editions. Three further editions were produced with the two examinations bound together. Foxe reproduced both examinations, translated into Latin, in his 1559 *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum*. After Elizabeth's accession, another English edition was produced before TAM in 1560. Foxe further edited the accounts and printed versions of them in the 1563, 1570, and 1576 editions of TAM. Foxe, *TAMO*, (1563 ed.) 726; (1570 ed.) 1453; (1576 ed.) 1229. For a short history of the production history of Askew's account, see Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 726 "Commentary" (apparatus).

[139] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 725.

[140] Acts 7:48 and 17:24: "God was not in temples made with hand"; Matt 7:6: "throw pearls before swine"; 1 Cor 14:8: "If the trumpet giveth an uncertain sound . . ."; Jas 5:16: "that every man ought to have knowledge . . ."; 1 Cor 14:33–34: "that a woman ought not to speak . . ."; Prov 1:5–7: "By communing with the wise . . ."; 1 Cor 12:8: "God has given me the gift of knowledge . . ."; Prov 19:14: "Solomon saith that a woman . . . ." Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 725–28.

[141] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 725.

[142] Sarah E. Wall, "Editing Anne Askew's Examinations: John Bale, John Foxe and Early Modern Textual Practices," in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, 249–62; Thomas S. Freeman and Sarah Elizabeth Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text: The Account of Anne Askew in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2001): 1165–96; Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England*, 92–97; Hickerson, "Gospelling Sisters 'Goinge up and Downe,'" 1035–51.

to reduce elements of her rebellious attitude that were offensive to the sensibilities of the time.[143] While Foxe edits out some of the more rebellious aspects of Askew's presentation, the fact that Foxe still includes many defiant attitudes and actions reveals something of his view of piety in women. For example, Askew defiantly corrects her examiner's interpretation of Scripture. When pressed that Paul forbids a woman to teach the Scriptures, she responds, "For Saint Paul (he said) forbode women to speak or to talk of the word of God, I answered him that I knew Paul's meaning as well as he, which is. 1 Corinthians 14 that a woman ought not to speak in the congregation by the way of teaching."[144] Foxe proffers Askew's correction of her examiner not as rebellious but as exemplary.

Foxe presents Askew as an excellent expositor. One of the accusations against Askew is that she has been preaching in public.[145] Thus, her examiners seek to entrap her by forcing her to explain difficult passages she has allegedly preached. In each case, she quickly and skillfully dismisses their arguments with quotations and explanations of Scripture.[146] Something of her expository skill can be seen in her defense of the

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[143] The question of Foxe's redaction of the Askew account is complicated by the fact that no autograph copy exists. Though the account claims to be from Askew, it is impossible to determine how much Bale reshaped the account before publication. Due to this, it is hard to determine how much of the account is shaped by Bale's editorial voice and how much comes from Foxe. Freeman and Wall seek to solve this problem by arguing that both Foxe and Bale should be considered collaborators. Foxe's editorial voice can be seen more clearly once he begins reshaping it between his editions. Foxe started with the 1550 edition of the examinations based on Bale's text. Foxe edited this edition for rhythm and emphasis, intending to create a dramatic effect. From there, he changed the account from edition to edition, first translating it into Latin for his *Rerum* (1559) then back into English for the first edition of TAM (1563). 1570 saw a more significant revision. Freeman and Wall attribute this to Foxe's growing impatience with the slow progress of reform under Elizabeth. In the 1570 and 1576 editions, Askew's account was moved to the front of a group of related accounts that tie together the themes of resisting ungodly authority. Freeman and Wall, "Racking the Body, Shaping the Text," 1165–89. Freeman and Wall's thesis only further emphasizes my own contention that Foxe used Askew's account to promote greater intensity and purity with regard to piety.

[144] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 726.

[145] The phrase "he said that there was a woman, which did testify, that I should read" refers to an accusation that she has been preaching publicly. Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 1229; Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, ed. John N. King, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 281.

[146] The first two accusations leveled at Askew are related to the report that she has preached Acts 7 in a way that denies the real presence of Christ at the altar. Askew responds with an exposition of

Protestant view of the Lord's Supper. Overflowing with Scripture, her answer features not only defense but also careful definition and even exhortation:

> The bread and the wine were left us, for a sacramental communion, or a mutual participation, of the inestimable benefits of his most precious death and blood shedding, and that we should in the end thereof be thankful together for that most necessary grace of our redemption. For in the closing up thereof, he said thus, this do ye, in remembrance of me. Yea, so oft as ye shall eat it or drink it. Luke 11 &. 1 Corinthians 11. Else should we have been forgetful of that we ought to have in daily remembrance, and also been altogether unthankful for it. Therefore it is mete, that in our prayers we call unto God to graft in our foreheads, the true meaning of the Holy Ghost concerning this communion.[147]

Though Foxe would not have permitted Askew to become a preacher, he readily prints her exposition of Scripture. Askew represents Foxe's ideal expressed in Hadleigh: every believer knowing and being able to interpret the Scriptures.

The martyrs were not only known for their citations of Scripture; their use of Scripture also indicates an even deeper and more personal knowledge. The martyrs are seen to be overflowing with scriptural allusion. Foxe adds marginal notes so the reader does not overlook the significance of these allusions. When John Oldcastle appeals to Henry V explaining why he has rejected the authority of the pope, he subtly alludes to Romans 13 to justify the King's doing so as well: "I know you a Christian king, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword to the punishment of ill doers and for a safeguard of them that be virtuous."[148] Foxe not only cites the passage; he also adds a marginal reference to 1 Peter 2 to encourage further reflection on the part of the reader. Such marginal scriptural citations serve two purposes. First, they promote the action of

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the words of Stephen in Acts 7. Askew interprets this passage as precluding the doctrine of transubstantiation. Stephen was stoned to death for proclaiming that God "does not dwell in houses made by hands" (Acts 7:48). Askew sees this as a refutation of the idea that the human hands of a priest could cause the Communion host to contain God. The third accusation relates to Askew's public rejection of the Latin mass, to which Askew responds with 1 Corinthians 14:8. Her answers are given in summary form, but they imply that a larger explanation of the passage has taken place and that her answers reflect her larger teaching ministry. Foxe, *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 1229; see also Megan L. Hickerson, "Commentary: Anne Askew," in *TAMO* (1576 ed.), 1229 (apparatus).

[147] Foxe, *TAMO* (1563 ed.), 729.

[148] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 314.

the martyr as exemplary and to be followed. If Oldcastle is obeying Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 in correcting the King, so too could an Elizabethan subject obey the Queen while advocating for greater reformation. The scriptural marginalia are instructive markers of good behavior that Foxe wants the reader to emulate. Second, such marginal scriptural references show that the piety Foxe has in view is more than just rebellion against authority. His marginalia encourage the reader to consider the scriptural principles behind the exemplary action and thus apply it more broadly. The martyrs become examples of scriptural application in practice. It is no wonder that *Acts and Monuments* became popular as a repository of sermon illustrations when Foxe prepared it to be so.

The confidence of the martyrs' ability to use the Scriptures is tied to their understanding of Scripture. Foxe presents the martyrs as champions of the sufficiency of Scripture. John Rogers defends scriptural sufficiency to Stephen Gardiner in his examination:

> Gardiner: No, no, thou canst prove nothing by the Scripture. The Scripture is dead: it must have a lively expositor.
>
> Rogers: No, the Scripture is alive.[149]

Laurence Saunders sees the Protestant right to self-interpretation in the words of Christ in John 10:

> It is an easy thing for them, which take Christ for their true Pastor, and be the very sheep of his pasture, to discern the voice of their true shepherd, from the voice of wolves, hirelings, and strangers, for as much as Christ sayeth: My sheep hear my voice, yea and thereby they shall have the gift to know the right voice of the true shepherd.[150]

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[149] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1510.

[150] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1520.

The Protestant doctrine of scriptural sufficiency spurred Protestants on to the personal interpretation of Scripture that empowered laity and clergy, man and woman, elderly and child alike to interpret Scripture, and Foxe reports stories of them all.

This belief led the martyrs not only to interpret Scripture to their examiners but also to interpret their life through Scripture. In an earlier chapter, I explored at length how Foxe did this with the whole of history, but Foxe also shows his martyrs doing this with the experiences of daily life. When the inquisitors come from Oxford to examine Jan Hus, Foxe describes them as "these high prelates with their Pharisees and Scribes,"[151] comparing Hus's examination to Christ's many conflicts with the teachers of the law in the Gospels. Foxe often includes interpretive marginal notes of Scripture passages, not because they are mentioned in the story but because he wants the reader to interpret the story in light of them. At the story of Hus's examination, Foxe marginally notes John 3, inviting the reader to compare Hus's reactions to Christ's.[152] In so doing, Foxe subliminally instructs the reader to interpret life through the lens of Scripture. Story characters become biblical characters. Alexander the jailer of Newgate becomes "a right Alexander, a Coppersmith" (2 Tim 2:14) because of how he treats his Protestant prisoners.[153] Saunders sees himself as a recapitulation of Paul before Felix in Acts 24.[154] Foxe adds his own more explicit interpretations of events. Commentating on the execution of John Rogers, he warns the reader on the basis of 1 Peter 4: "Peter truly warneth that if judgment beginneth in the house of God, what shall be the end of them that believe not the Gospel? . . . This shall be your sauce O ye wicked Papists, make ye merry here as long as ye may."[155] The subtext is clear; *Acts and Monuments* is instructing

[151] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 313.

[152] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 313.

[153] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517.

[154] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1519.

[155] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1516.

the reader on how to use Scripture in both its martyr stories and its direct exhortations. Again, one sees the evolution of the martyr pattern in Foxe. The martyr's trial retains the role of instruction, but in Foxe it focuses on the Protestant priorities of knowledge of the Scriptures and the marks of "true learning."

Piety in Martyrs' Sufferings and Death: Endurance and Proclamation

Within the martyr pattern, execution accounts serve as the pinnacle of the martyr's life and confirmation of the martyr's godliness. As such, the accounts often feature a recapitulation of Christ's death and supernatural events confirming the martyr's holiness. Here, again, one sees the retention but evolution of the martyr pattern in Foxe. With regard to the recapitulation of Christ's death, Foxe removes elements of sacrifice, focusing instead on imitating Christ's character.[156] With regard to confirmatory signs, Foxe minimizes external supernatural intervention, focusing instead on miracles of endurance and the confirmation of the martyr's inner character.

Constancy in the face of death is the crowning virtue of Foxe's martyrs. Thomas Bilney goes to the stake "with a quiet and mild face," giving alms along the way.[157] John Hooper refuses iron bindings at the stake, assuring the sheriff "ye have no need thus to trouble yourselves. For I doubt not God will give strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire, without bands."[158] Rowland Taylor kneels and kisses the stake.[159] This joy is typical not only of the martyrs but also of their followers. Foxe describes the onlookers at the execution of John Rogers as "wonderfully rejoicing at his

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[156] Foxe is not entirely consistent on this point, retaining elements of sacrifice when direct quotation of scripture is in view. See especially the "lamb of God" theme discussed below.

[157] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1012.

[158] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1535.

[159] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1552.

constancy, with great praises and thanks to God for the same."[160] It is clear that in Foxe's estimation joy is the proper Protestant expression in the face of death. As discussed in chapter 3, the early modern period saw a very important convergence of literature on devotion and death. The *Devotio Moderna* literature on death, the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, and the changing relationship of late medieval laity to death all combined to create a vision of a good death as the confirmation of a good life.[161] The great deathbed temptation foretold in the *Ars Moriendi* was the abandonment of faith in the face of fear.[162] Therefore, the Protestant martyrs' endurance in the face of the ghastliest of deaths was confirmation that their lives were of the holiest type.

As Hooper expressed, Foxe saw the source of this endurance as the Lord. Accordingly, Foxe's execution accounts are the most miraculous sections within the book. While Foxe is certainly a supernaturalist and not opposed to the miraculous, his attitude toward some supernatural events is somewhat skeptical. In his preface "To the Learned Reader," he expresses that his work would contain nothing "legendary," meaning the kinds of miracles observed in the hagiographic tradition.[163] Throughout the book, Foxe explicitly rejects miracles that he finds ridiculous and uses ancient martyrdoms selectively to present a history that "minimizes the intrusions of the supernatural."[164] Why does this avowed supernaturalist do this? The answer lies in how the supernatural functions for Foxe within the martyr narratives.[165] Many miracles within

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[160] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517.

[161] See chapter 3.

[162] See chapter 3.

[163] John Foxe, "*Ad Doctum Lectorem*," trans. John Wade, in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 6.

[164] Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, 44. For an example of Foxe's rejecting legendary miracles, see his presentation of and commentary on the martyrdom of Paul. Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 58.

[165] Helen White notes two other uses of miracles outside the death accounts, namely miracles of preservation, like the survival of Queen Elizabeth, and miracles of retribution, like the sudden and supernatural deaths of persecutors. Helen C. White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 165–66.

the hagiographic literature function to show the "beneficent activity of the Saint."[166] This is why some miracles continue after death, even at the martyr's tombs; they spotlight the saint as a worthy patron. For Foxe, however, the miracle does not point to the martyr but to the martyr's confession.[167] While this is true in the ancient martyrdoms, it is brought into even sharper relief in Foxe. When Foxe describes the martyrdom of St. Lawrence, he states, "Miraculously God tempered his element the fire, not a bed of consuming pain, but a pallet of nourishing rest was it unto Laurence [sic.]."[168] When Ridley dies, he is not spared the pain but due to the slow fire cries out, "I cannot burn!"[169] Instead, Foxe cites his endurance as supernatural: "For after his legs were consumed by reason of his struggling with the pain, (whereof he had no release, but only his contentation in GOD,) . . . yet in all this torment he forgot not to call unto GOD still, having in his mouth, Lord have mercy upon me, intermeddling this cry, 'let the fire come unto me, I cannot burn.'"[170] For Lawrence, the miracle is one of delivery. For Ridley, the miracle is one of endurance. Foxe holds the latter in higher regard and as the greater example. He makes this explicit in his comparison of John Hooper to Polycarp.

The subject of this comparison is important. Polycarp is seen as a key protomartyr, one whose words and actions are parroted by several Marian martyrs, most

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[166] White, *Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs*, 53.

[167] This represents a significant evolution of the pattern that is seen in early martyrologies. Daniel Boyarin categorizes the early Christian martyr pattern as consisting of the following: (1) A "ritualized performative speech act with a statement of pure essence becomes the central action" of the martyr story; (2) the martyr is conceived of as fulfilling a mandate, the central aspect of which is the "imitation of Christ"; and (3) the presence of powerful elements, such as a visionary experience, and a willingness to die out of a passionate love for God. Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 95–96. Foxe retains the first two elements but significantly modifies the third. Visionary and ecstatic elements are significantly reduced or replaced with scriptural allusions and recitations, and the miraculous primarily focuses on endurance.

[168] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 95.

[169] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1447.

[170] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1417.

famously in Latimer's exhortation "play the man."[171] Indeed, much of Foxe's effort in the book is to show how the Marian martyrs belong among the primitive martyrs. Nevertheless, as he tells the story of Hooper, he ventures a daring comparison:

> If comparison be to be made betwixt Saint and Saint: Martyr and Martyr, with whom, might I match this blessed martyr Master John Hooper . . . then with Polycarp the ancient Bishop of Smyrna, . . . For as both agreed together in one kind of punishment, being both put to the fire, so which of them showed more patience and constancy in the time of their suffering, it is hard to be said.[172]

Though Foxe feigns inability to make a clear comparison, he reveals true thoughts: "Though Polycarp being set in the flame (as the story saith) was kept by miracle from the torment of the fire . . . yet Hooper by no less miracle armed with patience & fervent spirit of Gods comfort, so quietly despised the violence thereof."[173] Foxe concludes that Hooper has suffered greater than Polycarp and indeed perhaps than any of the early church martyrs: "In this the Martyrdom of Master Hooper may seem in suffering to go before, though in time it followed the Martyrdom of Polycarp, for that he was both longer in prison, and there also so cruelly handled by the malice of his keepers, as I think none of the olde martyrs ever suffered the like."[174] The positive comparison, hinting that Hooper may be greater than Polycarp, reveals a key theme for Foxe: Endurance through suffering is the greatest miracle of the martyr.

Foxe valued this quality in the martyrs so highly because it revealed the true piety he held so dear. Endurance through suffering was a mark of the true church, a result of true inner religion, and a mark of the Spirit.[175] As such, it was one of his favorite

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[171] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1976; cf. 65, 1930. John King suggests this phrase may have been a typological commonplace that permeated the whole of the persecuted Marian Protestant community. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, 56.

[172] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1536.

[173] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1536.

[174] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1536.

[175] For a discussion of the marks of the true church, the power of the Spirit, and its relation to true piety, see chapter 5.

descriptions for both ancient and modern martyrs. Foxe and his sources use the concept of "constancy" under persecution 212 times throughout the book to both describe the martyrs and urge their imitation.[176] Foxe rejoiced in "miracles of endurance" at the stake because they provided dramatic examples of endurance that the reader could hardly fail to understand: Thomas Cranmer's willingly thrusting the hand that wrote his recantation into the fire preached devotion to the Protestant faith.[177] Robert Smith's being burnt as "black coal" and lifting the stumps of his arms to clap and declare "a rejoicing heart unto them" preached the hope of resurrection.[178] Though less dramatic, the more common descriptions of martyrs peacefully "going to sleep in the Lord" within the flames preached of the Protestant's salvation and peace with God.[179] Foxe states that the martyrdom of Thomas Tompkins "sealed up his faith in the flaming fire, to the glory of Gods holy name, and confirmation of the weak."[180] Constancy was the clear confirmation of the inner transformation so important to Protestants.

In a great paradox, this constancy was both supernatural and yet not easily achieved. The way the martyrs sought to cultivate and keep such constancy reveals a great deal about their active piety. In the letters leading up to their trials, they pray for it and ask their followers to pray unto God on their behalf. In a moment of weakness, Saunders cries out to his fellow Protestant clerics in a letter, "Pray, pray. Ah, ah . . . I am a child, I cannot speak. . . . Fare ye well, and pray, pray."[181] Hooper seeks to imitate Christ and prays for his persecutors in order to calm his spirit: "I do forgive them, and

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[176] For just a few of the many examples, see John Foxe, "The Utility of This Story," in *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 15; Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 56, 63, 65, 69.

[177] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1911.

[178] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1725.

[179] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 118, 1264, 1396, 1725, 1935.

[180] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1559.

[181] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1524.

pray for them daily in my poor prayer unto God, and from my heart I wish their salvation."[182]

The martyrs also seek to comfort one another and urge one another to prepare for their trials and executions. Hooper writes to several fellow prisoners, "Wherefore dear brethren, I do advertise you of the thing before for diverse causes. The one to comfort you in the Lord, that the time draweth nigh and is at hand, that we shall testify before Gods enemies, Gods truth. The next, that ye should prepare yourselves the better for it."[183] They remind one another of God's presence both to comfort and to judge. John Cardmaker writes to a friend, "That day that I recant any point of doctrine, I shall suffer twenty kinds of death, the Lord being mine assistance, as I doubt not, but he will. Commend me to my friend, and tell him no less. This the Lord strengthen you, me, and all his elect."[184] Saunders confesses his ingratitude for his current position and asks for prayer that his thankfulness be restored.[185] These letters reveal the cooperative spiritual struggle that martyrdom represented and the mutual assurance needed to weather it.

In addition, these letters often reveal the great instructive power of martyrdom. While the martyrs ask their friends, family, and followers to pray for their endurance, they often instruct their followers to endure as well. In these letters, the line between endurance unto death and endurance in this life are often blurred. In a letter to his congregation, Saunders compares his combat with his persecutors to his combat with sin and thus instructs his congregation: "This comfort have I when the giver thereof doth give it. But I look for battles with the root of unfaithfulness, the which I feel in me, will most eagerly give unto my conscience, when we come once to the combat. We be . . .

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[182] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1540.

[183] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1537.

[184] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1605.

[185] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1524.

within the sound of the triumph of our enemies."[186] Thomas Haukes reminds his congregation that his own suffering should be a warning to them to prepare themselves spiritually: "Therefore I am bold in bonds (as entirely desiring your everlasting health & felicities) to warn you, and most heartly desire you to watch and pray: for our estate is dangerous, and requireth continual prayer."[187] Hooper, considering his own imprisonment and impending death, spiritualizes his experience and applies it as an instruction for his congregation to not love the world:

> Saint Paul commandeth us, to think or set our affections on things that are above. When he biddeth us seek the things that are above, he requireth that our minds never cease from prayer and study in God's word, until we see, know, and understand the vanities of this world, the shortness and misery of this life, and the treasures of the world to come, the immortality thereof, and the joys of that life, and so never cease seeking, until such time as we know certainly, and be persuaded what a blessed man he is, that seeketh the one and finedeth it, and careth not for the other though he loose it: and in seeking to have right judgment between the life present and the life to come, wee shall find how little the pains, imprisonment, slanders, lies, and death it self is in this world, in respect of the pains everlasting, the prison infernal, and dungeon of hell, the sentence of Gods just judgment, and everlasting death.[188]

The circumstances of martyrdom provided a natural opportunity for instruction and exhortation.

In addition to prayer and exhortation, the martyrs practiced certain actions to solidify their spirits. The most prominent of these was the recitation of Scripture, especially the Psalms. John Rogers is taken to the stake "saying the Psalm Miserere."[189] George Eagles, an uneducated tailor turned itinerant preacher, is dragged to his execution on a sled, "having in his hand a Psalm book, of the which he read very devoutly all the

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[186] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1526.

[187] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1617.

[188] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1538.

[189] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1517. The *Miserere* is a reference to the first lines in the Latin of Psalm 51 (Psalm 50 in the Vulgate): *Miserere mei Deus* ("Lord have mercy on me").

way with a loud voice till he came there"[190] Approaching the stake, Philpot "with an obedient heart full meekly he said the 106th, 107th, and 108th Psalms."[191]

Scripture recitation was often mixed with prayers for strength at the execution. A martyr often offered a prayer reaffirming their reliance upon the lord. For example, Philpot declares at the stake, "I am ready: God grant me strength, and a joyful resurrection. And so he went unto his chamber, and poured out his spirit unto the Lord God, giving him most hearty thanks that he of his mercy had made him worthy to suffer for his truth."[192] Thomas Tompkins, when his hand is burned by Edmund Bonner at his examination, exclaims the words of Christ from the cross: "O Lord into thy hands I commend my spirit."[193] Foxe even offers a sample prayer "to be said at the stake, of all them that God shall account worthy to suffer for his sake,"[194] showing the importance of prayer as an aid to endurance.

The line between prayer and proclamation was often blurred. Hooper, being refused the opportunity to preach at the stake, publicly prayed for half an hour to ensure his words were heard. The stake is presented as a metaphorical pulpit, as seen in the execution of Christopher Wade.[195] The content of final proclamations are some of the best-remembered elements in all of *Acts and Monuments*. They most often combine scriptural quotation or allusion with an exhortation to one another, the nation, or the onlooking crowd. Most famously, Hugh Latimer urges his fellow martyr Nicholas Ridley, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a

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[190] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2034.

[191] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1854.

[192] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1854.

[193] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1558.

[194] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1854.

[195] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1703.

candle by God's grace in England, as (I trust) shall never be put out."[196] This allusion to both Scripture and Polycarp serves as a double-edged exhortation to both Ridley and the nation.[197] John Bradford exhorts his fellow martyr at the stake by paraphrasing the words from the Sermon on the Mount: "Straight is the way, and narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life eternal, and few there be that find it" (Matt 7:13–14).[198] Combining proclamation with action, Saunders embraces and kisses the stake with an exclamation identifying with Christ and declaring his hope in the resurrection: "Welcome the cross of Christ; welcome everlasting life."[199]

Saunders's proclamation reveals another key concept that both strengthened the martyrs and instructed their followers: the imitation of Christ.[200] This concept was so strong among the community of the book that the martyrs, their reporters, and Foxe all seek, at the various stages of the transmission of their stories, to overlay the martyr's experience upon the passion of Christ. Bilney says to his followers that "he was appointed to Go up to Jerusalem so they would see him no more" (Matt 20:18).[201] Richard Woodman writes his own account of fleeing the authorities with the words "And

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[196] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1793.

[197] The phrase "light a candle" is a likely allusion to Matthew 5:14–15.

[198] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1646.

[199] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1523.

[200] This concept is retained from the early martyr tradition, with the removal of the element of sacrifice. According to Robin Young, the earliest martyr accounts picture the martyr as an imitative rather than substitutionary sacrifice. Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*, Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 2001 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 12. This concept of the imitation of Christ became a primary element of the martyr story genre. Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 95–96; Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5:48. However, already by the time of Origen, the role of the martyr was being compared to the role of the Old Testament priest, and substitutionary themes were gaining prominence within the martyr accounts. Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom* XXX, in Rowan A. Greer, trans., *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1979), 62; Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 53. Foxe will retain the prominence of the imitation of Christ in his martyr stories, but his martyrs do not see their deaths as substitutionary. The emphasis in TAM is on imitation only, not sacrifice.

[201] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1032.

yet all mine enemies could lay no hands on me till the hour was full come,"[202] alluding to Christ's words in John 12:23. Eagles is said to have been executed with two thieves, one of whom asked Christ for mercy, the other mocking.[203] Philpot compares his suffering to Christ's, saying, "Shall I disdain to suffer at this stake seeing my redeemer did not refuse to suffer most vile death upon the Cross for me?"[204] Rowland Taylor compares himself to Christ when he declares at his execution, "Remember the good shepherd Christ, which not only fed his flock but died for his flock."[205]

The Passover Lamb motif is especially important to both the martyrs and those recording their travails. Foxe describes Protestant ministers as "lambs waiting when the Butchers would call them to the slaughter."[206] William Cowbridge is described as "this meek lamb of Christ was brought forth unto the slaughter," and when his death comes, he echoes the actions of Christ on the cross: "With great meekness and quietness he yielded his spirit into the hands of the Lord."[207] Philpot's death is described in remarkably similar terms: "In the midst of the fiery flames, [he] yielded his soul into the hands of the almighty God, and full like a lamb gave up his breath his body being consumed into ashes."[208]

As seen here, Foxe retains the powerful pedagogical element of the martyr's recapitulating the death of Christ with a Protestant focus. The act is not sacrificial but imitative. The martyr's death is marked by confirmatory signs, but these focus on miracles of endurance rather than deliverance. This, in turn, shows the martyr's struggle

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[202] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1984.

[203] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 2034.

[204] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1854.

[205] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1552.

[206] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1545.

[207] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 627.

[208] Foxe, *TAMO* (1583 ed.), 1854.

as exemplary to the common man. With the aid of the Spirit and the Scriptures, they overcome.

Conclusion

Foxe's use of the martyr pattern reveals a variety of Protestant priorities, but most importantly, it reveals the emphasis on the learning and application of Scripture as the heart of Protestant practice. One of the great themes throughout Foxe's stories of the laity is how they become empowered to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. These lay expositors' learning is enabled by the sufficiency of the Word and the power of the Spirit, not by the intercession of the clergy. Agrarian towns like Hadleigh become spiritual universities. Rawlins White, an uneducated fisherman, becomes a powerful preacher. The boy William Hunter debates a Catholic scholar. The woman Anne Askew becomes an "expositor." The Reformation value of *sola Scriptura* is put on display and Tyndale's prophetic "ploughboy" is put to work in the stories of Foxe.

The martyr stories reveal not only how this community learned and valued Scripture but also something of how they used it to interpret their world. Biblical allusions pervade the martyr stories because Foxe, his informants, and the martyrs themselves believed that Scripture interpreted their experiences. Just as Foxe saw Revelation as interpreting all of church history, so also the martyrs saw Scripture as interpreting their every moment. Not only scriptural commands but also scriptural characters and patterns become ways to interpret life and thus to instruct the martyr, the watcher, and the reader in how to act. Chief among the biblical lenses is the life and passion of Christ, which all the martyrs seek to recapitulate—and urge their followers to do the same. In so doing, Foxe and his martyrs took the mimetic piety of early saints and martyrs and added to it an incredible devotion to Scripture, making a new and unique martyr piety.

This dissertation argues that Foxe was seeking to promote Protestant piety with *Acts and Monuments*, using the martyrs as models. The way Foxe shaped these stories shows that they cannot be fully understood apart from this fact. In this chapter, I have shown how Foxe used the martyrs to promote Protestant piety. Drawing on, but updating, the historical structural pattern of the martyr story, Foxe invites the reader to consider the life, trial, and death of the martyr. At each stage, Foxe evokes the classic martyr pattern but modifies it to present Protestant priorities. In their birth accounts and lives, Foxe seeks to present attainable examples rather than exceptional saints. His martyrs are concerned with the mundane actions of raising children, cultivating marriages, and ordering homes rather than transcending to a greater plane of sainthood. This continues in Foxe's consideration of ministry and community. Rather than concentrating on supernatural feats and superlative persons, he focuses on inner transformation and the cultivation of love of God and neighbor. In the trials, Foxe's martyrs retain the element of proclamation but focus on knowledge of the Scripture and the marks of "true learning" rather than grandiose displays. In the death accounts, Foxe retains the elements of confirmation and recapitulation in the ancient martyrdoms but modifies them, minimizing external supernatural intervention and instead focusing on miracles of endurance and the confirmation of the martyr's inner character.

CHAPTER 7

"SUCH EXAMPLES OF LIFE, FAITH, AND DOCTRINE": CONCLUSION

The goal of this dissertation has been to assess Foxe's book of martyrs on its own terms. My thesis is that to be rightly understood, Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* needs to be considered in light of its theological background and pastoral goals. Specifically, with *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe was seeking to make a deliberate contribution to an established tradition of devotional literature with the goal of promoting further reformation, both personal and public, and providing the martyrs as models of godly piety to this end. The current shape of Foxe scholarship often overlooks, or makes light of, this approach. In the chapter 1, I sought to show this lacuna in the scholarship by exploring the current state of the field and particularly how the scholarly conversation has moved away from studying the intentions of the work itself to studying the myriad of sources behind the text of *Acts and Monuments*.

In chapter 2, my goal was to present Foxe as profoundly motivated by the advancement of Protestant piety in England. Through his actions, associations, and publications, I showed Foxe's unrelenting dedication to restoring English piety to the ancient form he discovered in his undergraduate study of history. When this restoration was challenged, he devoted the majority of his life to writing a historical martyrology, in order to give both historical context to and models of pure piety. I presented a view of Foxe's life that reveals a man far less comfortable with the Elizabethan Settlement than his powerful connections within the Elizabethan elite would imply. He was a man whose personal disposition and aversion to conflict tempered his outward expression but in no way quelled his passion to see England's practice of piety reformed and increased. Foxe's

life shows a man fervently devoted to the Reformation and the promotion of personal piety.

In chapter 3, I explored the literary background of *Acts and Monuments*, particularly the influence of martyrology, hagiography, *Ars Moriendi*, and a late medieval focus on the intersection of devotion and death. From this, I argued that the very genre of martyrology that Foxe adopted and adapted was inseparable from the promotion of piety. I showed how the martyrs took on the role of ethical exemplars very early in the life of the church, then they evolved into legendary saints in the Middle Ages. In this form, they dominated medieval piety. I examined how as the Middle Ages gave way to the Reformation, growing concerns with the convergence of devotion and death served to heighten interest in the martyrs as exemplars of piety. When John Foxe began to compile his book of martyrs, *The Golden Legend* was still in wide circulation, the images and concepts of the *Ars Moriendi* were still common knowledge, and the saints were all still household names. The saints and martyrs were still the most prominent and pervasive exemplars of true piety. In other words, Foxe's early modern audience would have read the book expecting it to instruct them in piety. Foxe's book of Protestant saints, complete with a celebratory calendar, could not have been seen any other way. In essence, the genre Foxe selected demanded that the book promote piety.

In chapter 4, I argued that Foxe deliberately structured *Acts and Monuments* to promote piety. I demonstrated that prominent modern Foxe scholars arguing for primarily political and academic motivations are mistaken based on the work's history, structure, and stated intentions. Looking at the structure of each of the four editions Foxe produced in his lifetime, I demonstrated that the promotion of piety was always a primary motivation in each edition and the primary motivator of Foxe's decision to publish the book in English. Then, I looked at the two most critical structural schemas that shaped *Acts and Monuments*: apocalypticism and martyrology. I demonstrated that each of these

schemas was used to promote piety within *Acts and Monuments*—apocalypticism was used to motivate personal reform, and martyrology was used to provide models.

In chapter 5, I sketched the theology of piety within *Acts and Monuments*. I argued that Foxe used the overarching concept of the "two churches" to sift martyr piety and present it in a truly Protestant form. I demonstrated how he used four dichotomies that divide true piety from false piety: spiritual versus fleshly piety, grace-driven versus law-driven piety, love-driven versus hate-driven piety, and spiritual versus ceremonial piety. By means of these dichotomies Foxe sought to argue against the Roman Catholic understanding of piety centered sacred ceremonies and spaces, and for a protestant definition of piety; namely, any action that flowed from the power of the Spirit to Love of God and neighbor. I argued that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit lies at the heart of each of Foxe's dichotomies. Having shown this, I sought to explain how the martyrs functioned as ideal models of this piety. Because of the traditional view of martyrs as uniquely Spirit-filled, Foxe used them as exemplars of his own Spirit-filled piety. Furthermore, Foxe used the metaphor of cosmic battle, which pervades the martyr stories, as a bridge to promote piety in the everyday Christian experiences of conversion, repentance, and sanctification. Because of this, Foxe's martyr stories cannot be understood apart from Foxe's theology of piety and his intent to promote piety in the book as a whole.

In chapter 6, I demonstrated how the martyr model functioned to promote piety within *Acts and Monuments*. I argued that Foxe used a specific structural pattern drawn from the ancient martyr stories but modified it to promote distinctly Protestant priorities. Using the story of John Rogers, I demonstrated how Foxe used this pattern to legitimize his martyrs and to evoke a collection of literary tropes already understood to promote piety. Using the basic martyr pattern revealed in Rogers's story as a lens, I showed how Foxe modified each element from the ancient pattern to promote Protestant concerns. In each case, Foxe presents attainable examples rather than extraordinary individuals and

promotes a life grounded in Scripture, transformed by the Spirit, and motivated by love. The way Protestant piety fundamentally shapes these stories shows that *Acts and Monuments* cannot be rightly understood without considering Foxe's use of the martyr as a model.

In many ways, my thesis is an attempt to redeem an older approach to reading *Acts and Monuments*. For centuries, lay Christians have looked to Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" for examples to motivate and inform their devotional lives. However, changes in historiography, questions of accuracy, and interest in matters behind the text have largely removed *Acts and Monuments* from the conversation regarding early modern English Protestant piety. This dissertation is my humble attempt to correct this. With care and consideration to good historiographical practices, one can still mine *Acts and Monuments* for a treasure trove of insights into early modern piety. As debates over the shape of early modern piety in England continue to rage, further specific studies of *Acts and Monuments* can provide insight into early Protestant understandings of piety. I believe that specific studies into *Acts and Monuments's* piety with regard to men, women, the Christian prince, the ideal clergyman, and piety in the life of the commoner would be profitable directions of research. My hope is that in some small way my work will help to revive historians' interest into *Acts and Monuments* as a window into early modern piety as well as lay Protestants' interest into martyrology as part of the Protestant devotional heritage.

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ABSTRACT

THE MARTYR AS MODEL IN JOHN FOXE'S
BOOK OF MARTYRS

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John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days Touching on the Matters of the Church*, popularly known as "The Book of Martyrs," has been widely acknowledged as one of the most influential books of the English Reformation, achieving an "influence second only to that of the English Bible."[1] As such, it has been subject to a myriad of interpretations, scholarly and otherwise. However, no recent scholarship has extensively explored the significant role that piety played in the composition of *Acts and Monuments*. This project argues that to be rightly understood, *Acts and Monuments* needs to be considered in light of its theological background and pastoral goals—namely, that with *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe was seeking to make a deliberate contribution to an established tradition of devotional literature with the goal of promoting further reformation, both personal and public, and of providing the martyrs as models of godly piety to this end.

Chapter 1 provides the background of the project by offering a sketch of the current state of Foxian scholarship as well as the structure of *Acts and Monuments* and the development of the four editions published in Foxe's lifetime. Chapter 2 investigates Foxe's personal piety, exploring his Protestant convictions and actions leading up to the publication of Acts and Monuments. Chapter 3 explores the literary background of *Acts*

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[1] Leonard J. Trinterud, ed., *Elizabethan Puritanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 41.

and Monuments by surveying three genres of literature from which Foxe drew in writing *Acts and Monuments*: devotional literature, *Ars Moriendi*, and martyrology. Chapter 4 begins the inductive study of *Acts and Monuments* itself, looking at Foxe's intentions for the work in the six prefaces that stretch across the four editions. Chapters 5–6 show the content of Foxe's model piety through two continually repeated patterns in *Acts and Monuments*. Chapter 5 explores the theology of piety within *Acts and Monuments*, demonstrating how Foxe shaped his piety upon the model of the "two churches." Chapter 6 explores the practice of piety within the martyr stories, showing how Foxe modified the classic pattern of martyrdom to promote Protestant priorities. Chapter 7 summarizes the argument and offers concluding remarks.

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