

THE
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JOHN FOXE.

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The Life of Mr. John Foxe.

By his son, Samuel Foxe (1560–1630)
Included in the 4th English edition of Acts and Monuments.

Childhood and early education

John Foxe was born in Boston, in the county of Lincoln, A.D. 1517. His father and mother were of the commonalty of that town, of good reputation, and in respectable circumstances. While young, his father died, and his mother married again. This brought him under the care of his step-father, with whom he dwelt during his childhood. At an early age, he gave indications of a love of learning. His friends, well approving of this, sent him to study at Oxford. The first nurse of his more serious studies, was Brasenose College. There, he was chamber-fellow with Doctor Nowell, who was so famous a man in this city afterwards, and dean of St. Paul's. It was therefore no marvel if their manners were so alike in the course of their lives, whose education and nurture in youth was the same. The native excellence and soundness of his judgment were well seconded by the fitness of the place: where the emulation of equals was frequent, and where each student's proficiency was narrowly sought into. Nor was industry wanting; as it seldom accompanies the greatest talents, so where it is conjoined, it is most available.

When in a short space he had won the admiration of all, and the love of many — in reward of his learning and good behavior — he was chosen fellow of Magdalen College. This being accounted a principal honor in the university, and usually due to the students of that house, it was seldom bestowed upon any others, and not unless in regard of singular deserts. It appears that he gave the first indications of an early wit, to the exercises of poetry. He wrote diverse Latin comedies, in a copious and graceful style, but somewhat lofty. He did not altogether leave behind this fault of his writing in his elder years, though age and experience mitigated it more than a little. But even then, he began to give earnest of what he afterwards proved, for those first efforts of his youth were spent only in holy histories of the bible; nor did he follow that course long. He took to the study of divinity with somewhat more fervency than circumspection, and discovered himself in favor of the Reformation, before he was known to those who maintained the cause, or were of the ability to protect those who did. From this grew his first troubles.

Reign of Henry VIII

This was the time when Henry VIII was uncertain what course to take, being at variance with the pope, and not resolved in himself, thinking the affairs of the church (then grown to an infinite height of power and pride) were neither in all respects tolerable, nor that it was necessary to wholly alter them. While he desired to show moderation in both, Henry prevailed in neither. By his unprofitable indifference, he obscured an act of which none had more glory since the world began. Never before were the people in more distraction, or in

less security of their lives and estates; there were such contrarities in the laws, that no man could tell what to take to with safety, nor what to avoid. For although the pope's supremacy had been renounced, his doctrine was still retained. The first news of the abolishing of the pope's supremacy was as prosperous as it was welcome to the reformers. Many joined the reformers out of love for the truth, being further assured of the king's intentions, by the punishment inflicted on some of the opposite party — and especially when the abbeys were dissolved. Nor was their hope little increased when they perceived that the noblemen more or less rose in the good opinion and favor of the king, in proportion to their opposition to the pope's pretensions. Meanwhile, the Act of the Six Articles was still in force; and if any were found guilty of breaching it, they were sure of punishment. ¹ So that, as long as the king held the middle way between his own judgment and the advice of his counsellors — feeding them with favors upon which they could build no assurance, and pleasing himself in his own severity — fear and hope equally prevailed.

But when the protectors themselves, and the pillars of the reformed religion, were taken away — the duke of Suffolk by his untimely death, the lord Thomas Cromwell by the sword, the archbishop Cranmer and his friends borne down by those of the contrary side; so that there was no help remaining, either in the laws or in the protection of the peers — then all things began to rapidly hasten back to their former abuses. This happened with so much more violence, because the conquest seemed a kind of revenge.

Awakening at University

In the universities and schools, there was yet no open change or innovation — I do not know whether it was through fear, or that they would not be followers.

This was the state of church affairs when Master Foxe began attentively to seek into the substance of the controversy that was then in agitation. He found the contention was of great antiquity, and no age had been free from some debate in the church.

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But those first quarrels were rather for dominion and increase of territory. The Romans endeavored by subtle practices and the pretext of religion, to retain under the jurisdiction of a high priest the ancient honor of their city, which they could not defend by open force. Then no sooner did anyone show himself to differ from them in point of faith, than the hastening of his punishment prevented any infection that might spread among others.

Thus by their cruelty, and the patience of princes who allowed it, the greatest part of these dissensions were appeased. Afterwards, the pope having grown bolder by good success, began to draw to himself all power and authority. Nor content with having weakened the estate of the Roman empire alone, the pope now longed to finger the scepters of other princes; and to compass his design, he did not spare violating any human or divine right. Meanwhile, the clergy was little impressed by the great damage done to religion by men of immoral life and conversation sometimes being chosen to the papacy — by whose example the strictness of life used by their forefathers was drawn into scorn, and their poverty into disgrace. The industry of the priesthood languished; and on the contrary side, ambition, riot, and avarice began to reign among them. Then at length the practices of the churchmen were brought to light, and their delusions laid open. It was then known why the ceremonies

¹ The Act of Six Articles was passed by Henry VIII in 1539. It reaffirmed traditional Catholic practices and doctrines within the Church of England, even though it had recently broken away from the Roman Catholic Church.

and rites in the church had been brought to that excessive multitude — namely, that the number of the clergy might be increased to perform them. These were to be maintained of necessity; and to that end, such opinions were broached as seemed most likely to draw money from all places. Opinions of the merit of works; of purgatory; of the power of absolution and the pope's indulgences — all of which being in themselves false, and soon subject to decay — were thought fit to be cemented together with that new and subtle invention, the pope's "infallibility" in matters of faith.

By this ingenious bond, and linking one opinion to another, the credulity of the Christians was easily ensnared; all this, while the new-forged opinions were yielding plentiful increase, and great sums of money, by a hundred devices, were screwed out of the clergy and the common people, and came daily to the pope and court of Rome.

I have often heard Master Foxe affirm that the first matter which occasioned his search into the popish doctrine, was that he saw diverse things, most repugnant to one another in their own natures, thrust upon men to be both believed at one time — such as, that the same man might be superior in matters of faith, and yet be inferior in his life and manners to the whole world besides. Upon this beginning, his resolution and intended obedience to that church was somewhat shaken; and little by little there followed some dislike to the rest.

His first care was to look into both the ancient and modern history of the church; to learn what beginning it had; what growth and increase; by what arts it flourished, and by what errors it began to decline; to consider the causes of all those controversies which had sprung up in the meantime, and to weigh diligently of what moment they were, and what was advanced on either side which was sound or erroneous.

He performed this with such diligence of study, and in so short a time, that before the thirtieth year of his age, he 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 their consistory in their degrees; *and* he had acquired no mean skill in the Hebrew language.

By the reports of some who were fellow-students with him, over and above his day's exercise, he used to bestow whole nights on his study, or not to take his rest till it was very late. Near to the college was a grove in which, for the pleasantness of the place, the students took delight to walk and spend some idle hours for their recreation. Master Foxe had chosen this place, and the dead of night, with their solitude and darkness, to confirm his mind, which trembled at the guilt of a new imagination.

I would rather omit in this discourse how many nights he watched in these solitary walks; 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; than to give it the appearance of ostentation. But of necessity it was to be remembered, because from this sprang the first suspicion of his alienated affections. For no sooner was the fame spread abroad of his nightly retirements, than the more understanding sort, out of their own wisdom, and others as they stood inclined towards him, were apt to interpret all of this to the worst sense. At length, those with whom he was intimate were drawn to suspect him; there were some employed who, under a pretense of admonishing him, might observe his walks and pry with more curiosity into his words and actions. And others were not lacking, who in comparing his customs formerly used, with the present course that he now took, aggravated the act even more with bitterness. Why does he not come to church as often as he was accustomed to in former times? Why would he shun the company of his equals, and refuse to recreate in

his usual manner, unless he had felt in his mind some sudden alteration? And if that alteration were for the better, why would he conceal it?

Expulsion from University

Being a man of plain dealing, he could neither hide his resolution any longer, nor had he seen fit to excuse himself by forging a lie. Being thus reported of, surrounded with treacheries and accused by everyone, when the matter came to more severe scanning, he was convicted by the judgment of the college, condemned as a heretic, and removed from the house. Nevertheless, his adversaries affirmed that he was favorably dealt with by that sentence, and might have been examined for his life, if they had not used clemency towards him rather than extremity. But this wound raged worse than it was thought it would. Upon the report of this incident, his friends were sorely displeased, and especially his stepfather. He had now grown altogether implacable, either through a real hatred conceived against Foxe for this cause, or pretending to be aggrieved so that he might now with more justice, or at least with more security, withhold from Foxe his own father's estate. For his stepfather both knew that it could not be safe for someone who is publicly hated and in danger of the law, to seek remedy by the law; and that Foxe was by nature so ignorant in requiting injuries, that he would many times, and with much ado, confess himself to be wronged, even when he had in his hands the ability of revenge.

When he was thus forsaken by his own friends and left naked of all human assistance, God's providence began to show itself, procuring Foxe a safe refuge in the house of a worshipful knight of Warwickshire called Sir Thomas Lucy, to whom he was sent to instruct his children. In this house he afterwards married a wife, and there continued till the children arrived at mature years, and no longer had need of a tutor. But fear of the popish inquisitions hastened his departure from there. Now relying on the favor of the laws, the inquisitors were not content to pursue public offences, but also began to break into the secrets of private families.

While conversing with his friends in the later days of his life, Foxe would often, with much vehemence of mind, detest the wretched condition of that departing. He would say that he had pretty well endured all other mischances; but in this case, the misery was so much greater, because to have borne it patiently would have seemed unnatural. Having brought his faithful consort, who entirely loved him, away from her friends and kindred, her grief and tears were to be comforted with all obliging piety. It therefore behooved him either to find some speedy remedy, or in assurance of his love, to weep with her. For it would be in vain to show an example of his constancy, if she suspected her grief went unregarded, rather than his mind be unconquered with such great calamities. He therefore consulted with himself what was best to be done. Only two ways were left by which he might free himself from further inconvenience: he might with most safety choose either to go to his wife's father, or to his stepfather.

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His wife's father dwelt nearest, being a citizen of Coventry; nor did her father bear any hatred towards him yet, and was more likely to be entreated for his daughter's sake. His stepfather was better known to him, but more suspected. At last he resolved to go first to his wife's father, and in the meanwhile to test by letters whether his stepfather would receive him or not. His stepfather's answer was that it seemed to him a hard condition, to take someone into his house whom he knew to be guilty, and condemned for a capital offence; nor was he ignorant of what risk he might undergo in so doing. *Nevertheless*, he would show

himself a kinsman, and for that cause neglect his own danger. If Foxe would alter his mind, he might come, and on that condition stay as long as he desired. But if he could not be persuaded to that, he should content himself with a shorter stay, and not bring himself and Foxe's mother to risk their fortunes, who were ready to do anything for his sake.

At a Crossroads

Mr. Foxe's state was at such a crisis, that he thought no condition ought to be refused; besides, he was secretly advised by his mother to come, and not fear his stepfather's severity. For that, perhaps, it was needful to write as he did; but when occasion offered, he would make recompence for his words with his actions. The truth is, he was better entertained by both of them than he hoped for anyway; but his business required that he rely long upon neither. Therefore, by often going to and fro from one home to the other, which carried with it some show of business, he both deceived the diligence of those who inquired after him, and he effected that neither of them grew weary of his company.

But, however, he kept himself concealed by this means. Yet it is certain that no time of his life passed more unknown to posterity than that. Whether he did but little (which is scarcely credible), or whether it more concerned those who knew what he did, it should be withheld rather than published abroad. For his own part, he always forbore, with particular care, to speak of that story, lest where he had deserved so much, he might, by extolling a small courtesy, seem to upbraid the slenderness of the requital, rather than to show himself thankful by remembering it. Afterwards he took his journey towards London; but from what motive he did that is uncertain, unless we may imagine the convenience of the place enticed him there. Being full of all classes of people, both inhabitants and strangers from all places, London afforded him a better opportunity either to conceal himself, or to make known his abilities, or to get acquainted with those of like inclination.

By computation of times, I should think the chief cause of his going there was this: about that time religion began at length to recover itself a little, and to gather strength, especially about the city. For Mr. Foxe did not go to London till a few years before king Henry departed this life. As I said before, though the kingdom was divided into factions, as long as Henry's youth and strength remained, he so ordered the matter, that sometimes the power of each party being equal, and sometimes one or other prevailing by his authority, both were retained in their obedience. But when Henry grew into later years, perceiving that his health was impaired every day, and that his death could not be far off, he then began to consider which side was most to be trusted, and which was most to be doubted. He considered at what age he should expose his son to the raging hatred of the papists. Because of his youth, Edward was yet unfit to govern; and he was brought up in the discipline of a religion which the papists opposed.

Therefore, Henry at last resolved upon that which in reason seemed most wholesome, and in the end proved most fortunate. Having removed the papist officers from their authority, by his will he appointed for his son those tutors whose love to himself he had always found readiest, and by long trial of their fidelity, he thought were likely to continue the same to his successor. This set the protestant religion again in safety, and its professors were thereby secured of their lives. Yet no public benefit or profit was afforded them from this. So that Foxe was still in as great a want as before, having already spent all that either his friends had bestowed on him, or his own daily industry had acquired.

God's gracious provision

I would forbear to speak of a marvellous accident here, and great example of God's mercy, were the matter not so well known abroad, that it would be to no purpose for modesty's sake, to be silent.

As Mr. Foxe one day sat in St. Paul's church, exhausted with long fasting, his countenance thin, and eyes hollow, in the ghastly manner of dying men, everyone shunning a spectacle of so much horror, there came to him one whom he never remembered seeing before. Sitting by him and greeting him with much familiarity, he thrust an untold sum of money into Foxe's hand, and bidding him be of good cheer; he added that he did not know how great the misfortunes were which oppressed him, but suspected that it was no light calamity. He therefore requested that he accept in good part that small gift from his countryman, which common courtesy had forced him to offer. And he recommended that he go and nurse himself, and take all occasions to prolong his life. In the meantime he informed him that within a few days his prospects would be improved, and a more certain condition of livelihood would be secured for him. Foxe could never learn who that man was, by whose seasonable bounty he had been relieved in that extreme necessity, though he earnestly endeavored to find him out. Some who looked further into the event which followed that prophecy, believed that this man did not come of his own accord, but was sent by some others, who very much desired Foxe's safety; and that it might perchance be through the servant's negligence, that he had suffered so much misery before any relief had been afforded. It is certain that within three days the issue seemed to make good the prediction. For there was a message sent from the duchess of Richmond, inviting him into her service on fair terms. It had so fallen out, not long before, that the duke of Norfolk,² the famous warrior and most renowned general of his time, together with his son Henry, the earl of Surrey, was committed to custody in the Tower of London — for what crimes is uncertain. Henry was a man, as far as may be imagined, of sincere meaning and good understanding. While they were in prison, the earl's children were sent to the aforesaid duchess, their aunt, to be brought up and educated. These were Thomas, who succeeded in the dukedom; Henry, afterwards 1st earl of Northampton; and Jane, afterwards countess of Westmoreland.

Foxe was appointed tutor to these young lords, to instruct them both in manners and learning. In this charge he did not deceive the expectation which the duchess, a woman of great wisdom, had of him. For the two sons grew to that height of proficiency in their behavior and scholarship, that building upon this foundation in their riper years, the elder, Thomas, seemed to deserve more than the kingdom could bestow on him. And the younger, Henry, came to such happiness, that he was able to measure his fortunes, not by the opinion of others, but by his own enjoyment. The young lady Jane profited so wondrously in the Greek and Latin tongues, that she might well stand in competition with the most learned men of that time, for the praise of elegance in both kinds.

There Foxe dwelt during those golden days of felicity, not seen for a long time before, in the last years of king Henry's reign, and through the five-year reign of king Edward the Sixth — a young prince incomparably hopeful. By perfecting the work begun by his father, Edward surpassed all the acts of his predecessors, till the beginning of queen Mary's sovereignty. Upon her coming to the crown, and turning the stream of religion, all things again yielded to

² Thomas Howard, 3rd duke Norfolk (1473-1554). His son, Henry Howard (1516/17-1547), earl of Surrey, was a famed poet. Henry was executed for treason; his father Thomas was not, but remained in prison. The earl's eldest son was Thomas (1536-1572), later 4th duke of Norfolk; he would be executed for conspiring with Mary Queen of Scots against Elizabeth I. The earl's other son was Henry (1540-1614). Lady Jane Neville (née Howard), Countess of Westmorland (1533/37-1593), had a role in the Northern Rebellion in 1569 against queen Elizabeth I.

the papists' authority. From this, not long after, proceeded that cruel tempest, the noise of which has come also to the ears of our age. Many who suffered in that common shipwreck, had swum out to those peaceful times, as to safe harbors of everlasting tranquility. Foxe was among these.

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Bishop Gardiner — Foxe's Enemy

At that time he was sheltered by the protection of the duke, his scholar. Yet this was not without the observance of many, who for hatred or envy narrowly watched him, and secretly laid wait for him. Among these was Doctor Gardiner, bishop of Winchester.³ Foxe saw something in him which he greatly feared, and he also much disdained that the heir of one of the foremost families in the kingdom (the duke), and nearest joined to himself in friendship, should be depraved by his company.

Because Gardiner was Foxe's greatest enemy, it will not be apart from our purpose to say something further about this man, so that both their natures may be better known.

The bishop of Winchester was a man famous in his youth, whether for his birth or parentage I have no certainty — one who stood midway between good and bad, and always growing worse as he grew older. Nature had bestowed on him industry, wit, and eloquence. But his pride, craftiness, and desire to bear sway, he learned from cardinal Wolsey. His abilities qualified him for any employment, which he managed with exceeding diligence, to gain new honors. Having obtained them, he then put on boldness instead of industry, flattery for obedience; and instead of fidelity, he put on deceit and compliments, and similar frivolous fashions of the court. He was cruel and proud in bearing those honors which his virtue won to him: in regaining any that he lost, he was able to weary any man with submission and humility. For he appeared as great in the diversity of his fortunes, as in his conditions.

He was pleasing to king Henry for some while, and high in his favor. By his pen he maintained the king's authority against the pope.⁴ Afterwards, when his prevaricating in this was understood, he was slighted by the king, and stripped of his dignity so that he might be less able to do harm. Under Edward VI, he was not only neglected, but imprisoned, and underwent the reproach of a mean estate. At length, in queen Mary's reign, he was freed. Being restored to his former honors, he exercised not so much command as tyranny. He was sick with envy that cardinal Pole out-shone him in dignity, and overshadowed his glory with height of honors. He had often, but in vain, tried to cure his malady by seeking cardinalship. Anger at length exasperating his disease, he pined away.

³ Stephen Gardiner (1483-1555). The son of a wealthy cloth-maker; defender of royal supremacy over the Church; yet chief opponent of Reformation doctrine. He was secretary to Cardinal Wolsey in 1525. Bishop of Winchester 1531 to 1551 and again 1553 to 1555. Henry bypassed him to appoint Thomas Cranmer as archbishop of Canterbury in 1532. Thomas Cromwell eased him out of his secretaryship in 1524. In 1539, Gardiner led the push for the Act of Six Articles. Gardiner and Thomas Howard, 3rd duke of Norfolk, had a hand in bringing about Cromwell's downfall in June 1540. He then succeeded Cromwell as chancellor of Cambridge. He was committed to the Tower by Edward VI in 1548, and deprived of his bishopric in 1550; he was reinstated by queen Mary in 1553, who appointed him lord Chancellor.

⁴ In 1528–29 he was sent on missions to Pope Clement VII to negotiate for the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon—the issue that was to cause Henry to break with Rome and declare himself head of the English Church. As a reward for his services Gardiner was made Henry's principal secretary in 1529 and bishop of Winchester, the wealthiest see in England, in 1531. — *Ency. Britannica*.

That man began and ended in this manner, commended for many excellences of mind while he led a private life; but in his honors, he was unbridled and of no moderation. One might well say, nature had made him a worthy man, and fortune corrupted him.

Foxe and the duke of Norfolk

Now, Foxe was cherished in the bosom of a most loving duke. Yet after he saw all sorts of men troubled for their religion's sake, some imprisoned, and others burnt — in brief, nothing on all sides but flight, slaughter, and the gallows; and that Gardiner, the bishop of Winchester, was the principal incendiary of all this — he began to fear what might become of him, and to think of some speedy way for his departure from there. In private respects, Gardiner was already his enemy.

As soon as the duke knew Foxe's intent to leave, he gently chided his fearfulness. He used many words to persuade him to leave all thought of going away. He affirmed that it was not agreeable either to honor or modesty, for him to allow his tutor, so well-deserving at his hands, to be taken from him at any time of his life. But that it should *then* be done, was not seemly for the one who desired it. Let him but think to himself how great a burden of hatred his scholar (the duke) must bear among those who were ignorant, whether he forsook him of his own accord, or were forsaken by him. Yet he entreated not to be excused from any hatred which might light upon him, if at least he might do it for Foxe's advantage. But in fleeing, what misery would be wanting: banishment, poverty, contempt — and among those who did not know him, the reproach of a runaway? He acknowledged, that would be less evil than death; but it had not yet come to such extremity; nor would he allow it to. He said he still had wealth, and favor, and friends, and the fortune of his house. If the mischance prevailed further, he would himself partake of the danger, and make the destruction common. He remembered with what precepts Foxe had fortified his younger years; nor had he hearkened to his instructions with more attention than he would with constancy put them into practice. Only let Foxe be of good courage, and so avoid the violence of his enemies, as not to be weary of his friend's company. He spoke this, hoping to prevail with Foxe by his authority; but if that might not be obtained, he would then further Foxe in the course he intended.

There was in the duke's speech even more credit, because it was known to proceed from the sincerity of his heart, and a most tender good will towards him. And Foxe now grew ashamed, not so much in what he had done in asking leave, for he believed his request might have been granted; but his modesty excused him. The duke's answer was that the same care did not befit the lord and his servant; that it was indeed for the duke's honor to defend his tutor from any injury. It was Foxe's own part to take care lest, for his safety, the duke might incur apparent danger, or perpetual trouble. Nor did his fear lack all excuse. For though he well knew the duke could not be drawn from his promise and good intentions towards him, Foxe was not ignorant that by some wile or other, the duke might be circumvented and deceived.

Foxe's Escape from England

For even at that time, the bishop of Winchester was very intimate with the duke, relying upon the ancient friendship he had always used toward that family, and by whose credit he had increased his own dignity. He often resorted there, to present his service to the duke. At several times he desired that he might see the duke's old tutor. At first the duke denied his request, one time alleging his absence, another that he was ill at ease. Still, after feigning several delays to put him off, at length it chanced that Foxe (not knowing the bishop was

within the house) entered the room where the duke and he were in discourse; and seeing the bishop, he withdrew himself with a show of bashfulness. The bishop asked who that was; the duke answered, "his physician, who was somewhat uncourtly, being newly come from the university." "I like his countenance and aspect very well," replied the bishop, "and when occasion arises, I will make use of him." The duke straightaway understood that speech as the messenger of some approaching danger; and now he himself thought it high time for Foxe to no longer remain within the same city, or within the same see, against the force of a crafty, and then open deceiver. But by all means, the bishop being sick, must be prevented.

From that time he caused all things necessary for Foxe's flight to be provided, with the least notice possible. He sent one of his servants ahead to Ipswich haven to hire a bark,⁵ and make ready all things needful for the voyage. Because it seemed scarcely safe for Foxe to stay in any city or place of resort, he chose the house of one of his servants, a farmer, where Foxe might with convenience await a fair wind to put to sea. Foxe went there as secretly as he could, taking his wife as companion in his travels. She was then pregnant, but resolved to go with him, not yielding to the entreaty of those who would persuade her to the contrary. As soon as it was told him that his company expected him, Foxe made haste to the port, and went on board.

Scarcely had they weighed anchor, when suddenly a boisterous wind arose from the contrary shore, which caused the waves to rage with such violence that the stoutest mariners began to tremble. Then followed a dark night, with continual showers, and a great multitude of clouds gathered together into a thick storm of rain and hail. These both hindered the seamen's work, and took away all possibility to direct their course by the compass any longer. That night, with much ado, they lay at anchor, and as soon as the day appeared, when the tempest seemed not likely to cease, they began to cast about, and make back again to the shore. The tide favoring them a little, at length and with much difficulty they arrived in the evening at the same haven again, from where they had loosed the day before. During the time that Foxe had been at sea, a pursuivant from the bishop of Winchester broke open the farmer's house, with a warrant to apprehend him, wherever he might be found, and bring him back a prisoner to the city. But understanding that he was already gone, after he had pursued him even to the port. There he found that the ship Foxe was embarked in, that was yet scarcely out of sight, had returned back.

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As soon as he came ashore, Foxe heard what had passed, by report of the people. Although the news somewhat amazed him, he collected himself, immediately took a horse, and made out as if he had left the town. But returning the same night, he bargained with the master of the ship to set sail again with the first convenience of the winds, telling him that his business so required it, and he did not much care what shore he landed at. He only desired him to go forward, and not doubt that God would prosper so pious a work. Whether for reward or piety's sake, the pilot took upon him this venturous task, and performed it accordingly. For loosing from there in the silence of the night, as soon as the tide turned, though the sea was

⁵ *Or barque: a sailing ship with 3 (or more) masts.*

rough and the weather blustering, within two days' time he landed Foxe and his company in safety at Newport-Haven, on the other side of the sea. ⁶

Whoever reads this history, does not need a more evident argument to force him to acknowledge either the certain course of Providence, or the uncertainty of all human forecast. He may see 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 all this is done to teach men to so use their authority, that the more power which fortune has conferred upon them, the less they are able to do of themselves; and therefore they are not to despise those who are of meaner condition. For God regards all men alike, having made them equal in nature, and distinguished them only by degrees. It is not to puff up the one sort, or shame the other, but to exercise both their modesties — or His own justice if they neglect their duty.

Life in Basel

When he had spent some days at Newport, in refreshing himself and his company, Foxe went to Antwerp, and from there by easy journeys to Basel. ⁷

This city was at that time much spoken of, for the great friendship and courtesy showed to those of the English nation. For this cause many famous men, withdrawing themselves from the cruelty of the times, had escaped out of England to there. Of these, many had but a small fortune. Some maintained their livelihood one way, some another, but most by reviewing and correcting the press. This place then surpassed all the cities of Germany for careful printing. It abounded with diligent and wealthy men in that profession, and preferred the industry of our men in that employment, before any of their own countrymen.

Foxe joined himself to these men, and was so much the better liked, having always been inured to hardiness. In his youth he was put to the trial of his patience. He had learned how to endure labor, and that which seemed the greatest misery to others — to suffer want, to sit up late, and to keep a hard diet — these were to him but the sports of fortune. This perhaps may seem strange to many, who remember Foxe as a slender-bodied man all his life, and in his elder years somewhat sickly. But let no man compare his old age, worn out and eaten up with cares and by the course of nature, with the flourishing prime of his youth, which appears to have been most healthful. Whether in those of indifferent size, it is an upright shape of the limbs and members that sufficiently serves for health, or perhaps the mind needs less help from the body, when it is animated with a desire of virtuous actions, and is content with its own abilities to pursue those things which it intends.

His industry may be abundantly testified from this: that being so full of employment at Basel, he nevertheless began to write his *History of the Acts and Monuments of the Church* there — a work that, by the title alone, seems beyond man's belief. At first it sufficed only to mark it out, and to draw the first lines or rudiments; or as it were, to fasten the warp to the loom. He added and interwove with it the whole body of the history, after he returned into his own country. First he wrote it in Latin, and sent the copy to Basel to be printed. There the work is still held in great estimation, as it is also in diverse other foreign nations. But it is hardly known among our own countrymen. This shows that while we seek after and

⁶ Likely Newhaven, a port town in the Lewes district of East Sussex, England, at the mouth of the River Ouse. The town developed during the Middle Ages as the nearby port of Seaford began drying up, forcing a “new port” to be established. In Foxe's time, a sheltered harbor was built at Newhaven in the English Channel, the “other side” of the N. Sea.

⁷ Basel is a city in Switzerland located on the river Rhine, at the southern borders of Germany and France.

admire strangers, we neglect our own countrymen, either through carelessness or envy. Shortly after, to gratify the unlearned, he wrote it in English.

Meanwhile, by the death of queen Mary, the reformed religion began to flourish again in England, and the papist faction began much to decline. While she followed her own inclination, she was in every way excellent, and well worthy of so royal a parentage. But while she denied nothing to some wicked counsellors, she did not obtain that praise she would otherwise have deserved. And if she is not ill spoken of, it may be attributed to the unwillingness of the succeeding age to speak very freely of princes.

Reign of Elizabeth.

The whole Christian world immediately felt some benefit by this change of the English government.

The neighboring nations, now disburdened of the exiled Englishmen, rejoiced as much for the good fortune of their guests, as for their own. But at home what could be devised to assure their safety, or relieve their distresses, which they did not sooner enjoy than presume to hope for? Those who had forsaken their houses, were now called back home. Those who had suffered imprisonment, were now released. Those who were decayed by loss of goods, were now repaired by gifts. Those who had been thrust from places of honor, were now restored to their former dignities. The unjust laws which had been enacted were in the meanwhile abrogated, and wholesome laws established in their places. Their minds were quieted; their consciences at liberty; they were in all degrees at peace among themselves, and every man's goods were without danger. For queen Elizabeth, even in the infancy of her reign, disposed the affairs of the commonwealth in such a way, that whatever the long and prosperous government of other princes hardly produced in many years, broke forth all at once at her very first entrance, even beyond the people's wish. It was as if some deity had diffused itself, and poured out felicity upon the world. To mention this incomparable and most glorious queen on any occasion, and not to supply some further digression, let it be accounted a capital crime among all writers of history.

Elizabeth was born of the lady Anne Boylen, whom king Henry VIII, after his divorce from his first marriage, took to wife. From her she received, as a princely dowry, a true zeal for religion. As she grew older in years, so she increased in manners, knowledge, and beauty, which as well befit a princess. So that nature seemed to have boasted in her the masterpiece of her most absolute workmanship; and fortune seemed to have raised her to as high a degree as hope could ever aspire to.

It made her better capable to bear so great a fortune, that she at first learned to obey, and then to command, and to use that honor first toward others, which was shortly after to be used by others toward her. In her private life, she had experienced the hatred that is fatal to the successors of great empires; yet she was of a nobler spirit than to return the like upon those who were to succeed her. As soon as she came to the kingdom, her several virtues appeared at once in their brightest lustre. Her mind did not descend to an excessive care of her body. The principles of her new sovereignty were to acquaint herself with the public reasons of state; to seek fit men to bear part of her cares; to strengthen all parts of the kingdom with faithful ministers; to know the temper and abilities of those about her; and to search into the strength, councils, and attempts of foreign princes. But all these qualities, if not well tempered, might have had, perhaps, no long continuance. Such therefore was her gravity, as nothing more pleasing; such her severity, as nothing more gentle; and such her frugality, as nothing more bountiful. Only she knew no measure in those excellencies whose

glory is founded, not in the even-balancing of different *virtues*, but as it were, in the throng of illustrious *actions*. So was the nobility of her birth heaped with desire for glory. Her religion was most sincere, and seconded with zeal for a holy life. But when all these virtues broke forth into actions, what days of happiness we then enjoyed!

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What more cheerful, more secure or wealthy years did England see, than those forty-four years of peace! For she never voluntarily provoked any to war, and always preferred the justice of the quarrel above the victory. To the Irish, war, honor, and shame to have lost a province, enforced her. To the French, it was piety and pity for her neighbors' danger. To the Spanish, her own safety and necessity compelled her — comprehending in itself the force of all other causes.

In the progress of this war with Spain (1585-1604), we heard of, and saw, that which perhaps never happened in any war before. For other nations, though they fought with mortal hatred against each other, yet their battles were restrained to some certain fields and places. But this war was so scattered over all places, and managed with such nobleness of courage on both sides, that through all seas and havens from east to west, the sun might still behold the English and Spanish navies fighting for their lives, honors, or estates. Never till then had that sea, which was accustomed to no other command but ours, frothed with strokes of foreign oars. Nor would a large volume contain the discourse, if I were to relate the number and stateliness of ships, the strength of sea and land forces, the supply of ammunition, engines, weapons, guns, and provision of victuals belonging to that navy which Philip the Second, king of Spain, sent here in the year 1588, with the intention to destroy the English name. Let this suffice, that never was any preparation by sea comparable to this fleet, made by any of the most powerful princes or states, as shown in all the records of antiquity. Yet, such a huge and threatening armada, swelling with self-confidence and a presumed hope of victory, was utterly defeated in a moment, by the fortune of this invincible princess.

The navies met together, unequal in number and strength. But the manner of the fight was disadvantageous to the Spaniards, because the English vessels being much less bulky, and lower built at the front, could with more ease cast about for the wind, and immediately having discharged, retire to open sea. Thereby they eluded the sluggish and unwieldy ships of their enemies; and by levelling at the broadsides of the Spanish galleons, they bestowed their shot with a more certain and successful aim. To this, our captains far excelled the Spanish commanders in the skill of sea-fight, and knowledge of the tides. The Spanish, now taught by the former day's experience that they could in no way, but in a set fight, bear the English encounters, cast their anchors near Calais. There they expected new forces out of Flanders, and by the goodness of their ordnance they defended themselves. This laid them open to the English for the victory. For having filled some ships with tow, pitch, brimstone, and all sorts of combustible materials, and setting them on fire, with a favorable tide, the British drove them directly upon the enemy. The Spanish were so exceedingly terrified by this action, that the whole fleet, cutting their cables as fast as they could, took instantly to flight. In this flight, some of their ships were burnt, some sunk, some forced to run themselves on shore, some split upon the rocks, and some, in their haste, fell foul on their fellows, and so they were torn and bruised, and taken by our soldiers. Those who escaped best, did not dare to go back the same way they came. With long labor both by sea and land, they returned at length to Spain, by the coasts of Scotland, and the islands of the Orkney

archipelago. These were seas which in no age had been sailed upon, except by those who were very good at fleeing.

Such great virtues and victories met together in one person, that of necessity, envy would be an attendant, followed by hatred and treacheries. These could not be so avoided by this most innocent queen, but that her safety was, throughout her life, daily endangered. Which makes me rather wonder, what rare doctrine of our adversaries this may be, for piety sake which they pretend, persecuting even virtue itself, whereas (not only in no heathen, but in none the most barbarous nation, which does at all acknowledge any deity) it was never thought just to take revenge upon virtue, even in their enemies; unless it is that the indulgence of the Christian religion may be so far extended, that although we are commanded to forgive our enemies, either they must not be virtuous, or they must not be forgiven. But evident enough it is, that in human affairs, the desires of men are often employed to one end, and the will of God to another. By him was queen Elizabeth protected always, from the injuries and wicked enterprises of her enemies, and brought full of years to that honor, as to carry with her that glory unspotted to heaven, which she obtained on earth, envy now in vain carping at her after death, whose cause all posterity does patronize.

Foxe Returns to England

Now let us return to our history.

Master Foxe heard by his friends, the happy news that queen Elizabeth reigned in England, and that the state of religion was sure, and likely to continue. About the end of that year in which this was in hand (1533), he came back to his country. He had taken so much time to think to himself, lest — if by any inconstancy of the people, they should grow weary of their present state — he should again be forced to seek his fortunes abroad. Besides, his family being then increased with two children, he was obliged to stay in Basel till money might be sent from home to bear his charges in travelling. But before he could get from there, he was informed that some hard statements had been made respecting him, as if through pride he had delayed to come, thereby seeking a shorter and speedier way to preferment as being due him, whenever he should be sent for. This he knew to be a cast of their cunning, who were themselves striving for honors with all earnestness, and feared Master Foxe as a man deserving of it, and likely to be preferred before them. Yet he did not think it worth his labor to make any excuse for a crime that would of itself come to nothing. But equally despising injuries, and neglecting his own right, he hid himself wholly in his study.

As in our bodies it is commonly seen that those men are healthier who use moderate diet and exercise than those who exceed in either, so I suppose the case stands with our minds. He who fortune has given no rule, and prescribes none for himself, can hardly persist in the soundness of his duty. Whereas he who uses modesty in his fortunes, is always fresher and more vigorous for any illustrious undertakings. For Master Foxe, being famous for his abilities, and supported (as I showed before) with the friendship of great personages, might with ease have attained to whatever his desires had inclined him. But affecting neither riches nor authority, nor the wishes of happy men (though his deserts were equal with any) he was well contented to keep the conscience of well-doing to himself, and that rewards should remain in the possession of others. I neither admit this as being wholly to his commendation, nor do I find fault with it, as many have done. Let us at least favor good men so far as to allow virtue to choose what degree of fortune it chooses to shine in. Or if we would restrain it within certain limits, let us do it to those who are good, with hope of reward. As for those who are good for no design, if their glory does not overwhelm us, we will not need to fear their multitude.

I shall write of a life continually bearing true and solid fruits, but not such on which the reader's senses may surfeit; where neither the rare stratagems of war or peace shall be related to you, nor any such discourses as writers use when they intend to captivate the ears of the hearers. I am to speak of a life passed over without noise, a life of modesty at home and abroad, of charity, contempt of the world, and thirst after heavenly things; of unwearied labors, where all actions are so performed as might be exemplary or beneficial to others.

I showed before, that Foxe first applied himself to write the history of the church while he was at Basel. And the reason why he did not finish it there was that he might afterwards use the testimony of more witnesses. This work not a little vexed the minds of the papists. For they well saw that they had shed so much blood in vain, and had been guilty of such great cruelty to no effect, if an account of these proceedings should be transmitted to succeeding ages. And they well understood that the work itself could not be taken out of men's hands. There was therefore no other hope left, than by charging the author with falsehood, and feigning some cavils⁸ against him, so as to lessen his credit and authority.

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While Foxe endeavored to remove and take this away from himself, he could not avoid it. Rather, he was obliged to pass the lawful bounds of a history, by a new collection of matters and testimonies. And let us only judge by this, the *industry* of our author. He not only gathered together so many things for the materials of his work, taken from all distances of time or place, and through all counties of the kingdom, collecting the acts of both courts, and the records of the matters judged — but by a most distracted kind of diligence, he also alone searched out, examined, even freed from moth-eating, and afterwards reduced into convenient order, those things themselves. They were partly rusty and eaten out, as it were, by antiquity, partly corrupted by hatred or flattery of authors, and partly hidden in the rugged and short form of old writing. I find by the author's own notes, that in the eleventh year after he began to write it, the work was finished. And it is very probable that the work shall live on, which was so long in being brought forth. Neither did he, in all that time, use the help of any servant, about his writing or other business. Industry employed to one purpose, and gathered into itself, affords more useful assistance than being scattered, and the mind divided into many cares at once, however many helping hands it has.

For many years Foxe had left no time free from his study, either not at all, or not seasonably affording himself what nature required. His natural liveliness and vigor being spent, he was at length brought to such a condition, that neither his friends nor kindred could recognize him by sight. By this means he first fell into that withered leanness of body, in which many afterwards saw him. He never again returned to that pleasing and cheerful countenance which he had before. But when he would not be persuaded to lessen his accustomed labors, or to lay aside his study, or to recreate himself, these being the cause of the debility which had been produced, the signs of it likewise remained.

Foxe's Reputation

From this time, Foxe began to be much spoken of as a good historian. The other virtues of his mind, as they were less known abroad, so they were overshadowed by that which was known. Shortly after, he also began to grow famous for his other endowments, not only as a learned man, but as one who is useful for his friendliness, and helpful to others. Modesty will not allow me, by way of his journal, to recite the voluntary pains he took upon himself.

⁸ *Cavil*: An evasion of the point of an argument by raising irrelevant distinctions or objections.

However, it will not be amiss to say something of it in general; and to show how, either by good advice, comfortable persuasions, or a charitable hand, he either relieved the wants, or satisfied the desires of innumerable persons. Upon which, no man's house in those times was 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*. At length, some who were likewise sick in body, would need to be carried to him. But to stop any rumors, he would not allow this to be done. For some reported that these people were cured, *because* they were brought there.

Thus spending the day at home in such duties, and frequently preaching abroad, and going to visit those who were not able to come to him themselves, he fulfilled what was enjoined of him by the courtesy of his own disposition. Nor did he neglect the performance of that duty which the office of his ministry had imposed upon him. Whatever little time his friends had left free to his own disposal — either being called away by other occasions, or ashamed of being too tedious — he did not bestow upon sleeping or taking his pleasure, but in prayer and studying. When he engaged in either of these exercises, he always retired into some private apartment, or made use of the night's silence for secrecy, lest by chance the vehement groans he sometimes mingled with his prayers, being heard by some who were near the place, gave notice how earnest he was in his devotions. For at no time of the night could any man come to find his labors ended; but often the next morning's light concluded the last of his night's care.

Now, although these things are true, I well know that many will find fault, that I have so slightly passed them over. They will demand to know why I did not produce the matters themselves, as witnesses of his actions, or at least some particular example of each kind, so that they may give credit to the rest, with more security. But there are many things which hinder me from doing so.

First, common civility forbids us to publish abroad that which the conscience of another has committed to our secrecy. He would give a very bad example, who should by all means conceal rather than make known to the world, the secrets of private houses, the conflicts of friends, and such private affairs in men's lives that may either shame or repent them. Next, the matters themselves, which used to be attended to in the greatest possible privacy, could by no means come to our knowledge. Or if something were gathered by suspicion, and I were to instance it in one or two particulars, what great assurance in the rest, could I draw from this?

I will now bring the last argument for his ability or industry — I do not know whether I should say — that this man, who had given himself so wholly to please his friends that he had set apart no time for his other occasions, yet he wrote so much that it might well have been believed, he had done nothing else.

Foxe's Writings

Here, for the sake of those who may desire it, I have set down the titles of those books he wrote; which are these:

Comaediaram libri 2 (Book 2 of the Comedies) — Syllogisticon (Syllogistics) ⁹ —
Admonitio ad Parliamentum (Reminder to Parliament) — De lapsis per errorem in

⁹ *Syllogistics*: in logic, the formal analysis of logical terms and operators and the structures that make it possible to infer true conclusions from given premises.

Ecclesiam restituendis (On restoring into the Church those who have fallen into error) — Oliva Evangelica (Evangelical Olive) — De Christo gratis justificante (Of Christ justifying by grace) — De Christo Crucifixo (The Cross of Christ) — Papa confutatus (Refutation of the Pope) — Contra Osorium de Justitia (Against Osorius on Justification) — Meditationes supra Apocalypsi in Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum Commentarii (Meditations on the Apocalypse, in Commentaries on Events in the Church) — and, The Acts and Monuments of the Church.

Foxe's Motivations

We have now come so far as to be able from all this, to give the reader a full sight at once of the rest of Foxe's life. This should, I suppose, please in the same way that we see those who travel, when they have been long tired with continual rugged ways and rough forests, and at length come into the plain and champagne countries, are not a little delighted and refreshed with the very change of soil.

In this sketch of his conditions (as it were), we will first observe what might well be thought the foremost of his virtues; namely, a deliberate and resolved contempt of all things which are in greatest esteem among men, and especially of pleasures. This disposition of his, whether inbred by nature, acquired by discipline, or infused by God, of necessity gave him great ability to perform with commendation, whatever he chose to take in hand. There is nothing which can mislead the mind into errors — which would otherwise of itself hold the right way — except what proceeds from some pleasure or other, lying in wait to entrap us in our journey. But Foxe so played with these enemies, as one who did not desire to save himself by fleeing to or sheltering himself in some secret place of retirement. But by often skirmishing, and gaining experience in the manner of fighting, he increased his own strength, and gave others an example of fortitude. He used to say that they did not greatly matter, who forsook business and employments in the world, lest they allow themselves to be allured and deceived by them. For these things were in themselves innocent, and all grew hurtful only when they were overvalued and pursued with avaricious desire. Whoever can beat this back when it assails him and strives to break in upon him, is deservedly called temperate. But someone who was never in any temptation, may seem to be good through lack of occasion to be otherwise, rather than by his own virtue.

He therefore never declined the friendship of illustrious personages — not to draw honor to himself, but that thereby he saw his commendation would be more effectual, when he desired favor on behalf of others. The money which rich men sometimes offered him, he accepted, giving it back to the poor. He likewise frequented the tables of his friends, not for his own pleasure, being of a spare diet, but from *courtesy*, to keep them company.

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And let none imagine he either feared or fled from wrestling and striving with gourmet delights, or that he thought himself better defended against the pleasures incident to eating and drinking, by being absent rather than by guarding his own moderation. In a word, Mr. Foxe so behaved himself in those things which are accompanied by delights, it is certain that none of those who were always in his company, can remember any speech or action of his, which might betray the least show of a desire for them. And he was so far from thirsting after honor, riches, applause, or any outward good, that he would at no time allow the care of his private estate to enter his mind, much less that it should be overcome or drawn aside by thoughts of his household affairs. I will hereafter declare where either his security, or as some called it, the slothfulness in his own fortunes, proceeded from. In the meantime, I will

consider the cause for which he thought all other things were so contemptible, especially since that could not be imagined to arise from any obstinate disdainfulness, much less from a sluggishness of mind. I assure myself that it was only the love of God with which his mind was so filled, and so much delighted, that he left no room or affection free for other pleasures. Of his own accord, he separated himself from the fashions of the world, of which he was not otherwise incapable. And devoting himself wholly to this care, like someone who had found an invaluable treasure, he bent his eyes and mind upon this only, neither hoping nor expecting anything besides, but resolved to make this the scope of all his wishes and desires. As must happen in such a case, it so fell out by this, that those who observed his mind so steadfastly fixed upon God, seeing that he both spoke and did many things beyond the capacity of an ordinarily good man, they believed he could not be void of some divine inspiration. And now some began to honor him, not as a good man, but as one sent from heaven, even to adore him — through the folly of mankind madly doting upon anything, whatever their own will has set up to be worshipped.

Foxe on the church of Rome

It will not be out of the way to add in general what Foxe thought of the church of Rome and its bishop, as far as it may be gathered out of his speeches, when being of ripe years, he had strengthened his judgment with much experience.

The heads of his opinions were these:

- That among the Christian church, the Roman church had always been chief in dignity, and greatest in antiquity.
- That it retained this dignity and preference many ages after, little by little growing to greater authority, not by consent of the people, nor by any right to that claim, but by reason of a certain inclination and custom among men, that where any chanced to excel others, they first began to be powerful among the rest, and then at length began to exercise command over them.
- That the greatest honor and authority it had was among these western kingdoms which, as everyone mostly loved the Christian religion, so they were most assisted by the diligence and piety of the Romans; in this respect, it had not ill-deserved to be called the *mother* of those churches.
- That the occasion of so great an increase, was that the city of Rome, being of such ancient renown, and as it were, appointed monarch of the world by destiny, it abounded in all ages with men of great courage and virtue — being well peopled, wealthy, usefully seated, and always under the emperors' sight, easily afforded this convenience.
- That at first the Christians could not meet anywhere together with less trouble than in Rome, nor be more plentifully provided for, nor more safely concealed, nor when there was need, die with more constancy — all of which made posterity greatly admire and honor them.
- That the church at first flourished in good discipline, and in the approved holiness of professing believers, rather than in abundance of riches, there being yet no looseness, no pride or ambition found in the manners of the clergy; and money, servants, lands, jewels, and similar goods, were altogether unknown to them — in short, all things were so restrained, either by modesty in using what they had, or by being content in what they did not have, that the seat of the Christian religion seemed to be in Rome alone.

All this was observed with the greatest strictness in the times nearest to the church's infancy. But in process of time, little by little, it began to be neglected and corrupted, in the same way that rivers, whose streams being small and clear near their head, the farther they

proceed, the larger is the channel, but with more troubled waters; till at length, by mixing with the sea, they also become unwholesome. And though in no one place can we perceive where they are in any jot changed from their first purity; yet we may easily enough find a great difference if we compare the extremes together. In the church, it so fell out that having brought all nations to the Christian faith, they began to think it was for the honor of the empire, that the priests should no longer endure poverty (as they had formerly been accustomed), but live in a more sumptuous way. To this purpose, the emperors granted many things to the churchmen, both as an ornament and a reward to them. Then too, the priests began first to be taken with the love of riches, and then by degrees, to grow wanton through abundance, and not care what little pains they took. Afterwards (as the succeeding age always adds to the vice of the former) they affected power also. Once they had obtained it, and received the command of the church by the emperor's gift, they did not give it up till (having cast down the emperors, by whose bounty they had so prevailed) they invaded the privileges of the empire, and now laid claim to both spiritual and temporal government.

In the meanwhile, neglecting those rules of religion which their predecessors had prescribed to them, neither searching the Scriptures themselves, nor permitting others to do it, they esteemed the worship of God to consist in outward devotion and pomp of ceremonies, rather than in the obedience of faith. By this means, it came to pass that the church of Rome (as with all other immoderate empires) not only fell from that high degree it once held, but it also subverted in itself the very substance and state of a church. Nor should this seem strange if, as with most healthy bodies, they fall into sickness with the most danger. So it happens that the prime of all churches should have no mean, but either remain in perfect health, or become its most dangerous enemy; and that for this cause, the pope now seemed to be antichrist. Notwithstanding that the case was so plain, neither part should lend too much belief to arguments, nor be too earnest in hindering it, if by any moderation of men the matter might be brought to soundness and agreement:

- That it was not, perhaps, in our power to take from Rome her ancient honor, and the opinion of her religion that was so fixed already in the minds of men.
- That the church of Rome had fallen by her own covetousness, ambition, and prevarication; but that no man had ever gone so far in sinning, that repentance had not reached as far.
- That therefore it was fitting to allow them, as returning to repentance, some convenient *means* to move them to it, and sufficient *space* to repent in.
- That it might be the author disliked them, because it was a German or a Frenchman, and not an Italian of their own nation, who had told them of their errors.
- That there might one day be found among their own men, some by whose authority they would not be ashamed to amend their faults, and with more willingness, to part with their own power in order to procure the peace of the whole world.
- That there was at least this hope left, it might so fall out that they had no further erred in the articles of faith, than that they would not suffer too much to be known.
- That the conditions of agreement would be, first,
 - That the pope should forsake all those tenets by which he gained such great sums of money — there being nothing to which the people might be persuaded with more difficulty, than that Christ, the Savior of the world, had instructed his church in the way of getting money — and putting the Scriptures up for sale.
 - Next, that the pope should renounce all secular jurisdiction, and not suppose himself to have title, or anything to do with the right of princes.

- That, on the other side, the pope's opposers should not refuse the idea that some one man may have the principal place of counsel and government in church affairs, as it would have many conveniences in it, if it could be done with security; nor should the Romish church having once fallen, be an argument against it; nor because the Romish church had first flourished, should that prevail for it, and make it preferred before any other.

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- That all this was to be left to the discretion of a general council of the Christians, which might be so equitable that neither the power nor the favor of anyone should be able to promise itself any advantage to the injury of the rest, regarding either the place of meeting, or the difference in number of voices.
- That meanwhile, it would be of great moment to the hope and speediness of settling all controversies, if hereafter, on *both* sides, they would give such instructions as might cause in each party a better hope and opinion of the other — especially that they ought to quit that stubborn conceit by which each of them, presuming itself to be the only true church, supposes the other to be excluded.

For it would not only be wicked, but also highly to the dishonor of God, to think that He had so given his commandments to mankind, that they should be turned to the destruction of those who obey them. If all men will not consent in the same opinion, this must of necessity come to pass: that those who understand the most, will refuse to admit the rest. Was the kingdom of heaven therefore reserved only for the more understanding sort, and those who know the most? Where then would the fools of the world be? Where would little children be, whom Christ had set apart for himself? How much better would we serve God by following what was evident, than by interpreting what was doubtful? How much more probable would it be that God's mercy is abundant, than if men were so agreed in point of general obedience, that nothing else would be laid to their charge? For the force of obedience before God would be so great, that thereby all other inequalities might be made even. But if all were *not* in equal condition, then certainly with God, those who judged others with the most modesty, would be best esteemed.

Foxe's Friends

I will now speak of the friends of Mr. Foxe, among whom I have already shown with how great an affection he was beloved by the duke of Norfolk, being maintained by his bounty during his lifetime, and after his death by the pension the duke bestowed on him, which his son, the right honorable earl of Suffolk, to whom those revenues descended, continued out of his liberality.

His fortunes were increased by the lord William Cecil, then lord treasurer, a man excellent beyond expression, whom it as much availed queen Elizabeth to have for her minister, as it availed the kingdom to have Elizabeth for their queen. Without doubt, lord Cecil was most deserving that in himself and in his posterity, he should flourish in that kingdom which he had made most flourishing by his wisdom and advice. He obtained for Mr. Foxe, from the queen's gift, the rectory of Shipton, upon no other inducement but his public merits. And when Mr. Foxe delayed, and in his manner entreated leave to excuse himself, the lord Cecil politically overcame his bashfulness by telling him that he neither accepted that for an answer, nor did he deserve that the blame of Mr. Foxe's refusing the queen's gift, should be laid upon himself, as if lord Cecil had been his hindrance.

He was very acceptable to the earls of Bedford and of Warwick.

He was very intimate with sir Francis Walsingham, secretary of state, a prudent and vigilant man, and one who deservedly was the first who advanced the power of the secretaryship.

He sincerely loved the two brothers, sir Thomas Hennage and Master Michael Hennage; the first for the sweetness of his behavior, the other for his solid learning and singular modesty of life. And though they were both, in their kind, most accomplished gentlemen, Foxe was prone to say that sir Thomas Hennage had as much as was requisite in any way to become a complete courtier, but that Master Michael Hennage had in himself all that his brother had, besides his own, which the court had not corrupted.

He likewise bore a strong affection toward sir Drew Drury, as to a man of sincere intentions, and of great constancy in all fortunes, and perhaps the only man in the court who continued his favor without loss of his freedom.

Among the prelates he principally revered Doctor Grindall, archbishop of Canterbury; Doctor Elmar, bishop of London; Doctor Pilkington, bishop of Durham; and Doctor Nowell, dean of St. Paul's, who were his partners in banishment at Basel.

Among the writers of his time, he preferred before the rest, Doctor Humphrey, Doctor Whiteaker, and Doctor Fulke, with whose learning he was greatly delighted; and he esteemed it no small benefit to be beloved by them in return.

But with none did he have more familiar acquaintance than with Master John Crowley and Master Baldwine Collins, whose counsel he made use of in all his affairs, especially of Master Collins. He used to say concerning him, that he did not know which had the greatest share in him, whether excellence of knowledge, or modesty of mind.

Among military men, sir Francis Drake was much delighted with Foxe's familiarity. It would be needless to commend him near the times he lived in; but many volumes would scarcely suffice to commend sir Drake to posterity, according to his merits,.

Foxe always found great good will among the citizens of London, especially with sir Thomas Gresham, sir Thomas Roe, Alderman Bacchus, Master Ismith. Master Dale, and Master Sherington, who held him in great estimation. Part of them were those who had borne the highest places of honor in the city, and part of them were merchants of great substance.

I pass by many who perhaps had as great a share in Master Foxe's friendship as any of these. Nor should it be accounted a fault if I either did not know or remember them all. But this I should not omit (being the chief cause why I thought it fit to mention the above-named worthy men) that these were men from whom, as I said before, Master Foxe received such large sums of money to divide among the poor. Although they did it with so much privacy that they did not trust it to messengers in delivering it. They did not regard any outward praise that their well-doing might procure them, knowing the consciousness of it was as much as they needed to desire. Yet it was not fitting for me, in Foxe's history, to dissemble it, or to give any man occasion to suppose the truth was not revealed by Foxe, though they themselves thought it good to neglect the fruit of such great liberality. This is especially true, since it may abundantly serve to commend both him and them, that they should be known by *their* own actions, and he by none but *his*.

Among his friends, Foxe always used a pleasant kind of familiarity, with which he seasoned the gravity and severity of his other behavior.

Once, being asked at a friend's table what dish he desired to be set up for him to begin his meal with, he answered, "the last." This word was pleasantly taken, as if he had meant some

choicer dish, such as those which are usually brought for the second course. Whereas he rather signified the desire he had to see dinner ended, that he might depart home.

Going abroad, he met by chance a woman that he knew, who pulling a book from under her arm, and saying, "Do you not see that I am going to a sermon?" Foxe replied, "But if you will be ruled by me, go home instead; for you will do but little good at church today." And when she asked, "At what time, therefore, would he counsel her to go?" he answered, "When you tell nobody beforehand."

It happened at his own table that a gentleman there spoke somewhat too freely against the earl of Leicester. When Foxe heard this, he commanded a bowl filled with wine to be brought him. This being done, he said, "This bowl was given to me by the earl of Leicester," thus stopping the gentleman in his intemperate speeches, without reprehending him.

When a young man, who was a little too forward, had said in the presence of many, that he "could conceive no reason, in the reading of old authors, why men should so greatly admire them," Foxe replied, "No marvel indeed, for if you could conceive the reason, you would then admire them yourself."

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I could mention many anecdotes of this kind, but I will not exceed my intended limits too far.

At length, having spent out his age in such actions and such behavior, now being full of years, and blessed with friends, he died before he had quite passed through his seventieth year (1587) — not through any known disease, but through great age.

Upon the report of his death, the whole city lamented, honoring the small funeral which was made for him, with the concourse of a great multitude of people; and in no other fashion of mourning than as if, among so many, each man had buried his own father, or his own brother.