

Secondly, he said it was told him that I should deny the sacrament of the altar. And I answered him again that, that I had said, I had said. Thirdly, he asked me if I were shriven.² I told him, so³ that I might have one of these three, that is to say, Doctor Crome, Sir William, or Huntingdon,⁴ I was contented, because I knew them to be men of wisdom. "As for you or any other I will not dispraise, because I know ye not."

Then he said, "I would not have you think but that I or another that shall be brought you shall be as honest as they. For if we were not, ye may be sure the king would not suffer us to preach."

Then I answered by the saying of Solomon, "By communing with the wise, I may learn wisdom: But by talking with a fool, I shall take scathe"⁵ (Proverbs 1).

Fourthly, he asked me if the host should fall, and a beast did eat it, whether the beast did receive God or no. I answered, "Seeing ye have taken the pains to ask this question I desire you also to assoil it yourself. For I will not do it, because I perceive ye come to tempt me." And he said it was against the order of schools that he which asked the question should answer it. I told him I was but a woman and knew not the course of schools.⁶ Fifthly, he asked me if I intended to receive the sacrament at Easter or no. I answered that else I were no Christian woman, and that I did rejoice that the time was so near at hand. And then he departed thence with many fair words.

* * *

In the meanwhile he commanded his archdeacon to common⁷ with me, who said unto me, "Mistress, wherefore are ye accused and thus troubled here before the bishop?"

To whom I answered again and said, "Sir, ask, I pray you, my accusers, for I know not as yet."

Then took he my book out of my hand and said, "Such books as this hath brought you to the trouble you are in. Beware," sayeth he, "beware, for he that made this book and was the author thereof was an heretic, I warrant you, and burnt in Smithfield."

Then I asked him if he were certain and sure that it was true that⁸ he had spoken. And he said he knew well the book was of John Frith's making.⁹ Then I asked him if he were not ashamed for to judge of the book before he saw it within, or yet knew the truth thereof. I said also that such unadvised and hasty judgment is token apparent of a very slender wit.¹ Then I opened the book and showed it to him. He said he thought it had been another, for he could find no fault therein. Then I desired him no more to be so unadvisedly rash and swift in judgment, till he thoroughly knew the truth; and so he departed from me. * * *

1546-47, 1563

2. Absolved after confessing to a priest.

3. If.

4. Reformist preachers.

5. Injury.

6. Rules governing Catholic theological debates; scholastic procedures.

7. Converse.

8. What.

9. The reformer John Frith was executed in 1533. *A Book Made by John Frith, Prisoner in the Tower of London, Answering unto Master More's Letter . . . Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*, published in that year, was reissued in revised form in 1546, a few weeks before Frith was executed.

1. Shallow mind.

John Foxe's career at Oxford University, where he had become a fellow of Magdalen College, was interrupted when his Puritan convictions led him to protest energetically against some college rules and practices. Foxe (1516-1587) then served as tutor to the children of various noble families, but when Mary became queen in 1553 and Protestants were once again persecuted, he fled to the Continent. His great book was already under way: the first version (Strasbourg, 1554) was in Latin and dealt with the persecutions suffered by the early reformers, particularly Wycliffe and John Hus. But the book grew and grew as Foxe received from England accounts of the hideous tortures and persecutions being inflicted on the Protestants there. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, Foxe returned at once to England, and there he translated his Latin volume, adding to it hundreds of stories of the Marian martyrs (many based on eyewitness testimony, some on hearsay and rumor). The English edition was first published in 1563; often called "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," its title was *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous days, touching matters of the church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecution and horrible troubles that have been wrought and practiced by the Romish prelates from the year of Our Lord a thousand to the time now present*.

Foxe saw life as an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, Christ and Antichrist. Immediately and enormously popular, his book is a compendium of memoirs, stories, personal letters, court records, and the like, rendering the words, acts, and sufferings of some hundreds of martyrs in graphic—if often fictionalized—detail. The final version of the book (1583) is massive—more than six thousand folio pages, containing four million words. Apart from fanning the flames of anti-Catholic feeling, Foxe had an immense influence on English nationalism. His stories, from the medieval crypto-Protestants burned for heresy to the Protestant martyrs who passed through the fiery trials of the Marian persecutions, portrayed England as the land of a new chosen people, destined to lead the way toward the kingdom of God on earth. Foxe's second edition (1570) was placed, by government order, in churches throughout England.*

From Acts and Monuments

[THE DEATH OF ANNE ASKEW]

Hitherto we have entreated of this good woman; now it remaineth that we touch somewhat as touching her end and martyrdom. She being born of such stock and kindred that she might have lived in great wealth and prosperity, if she would rather have followed the world than Christ, but now she was so tormented, that she could neither live long in so great distress, neither yet by the adversaries be suffered¹ to die in secret. Wherefore the day of her execution was appointed, and she brought into Smithfield² in a chair, because she could not go on her feet, by means³ of her great torments. When she was brought unto the stake she was tied by the middle with a chain that held up her body. When all things were thus prepared to the fire, the king's letters of pardon

* For Foxe's account of the execution of Lady Jane Grey, see below, p. 674. For his account of the burning of Nicholas Ridley (bishop of London) and Hugh Latimer (former bishop of Worcester), go to Norton Literature Online.

1. Allowed.

2. Smithfield Market, just outside the London city walls, was a site of public executions until the 17th century.

3. Because.

where brought, whereby to offer her safeguard of her life which she would neither receive neither⁴ yet vouchsafe once to look upon. Shaxton⁵ also was there present, who, openly that day recanting his opinions, went about with a long oration to cause her also to turn, against whom she stoutly resisted. Thus she being troubled so many manner of ways, and having passed through so many torments, having now ended the long course of her agonies, being compassed in with flames of fire, as a blessed sacrifice unto God, she slept in the Lord, in anno⁶ 1546, leaving behind her a singular example of Christian constancy for all men to follow.

1563

4. Nor.

6. The year.

5. Nicholas Shaxton, formerly bishop of Salisbury.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Protestant attack on Catholic rituals and the demand for worship in the vernacular led during the reign of Edward VI to the preparation of an English liturgical book, authorized to be the official and only text for public worship in England. Initiated by the Act of Uniformity in 1549, the work's principal architect was Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556). Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, was at first careful to translate and shape the old Latin liturgy into a moderate, occasionally ambiguous compromise between Catholic and Protestant positions. His thorough revision in 1552 put the *Book of Common Prayer* much more decisively into the Protestant camp. Banned by the Catholic Mary Tudor, during whose reign Cranmer was executed, the *Book of Common Prayer* was restored, with small revisions, by Elizabeth, and has remained the basis of Anglican worship ever since. Cranmer was, among his other accomplishments, a brilliant prose stylist, and the cadences of his book have had a profound influence on the English language. The selection, part of the marriage service, is from the version used during the reign of Elizabeth.

From The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England

From *The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony*

* * * At the day appointed for solemnization of matrimony, the persons to be married shall come into the body of the church with their friends and neighbors. And there the priest shall thus say:

Dearly beloved friends, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate,¹ instituted of God in paradise, in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church: which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of

1. State, condition.

Galilee,² and is commended of Saint Paul to all men,³ and therefore is not to be enterprised⁴ nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for the which matrimony was ordained. One was, the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.⁵ Thirdly, for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity: into the which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

And also speaking to the persons that shall be married, he shall say:

I require and charge you (as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed) that if either of you do know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, that ye confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as be coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.

At which day of marriage, if any man do allege and declare any impediment why they may not be coupled together in matrimony by God's law or the laws of this realm; and will be bound, and sufficient sureties with him, to the parties, or else put in a caution,⁶ to the full value of such charges as the persons to be married doth sustain, to prove his allegation: then the solemnization must be deferred unto such time as the truth be tried. If no impediment be alleged, then shall the curate⁷ say unto the man,

N.⁸ Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health? And forsaking all other, keep thee only to her, so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer,
I will.

Then shall the priest say to the woman,

N. Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honor, and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer,
I will.

Then shall the minister say,

Who giveth this woman to be married unto this man?

2. He changed water into wine (John 2.1–11).

3. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13.4).

4. Undertaken.

5. The church.

6. Surety.

7. A clergyman who has charge of a parish.

8. Name—i.e., the minister inserts the man's given name here.