

John Fetty's Godly Child

After John Fetty had lain in prison by the space of fifteen days, hanging in the stocks, sometimes by one leg, and the one arm, sometimes by the other, and other whiles by both, it happened that one of his children (a boy of 8 or 9 years) came unto the bishops house, to see if he could get leave to speak with his father. At his coming thither, one of the bishop's chaplains met with him, and asked what he lacked and whom he would have. The child answered, that he came to see his father. The chaplain asked again, who was his father. The boy then told him, and pointing towards Lollards' Tower, showed him his father was there in prison.

'Why' quoth the priest, 'thy father is a heretic.'

The child, being of a bold and quick spirit, and also godly brought up, and instructed by his father in the knowledge of God, answered and said, 'My father is no heretic; but you are an heretic, for you have Balaam's mark.'

With that the priest took the child by the hand, and carried him into the bishops house, and there, amongst them, they did most shamefully and without all pity so whip and scourge, being naked, this tender child, that he was in a gore blood; and then they carried the child in his shirt unto his father, the blood running down by his heels.

At his coming unto his father the child fell down upon his knees, and asked him blessing. The poor man then, beholding his child, and seeing him so cruelly arrayed, cried for sorrow, and said, 'Alas, Will! who hath done this to thee?'

The boy answered that as he was seeking how to come to his father, a priest with Balaam's mark took him into the bishop's house, and there was he so handled. Cluney therewith violently plucked the child away out of his father's hands, and carried him back again into the bishops house, where they kept him three days after.

Bonner, bethinking in himself of the danger which the child was in by their whipping, and what peril might ensue thereupon, thought better to discharge the said Ferry, willing to go home and carry his child with him; which he did so, and that with a heavy heart, to see his poor boy in such extreme pain and grief. But within fourteen days after the child died. - London 1558.

Foxes book of Martyrs.