

Welcome to Quakerism 101

General Instructions to Participants

Quakerism 101 will follow the Friends General Conference (FGC) curriculum of readings and discussion.

I hope to have all the readings posted on the Meeting Website for participants to download and read prior to the session to which the readings relate. In my best case scenario, all of the readings will be posted prior to class and in my worse case scenario, all readings will be posted at least one week prior to the session to which the readings relate.

There are seven (7) 1-hour sessions planned for 2010, unfortunately the curriculum is designed to have six (6) 2-hour sessions. This puts a little pressure on all of us and the only way to reduce the pressure and make our time together pleasant and meaningful is for all of us to read the readings prior to the session. If we can do this, we will not need to recap the readings prior to the discussions for those who have not read the assignment for the session.

Friends (Quakers, I hope you forgive me for using the term 'Friend(s)' more frequently than the term 'Quaker(s)'; when I was growing up I was taught that Quaker was a pejorative and forbidden to use it. Our faith is experiential, and eminently pragmatic, and evolving with the times...sometimes it is very difficult to ignore the prejudices learned at Grandma's knee) have always been seekers, relentlessly seeking the 'Truth' and listening for the 'Word" (see John 1:1 – 1:34, the “Quaker Gospel”), keeping the tradition, questions will be expected and dealt with accordingly.

Reading Assignment

The readings for the first session, Unit A, are:

- Howard Brinton, Friends for 350 Years, chapter 1

There is only one copy of Brinton's Book in the library and participants may wish to purchase a copy from FGC - 800-966-4556 (9 AM-4:30 PM EST)

- William Penn's Preface to George Fox's Journal

There are several copies of Fox's Journal in the library and for unfettered reading one should point their browser to <http://www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/title.html>

- The Journal of George Fox, chapters 1-2

See <http://www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/title.html> or library copy

- Margaret Fell, selections, from London Yearly Meeting Christian Faith and Practice [1960]

PDF in 'Session 1, Unit A' folder

- Edward Burrough, "The Death of Mary Dyer"

PDF in 'Session 1, Unit A' folder

In addition, a Quaker Chronology is offered in the 'Session 1, Unit A' to help with the correlation of people, events and time.

During and after reading, you may find reflecting on the following queries useful.

What did Gorge Fox and early Friends discover? How have you, yourself had a similar experience?

Have you ever felt inner restlessness and pain as did George Fox? If so, how did you respond.

At least twenty openings (revelations or insights) are recorded in the first two Chapters of George Fox's Journal. How would you describe these openings in your own words? Which of these do you feel is the most important for today?

What does Margarete Fell mean when she says that George Fox spoke in her household and they were 'convinced'...what is Quaker "convincement"?

Why did Margarete Fell cry "we are all thieves..." Are Friends today "thieves"?

Where did Friends like Mary Dwyer find the strength to face imprisonment and death? Does Mary Dwyer's witness make sense in today's world? Can you think of people in our own era who have made similar witnesses? How do you respond?

Despite intense persecution, the early Quaker movement grew rapidly, why do you believe so many people were attracted? Are there implications for Friends today?

Where are you on your spiritual journey? Are you satisfied with where you are? Suppose you learned that you only had months to live – what would you want to do with your life before you died?

Are there ways you can strengthen your own spiritual life?

See you all on the 17th.

~JW.

BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED

Below is a list of books and booklets that each participant will need. Howard Brinton's *Friends for 350 Years* is the main text, used throughout the course. Some participants may already own one or more of these materials; you may want to check with them before ordering. The materials may be ordered from Friends General Conference Publications, 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, P A 19107 (phone 215-561-1700 or 800-966-4556), or the Pendle Hill Book Store, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford, PA 19086 (phone 610-566-4514 or 800-742-3150). Dan Seeger's "The Place of Universalism" is also available directly from the publisher, Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 121 Watson Mill Rd., Landenberg, PA 19350-9344 (phone 610-2748856).

Allow *at least six weeks* for delivery.

Unit A

Brinton, Howard H. *Friends for 350 Years*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, [1952] 2002.

Nickalls, John L., ed. *The Journal of George Fox*. Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1995. Contains William Penn's *Preface*.

Unit C

Seeger, Dan. "The Place of Universalism in the Society of Friends, or Is Coexistence Possible?" Landenberg, PA: Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 1986.

Unit D

Punshon, John. *Encounter with Silence*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1987.

Kelly, Thomas. "The Gathered Meeting." Philadelphia: Tract Association of Friends, [1949] 2007.

Unit E

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*, revised 1997, 2002.

Unit F

Sheeran, Michael L. *Beyond Majority Rule*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT A - SEEKERS AND FINDERS: THE EXPERIENCE OF EARLY FRIENDS

Many among the first generation of Friends sought a spiritual home for years before they found what they were seeking and joined with Friends. What did they discover? What galvanized them to worship and witness in the face of persecution and hardship? What does their experience say to us today?

READING:

Howard Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years*, chapter 1

William Penn's *Preface to George Fox's Journal*

The Journal of George Fox, chapters 1-2 (omit chapter 2 if short on time)

Margaret Fell, selections, from London Yearly Meeting *Christian Faith and Practice* [1960] (photocopied; contained in Resource Section)

Edward Burrough, "The Death of Mary Dyer" (photocopied; contained in Resource Section)

UNIT B - THE LIGHT WITHIN

An exploration of this most basic Quaker concept. What do Friends mean by the "Inner Light?" What is "that of God in everyone?" How is the Light like a searchlight? How do you experience the Light in your own life, now?

READING:

Brinton, chapters 2-3 (pp. 19-48 only)

UNIT C - QUAKER UNIVERSALISM

What do Friends believe about Jesus Christ? Can Quakers be both Christian and universalist? What is "the Light of Christ Within?" How do Friends respond to traditional Church teachings on salvation, atonement, etc.? How do you relate to Jesus?

READING:

Samuel D. Caldwell, "The Inward Light: How Quakerism Unites Universalism and Christianity" (photocopied; contained in Resource Section)

Dan Seeger, "The Place of Universalism in The Society of Friends, or Is Coexistence Possible?"

UNIT D - WORSHIP AND MINISTRY

What do you "do" in Meeting for Worship? How do you know if you are "being led" to speak? What is a "leading?" What is a "gathered Meeting?" How can Friends help (or hurt) the Meeting for Worship?

READING:

John Punshon, *Encounter with Silence*, pp. 22-28, 58-65, 74-91
 Thomas Kelly, "The Gathered Meeting"
 (Brinton, chapters 4-5, if you have time)

UNIT E - LIVING IN THE LIGHT: QUAKER WITNESS

What is a "concern?" Have you ever felt led to take action? What did you do? The role of a "clearness" committee. What is a "testimony?" How do you understand Friends' testimonies today?

READING:

Brinton, chapter 7
 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*, revised 1997, sections on
 "Concerns, Leadings, and Testimonies" (pp. 65-67) and "Living in the
 World" (pp. 74-81)
 Margaret Hope Bacon, "Quaker Women as Abolitionists," chapter 7 in *As The Way
 Opens*, (photocopied; contained in Resource Section)

UNIT F - GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

How does a Friends' Meeting for Business work? Why do some Friends call it the Meeting for Worship for Business? What is Quaker "unity?" How does a "sense of the Meeting" differ from "consensus?" The roles of clerk and recording clerk. What you can do to nurture (or undermine) your Meeting for Business.

READING:

Brinton, chapter 6
 Michael 1. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule*, pp. 49-71, 91-106

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QUAKER CHRONOLOGY

<u>Quaker History</u>	<u>General History</u>
1624 Birth of George Fox	1625 Accession of Charles I
	1630 Beginning of Puritan migration to Massachusetts
	1634 Founding of Maryland
	1636 Founding of Harvard College
1643 George Fox becomes a religious "seeker"	1642-46 First Civil War in England
1644 Birth of William Penn	1644 Milton's <i>Areopagitica</i>
1647 George Fox finds the Light Within, begins to preach	1649 Execution of Charles I
1652 George Fox on Pendle Hill sees a vision of "a great people to be gathered": beginning of Quaker	1653-58 Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of England
1655 James Nayler's entry into Bristol and trial by Parliament	
1656 First Quakers in North America	
1659-61 Four Quakers hanged in Boston	
1661 Establishment of New England Yearly Meeting	1660 Restoration of Charles II
1662-88 Systematic persecution of Quakers in England	1662 Quaker Act (Quakers forbidden to meet)
	1663 Charter of the Carolinas
	1664 First Conventicle Act (directed against all Non-conformists)
	1666 Great fire of London
1667 "Convincement" of William Penn	1667 Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>
1668 First Quaker schools in England	
1670 Trial of William Penn and William Meade	1670 Second Conventicle Act (climax of persecution)
1671-73 George Fox in America	
1675 Quakers acquire West New Jersey	
1676 Robert Barclay's <i>Apology</i> , greatest work of Quaker theology	
Meeting for Sufferings organized in London	1678 Bunyan's <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>
1681 William Penn's charter for Pennsylvania	
1682 William Penn in America; beginning of "Holy Experiment" in Pennsylvania	
	1685 Accession of James II
	1687 Sir Isaac Newton's <i>Principia Mathematica</i>
1688 Protest of Germantown Quakers against slavery	1688-89 "Glorious Revolution" in England; accession of William and Mary
	1689 Toleration Act
	1690 Locke's <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>
1691 Death of George Fox	
1693 Penn's <i>Some Fruits of Solitude</i>	
1694 Publication of Fox's <i>Journal</i>	
	1695-96 John Archdale Governor of Carolina

1699-1701	Penn's second visit to America	1702	Accession of Queen Anne
1704	First written book of discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting	1714	Accession of George I
1718	Death of William Penn	1726	Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>
1727	James Logan demonstrates function of pollen in fertilizing Indian corn	1733	Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i> Voltaire's <i>Letters Concerning the English Nation</i> Founding of Georgia
1737	Adoption of "birthright membership" in England	1738	John Wesley's conversion; beginning of the Methodist movement
1738	First written book of discipline in England	1740-45	Climax of Great Awakening (religious revival) in American colonies
1751	John Bartram's <i>Observations</i>	1754-63	French and Indian War
1756	Quakers relinquish control of Pennsylvania legislature; end of "Holy Experiment"	1754	Jonathan Edwards' <i>Freedom of the Will</i>
1758	John Woolman persuades Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to condemn slaveholding by Friends	1765	Stamp Act
1774	Publication of John Woolman's <i>Journal</i>	1769	Richard Arkwright invents spinning frame James Watt invents steam engine
1777	Seventeen Philadelphia Quakers exiled to Virginia for refusing to take oath of allegiance	1773	Boston Tea Party
1781	Formation of "Free Quakers" ("Fighting Quakers")	1775-83	American Revolution
1790	Moses Brown applies power-driven machinery to spinning of cotton yarn at Pawtucket, RI; beginning of Industrial Revolution in US	1776	Declaration of Independence
1791	William Bartram's <i>Travels</i> (influenced English Romantic poets)	1787	Constitutional Convention
1796	York Retreat, first modern mental hospital, founded by Friends in England	1788	George Washington elected President
1799	Westtown School, first American Quaker boarding school, founded Beginning of Quaker migration to Northwest Territory	1789-99	French Revolution
1806	First Quakers in Indiana (Whitewater, near Richmond)	1793	Invention of cotton gin
1808	John Dalton states atomic theory	1794	Thomas Paine's <i>Age of Reason</i>
1813	Elizabeth Fry begins prison reform work at Newgate	1798	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i> by Wordsworth and Coleridge
		1800	Election of Thomas Jefferson
		1801	Climax of Great Revival on American frontier
		1803	Louisiana Purchase
		1804	Napoleon crowned Emperor of France
		1807	Embargo Act
		1808	End of foreign slave trade in U.S.
		1812-14	War of 1812
		1814	First steam locomotive built by George Stephenson in England
		1814	First steam locomotive built by George Stephenson in England

1816	First Peace Society in England, founded by William Allen and Joseph T. Price		
1817	Friends Asylum, Frankford PA, first modern mental hospital in US		
		1819	Washington Irving's <i>Sketch Book</i> William E. Channing's "Baltimore sermon," manifesto of Unitarian movement
		1820	Missouri Compromise
1821	Benjamin Lundy begins publication of <i>The Genius of Universal Emancipation</i> , antislavery periodical		
1825	Edward Pease opens Stockton and Darlington Railway, first passenger railroad.		
1827-28	Hicksite-Orthodox "separation"		
			Repeal of Test Act in England allows non-conformists to hold public office
		1828	Election of Andrew Jackson William Lloyd Garrison begins publication of <i>The Liberator</i>
		1832	Great Reform Bill in England
	Joseph Pease, first Quaker elected to Parliament Whittier publishes <i>Justice and Expediency</i> , his first important antislavery tract	1833	Emancipation of slaves in British colonies
1833	Haverford School (later Haverford College) Pennsylvania, founded		
1835	First Quakers in Iowa		
		1836	Emerson's <i>Nature</i>
1837	New Garden Boarding School (later Guilford College), North Carolina. founded	1837	Accession of Queen Victoria
		~1840-60	"Underground Railroad" at its height
1843	John Bright enters Parliament		
1845	Wilburite-Gurneyite "separation" in New England		
		1846-48	Mexican War
1846	Levi Coffin settles in Cincinnati, "President" of Underground Railroad		
1846-47	Quaker famine relief in Ireland	1846	Potato famine in Ireland
1847	Boarding School at Richmond, Indiana (later Earlham College), founded		
1848	Lucretia Mott (with Elizabeth Cady Stanton) organizes first women's rights convention		
		1850	Fugitive Slave Law passed
		1851	Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i>
		1852	Harriet Beecher Stow e's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
1854	Wilburite-Gurneyite "separation" in Ohio	1854	Thoreau's <i>Walden</i>
		1854-55	Crimean War
		1855	Whitman's <i>Leaves of Grass</i>
		1859	Darwin's <i>Origin of Species</i>
		1860	Election of Abraham Lincoln
		1861-65	Civil War
1862	Quakers undertake relief and educational work for freed slaves		
		1863	Emancipation Proclamation
1864	Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, founded		
		1865-77	Reconstruction in the South
1866	Whittier's <i>Snowbound</i>		
		1867	Second Reform Bill in England
1869	American Friends undertake supervision of Indian agencies in Nebraska, Kansas, and Indian Territory		
1870-71	British Quaker war relief in Franco-Prussian War	1870-71	Franco-Prussian War
1870-71	British Quaker war relief in Franco-Prussian War	1870-71	Franco-Prussian War
1873	First Quaker Meeting on Pacific Coast (San Jose, California)		

ca. 1875	Introduction of "pastoral system" in some Quaker meetings, especially in Midwest		
1882	John Bright resigns from British Cabinet in protest against bombardment of Alexandria	1882	British intervention in Egypt
1891	Whittier College, California, founded		
1900	Friends General Conference (Hicksite) established	1898	Spanish-American War
1902	Five Years Meeting (Orthodox-Gurneyite) established	1901	Death of Queen Victoria
1903	Woodbrooke Settlement (adult school near Birmingham, England) established		
1914	War Victims' Relief Committee established by English Friends	1912	Election of Woodrow Wilson
1917	American Friends Service Committee established by Rufus M. Jones and others Quakers	1914-18	First World War
1920-22	Child-feeding program in Germany	1917	US enters First World War
1924	German child-feeding resumed	1920	Founding of the League of Nations
1930	Pendle Hill (adult school at Wallingford, Pennsylvania) established	1929	Beginning of Great Depression
1931	Quaker child-feeding program in American coal fields		
1936	Wider Quaker Fellowship established (for "friends of the Friends")	1932	Election of Franklin D. Roosevelt
1937-39	Non-partisan Quaker relief work in Spanish Civil War		
1937	Friends World Committee for Consultation established		
1939-46	American and British Friends carry on war relief in Europe and Asia	1939-45	Second World War
1943	Friends Committee on National Legislation established (to present Quaker viewpoints to Congress and to inform Friends on legislative issues)		
1947	Nobel Peace Prize awarded to American Friends Service Committee and Friends Service Council (Great Britain)	1947	Charter of the United Nations
		1950	Korean War

CHRISTIAN SPECTRUM IN THE MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

	Catholic	Lutheran	Calvinist	Baptist	Quaker
Theology	Clear, rational; truth expressed in creed	More personal; creed still fundamental	Logical, but more personal; power of God in history	Conversion and commitment	Most personal - experience over doctrine
Sacraments	Crucial; seven sacraments	Once/week; two sacraments	Once/three months	Some do without	No outward sacraments
Ministry	Sacraments & salvation depend on priest	Minister not essential for salvation	Same as Lutherans	Conversion itself is what's important	No permanent pastor
Economic & Social	Social hierarchy approved	Princes; less hierarchy; mixture	Similar to Lutherans, but middle class; success orientation	Mixture	Mixture; many leaders from lower classes
	Pure doctrine	(—————)			Pure experience

The Inward Light: How Quakerism Unites Universalism and Christianity

by Samuel D. Caldwell

We are all well aware of the long-standing tension in the Religious Society of Friends between Christianity and Universalism. Each pole of this historic tension has had its partisans over time. The Quaker Universalist Fellowship represents one pole of the contemporary debate. Evangelical Friends International is an example of a group that represents the other. Each side of the debate claims that its own view of Quakerism is the true one, and each side feels that the other side's position is a negation of its own. Typically, the debate is cast in logically exclusivist terms: if one position is true, then the other must of necessity be false~ both cannot possibly be true at the same time.

For my part, I have never accepted the terms in which the debate has been cast. It is my own view that Quakerism is neither exclusively Christian, as some Quaker Christians would have it~ nor is it exclusively Universalist, as some Quaker Universalists would have it. The fact is Quakerism has always been a powerful amalgamation of both. My thesis is that not only is it possible to be *both* Christian and Universalist at the same time, but it has always been the very essence and peculiar genius of Quakerism to join the two in holy matrimony! I wish to explain how this is so.

Let me start with the Universalist side of the equation. What many Christian Quakers fail to understand or accept about the Quaker approach to Christianity is that it is Universalist to the core. Universalism is thoroughly embedded in the Quaker perspective precisely because it is intrinsic to our most central and distinctive religious insight: the principle of the Inner Light.

It is helpful to remind ourselves of the essential core of this important insight. Historically, it is this: God gives to every human being who comes into the world a measure of the divine spirit as a Living Witness and a Light to be inwardly guided by. Those who learn to heed the promptings of this Light within them come to be "saved" - that is, they come into fullness and wholeness of life and right relationship with God, themselves, and one another.

Those who resist, ignore, or otherwise deny the workings of this pure spirit within them, though they make a profession of faith, are "condemned" - that is, they become alienated from God, from themselves, and from one another. The chief end of religious life, therefore, is to hearken to and act in accordance with the promptings of the Inner Light in one's life. This description closely parallels George Fox's original "opening" concerning the Light in 1648, as recorded in his *Journal* (Nickalls edition, p. 33).

A number of important characteristics of the Light can be readily inferred from this description. First, this Light is "*divine*" or "*supernatural*." That is, it pertains to God and God's activity. Numerous Friends, among them George Fox and Robert Barclay, have been urgent in cautioning us against confusing the Inner Light with such natural phenomena as reason or conscience, both of which are physically and socially conditioned. Rather, they have emphasized that the Light is God's eternal and indwelling power resident within our mortal frames, there to enlighten and inform the natural reason and conscience with truth of a higher order.

This Light is *personal*. It is no mindless, purposeless, undifferentiated force or power. It is the mind and will of God - the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah - who indwells our souls. To claim, as we do, that we are led or taught by the Light is to accept by inference that the power by which we are led or taught is capable of actively leading or teaching us. This requires a personal or theistic conception of the Spirit, which Friends have traditionally held.

From: London Yearly Meeting, *Christian Faith and Practice*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, ©1960 by London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (OP).

MARGARET FELL

The Swarthmoor household. *Margaret Fell (1614-1702) was the wife of Judge Thomas Fell of Swarthmoor Hall, near Ulverston, Lancashire. After the meeting with George Fox in June 1652, described in her own words below, she made her house (with her husband's permission) the centre for the Quaker 'Publishers of Truth' and became the nursing-mother of the new movement. Among the members of her household who became Quaker leaders were Thomas Salthouse (1630-1690/1) who labored chiefly in the south-west of England, and Anne Clayton, who traveled to Barbados and America. The influence of Margaret Fell and her household is described here by Anthony Pearson (1628-1666) who was a frequent visitor at the time, and William Caton (1636-1665) who was then companion to young George Fell, and later became one of the apostles of Quakerism in Holland*

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All my religion was but the hearing of the ear, the believing and talking of a God and Christ in heaven or a place at a distance, I knew not where. Oh, how gracious was the Lord to me in carrying me to Judge Fell's to see the wonders of his power and wisdom, *a family walking in the fear of the Lord*, conversing daily with Him, crucified to the world and living only to God. I was so confounded, all my knowledge and wisdom became folly; my mouth was stopped, my conscience convinced and the secrets of my heart were made manifest, and that Lord was discovered to be near, whom I ignorantly worshipped.

Anthony Pearson, 1653

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Truly willing we were to sympathize and bear one with another, to be helpful one unto another, and in true and tender love to watch over one another. And, oh the love, mercy and power of God, which abounded to us, through us and among us; who shall declare it? And hence came that worthy family to be so renowned in the nation, the fame of which spread much among Friends. And the power and presence of the Lord being so much there with us, it was as a means to induce many, even from far, to come thither, so that at one time there would have been Friends out of five or six counties .. I was cherished and encouraged in the way of life by my entirely beloved friend Margaret Fell, who as a tender-hearted nursing-mother cared for me and was tender of me as if I had been one of her own children; oh, the kindness, the respect and friendship which she showed me ought never to be forgotten by me.

William Caton, 1652

In 1669, eleven years after Judge Fell's death, Margaret Fell married George Fox, though their incessant labors, travels and imprisonments prevented them from living much together at Swarthmoor. Her account of her conviction follows:

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I was one that sought after the best things, being desirous to serve God, so as I might be accepted of him, and was enquiring after the way of the Lord, and went often to hear the best ministers that came into our parts, whom we frequently entertained at our house ... This I hoped I did well in, but

often I feared was short of the right way. And after this manner I was enquiring and seeking about twenty years.

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In the year 1652 it pleased the Lord to draw him <George Fox> toward us My then husband, Thomas Fell, was not at home at that time, but gone the Welsh circuit, being one of the Judges of Assize, and our house, Swarthmoor Hall, being a place open to entertain ministers and religious people at, one of George Fox his friends brought him hither, where he stayed all night. And the next day, being a lecture or a fast-day, he went to Ulverston steeplehouse, but came not in till people were gathered; I and my children had been a long time there before. And when they were singing before the sermon, he came in; and when they had done singing, he stood up upon a seat or form and desired that he might have liberty to speak. And he that was in the pulpit said he might. And the first words that he spoke were as followeth: 'He is not a Jew that is one outward, neither is that circumcision which is outward; but he is a Jew that is one inward, and that is circumcision which is of the heart'. And so he went on and said, How that Christ was the Light of the world and lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that by this Light they might be gathered to God, etc. And I stood up in my pew, and I wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on, and opened the Scriptures, and said, "The Scriptures were the prophets' words and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what as they spoke they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord'. And said, 'Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?'

This opened me so that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat me down in my pew again, and cried bitterly. And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, 'We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves'. So that served me, that I cannot well tell what he spake afterwards; but he went on in declaring against the false prophets and priests and deceivers of the people.

And there was one John Sawrey, a Justice of Peace and a professor, that bid the churchwarden 'Take him away', and he laid his hands on him several times, and took them off again and let him alone; and then after a while he <George Fox> gave over and came to our house again that night. And he spoke in the family amongst the servants; and they were all generally convinced, as William Caton, Thomas Salthouse, Mary Askew, Anne Clayton and several other servants. And I was stricken into such a sadness I knew not what to do, my husband being from home. I saw it was the truth, and I could not deny it; and I did as the apostle saith, I 'received the truth in the love of it'. And it was opened to me so clear that I had never a tittle in my heart against it; but I desired the Lord that I might be kept in it, and then I desired no greater portion.

Margaret Fox (1694)

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Of her second trial in 1664 she wrote: So they passed sentence of Praemunire upon me which was that I should be out of the King's protection and forfeit all my estate, real and personal, to the King and imprisonment during life. But the great God of heaven and earth supported my- spirit under this severe sentence, that I was not terrified but gave this answer to Judge Turner, who gave the sentence, 'Although I am out of the King's protection, I am not out of the protection of the Almighty God'. *(She was subsequently released and her estate was given back to her family.)*

From: Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, eds., *Early Quaker Writings*. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973 (Republished Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications 2003).

THE DEATH OF MARY DYER [from
Edward Burrough, 15/1/1660/61]:67

A DECLARATION OF THE SAD AND GREAT PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

*Of the People of God, called Quakers in
New-England, for the Worshipping Of
God, Whereof*

22 have been Banished upon pain of Death.
03 have been *Martyred*
03 have had their Right Ears cut
01 hath been burned in the Hand with the letter H.
31 Persons have received 650 stripes
01 was beat while his Body was like a jelly.
Several were beat with Pitched Ropes
Five Appeals made to England were denied by the Rulers of Boston

One thousand forty four pounds of goods hath been taken from them (being poor men) for meeting together in the fear of the Lord, and for keeping the Commands of Christ.
One now lyeth in Iron-fetters, condemned to dye.

ALSO

Some Considerations presented to the King, which is in Answer to a Petition and Address which was presented unto Him by the General Court at Boston: Subscribed by J. Endicott, the Chief Persecutor there; thinking thereby to cover themselves from the Blood of the Innocents.

Gal.4.29

London, Printed for Robert Wilson, in Martins Le Grand.

[The first section answers the claims of the Boston General Court's Petition, justifying their persecution of the troublers of their peace – it is fourteen pages. The second section, signed by John Rous and John Copeland (who had lost their ears), Samuel Shattuck, Josiah Southwick, Nicholas Phelps, Joseph Nicholson, and Jane Nicholson - these latter all Boston residents, banished from their homes and families – expands the summary of sufferings on the title page. The third section – on the sentencing of Robinson, Stephenson, and Mary Dyer, and execution of the first two – is taken almost verbatim from *A Call from Death to Life*. The final section, written by Burrough, seems to be taken from the account of the Nicholsons, and is the first printed report on Mary Dyer's death.]

[27] Mary Dyer, being freed as aforesaid, returned to Rhode Island, and afterwards to Long Island, and there was [28] most part of the winter, over the Island, where she had good service for the Lord~ and then came to Shelter Island, whence she thought she might pass to

Rhode Island. And being there, sometime she had movings from the Lord to go to Boston, and there she came the 21st of the 3rd Month, 1660. And the 30th day was their Governor chosen, and the 31st of the 3rd Month, in the former part of the day, she was sent for to the General Court.

The Governor said, "Are ye the same Mary Dyer that was here before?" ...

Mary Dyer: "I am the same Mary Dyer that was here the last General Court. "

The Governor said, "You will own yourself a Quaker, will you not."

M.D.: "I own my self to be so reproachfully called." The bloody minded Jailer, having now opportunity to have his bloodthirsty will fulfilled, said "she is a vagabond."

The Governor said, "The sentence was passed upon her the Last General Court, and now likewise: 'you must return to the prison from whence you came, and there remain until tomorrow at nine of the clock, then from thence you must go to the gallows, and there be hanged till you are dead.'"

Mary Dyer said, "this is no more than that thou saidst before. "

"Aye, aye," the Governor said, "and now it is to be executed. Therefore prepare yourself tomorrow at nine of the clock," (being the first day of the 4th Month, 1660).

Mary Dyer answered and said, "I came in obedience to the will of God, the last General Court, desiring you to repeal your unrighteous laws of banishment upon pain of death; and that same is my work now, and earnest request, because ye refused before to grant my request, although I told you that if ye refused to repeal them the Lord will send others of his servants to witness against them."

John Endicott asked her whether she was a prophet.

She said she spake the words that the Lord spake in her; "and now the thing is come to pass." She beginning to speak of her Call, 1. Endicott said, "away with her, away with her."

So she was brought to the prison-house, where she was before, close shut up until the next day. About the time prefixed, the marshal Michaelson came and called hastily for her. When he [29] came into the room, she desired him to stay a little, and speaking mildly to him she said she should be ready presently, even like a sheep prepared for the slaughter. But he in the wolvis nature said he could not wait upon her, but she should now wait upon him. Margaret Smith, her companion, hearing him speak these words with others from the Cain-like spirit, was moved to testify against their unjust laws and proceedings, being grieved to see both him and many others in such gross darkness and hardheartedness. Then he said, "you shall have your share of the same," with other violent words.

Then they brought her forth, and drums were beat before and behind her, with a band of soldiers, through the town, and so to the place of execution, which is about a mile, the drums being that none might hear her speak all the way.

Some said unto her, that if she would return she might come down and save her life (Bonner- and Gardner-like).⁶⁸ She answered and said, "Nay, I cannot. For in obedience to the will of the Lord God I came, and in his will I abide faithful to the death. "

Their Captain, John Webb said, She had been here before, and had the sentence of banishment upon pain of death; and had broken this law in coming again now, as well as formerly; - and therefore she was guilty of her own blood. To which M. Dyer said, "Nay, I came to keep blood-guiltiness from you, desiring you to repeal the unrighteous and unjust law of banishment upon pain of death, made against the innocent servants of the Lord. Therefore my blood will be required at your hands, who wilfully do it; but for those that do it in the simplicity of their hearts, I do desire the Lord to forgive them. I came to do the will of my Father, and in obedience to his will I stand even to the death."

John Wilson, their priest of Boston, said, "M. Dyer, O repent; O repent, and be not so deluded and carried away by the deceit of the Devil." M. Dyer answered and said, "Nay, man, I am not now to repent."

[30] Some asked her whether she would have the Elders to pray for her. She said, "I know never an Elder here." They asked whether she would have any of the people to pray for her. She said she desired the prayers of all the People of God. Some scoffingly said, "It may be she thinks there is none here; this is a mock." M. Dyer looked about and said, "I know but few here."

Then they spake to her again, that one of the Elders might pray for her. She replied and said, "Nay, first a child, then a young man, then a strong man, before an Elder of Christ Jesus." Some charged her with something that was not understood what it was. But her answer was, "It's false; it's false; I never spoke the words."

Then one said she should say she had been in Paradise. And she answered, "Yea, I have been in Paradise several days." And more she spake of her eternal happiness, that's out of mind. And so sweetly and cheerfully in the Lord she finished her testimony and died a faithful martyr of Jesus Christ.

And still they are going on in acting their cruel laws: for the same day, in the former part of it, they sent for Joseph Nicholson and his wife Jane Nicholson, and banished them on pain of death. Then sent for three more, and whilst they were examining them, there came one to the Court spake to this purpose, and one scoffingly said "she did hang as a flag for them to take example by." (But precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints). These are the people that say their churches are the purest churches in the world, and that their magistrates are godly magistrates, and godly ministers. A fair show to the world! Even "another Beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon; and he exerciseth the power of the first Beast before him." [Rev. 13: 11-12]

And their General Court being ended, they left nine of us still remaining in prison, it seems looking for encouragement from England that more may follow their Ensign. And we have a further account also, that one of our Friends, named William Leddra, being banished upon pain of death, he not departing the colony but being moved to return again to Boston, was apprehended and cast into prison, and there lieth chained to a log with a horse-lock, condemned to die.

[Burrough's appeal to the king, presented by this tract and in a personal interview, was not in time to save the life of Leddra, but induced the king to order the transfer of all accusations against Quakers in Massachusetts to courts in England. Thereby the lives of Wenlock Christison and others were saved; but the struggle continued nevertheless for five years more.]

[67] Burrough's tract is the earliest to describe Mary Dyer's death; it was soon overshadowed by Bishop's, but Burrough himself, by taking Samuel Shattuck to see Charles II, procured "the King's Missive" (see Whittier's poem) that saved Wenlock Christison and later Quaker prisoners from death in Boston.

[68] Stephen Gardner and Edmund Bonner were bishops through whom Mary Tudor tried to bring back the Church of England to Catholicism by burning the Protestant leaders.

GEORGE FOX - An Autobiography

CHAPTER II. The First Years of Ministry

1648-1649

Chapter II

After this³⁴ I went to Mansfield, where was a great meeting of professors and people. Here I was moved to pray; and the Lord's power was so great that the house seemed to be shaken. When I had done, some of the professors said it was now as in the days of the apostles, when the house was shaken where they were.³⁵ After I had prayed, one of the professors would pray, which brought deadness and a veil over them; and others of the professors were grieved at him and told him it was a temptation upon him. Then he came to me, and desired that I would pray again; but I could not pray in man's will.

Soon after there was another great meeting of professors, and a captain, whose name was Amor Stoddard, came in. They were discoursing of the blood of Christ; and as they were discoursing of it, I saw, through the immediate opening of the invisible Spirit, the blood of Christ. And I cried out among them, and said, "Do ye not see the blood of Christ? See it in your hearts, to sprinkle your hearts and consciences from dead works, to serve the living God"; for I saw it, the blood of the New Covenant, how it came into the heart.³⁶

This startled the professors, who would have the blood only without them, and not in them. But Captain Stoddard was reached, and said, "Let the youth speak; hear the youth speak"; when he saw they endeavoured to bear me down with many words.

There was also a company of priests, that were looked upon to be tender; one of their names was Kellett; and several people that were tender went to hear them. I was moved to go after them, and bid them mind the Lord's teaching in their inward parts. That priest Kellett was against parsonages then; but afterwards he got a great one, and turned a persecutor.

Now, after I had had some service in these parts, I went through Derbyshire into my own county, Leicestershire, again, and several tender people were convinced.

Passing thence, I met with a great company of professors in Warwickshire, who were praying, and expounding the Scriptures in the fields. They gave the Bible to me, and I opened it on the fifth of Matthew, where Christ expounded the law; and I opened the inward state to them, and the outward state; upon which they fell into a fierce contention, and so parted; but the Lord's power got ground.

Then I heard of a great meeting to be at Leicester, for a dispute, wherein Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Common-prayer-men³⁷ were said to be all concerned. The meeting was in a steeple-house; and thither I was moved by the Lord God to go, and be amongst them. I heard their discourse and reasonings, some being in pews, and the priest

in the pulpit; abundance of people being gathered together.

At last one woman asked a question out of Peter, What that birth was, viz., a being born again of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever? And the priest said to her, "I permit not a woman to speak in the church"; though he had before given liberty for any to speak. Whereupon I was wrapped up, as in a rapture, in the Lord's power; and I stepped up and asked the priest, "Dost thou call this (the steeple-house) a church? Or dost thou call this mixed multitude a church?" For the woman asking a question, he ought to have answered it, having given liberty for any to speak.

But, instead of answering me, he asked me what a church was? I told him the church was the pillar and ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household, which Christ was the head of; but he was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of lime, stones and wood.³⁸

This set them all on fire. The priest came down from his pulpit, and others out of their pews, and the dispute there was marred. I went to a great inn, and there disputed the thing with the priests and professors, who were all on fire. But I maintained the true church, and the true head thereof, over their heads, till they all gave out and fled away. One man seemed loving, and appeared for a while to join with me; but he soon turned against me, and joined with a priest in pleading for infant-baptism, though himself had been a Baptist before; so he left me alone. Howbeit, there were several convinced that day; the woman that asked the question was convinced, and her family; and the Lord's power and glory shone over all.

After this I returned into Nottinghamshire again, and went into the Vale of Beavor.³⁹ As I went, I preached repentance to the people. There were many convinced in the Vale of Beavor, in many towns; for I stayed some weeks amongst them.

One morning, as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me; and I sat still. It was said, "All things come by nature"; and the elements and stars came over me, so that I was in a manner quite clouded with it. But as I sat still and said nothing, the people of the house perceived nothing. And as I sat still under it and let it alone, a living hope and a true voice arose in me, which said, "There is a living God who made all things."⁴⁰ Immediately the cloud and temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all; my heart was glad, and I praised the living God.

After some time I met with some people who had a notion that there was no God, but that all things come by nature. I had a great dispute with them, and overturned them, and made some of them confess that there is a living God. Then I saw that it was good that I had gone through that exercise.⁴¹ We had great meetings in those parts; for the power of the Lord broke through in that side of the country.

Returning into Nottinghamshire, I found there a company of shattered Baptists, and others. The Lord's power wrought mightily, and gathered many of them. Afterwards I went to Mansfield and thereaway, where the Lord's power was wonderfully manifested both at Mansfield and other towns thereabouts.

In Derbyshire the mighty power of God wrought in a wonderful manner. At Eton, a town near Derby, there was a meeting of Friends,⁴² where appeared such a mighty power of God that they were greatly shaken, and many mouths were opened in the power of the Lord God. Many were moved by the Lord to go to steeple-houses, to the priests and people, to declare the everlasting truth unto them.

At a certain time, when I was at Mansfield, there was a sitting of the justices about hiring of servants; and it was upon me from the Lord to go and speak to the justices, that they should not oppress the servants in their wages. So I walked towards the inn where they sat; but finding a company of fiddlers there, I did not go in, but thought to come in the morning, when I might have a more serious opportunity to discourse with them.

But when I came in the morning, they were gone, and I was struck even blind, that I could not see. I inquired of the innkeeper where the justices were to sit that day; and he told me, at a town eight miles off. My sight began to come to me again; and I went and ran thitherward as fast as I could. When I was come to the house where they were, and many servants with them, I exhorted the justices not to oppress the servants in their wages, but to do that which was right and just to them; and I exhorted the servants to do their duties, and serve honestly.⁴³ They all received my exhortation kindly; for I was moved of the Lord therein.

Moreover, I was moved to go to several courts and steeple-houses at Mansfield, and other places, to warn them to leave off oppression and oaths, and to turn from deceit to the Lord, and to do justly. Particularly at Mansfield, after I had been at a court there, I was moved to go and speak to one of the most wicked men in the country, one who was a common drunkard, a noted whore-master, and a rhyme-maker; and I reproved him in the dread of the mighty God, for his evil courses.

When I had done speaking, and left him, he came after me, and told me that he was so smitten when I spoke to him, that he had scarcely any strength left in him. So this man was convinced, and turned from his wickedness, and remained an honest, sober man, to the astonishment of the people who had known him before.

Thus the work of the Lord went forward, and many were turned from the darkness to the light, within the compass of these three years, 1646, 1647 and 1648. Diverse meetings of Friends, in several places, were then gathered to God's teaching, by his light, Spirit, and power; for the Lord's power broke forth more and more wonderfully.

Now I was come up in spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave unto me another smell than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness; being renewed into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me; and it was showed me how all things had their names given them according to their nature and virtue.

I was at a stand in my mind whether I should practise physic for the good of mankind, seeing the nature and virtues of things were so opened to me by the Lord. But I was immediately taken up in spirit to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam's innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall. And the Lord showed me that such as were faithful to Him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell; in which the admirable works of the creation, and the virtues thereof, may be known, through the openings of that divine Word of wisdom and power by which they were made.

Great things did the Lord lead me into, and wonderful depths were opened unto me, beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the Word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being.⁴⁴

Thus I travelled on in the Lord's service, as He led me. When I came to Nottingham, the mighty power of God was there among Friends.⁴⁵ From thence I went to Clawson, in Leicestershire, in the Vale of Beavor; and the mighty power of God appeared there also, in several towns and villages where Friends were gathered.

While I was there the Lord opened to me three things relating to those three great professions in the world, -- law, physic, and divinity (so called). He showed me that the physicians were out of the wisdom of God, by which the creatures were made; and knew not the virtues of the creatures, because they were out of the Word of wisdom, by which they were made. He showed me that the priests were out of the true faith, of which Christ is the author, -- the faith which purifies, gives victory and brings people to have access to God, by which they please God; the mystery of which faith is held in a pure conscience. He showed me also that the lawyers were out of the equity, out of the true justice, and out of the law of God, which went over the first transgression, and over all sin, and answered the Spirit of God that was grieved and transgressed in man; and that these three, -- the physicians, the priests, and the lawyers, -- ruled the world out of the wisdom, out of the faith, and out of the equity and law of God; one pretending the cure of the body, another the cure of the soul, and the third the protection of the property of the people. But I saw they were all out of the wisdom, out of the faith, out of the equity and perfect law of God.

And as the Lord opened these things unto me I felt that His power went forth over all, by which all might be reformed if they would receive and bow unto it. The priests might be reformed and brought into the true faith, which is the gift of God. The lawyers might be reformed and brought into the law of God, which answers that indwelling Spirit of God⁴⁶ which is in every one, is transgressed in every one, and which yet, if heeded brings one to love his neighbour as himself. This lets man see that if he wrongs his neighbour, he wrongs himself; and teaches him to do unto others as he would they should do unto him. The physicians might be reformed and brought into the wisdom of God, by which all things were made and created; that they might receive a right knowledge of the creatures, and understand their virtues, which the Word of wisdom, by which they were made and are upheld, hath given them.

Abundance was opened concerning these things; how all lay out of the wisdom of God, and out of the righteousness and holiness that man at the first was made in. But as all believe in the Light, and walk in the Light, -- that Light with which Christ hath enlightened every man that cometh into the world, -- and become children of the Light, and of the day of Christ, all things, visible and invisible, are seen, by the divine Light of Christ, the spiritual heavenly man, by whom all things were created.

Moreover, when I was brought up into His image in righteousness and holiness, and into the paradise of God He let me see how Adam was made a living soul; and also the stature of Christ, the mystery that had been hid from ages and generations: which things are hard to be uttered, and cannot be borne by many. For of all the sects in Christendom (so called) that I discoursed with, I found none who could bear to be told that any should come to Adam's perfection, -- into that image of God, that righteousness and holiness, that Adam was in before he fell; to be clean and pure, without sin, as he was. Therefore how shall they be able to bear being told that any shall grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, when they cannot bear to hear that any shall come, whilst upon earth, into the same power and Spirit that the prophets and apostles were in? -- though it be a certain truth that none can understand their writings aright without the same Spirit by which they were written.

Now the Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ,⁴⁷ and I saw it shine through all; and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation to the Light of life, and became the children of it; but they that hated it, and did not believe in it were condemned by it, though they made a profession of Christ. This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man; neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it. For I saw, in that Light and Spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all, if they would know God or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, must come to that Spirit by which they that gave them forth were led and taught.

On a certain time, as I was walking in the fields, the Lord said unto me, “Thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life, which was before the foundation of the world”: and as the Lord spoke it, I believed, and saw in it the new birth. Some time after the Lord commanded me to go abroad into the world, which was like a briery, thorny wilderness. When I came in the Lord's mighty power with the Word of life into the world, the world swelled and made a noise like the great raging waves of the sea. Priests and professors, magistrates and people, were all like a sea when I came to proclaim the day of the Lord amongst them, and to preach repentance to them.

I was sent to turn people from darkness to the Light, that they might receive Christ Jesus; for to as many as should receive Him in His Light, I saw He would give power to become the sons of God; which power I had obtained by receiving Christ. I was to direct people to the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all truth, and up to Christ and God, as those had been who gave them forth.

Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures. They were very precious to me; for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them. I could speak much of these things, and many volumes might be written upon them; but all would prove too short to set forth the infinite love, wisdom, and power of God, in preparing, fitting, and furnishing me for the service to which He had appointed me; letting me see the depths of Satan on the one hand, and opening to me, on the other hand, the divine mysteries of His own everlasting kingdom.

When the Lord God and His Son Jesus Christ sent me forth into the world to preach His everlasting gospel and kingdom, I was glad that I was commanded to turn people to that inward Light, Spirit, and Grace, by which all might know their salvation and their way to God; even that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth, and which I infallibly knew would never deceive any.⁴⁸

But with and by this divine power and Spirit of God, and the Light of Jesus, I was to bring people off from all their own ways, to Christ, the new and living way; and from their churches, which men had made and gathered, to the Church in God, the general assembly written in heaven, of which Christ is the head. And I was to bring them off from the world's teachers, made by men, to learn of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, of whom the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him”; and off from all the world's worships, to know the Spirit of Truth in the inward parts, and to be led thereby; that in it they might worship the Father of spirits, who seeks such to worship Him. And I saw that they that worshipped not in the Spirit of Truth, knew not what they worshipped.

And I was to bring people off from all the world's religions, which are vain, that they might know the pure religion; might visit the fatherless, the widows, and the strangers, and keep themselves from the spots of the world. Then there would not be so many beggars, the sight of whom often grieved my heart, as it denoted so much hard-heartedness amongst them that professed the name of Christ.

I was to bring them off from all the world's fellowships, and prayings, and singings, which stood in forms without power; that their fellowship might be in the Holy Ghost, and in the Eternal Spirit of God; that they might pray in the Holy Ghost, and sing in the Spirit and with the grace that comes by Jesus; making melody in their hearts to the Lord, who hath sent His beloved Son to be their Saviour, and hath caused His heavenly sun to shine upon all the world, and His heavenly rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, as His outward rain doth fall, and His outward sun doth shine on all.

I was to bring people off from Jewish ceremonies, and from heathenish fables,⁴⁹ and from men's inventions and worldly doctrines, by which they blew the people about this way and the other, from sect to sect; and from all their beggarly rudiments, with their schools and colleges for making ministers of Christ, -- who are indeed ministers of their own making, but not of Christ's; and from all their images, and crosses, and sprinkling of infants, with all their holy-days (so called), and all their vain traditions, which they had instituted since the Apostles' days, against all of which the Lord's power was set: in the dread and authority of which power I was moved to declare against them all, and against all that preached and not freely, as being such as had not received freely from Christ.

Moreover, when the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low; and I was required to Thee and Thou all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small.⁵⁰ And as I travelled up and down I was not to bid people Good morrow, or Good evening; neither might I bow or scrape with my leg to any one; and this made the sects and professions to rage. But the Lord's power carried me over all to His glory, and many came to be turned to God in a little time; for the heavenly day of the Lord sprung from on high, and broke forth apace, by the light of which many came to see where they were.

Oh, the blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men! Some had their hats violently plucked off and thrown away, so that they quite lost them. The bad language and evil usage we received on this account are hard to be expressed, besides the danger we were sometimes in of losing our lives for this matter; and that by the great professors of Christianity, who thereby discovered they were not true believers.

And though it was but a small thing in the eye of man, yet a wonderful confusion it brought among all professors and priests; but, blessed be the Lord, many came to see the vanity of that custom of putting off the hat to men, and felt the weight of Truth's testimony⁵¹ against it.

About this time I was sorely exercised in going to their courts to cry for justice, in speaking and writing to judges and justices to do justly; in warning such as kept public houses for entertainment that they should not let people have more drink than would do them good; in testifying against wakes, feasts, May-games, sports, plays, and shows, which trained up people to vanity and looseness, and led them from the fear of God; and the days set forth for holidays were usually the times wherein they most dishonoured God by these things.

In fairs, also, and in markets, I was made to declare against their deceitful merchandise, cheating, and cozening; warning all to deal justly, to speak the truth, to let their yea be yea, and their nay be nay, and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them; forewarning them of the great and terrible day of the Lord, which would come upon them all.

I was moved, also, to cry against all sorts of music, and against the mountebanks playing tricks on their stages; for they burthened the pure life, and stirred up people's minds to vanity. I was much exercised, too, with school-masters and school-mistresses, warning them to teach children sobriety in the fear of the Lord, that they might not be nursed and trained up in lightness, vanity, and wantonness. I was made to warn masters and mistresses, fathers and mothers in private families, to take care that their children and servants might be trained up in the fear of the Lord, and that themselves should be therein examples and patterns of sobriety and virtue to them.

The earthly spirit of the priests wounded my life; and when I heard the bell toll to call people together to the steeple-house, it struck at my life; for it was just like a market-bell, to gather people together, that the priest might set forth his ware for sale. Oh, the vast sums of money that are gotten by the trade they make of selling the Scriptures, and by their preaching, from the highest bishop to the lowest priest! What one trade else in the world is comparable to it? notwithstanding the Scriptures were given forth freely, and Christ commanded His ministers to preach freely, and the prophets and apostles denounced judgment against all covetous hirelings and diviners for money.

But in this free Spirit of the Lord Jesus was I sent forth to declare the Word of life and reconciliation freely, that all might come to Christ, who gives freely, and who renews up into the image of God, which man and woman were in before they fell, that they might sit down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Notes and Links

³⁴ In the year 1648.

³⁵ William Penn gives the following testimony to Fox's power in prayer:

“But above all he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behaviour, and the fewness and fulness of his words, have often struck, even strangers, with admiration, as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer. And truly it was a testimony he knew and lived nearer to the Lord than other men.” -- Preface to George Fox's “Journal.”

³⁶ This is a characteristic illustration of the way Fox passed beyond theories and doctrines, and demanded practical *life-results*.

³⁷ That is, members of the English or Episcopal Church.

³⁸ The Friends from the time of Fox until the present have been careful to use the word “church” only for the community of spiritual believers. The cathedrals and churches were called “steeple-houses,” and their own places of worship were called “meeting-houses.”

³⁹ A beautiful valley southwest of Nottingham, near the edge of the counties of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, just west of Bardon Hills.

⁴⁰ See Whittier's poem, “Revelation.”

⁴¹ He means experience.

⁴² There is no account of the origin of this meeting, which seems to have been in existence before Fox came to Eton. There seems to have been considerable definite work done which is not detailed in the "Journal." See "Epistles," Vol. I., page 2, "Truth sprang up (to us as to be a people of the Lord) in Derbyshire in 1647." Eton is in Derbyshire.

⁴³ This is an interesting illustration of Fox's sensitiveness to wrong social conditions and of the practical character of his religion.

⁴⁴ This passage which records a striking personal experience is undated. It is strangely like an experience of the great German mystic, Jacob Boehme, whose works were published in England about the time Fox was beginning his missionary labors. He, too, had all nature opened to him, so that he says he saw the true significance and essence of things. See Jacob Boehme, "Signatura Rerum," which was published in English in 1649. Muggleton, in his "Looking Glass for G. Fox" (second edition, 1756, page 10), says that the writings of Boehme are the "chief books" bought by the followers of Fox.

⁴⁵ The name "Friends" is apparently used as formerly in Chapter I to designate the gatherings of persons who sympathized with Fox's message and who *afterwards* were called "Friends."

⁴⁶ One could wish that this important account of Fox's practical mission to the world were more clearly expressed than is here done in his phraseology, which needs translation into modern terms. There is, he means to say, a universal Divine principle or law of life which finds expression or voice in every soul. "That of God" in the individual "answers" or corresponds with the universal Divine principle. But, unfortunately, this Divine Light within is disobeyed, and thus men are astray -- out of their true life and function. Fox's mission is to call all such to obedience to "that of God" within them.

⁴⁷ This is the central teaching of George Fox. Everything else comes out of this elemental truth. It is, as he says, clearly enough taught in the Scriptures but he now saw the truth as an immediate revelation -- as a primary fact of experience.

⁴⁸ The soul's own assurance of salvation was well proclaimed by Luther, but the high and joyous experience was well-nigh lost in Calvinistic England. Fox reaffirms the privilege of this experience. He proclaims no man's infallibility, but rather the infallibility of the Spirit, in union with which a man may know that he pleases God.

⁴⁹ By a clear spiritual insight Fox saw how large a contribution both Judaism and Paganism had made to the historic church. He went to work to carry the reformation to its logical conclusion. To re-instate primitive Christianity was his aim.

⁵⁰ The real principles here involved were simplicity of life, equal respect for *all* men alike, and strict sincerity. It must be confessed that these principles have sometimes been lost sight of, and dress and language have sometimes become a form to those who opposed all forms.

⁵¹ That is, the testimony of the Spirit.