

FOX GEORGE

GEORGE FOX: AN
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Содержание

PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	12
THE TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM PENN CONCERNING THAT FAITHFUL SERVANT	37
CHAPTER I	51
CHAPTER II	74
CHAPTER III	92
CHAPTER IV	101
CHAPTER V	114
CHAPTER VI	132
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	151

George Fox

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"It (George Fox's Journal) is one of the most extraordinary and instructive narratives in the world; which no reader of competent judgment can peruse without revering the virtue of the writer."

– Sir James Mackintosh.

"The basis of his [George Fox's] teaching was the belief that each soul is in religious matters answerable not to its fellows, but to God alone, without priestly mediation, because the Holy Spirit is immediately present in every soul and is thus a direct cause of illumination. From this central belief flowed two important practical consequences, both essentially modern; one was complete toleration, the other was complete equality of human beings before the law."

– John Fiske.

"To sum up in fewest possible words the impression made by his [George Fox's] words and works upon one who studies them across the level of two centuries: he was a man of lion-like courage and adamant strength of will, absolutely truthful, devoted to the fulfillment of what he believed to be his God-appointed mission, and without any of those side-long looks at worldly promotion and aggrandizement which

many sincere leaders of church parties have cast at intervals of their journey."

– Thomas Hodgkin.

"I have read through the ponderous folio of George Fox. Pray, how may I return it to Mr. Skewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage-coach, not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard READING it, but it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it safely? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six MONTHS; I think I was about as many DAYS in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipped a word of it."

– Charles Lamb to Bernard Barton, Feb., 1823.

"Fox judged truly that the new Protestant scholasticism had not reached to the heart of things in any image of past experience, or in any printed book however sacred: that academic learning was not in itself an adequate passport to the Christian ministry; that the words of God should not supersede the Word of God. He realized, as few men have ever realized, that we are placed under the dispensation of the Spirit: that the power from on high with which the risen Christ promised to endue His People was no exceptional or transitory gift, but an Eternal Presence, an unfailling spring of energy, answering to new wants and new labours. He felt that the Spirit which had guided the fathers was waiting still to lead forward their children: that He who spoke through men of old was not withdrawn from the world like the gods of Epicurus, but ready in all ages to enter into holy souls and

make them friends of God and prophets."

– Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott.

PREFACE

The Journal of George Fox is one of the great religious autobiographies, and has its place with the "Confessions" of St. Augustine, Saint Teresa's "Life," Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," the "Life of Madam Guyon, Written by Herself," and John Wesley's "Journal." The great interest which has developed in recent years in the Psychology of Religion, and in the study of mysticism, has most naturally given new interest and prominence to all autobiographical writings which lay bare the inward states and processes of the seeking, or the triumphant soul. Professor William James has stated a well-known fact when he says that religion must be studied in those individuals in whom it is manifested to an extra-normal degree. In other words, we must go to those individuals who have a genius for religion – for whom religion has constituted well nigh the whole of life. George Fox is eminently a character of this sort, as nearly every recent student of personal religion has recognized.

Then, again, his Journal is one of the best sources in existence for the historical study of the inner life of the Commonwealth and Restoration periods. There were few hamlets so obscure, few villages so remote that they did not have their streets traversed by this strange man in leather who always travelled with his eyes open. He knew all the sects and shades of religion which flourished in these prolific times. He never rides far without

having some experience which shows the spirit and tendencies of the epoch. He never writes for effect, and he would have failed if he had tried, but he has, though utterly unconscious of it himself, filled his pages with the homely stuff out of which the common life of his England was made.

The world-events which moved rapidly across the stage during the crowded years of his activity receive but scant description from his pen. They are never told for themselves. They come in as by-products of a narrative, whose main purpose is the story of personal inward experience. The camera is set for a definite object, but it catches the whole background with it. So here we have the picture of a sensitive soul, bent singly and solely on following a Divine Voice, yet its tasks are done, not in a desert, but in the setting of great historic events. Here are the soldiers of Marston Moor and Dunbar; Cromwell and his household; Desborough and Monk; the quartering of regicides and the "new era" under the second Charles. At every point we have vivid scenes in courts, in prisons, in churches, and in inns. People of all classes and sorts talk in their natural tongue in these pages. Fox has little dramatic power, but everything which furthers, or hinders his earthly mission interests him and gets caught in his narrative. Pepys and Evelyn have readier pens, but Fox had many points of contact with the England of those days which they lacked.

In its original, unabridged form, the Journal contains many epistles, and long, arid passages which are somewhat forbidding,

and it has always required a patient, faithful reader. It has, however, always had a circle of readers outside the religious body which was founded by George Fox. This circle has been composed of those who were somewhat kindred in spirit with him, and the circle has kept small, mainly owing to the inherent difficulties of the ponderous, unedited mass of material. Of the Journal, in its complete form, there have nevertheless been thirteen editions published – nine in England and four in America.

The present editor has undertaken the task of abridging and editing it, in the belief that the time is ripe for such a work. The parts of the Journal which have been omitted – and they are many – have gone because they possess no living, present interest, or because they were repetitions of what is left. The story, as it stands, is continuous, and in no way suffers by omissions. The writer of the Journal lacked perspective. Everything that came was equally important, and his first editors, in 1694, looked upon these writings as too precious and sacred to be tampered with or seriously condensed. The original manuscript, which has never been published (now in the possession of Charles James Spence, of North Shields, England), shows us that the little group of early editors contented themselves with improving the diction, introducing some system into the spelling, and cutting out an occasional anecdote which they feared might startle the sober reader. The original manuscript is a little livelier, fresher and more graphic than any published edition, though in the main we

have in the editions a faithful reproduction of what Fox wrote.

The notes which attend the text in this edition have seemed necessary for a clear understanding of the passages to which they refer. They have been made as brief and as few in number as the situation would warrant. The Introduction is an attempt to put George Fox in his historical setting, and to develop the central ideas which he expounded, though all points of detail are postponed to the notes. This estimate of his religious message is based on a study of the body of his writings, which are voluminous, and on the writings of his contemporaries and fellow-laborers. It is a pleasure for the editor to acknowledge the valuable assistance which he has received from his friends, Norman Penney, John Wilhelm Rowntree, Joshua Rowntree and Prof. Allen C. Thomas.

Among recent writers the following have been appreciative students of George Fox: Thomas Hodgkin, in his "George Fox"; Spurgeon, in his "George Fox"; Bancroft, in his "History of America"; Barclay, in his "Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth"; Arthur Gordon's Articles on George Fox in the *Theological Review*; and in the "Dictionary of National Biography"; Frank Granger, in his "The Soul of a Christian"; Starbuck, author of "Psychology of Religion"; William James, in "Varieties of Religious Experience"; Josiah Royce, in "The Mysticism of George Fox"; Canon Curteis, "Dissent in Its Relation to the English Church" (see Chapter V., "The Quakers"); Westcott "Social Christianity" (see pp.

119-133, "The Quakers"), and John Stephenson Rowntree, "Two Lectures on George Fox."

INTRODUCTION

There are mysterious moments in the early life of the individual which we call "budding periods." They are incubation crises, when some new power or function is coming into being. The budding tendency to creep, to walk, to imitate, or to speak, is an indication that the psychological moment has come for learning the special operation.

There are, too, similar periods in the history of the race, mysterious times of gestation, when something new is coming to be, however dimly the age itself comprehends the significance of its travail. These racial "budding periods," like those others, have organic connection with the past. They are life-events which the previous history of humanity has made possible, and so they cannot be understood by themselves.

The most notable characteristic of such times is the simultaneous outbreaking of new aspects of truth in sundered places and through diverse lives, as though the breath of a new Pentecost were abroad. This dawning time is generally followed by the appearance of some person who proves to be able to be the exponent of what others have dimly or subconsciously felt, and yet could not explicitly set forth. Such a person becomes by a certain divine right the prophet of the period because he knows how to interpret its ideas with such compelling force that he organizes men, either for action or for perpetuating the truth.

In the life history of the Anglo-Saxon people few periods are more significant than that which is commonly called the Commonwealth period, though the term must be used loosely to cover the span from 1640 to 1660. It was in high degree one of these incubation epochs when something new came to consciousness, and things equally new came to deed. This is not the place to describe the political struggles which finally produced tremendous constitutional changes, nor to tell how those who formed the pith and marrow of a nation rose against an antiquated conception of kingship and established principles of self-government. The civil and political commotion was the outcome of a still deeper commotion. For a century the burning questions had been religious questions. The Church of that time was the result of compromise. It had inherited a large stock of mediæval thought, and had absorbed a mass of mediæval traditions. The men of moral and religious earnestness were bent on some measure of fresh reform. A spirit was abroad which could not be put down, and which would not be quiet. The old idea of an authoritative Church was outgrown, and yet no religious system had come in its place which provided for a free personal approach to God Himself. It has, in fact, always been a peculiarly difficult problem to discover some form of organization which will conserve the inherited truth and guarantee the stability of the whole, while at the same time it promotes the personal freedom of the individual.

The long struggle for religious reforms in England followed

two lines of development. There was on the one hand a well-defined movement toward Presbyterianism, and on the other a somewhat chaotic search for freer religious life – a movement towards Independency. The rapid spread of Presbyterianism increased rather than diminished the general religious commotion. It soon became clear that this was another form of ecclesiastical authority, as inflexible as the old, and lacking the sacred sanction of custom. Then, too, the Calvinistic theology of the time did violence to human nature as a whole. Its linked logic might compel intellectual assent, but there is something in a man as real as his intellect, which is not satisfied with this clamping of eternal truth into inflexible propositions. Personal soul-hunger, and the necessity which many individuals feel for spiritual quest, must always be reckoned with. It should not be forgotten that George Fox came to his spiritual crisis under this theology.

Thus while theology was stiffening into fixed form with one group, it was becoming ever more fluid among great masses of people throughout the nation. Religious authority ceased to count as it had in the past. Existing religious conditions were no longer accepted as final. There was a widespread restlessness which gradually produced a host of curious sects. Fox came directly in contact with at least four of the leading sectarian movements of the time and there can be no question that they exerted an influence upon him both positively and negatively. The first "sect" in importance, and the first to touch the life of George

Fox, was the Baptist – at that time often called Anabaptist. His uncle Pickering was a member of this sect, and, though George seems to have been rather afraid of the Baptists, he must have learned something from them. They already had a long history, reaching back on the continent to the time of Luther, and their entire career had been marked by persecution and suffering. They were "Independents," i. e., they believed that Church and State should be separate, and that each local church should have its own independent life. They stoutly objected to infant baptism, maintaining that no act could have a religious value unless it were an act of will and of faith. Edwards, in his "Gangræna," 1646, reports a doctrine then afloat to the intent that "it is as lawful to baptize a cat, or a dog, or a chicken as to baptize an infant." Their views on ministry were novel and must surely have interested Fox. They encouraged a lay ministry, and they actually had cobblers, leather-sellers, tailors, weavers and at least one brewer, preaching in their meetings. John Bunyan, who was of them, proved to general satisfaction that "Oxford and Cambridge were not necessary to fit men to preach." Still stranger, they had what their enemies scornfully called "She-preachers." Edwards has recorded this dreadful error in his list of one hundred and ninety-nine "distinct errors, heresies and blasphemies": "Some say that 'tis lawful for women to preach, that they have gifts as well as men; and some of them do actually preach, having great resort to them"!

Furthermore, they held that all tithes and all set stipends

were unlawful. They maintained that preachers should work with their own hands and not "go in black clothes." This sad error appears in Edwards's chaotic list: "It is said that all settled certain maintenance for ministers of the gospel is unlawful." Finally many of the Baptists opposed the use of "steeple houses" and held the view that no person is fitted to preach or prophesy *unless the Spirit moves him*.

The "Seekers" are occasionally mentioned in the Journal and were widely scattered throughout England during the Commonwealth. They were serious-minded people who saw nowhere in the world any adequate embodiment of religion. They held that there was no true Church, and that there had been none since the days of the apostles. They did not celebrate any sacraments, for they held that there was nobody in the world who possessed an anointing clearly, certainly and infallibly enough to perform such rites. They had no "heads" to their assemblies, for they had none among them who had "the power or the gift to go before one another in the way of eminency or authority." William Penn says that they met together "not in their own wills" and "waited together in silence, and as anything arose in one of their minds that they thought favored with a divine spring, so they sometimes spoke."

We are able to pick out a few of their characteristic "errors" from Edwards's list in the "Gangræna." "That to read the Scriptures to a mixed congregation is dangerous." "That we did look for great matters from One crucified in Jerusalem 1600

years ago, but that does no good; it must be a Christ formed *in* us." "That men ought to preach and exercise their gifts without study and premeditation and not to think what they are to say till they speak, because it shall be given them in that hour and the Spirit shall teach them." "That there is no need of human learning or reading of authors for preachers, but all books and learning must go down. It comes from want of the Spirit that men write such great volumes."

The "Seekers" expected that the light was soon to break, the days of apostasy would end and the Spirit would make new revelations. In the light of this expectation a peculiar significance attaches to the frequent assertion of Fox that he and his followers were living in the same Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures, and received direct commands as did the apostles. "I told him," says Fox of a "priest," "that to receive and go with a message, and to have a word from the Lord, as the prophets and apostles had and did, and as *I had done*," was quite another thing from ordinary experience. A much more chaotic "sect" was that of the "Ranters." There was probably a small seed of truth in their doctrines, but under the excitement of religious enthusiasm they went to wild and perilous extremes, and in some cases even fell over the edge of sanity. They started with the belief that God is in everything, that every man is a manifestation of God, and they ended with the conclusion which their bad logic gave them that *therefore what the man does God does*. They were above all authority and actually said: "Have not *we* the Spirit, and why

may not *we* write scriptures as well as Paul?" They believed the Scriptures "not because such and such writ it," but because they could affirm "God saith so in me." What Christ did was for them only a temporal figure, and nothing external was of consequence, since they had God Himself in them. As the law had been fulfilled they held that they were free from all law, and might without sin do what they were prompted to do. Richard Baxter says that "the horrid villainies of the sect did speedily extinguish it." Judge Hotham told Fox in 1651 that "if God had not raised up the principle of Light and life which he (Fox) preached, the nation had been overrun with Ranterism." Many of the Ranters became Friends, some of them becoming substantial persons in the new Society, though there were for a time some serious Ranter influences at work within the Society, and a strenuous opposition was made to the establishment of discipline, order and system. The uprising of the "Fifth-monarchy men" is the only other movement which calls for special allusion. They were literal interpreters of Scripture, and had discovered grounds for believing in the near approach of the millennium. By some system of calculation they had concluded that the last of the four world monarchies – the Assyrian, Persian, Greek and Roman – was tottering toward its fall, and the Fifth universal monarchy – Christ's – was about to be set up. The saints were to reign. The new monarchy was so slow in coming that they thought they might hasten it with carnal weapons. Perhaps a miracle would be granted if they acted on their faith. The miracle did not come,

but the uprising brought serious trouble to Fox, who had before told these visionaries in beautifully plain language that "Christ *has* come and has dashed to pieces the four monarchies."

The person of genius discovers in the great mass of things about him just that which is vital and essential. He seizes the eternal in the temporal, and all that he borrows, he fuses with creative power into a new whole. This creative power belonged to George Fox. There was hardly a single truth in the Quaker message which had not been held by some one of the many sects of the time. He saw the spiritual and eternal element which was almost lost in the chaos of half truths and errors. In his message these scattered truths and ideas were fused into a new whole and received new life from his living central idea.

It is a strange fact that, though England had been facing religious problems of a most complex sort since the oncoming of the Reformation, it had produced no religious genius. No one had appeared who saw truth on a new level, or who possessed a personality and a personal message which compelled the attention of the nation. There had been long years of ingenious, patchwork compromise, but no distinct prophet. George Fox is the first real prophet of the English Reformation, for he saw what was involved in this great religious movement.¹ Perhaps the most

¹ "But of 'prophets' there are very few. The good God does not seem to need many. Centuries pass, as He orders history, in which there are none. So we call them Dark Ages. Then comes some John in the desert, and the world is wakened; some Wesley in the Church of England, and there is a revival of religion."For our English races, since there were English races, I count three or four such prophets; for the world of

convincing proof of this is not the remarkable immediate results of his labors, though these are significant enough, but rather the easily-verified fact that the progress of religious truth during the last hundred years has been toward the truth which he made central in his message.² However his age misunderstood him, he would to-day find a goodly fellowship of believers.

The purpose of this book is to have him tell his own story, which in the main he knows how to do. It will, however, be of some service to the reader to develop in advance the principle of

Europe I count perhaps eleven worthy of our gratitude to-day. I mean the gratitude of all mankind. Saint Paul and Saint John are two; Augustine of Hippo is three; Dante and Francis of Assisi are two more; Thomas à Kempis and Jacob Böhme, two more; and, coming across to England, Wiclif, John Milton, George Fox, and John Wesley."—*Edward Everett Hale, in an Address at the Wesley Bicentennial Celebration in People's Temple, Boston.*"The three most influential Englishmen of the last three centuries were George Fox, John Wesley and John Henry Newman. Those who wish really to understand those three centuries must read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Fox's Journal, Wesley's Journal, and Newman's Apologia. The entire future of England and the English Empire depends upon the answer to this question: Will Newman defeat Fox and Wesley, or will Fox and Wesley defeat Newman?"Editorial in "The Methodist Times."

² "The Quaker religion which he (George Fox) founded is something which it is impossible to overpraise. In a day of shams, it was a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England. So far as our Christian sects to-day are evolving into liberality, they are simply reverting in essence to the position which Fox and the early Quakers so long ago assumed. No one can pretend for a moment that in point of spiritual sagacity and capacity, Fox's mind was unsound. Every one who confronted him personally, from Oliver Cromwell down to county magistrates and jailers, seems to have acknowledged his superior power."James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," page 6.

which he was the exponent. The first period of his life is occupied with a most painful quest for something which would satisfy his heart. His celebrated contemporary, Bunyan, possessed much greater power of describing inward states and experiences, but one is led to believe on comparing the two autobiographical passages that the sufferings of Fox, in his years of spiritual desolation, were even more severe than were those of Bunyan, though it is to be noted that the former does not suffer from the awful sense of personal sin as the latter does. "When I came to eleven years of age, *I knew pureness and righteousness*," is Fox's report of his own early deliverance from the sense of sin. His "despair," from which he could find no comfort, was caused by the extreme sensitiveness of his soul. The discovery that the world, and even the Church, was full of wickedness and sin crushed him. "I looked upon the great professors of the city [London, 1643], and I saw all was dark and under the chain of darkness." This settled upon him with a weight, deep almost as death. Nothing in the whole world seemed to him so real as the world's wickedness. "I could have wished," he cries out, "I had never been born, or that I had been born blind that I might never have seen wickedness or vanity; and deaf that I might never have heard vain and wicked words, or the Lord's name blasphemed."

He was overwhelmed, however, not merely because he discovered that the world was wicked, but much more because he discovered that priests were "empty hollow casks," and that religion, as far as he could discover any in England, was weak

and ineffective, with no dynamic message which moved with the living power of God behind it. He could find theology enough and theories enough, but he missed everywhere the direct evidence that men about him had found God. Religion seemed to him to be reduced to a system of clever substitutes for God, while his own soul could not rest until it found the Life itself.

The turning point of his life is the discovery – through what he beautifully calls an "opening" – that Christ is not merely an historic person who once came to the world and then forever withdrew, but that He is the continuous Divine Presence, God manifested humanly, and that this Christ can "speak to his condition."

At first sight, there appears to be nothing epoch-making in these simple words. But it soon develops that what he really means is that he has discovered within the deeps of his own personality a meeting place of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit. He had never had any doubts about the historical Christ. All that the Christians of his time believed *about* Christ, he, too, believed. His long search had not been to find out something *about* Christ, but to find *Him*. The Christ of the theological systems was too remote and unreal to be dynamic for him. Assent to all the propositions about Him left one still in the power of sin. He emerges from the struggle with an absolute certainty in his own mind that he has discovered a way by which his soul has immediate dealings with the living God. The larger truth involved in his experience soon becomes plain to him, namely,

that he has found a universal principle, that the Spirit of God reaches every man. He finds this divine-human relation taught everywhere in Scripture, but he challenges everybody to find the primary evidence of it in his own consciousness. He points out that every hunger of the heart, every dissatisfaction with self, every act of self-condemnation, every sense of shortcoming shows that the soul is not unvisited by the Divine Spirit, To want God at all implies some acquaintance with Him. The ability to appreciate the right, to discriminate light from darkness, the possibility of being anything more than a creature of sense, living for the moment, means that our personal life is in contact at some point with the Infinite Life, and that all things are possible to him who believes and obeys.

To all sorts and conditions of men, Fox continually makes appeal to "that of God" within them. At other times he calls it indiscriminately the "Light," or the "Seed," or the "Principle" of God within the man. Frequently it is the "Christ within." In every instance he means that the Divine Being operates directly upon the human life, and the new birth, the real spiritual life, begins when the individual becomes aware of Him and sets himself to obey Him. He may have been living along with no more explicit consciousness of a Divine presence than the bubble has of the ocean on which it rests and out of which it came; but even so, God is as near him as is the beating of his own heart, and only needs to be found and obeyed.

Instead of making him undervalue the historic revelations

of God, the discovery of this principle of truth gave him a new insight into the revelations of the past and the supreme manifestations of the Divine Life and Love. He could interpret his own inward experience in the light of the gathered revelation of the ages. His contemporaries used to say that, though the Bible were lost, it might be found in the mouth of George Fox, and there is not a line in the Journal to indicate that he undervalued either the Holy Scriptures or the historic work of Christ for human salvation. Entirely the contrary. As soon as he realized that the same God who spoke directly to men in earlier ages still speaks directly, and that to be a man means to have a "seed of God" within, he saw that there were no limits to the possibilities of a human life. It becomes possible to live entirely in the power of the Spirit and to have one's life made a free and victorious spiritual life. So to live is to be a "man" – for sin and disobedience reduce a man. The normal person, then, is the one who has discovered the infinite Divine resources, and is turning them into the actual stuff of a human life. That it happens now and then is no mystery; that it happens so seldom is the real mystery. "I asked them if they were living in the power of the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures" is his frequent and somewhat naïve question, as though everybody ought to be doing it.

The consciousness of the presence of God is the characteristic thing in George Fox's religious life. His own life is in immediate contact with the Divine Life. It is this conviction which unifies and gives direction to all his activities. God has found him and

he has found God. It is this experience which puts him among the mystics.

But here we must not overlook the distinction in types of mysticism. There is a great group of mystics who have painfully striven to find God by a path of negation. They believe that everything finite is a shadow, an illusion – nothing real. To find God, then, every vestige of the finite must be given up. The infinite can be reached only by wiping out all marks of the finite. The Absolute can be attained only when every "thing" and every "thought" have been reduced to zero. But the difficulty is that this kind of an Absolute becomes absolutely unknowable. From the nature of the case He could not be *found*, for to have any consciousness of Him at all would be to have a finite and illusory thought.

George Fox belongs rather among the *positive* mystics, who seek to realize the presence of God in this finite human life. That He transcends all finite experiences they fully realize, but the reality of any finite experience lies just in this fact, that the living God is in it and expresses some divine purpose through it, so that a man may, as George Fox's friend, Isaac Penington says, "become an organ of the life and power of God," and "proagate God's life in the world." The mystic of this type may feel the light break within him and know that God is there, or he may equally well discover Him as he performs some clear, plain duty which lies across his path. His whole mystical insight is in his discovery that God is near, and not beyond the reach of the ladders which

He has given us.

But no one has found the true George Fox when he stops with an analysis of the views which he held. Almost more remarkable than the truth which he proclaimed was the fervor, the enthusiasm, the glowing passion of the man. He was of the genuine apostolic type. He had come through years of despair over the wickedness of the world, but as soon as the Light really broke, and he knew that he had a message for the world in its sin and ignorance, there was after that nothing but the grave itself which could keep him quiet. He preached in cathedrals, on hay stacks, on cliffs of rock, from hill tops, under apple trees and elm trees, in barns and in city squares, while he sent epistles from every prison in which he was shut up. Wherever he could find men who had souls to save he told them of the life and Truth which he had found.

Whether one is in sympathy with Fox's mystical view of life or not, it is impossible not to be impressed with the practical way in which he wrought out his faith. After all, the view that God and man are not isolated was not new; the really new thing was the appearance of a man who genuinely practiced the Divine presence and lived *as though he knew* that his life was in a Divine environment.

We have dwelt upon the fundamental religious principle of Fox at some length, because his great work as a social reformer and as the organizer of a new system of Church government proceeds from this root principle. One central idea moves

through all he did. His originality lies, however, not so much in the discovery, or the rediscovery, of the principle as in the fearless application of it. Other men had believed in Divine guidance; other Christians had proclaimed the impenetration of God in the lives of men. But George Fox had the courage to carry his conviction to its logical conclusions. He knew that there were difficulties entailed in calling men everywhere to trust the Light and to follow the Voice, but he believed that there were more serious difficulties to be faced by those who put some external authority in the place of the soul's own sight. He was ready for the consequences and he proceeded to carry out both in the social and in the religious life of his time the experiment of obeying the Light within. It is this courageous fidelity to his insight that made him a social reformer and a religious organizer. He belongs, in this respect, in the same list with St. Francis of Assisi. They both attempted the difficult task of bringing religion from heaven to earth.

1. In the light of his religious discovery Fox reinterpreted man as a member of society. If man *has* direct intercourse with God he is to be treated with noble respect. He met the doctrine of the divine right of kings with the conviction of the *divine right of man*. Every man is to be treated as a man. He was a *leveler*, but he leveled up, not down. Every man was to be read in terms of his possibilities – if not of royal descent, certainly of royal destiny. This view made Fox an unparalleled optimist. He believed that a mighty transformation would come as soon as men were made

aware of this divine relationship which he had discovered. They would go to living as he had done, in the *power* of this conviction.

He began at once to put in practice his principle of equality —*i. e.*, equality of privilege. He cut straight through the elaborate web of social custom which hid man's true nature from himself. Human life had become sicklied o'er with a cast of sham, until man had half forgotten to act as *man*. Fox rejected for himself every social custom which seemed to him to be hollow and to belittle man himself. The honor which belonged to God he would give to no man, and the honor which belonged to any man he gave to every man. This was the reason for his "thee" and "thou." The plural form had been introduced to give distinction. He would not use it. The Lord Protector and the humble cotter were addressed alike. He had an eye for the person of great gifts and he never wished to reduce men to indistinguishable atoms of society, but he was resolved to guard the jewel of personality in every individual — man or woman.

2. His estimate of the worth of man made him a reformer. In society as he found it men were often treated more as things than as persons. For petty offenses they were hung,³ and if they escaped this fate they were put into prisons, where no touch of man's humanity was in evidence. In the never-ending wars the common people were hardly more than human dice. Their worth as men was well nigh forgotten. Trade was conducted on a system of sliding prices — high for this man, low for some other. Dealers

³ At this epoch there were more than two hundred capital offenses.

were honest where they had to be; dishonest where they could be. The courts of justice were extremely uncertain and irregular, as the pages of this journal continually show. Against every such crooked system which failed to recognize the divine right of man George Fox set himself. He himself had large opportunities of observing the courts of justice and the inhuman pens which by courtesy were called jails. But he became a reformer, not to secure his own rights or to get a better jail to lie in, but to establish the principle of human rights for all men. He went calmly to work to carry an out-and-out honesty into all trade relations, to establish a fixed price for goods of every sort, to make principles of business square with principles of religion. By voice or by epistle he called every judge in the realm to "mind that of God" within him. He refused ever to take an oath, because he was resolved to make a plain man's "yea" weigh as heavy as an oath. He was always in the lists against the barbarity of the penal system, the iniquity of enslaving men, the wickedness of war, the wastefulness of fashion and the evils of drunkenness, and by argument and deed he undertook to lead the way to a new heroism, better than the heroism of battlefields.

3. The logic of his principle compelled him to value education. If all men are to count as men, it is a man's primal duty to be all he can be. To be a poor organ of God when one was meant for a good one belongs among the high sins.⁴ If it was "opened" to

⁴ "Dear friends and brethren that have gone into America and the islands thereaway, stir up the gift of God in you and improve your talents. Let your light shine among

him that Oxford and Cambridge could not make men ministers, his own reason taught him that it is not safe to call all men to obey the voice and follow the light without broad-basing them at the same time in the established facts of history and nature. Fox himself very early set up schools for boys and girls alike in which "everything civil and useful in creation" was to be taught. It is, however, quite possible that he undervalued the æsthetic side of man, and that he suffered by his attempt to starve it. In this particular he shared the puritan tendency, and had not learned how to hold all things in proportion, and to make the culture of the senses at the same time beautify the inner man.

4. On the distinctively religious side his discovery of a direct divine-human relationship led to a new interpretation of worship and ministry. God is not far off. He needs no vicar, no person of any sort between Himself and the worshipper. Grace no more needs a special channel than the dew does. There is no special holy place, as though God were more *there* than *here*. He does not come from somewhere else. He is Spirit, and needs only a responsive soul, an open heart, to be *found*. Worship properly begins when the soul discovers Him and enjoys His presence – in the simplest words it is the soul's appreciation of God. With his usual optimism, he believed that all men and women were capable of this stupendous attainment. He threw away all

the Indians, the blacks and the whites, that ye may answer the truth in them and *bring them to the standard and ensign that God hath set up, Jesus Christ. Grow in the faith and grace of Christ that ye be not like dwarfs, for a dwarf shall not come near to offer upon God's altar.*"From an Epistle of George Fox written in 1690.

crutches at the start and called upon everybody to walk in the Spirit, to live in the Light. His house of worship was bare of everything but seats. It had no shrine, for the shekinah was to be in the hearts of those who worshipped. It had no altar, for God needed no appeasing, seeing that He Himself had made the sacrifice for sin. It had no baptismal font, for baptism was in his belief nothing short of immersion into the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – a going down into the significance of Christ's death and a coming up in newness of life with Him. There was no communion table, because he believed that the true communion consisted in partaking directly of the soul's spiritual bread – the living Christ. There were no confessionals, for in the silence, with the noise and din of the outer life hushed, the soul was to unveil itself to its Maker and let His light lay bare its true condition. There was no organ or choir, for each forgiven soul was to give praise in the glad notes that were natural to it. No censer was swung, for he believed God wanted only the fragrance of sincere and prayerful spirits. There was no priestly mitre, because each member of the true Church was to be a priest unto God. No official robes were in evidence, because the entire business of life, in meeting and outside, was to be the putting on of the white garments of a saintly life. From beginning to end worship was the immediate appreciation of God, and the appropriate activity of the whole being in response to Him.

William Penn says of him: "The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld was his in prayer." And this was

because he realized that he was in the presence of God when he prayed. He believed that the ministry of truth is limited to no class of men and to no sex. As fast and as far as any man discovers God it becomes his business to make Him known to others. His ability to do this effectively is a gift from God, and makes him a minister. The only thing the Church does is to recognize the gift. This idea carried with it perfect freedom of utterance to all who felt a *call* to speak, a principle which has worked out better than the reader would guess, though it has been often sorely tested.

In the Society which he founded there was no distinction of clergy and laity. He undertook the difficult task of organizing a Christian body on which the priesthood of believers should be an actual fact, and in which the ordinary religious exercises of the Church should be under the directing and controlling power of the Holy Spirit manifesting itself through the congregation.

Not the least service of Fox to his age was the important part which he took in breaking down the intolerable doctrine of predestination, which hung like an incubus over men's lives. It threw a gloom upon every person who found himself forced by his logic to believe it, and its effect upon sensitive souls was simply dreadful. Fox met this doctrine with argument, but he met it also with something better than argument – he set over against it two facts: that Divine grace and light are free, and that an inward certainty of God's favor and acceptance is possible for every believer. Wherever Quakerism went this inward assurance went with it. The shadow of dread uncertainty

gave place to sunlight and joy. This was the beginning of a spiritual emancipation which is still growing, and peaceful faces and fragrant lives are the result.

No reader of the Journal can fail to be impressed with the fact that George Fox believed himself to be an instrument for the manifestation of miraculous power. Diseases were cured through him; he foretold coming events; he often penetrated states and conditions of mind and heart; he occasionally had a sense of what was happening in distant parts, and he himself underwent on at least three occasions striking bodily changes, so that he seemed, for days at a time, like one dead, and was in one of these times incapable of being bled. These passages need trouble no one, nor need their truthfulness be questioned. He possessed an unusual psychical nature, delicately organized, capable of experiences of a novel sort, but such as are to-day very familiar to the student of psychical phenomena. The marvel is that with such a mental organization he was so sane and practical, and so steadily kept his balance throughout a life which furnished numerous chances for shipwreck.

It is very noticeable – rather more so in the complete Journal than in this Autobiography – that "judgments" came upon almost everybody who was a malicious opposer of him or his work. "God cut him off soon after," is a not infrequent phrase. It is manifestly impossible to investigate these cases now, and to verify the facts, but the well-tested honesty of the early Friends leaves little ground for doubting that the facts were substantially

as they are reported. Fox's own inference that all these persons had misfortune as a direct "judgment" for having harmed him and hindered his cause will naturally seem to us a too hasty conclusion. It is not at all strange that in this eventful period many persons who had dealings with him should have suffered swift changes of fortune, and of course he failed to note how many there were who did *not* receive judgment in this direct manner. One regrets, of course, that this kindly spiritual man should have come so near enjoying what seemed to him a divine vengeance upon his enemies, but we must remember that he believed in his soul that his work was God's work, and hence to frustrate it was serious business.

He founded a Society, as he called it, which he evidently hoped, and probably believed, would sometime become universal.⁵ The organization in every aspect recognized the fundamentally spiritual nature of man. Every individual was to be a vital, organic part of the whole; free, but possessed of a freedom which had always to be exercised with a view to the interests and edification of the whole. It was modelled exactly on the conception of Paul's universal Church of many members, made a *unity* not from without, but by the living presence of the One Spirit. All this work of organization was effected while Fox himself was in the saddle, carrying his message to town after town, interrupted by long absences in jail and dungeon, and

⁵ "In 1658 there was not a Quaker living who did not believe Quakerism to be the one only true Church of the living God." Hancock's "Peculium," page 8.

steadily opposed by the fanatical antinomian elements which had flocked to his standard. It is not the least mark of his genius that in the face of an almost unparalleled persecution he left his fifty thousand followers in Great Britain and Ireland formed into a working and growing body, with equally well-organized meetings in Holland, New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. His personality and his message had won men from every station of life, and if the rank and file were from the humbler walks, there were also men and women of scholarship and fame. Robert Barclay, from the schools of Paris, gave the new faith its permanent expression in his Apology. William Penn worked its principles out in a holy experiment in a Christian Commonwealth, and Isaac Penington, in his brief essays, set forth in rich and varied phrase the mystical truth which was at the heart of the doctrine.

This is the place for exposition, not for criticism. It requires no searchlight to reveal in this man the limitations and imperfections which his age and his own personal peculiarities fixed upon him. He saw in part and he prophesied in part. But, like his great contemporary, Cromwell, he had a brave sincerity, a soul absolutely loyal to the highest he saw. The testimony of the Scarborough jailer is as true as it is unstudied – "as stiff as a tree and as pure as a bell." It is fitting that this study of him should close with the words of the man who knew him best – William Penn: "I write my knowledge and not report, and my witness is true, having been with him for weeks and months together on

diverse occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, by sea and land, in this country and in foreign countries; and I can say I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service or occasion. For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yea, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man; a divine and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making."⁶

⁶ From William Penn's "Preface to the Journal of George Fox."

THE TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM PENN CONCERNING THAT FAITHFUL SERVANT GEORGE FOX

The blessed instrument of and in this day of God, and of whom I am now about to write, was George Fox, distinguished from another of that name, by that other's addition of younger to his name in all his writings; not that he was so in years, but that he was so in the truth; but he was also a worthy man, witness and servant of God in his time.

But this George Fox was born in Leicestershire, about the year 1624. He descended of honest and sufficient parents, who endeavoured to bring him up, as they did the rest of their children, in the way and worship of the nation; especially his mother, who was a woman accomplished above most of her degree in the place where she lived. But from a child he appeared of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren; being more religious, inward, still, solid, and observing, beyond his years, as the answers he would give, and the questions he would put upon occasion manifested, to the astonishment of those that heard him, especially in divine things.

His mother taking notice of his singular temper, and the

gravity, wisdom, and piety that very early shone through him, refusing childish and vain sports and company when very young, she was tender and indulgent over him, so that from her he met with little difficulty. As to his employment, he was brought up in country business; and as he took most delight in sheep, so he was very skilful in them; an employment that very well suited his mind in several respects, both for its innocency and solitude; and was a just figure of his after ministry and service.

I shall not break in upon his own account, which is by much the best that can be given; and therefore desire, what I can, to avoid saying anything of what is said already, as to the particular passages of his coming forth; but, in general, when he was somewhat above twenty, he left his friends, and visited the most retired and religious people, and some there were at that time in this nation, especially in those parts, who waited for the consolation of Israel night and day, as Zacharias, Anna, and good old Simeon did of old time. To these he was sent, and these he sought out in the neighboring countries, and among them he sojourned till his more ample ministry came upon him.

At this time he taught and was an example of silence, endeavouring to bring people from self-performances, testifying and turning to the light of Christ within them, and encouraging them to wait in patience to feel the power of it to stir in their hearts, that their knowledge and worship of God might stand in the power of an endless life, which was to be found in the light, as it was obeyed in the manifestation of it in man. "For in

the Word was life, and that life was the light of men." Life in the Word, light in men, and life too, as the light is obeyed; the children of the light living by the life of the Word, by which the Word begets them again to God, which is the regeneration and new birth, without which there is no coming unto the kingdom of God; and which, whoever comes to, is greater than John, that is, than John's ministry, which was not that of the kingdom, but the consummation of the legal, and opening of the gospel-dispensation. Accordingly, several meetings were gathered in those parts; and thus his time was employed for some years.

In 1652, he being in his usual retirement to the Lord upon a very high mountain, in some of the hither parts of Yorkshire, as I take it, his mind exercised towards the Lord, he had a vision of the great work of God in the earth, and of the way that he was to go forth to begin it. He saw people as thick as motes in the sun, that should in time be brought home to the Lord, that there might be but one Shepherd and one sheepfold in all the earth. There his eye was directed northward, beholding a great people that should receive him and his message in those parts. Upon this mountain he was moved of the Lord to sound out his great and notable day, as if he had been in a great auditory, and from thence went north, as the Lord had shewn him: and in every place where he came, if not before he came to it, he had his particular exercise and service shewn to him, so that the Lord was his leader indeed; for it was not in vain that he travelled, God in most places sealing his commission

with the convincement of some of all sorts, as well publicans as sober professors of religion. Some of the first and most eminent of them, which are at rest, were Richard Farnsworth, James Nayler, William Dewsberry, Francis Howgil, Edward Burrough, John Camm, John Audland, Richard Hubberthorn, T. Taylor, John Aldam, T. Holmes, Alexander Parker, William Simpson, William Caton, John Stubbs, Robert Widders, John Burnyeat, Robert Lodge, Thomas Salthouse, and many more worthies, that cannot be well here named, together with divers yet living of the first and great convincement, who after the knowledge of God's purging judgments in themselves, and some time of waiting in silence upon him, to feel and receive power from on high to speak in his name (which none else rightly can, though they may use the same words), felt the divine motions, and were frequently drawn forth, especially to visit the publick assemblies, to reprove, inform and exhort them, sometimes in markets, fairs, streets, and by the highway side, calling people to repentance, and to turn to the Lord with their hearts as well as their mouths; directing them to the light of Christ within them, to see and examine and consider their ways by, and to eschew the evil and do the good and acceptable will of God. And they suffered great hardships for this their love and good-will, being often stocked, stoned, beaten, whipped and imprisoned, though honest men and of good report where they lived, that had left wives and children, and houses and lands, to visit them with a living call to repentance. And though the priests generally set themselves to oppose them, and write

against them, and insinuated most false and scandalous stories to defame them, stirring up the magistrates to suppress them, especially in those northern parts, yet God was pleased so to fill them with his living power, and give them such an open door of utterance in his service, that there was a mighty convincement over those parts.

And through the tender and singular indulgence of Judge Bradshaw and Judge Fell, in the infancy of things, the priests were never able to gain the point they laboured for, which was to have proceeded to blood, and if possible, Herod-like, by a cruel exercise of the civil power, to have cut them off and rooted them out of the country. Especially Judge Fell, who was not only a check to their rage in the course of legal proceedings, but otherwise upon occasion, and finally countenanced this people; for his wife receiving the truth with the first, it had that influence upon his spirit, being a just and wise man, and seeing in his own wife and family a full confutation of all the popular clamours against the way of truth, that he covered them what he could, and freely opened his doors, and gave up his house to his wife and her friends, not valuing the reproach of ignorant or evil-minded people, which I here mention to his and her honour, and which will be I believe an honour and a blessing to such of their name and family as shall be found in that tenderness, humility, love and zeal for the truth and people of the Lord.

That house was for some years at first, till the truth had opened its way in the southern parts of this island, an eminent

receptacle of this people. Others of good note and substance in those northern countries had also opened their houses with their hearts to the many publishers, that in a short time the Lord had raised to declare his salvation to the people, and where meetings of the Lord's messengers were frequently held, to communicate their services and exercises, and comfort and edify one another in their blessed ministry.

But lest this may be thought a digression, having touched upon this before, I return to this excellent man: and for his personal qualities, both natural, moral, and divine, as they appeared in his converse with his brethren and in the church of God, take as follows.

I. He was a man that God endowed with a clear and wonderful depth, a discerner of others' spirits, and very much a master of his own. And though the side of his understanding which lay next to the world, and especially the expression of it, might sound uncouth and unfashionable to nice ears, his matter was nevertheless very profound, and would not only bear to be often considered, but the more it was so, the more weighty and instructing it appeared. And as abruptly and brokenly as sometimes his sentences would fall from him about divine things, it is well known they were often as texts to many fairer declarations. And indeed it shewed beyond all contradiction that God sent him, that no arts or parts had any share in the matter or manner of his ministry, and that so many great, excellent, and necessary truths as he came forth to preach to mankind, had

therefore nothing of man's wit or wisdom to recommend them. So that as to man he was an original, being no man's copy. And his ministry and writings shew they are from one that was not taught of man, nor had learned what he said by study. Nor were they notional or speculative, but sensible and practical truths, tending to conversion and regeneration, and the setting up the kingdom of God in the hearts of men, and the way of it was his work. So that I have many times been overcome in myself, and been made to say with my Lord and Master upon the like occasion, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed them to babes"; for many times hath my soul bowed in an humble thankfulness to the Lord, that he did not choose any of the wise and learned of this world to be the first messenger in our age of his blessed truth to men; but that he took one that was not of high degree, or elegant speech, or learned after the way of this world, that his message and work He sent him to do might come with less suspicion or jealousy of human wisdom and interest, and with more force and clearness upon the consciences of those that sincerely sought the way of truth in the love of it. I say, beholding with the eye of my mind, which the God of heaven had opened in me, the marks of God's finger and hand visibly in this testimony from the clearness of the principle, the power and efficacy of it in the exemplary sobriety, plainness, zeal, steadiness, humility, gravity, punctuality, charity, and circumspect care in the government of church affairs, which

shined in his and their life and testimony that God employed in this work, it greatly confirmed me that it was of God, and engaged my soul in a deep love, fear, reverence, and thankfulness for his love and mercy therein to mankind; in which mind I remain, and shall, I hope, to the end of my days.

II. In his testimony or ministry he much laboured to open truth to the people's understandings, and to bottom them upon the principle and principal, Christ Jesus, the light of the world, that by bringing them to something that was of God in themselves, they might the better know and judge of him and themselves.

He had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things, and shew the mind, harmony, and fulfilling of them with much plainness, and to great comfort and edification.

The mystery of the first and second Adam, of the fall and restoration, of the law and gospel, of shadows and substance, of the servant and son's state, and the fulfilling of the Scriptures in Christ, and by Christ the true light, in all that are His, through the obedience of faith, were much of the substance and drift of his testimonies. In all which he was witnessed to be of God, being sensibly felt to speak that which he had received of Christ, and was his own experience in that which never errs nor fails.

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 fullness 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; for they that know him most will see most reason to approach him with reverence and fear.

He was of an innocent life, no busy-body, nor self-seeker, neither touchy nor critical: what fell from him was very inoffensive, if not very edifying. So meek, contented, modest, easy, steady, tender, it was a pleasure to be in his company. He exercised no authority but over evil, and that everywhere and in all; but with love, compassion, and long-suffering. A most merciful man, as ready to forgive as unapt to take or give offence. Thousands can truly say, he was of an excellent spirit and savour among them, and because thereof the most excellent spirits loved him with an unfeigned and unfading love.

He was an incessant labourer; for in his younger time, before his many great and deep sufferings and travels had enfeebled his body for itinerant services, he laboured much in the word and doctrine and discipline in England, Scotland, and Ireland, turning many to God, and confirming those that were convinced of the truth, and settling good order as to church affairs among them. And towards the conclusion of his travelling services, between the years seventy-one and seventy-seven, he visited the churches of Christ in the plantations in America, and in the United Provinces, and Germany, as his following Journal relates, to the conviction and consolation of many. After that time

he chiefly resided in and about the city of London, and besides the services of his ministry, which were frequent, he wrote much both to them that are within and those that are without the communion. But the care he took of the affairs of the church in general was very great.

He was often where the records of the affairs of the church are kept, and the letters from the many meetings of God's people over all the world, where settled, come upon occasions; which letters he had read to him, and communicated them to the meeting that is weekly held there for such services; he would be sure to stir them up to discharge them, especially in suffering cases: showing great sympathy and compassion upon all such occasions, carefully looking into the respective cases, and endeavouring speedy relief according to the nature of them; so that the churches and any of the suffering members thereof were sure not to be forgotten or delayed in their desires if he were there.

As he was unwearied, so he was undaunted in his services for God and his people; he was no more to be moved to fear than to wrath. His behaviour at Derby, Litchfield, Appleby, before Oliver Cromwell at Launceston, Scarborough, Worcester, and Westminster-hall, with many other places and exercises, did abundantly evidence it to his enemies as well as his friends.

But as in the primitive times some rose up against the blessed apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, even from among those that they had turned to the hope of the gospel, and who became their

greatest trouble, so this man of God had his share of suffering from some that were convinced by him, who through prejudice or mistake ran against him as one that sought dominion over conscience; because he pressed, by his presence or epistles, a ready and zealous compliance with such good and wholesome things as tended to an orderly conversation about the affairs of the church, and in their walking before men. That which contributed much to this ill work, was in some a begrudging of this meek man the love and esteem he had and deserved in the hearts of the people, and weakness in others that were taken with their groundless suggestions of imposition and blind obedience.

They would have had every man independent, that as he had the principle in himself, he should only stand and fall to that and nobody else; not considering that the principle is one in all, and though the measure of light or grace might differ, yet the nature of it was the same, and being so they struck at the spiritual unity, which a people guided by the same principle are naturally led into: so that what is evil to one is so to all, and what is virtuous, honest, and of good report to one, is so to all, from the sense and savour of the one universal principle which is common to all, and (which the disaffected profess to be) the root of all true Christian fellowship, and that spirit into which the people of God drink, and come to be spiritually minded, and of one heart and one soul.

Some weakly mistook good order in the government of church-affairs for discipline in worship, and that it was so pressed or recommended by him and other brethren; and they were ready

to reflect the same things that dissenters had very reasonably objected upon the national churches, that have coercively pressed conformity to their respective creeds and worships: whereas these things related wholly to conversation, and the outward and (as I may say) civil part of the church, that men should walk up to the principles of their belief, and not be wanting in care and charity. But though some have stumbled and fallen through mistakes and an unreasonable obstinacy, even to a prejudice, yet blessed be God, the generality have returned to their first love, and seen the work of the enemy, that loses no opportunity or advantage by which he may check or hinder the work of God, and disquiet the peace of His church, and chill the love of His people to the truth, and one to another; and there is hope of divers that are yet at a distance.

In all these occasions, though there was no person the discontented struck so sharply at as this good man, he bore all their weakness and prejudice, and returned not reflection for reflection; but forgave them their weak and bitter speeches, praying for them that they might have a sense of their hurt, and see the subtlety of the enemy to rend and divide, and return into their first love that thought no ill.

And truly, I must say, that though God had visibly clothed him with a divine preference and authority, and indeed his very presence expressed a religious majesty, yet he never abused it, but held his place in the church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation. For upon all

occasions, like his blessed Master, he was a servant to all, holding and exercising his eldership in the invisible power that had gathered them, with reverence to the head and care over the body, and was received only in that spirit and power of Christ, as the first and chief elder in this age; who as he was therefore worthy of double honour, so for the same reason it was given by the faithful of this day; because his authority was inward and not outward, and that he got it and kept it by the love of God and power of an endless life. I write my knowledge and not report, and my witness is true, having been with him for weeks and months together on divers occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, and that by night and by day, by sea and by land, in this and in foreign countries: and I can say I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service or occasion.

For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yea a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man. A divine, and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making. I have been surprised at his questions and answers in natural things, that whilst he was ignorant of useless and sophistical science, he had in him the foundation of useful and commendable knowledge, and cherished it everywhere. Civil beyond all forms of breeding in his behaviour; very temperate, eating little and sleeping less, though a bulky person.

Thus he lived and sojourned among us, and as he lived so he died, feeling the same eternal power that had raised and preserved him in his last moments. So full of assurance was he

that he triumphed over death; and so even to the last, as if death were hardly worth notice or a mention: recommending to some with him the dispatch and dispersion of an epistle, just before written to the churches of Christ, throughout the world, and his own books; but above all, friends, and of all friends those in Ireland and America, twice over: saying, Mind poor friends in Ireland and America.

And to some that came in and inquired how he found himself, he answered, "Never heed, the Lord's power is over all weakness and death, the Seed reigns, blessed be the Lord": which was about four or five hours before his departure out of this world. He was at the great meeting near Lombard Street on the first day of the week, and it was the third following about ten at night when he left us, being at the house of H. Goldney in the same court. In a good old age he went, after having lived to see his children's children to several generations in the truth. He had the comfort of a short illness, and the blessing of a clear sense to the last; and we may truly say with a man of God of old, that "being dead, he yet speaketh"; and though absent in body, he is present in Spirit; neither time nor place being able to interrupt the communion of saints, or dissolve the fellowship of the spirits of the just. His works praise him, because they are to the praise of Him that worked by him; for which his memorial is and shall be blessed. I have done, as to this part of my preface, when I have left this short epitaph to his name: "Many sons have done virtuously in this day, but, dear George, thou excellest them all."

CHAPTER I

Boyhood – A Seeker

1624-1648

That all may know the dealings of the Lord with me, and the various exercises, trials, and troubles through which He led me, in order to prepare and fit me for the work unto which He had appointed me, and may thereby be drawn to admire and glorify His infinite wisdom and goodness, I think fit (before I proceed to set forth my public travels in the service of Truth) briefly to mention how it was with me in my youth, and how the work of the Lord was begun, and gradually carried on in me, even from my childhood.

I was born in the month called July, 1624, at Drayton-in-the-Clay,⁷ in Leicestershire. My father's name was Christopher Fox; he was by profession a weaver, an honest man; and there was

⁷ Now called Fenny Drayton; a little hamlet about five miles from Nuneaton, in a flat, though beautiful farming country. The house in which George Fox was born has long since vanished, and the few cottages which cluster here about the crossing of two roads are of modern structure. An obelisk, with a long inscription, stands within a hundred yards or so of the site of the birthplace.

a Seed of God in him. The neighbours called him Righteous Christer. My mother was an upright woman; her maiden name was Mary Lago, of the family of the Lagos, and of the stock of the martyrs.⁸

In my very young years I had a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children; insomuch that when I saw old men behave lightly and wantonly towards each other, I had a dislike thereof raised in my heart, and said within myself, "If ever I come to be a man, surely I shall not do so, nor be so wanton."

When I came to eleven years of age I knew pureness and righteousness; for while a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure. The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully two ways, viz., inwardly, to God, and outwardly, to man; and to keep to Yea and Nay in all things. For the Lord showed me that, though the people of the world have mouths full of deceit, and changeable words, yet I was to keep to Yea and Nay in all things; and that my words should be few and savoury, seasoned with grace; and that I might not eat and drink to make myself wanton, but for health, using the creatures⁹ in their service, as servants in their places, to the glory of Him that created them.

⁸ This martyred ancestor of Mary Lago was probably a member of the Glover family, of Mancetter, a few miles north of Drayton. (See article on Fox in Dict. of Nat. Biog., which refers to Riching's "Mancetter Martyrs," 1860.)

⁹ "Creatures" here and frequently means "created things."

As I grew up, my relations thought to have made me a priest,¹⁰ but others persuaded to the contrary. Whereupon I was put to a man who was a shoemaker¹¹ by trade, and dealt in wool. He also used grazing, and sold cattle; and a great deal went through my hands. While I was with him he was blessed, but after I left him he broke and came to nothing.

I never wronged man or woman in all that time; for the Lord's power was with me and over me, to preserve me. While I was in that service I used in my dealings the word Verily, and it was a common saying among those that knew me, "If George says verily, there is no altering him." When boys and rude persons would laugh at me, I let them alone and went my way; but people had generally a love to me for my innocency and honesty.

When I came towards nineteen years of age, being upon business at a fair, one of my cousins, whose name was Bradford, having another professor¹² with him, came and asked me to drink part of a jug of beer with them. I, being thirsty, went in with

¹⁰ "Priest" here means clergyman in the established Church, though the "priests" with whom he comes in contact in the early years of his ministry are Presbyterian. The word is usually employed for any minister who receives pay for preaching.

¹¹ This brief connection with shoemaking has been effectively used by Carlyle in his famous characterization of George Fox. (See "Sartor Resartus," book iii., chapter 1: "An Incident in Modern History.") There is, however, no historical foundation for Carlyle's picture. Sewel denies that there was any connection between Fox's suit of leather and "his former leather-work." Croese says the shoemaker and cattle grazer lived in Nottingham.

¹² "Professor" means here and everywhere throughout this book a nominal Christian. Our modern substitute for the expression would be "a church member."

them for I loved any who had a sense of good, or that sought after the Lord.

When we had drunk a glass apiece, they began to drink healths, and called for more drink, agreeing together that he that would not drink should pay all. I was grieved that any who made profession of religion should offer to do so. They grieved me very much, having never had such a thing put to me before by any sort of people. Wherefore I rose up, and, putting my hand in my pocket, took out a groat, and laid it upon the table before them, saying, "If it be so, I will leave you."

So I went away; and when I had done my business returned home; but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down, and sometimes prayed and cried to the Lord, who said unto me: "Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, young and old, keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all."

Then, at the command of God, the ninth of the Seventh month, 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with young or old. I passed to Lutterworth, where I stayed some time. From thence I went to Northampton, where also I made some stay; then passed to Newport-Pagnel, whence, after I had stayed awhile, I went to Barnet, in the Fourth month, called June,¹³ in the year 1644.

¹³ Until 1752 the English year began in March, so that by the calendar then in use June was the fourth month. This method of reckoning time runs through the entire

As I thus traveled through the country, professors took notice of me, and sought to be acquainted with me; but I was afraid of them, for I was sensible they did not possess what they professed.

During the time I was at Barnet a strong temptation to despair came upon me. I then saw how Christ was tempted, and mighty troubles I was in. Sometimes I kept myself retired to my chamber, and often walked solitary in the Chase to wait upon the Lord. I wondered why these things should come to me. I looked upon myself, and said, "Was I ever so before?" Then I thought, because I had forsaken my relations I had done amiss against them.

So I was brought to call to mind all my time that I had spent, and to consider whether I had wronged any; but temptations grew more and more, and I was tempted almost to despair; and when Satan could not effect his design upon me that way, he laid snares and baits to draw me to commit some sin, whereof he might take advantage to bring me to despair.

I was about twenty years of age when these exercises came upon me; and some years I continued in that condition, in great trouble; and fain I would have put it from me. I went to many a priest to look for comfort, but found no comfort from them.

From Barnet I went to London, where I took a lodging, and was under great misery and trouble there; for I looked upon the great professors of the city of London, and saw all was dark and under the chain of darkness. I had an uncle there, one Pickering,

a Baptist; the Baptists were tender¹⁴ then; yet I could not impart my mind to him, nor join with them; for I saw all, young and old, where they were. Some tender people would have had me stay, but I was fearful, and returned homeward into Leicestershire, having a regard upon my mind to my parents and relations, lest I should grieve them, for I understood they were troubled at my absence.

Being returned¹⁵ into Leicestershire, my relations would have had me married; but I told them I was but a lad, and must get wisdom. Others would have had me join the auxiliary band among the soldiery,¹⁶ but I refused, and was grieved that they offered such things to me, being a tender youth. Then I went to Coventry, where I took a chamber for awhile at a professor's house, till people began to be acquainted with me, for there were many tender people in that town. After some time I went into my own country again, and continued about a year, in great sorrow and trouble, and walked many nights by myself.

Then the priest of Drayton, the town of my birth, whose name was Nathaniel Stephens, came often to me, and I went often to him; and another priest sometimes came with him; and they would give place to me, to hear me; and I would ask them

¹⁴ "Tender" is one of George Fox's favorite words. It will come often. It means that the persons to whom it is applied are religiously inclined, serious, and earnest in their search for spiritual realities.

¹⁵ From his return home in 1644, George Fox dates the beginning of his religious society. (See *Epistles*, Vol. I., p. 10. Philadelphia edition, 1831.)

¹⁶ The Civil War was at its height.

questions, and reason with them. This priest, Stephens, asked me why Christ cried out upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and why He said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will, but thine, be done"? I told him that at that time the sins of all mankind were upon Him, and their iniquities and transgressions, with which He was wounded; which He was to bear, and to be an offering for, as He was man; but died not, as He was God; so, in that He died for all men, tasting death for every man, He was an offering for the sins of the whole world.

This I spoke, being at that time in a measure sensible of Christ's sufferings. The priest said it was a very good, full answer, and such a one as he had not heard. At that time he would applaud and speak highly of me to others; and what I said in discourse to him on week-days, he would preach of on First-days,¹⁷ which gave me a dislike to him. This priest afterwards became my great persecutor.

After this I went to another ancient priest¹⁸ at Mancetter, in Warwickshire, and reasoned with him about the ground of despair and temptations. But he was ignorant of my condition;

¹⁷ It was a settled custom, in fact, a matter of conscience with Fox, to avoid the names of the days and of the months. He disliked them because they commemorated heathen divinities, and he always makes a point of using numeral adjectives instead of the names. It was not an original scruple with him, but a similar position was taken by some of the leading "Separatists" before the Commonwealth period. (See Barrow's "False Churches," p. 204.)

¹⁸ Richard Abell.

he bade me take tobacco and sing psalms. Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing; I could not sing. He bade me come again, and he would tell me many things; but when I came he was angry and pettish, for my former words had displeased him. He told my troubles, sorrows, and griefs to his servants, so that it got out among the milk-lasses. It grieved me that I should have opened my mind to such a one. I saw they were all miserable comforters, and this increased my troubles upon me. I heard of a priest living about Tamworth, who was accounted an experienced man. I went seven miles to him, but found him like an empty, hollow cask.

I heard also of one called Dr. Cradock, of Coventry, and went to him. I asked him the ground of temptations and despair, and how troubles came to be wrought in man? He asked me, "Who were Christ's father and mother?" I told him, Mary was His mother, and that He was supposed to be the Son of Joseph, but He was the Son of God.

Now, as we were walking together in his garden, the alley being narrow, I chanced, in turning, to set my foot on the side of a bed, at which the man was in a rage, as if his house had been on fire. Thus all our discourse was lost, and I went away in sorrow, worse than I was when I came. I thought them miserable comforters, and saw they were all as nothing to me, for they could not reach my condition.

After this I went to another, one Macham,¹⁹ a priest in high

¹⁹ Of Atherstone.

account. He would needs give me some physic, and I was to have been let blood; but they could not get one drop of blood from me, either in arms or head (though they endeavoured to do so), my body being, as it were, dried up with sorrows, grief and troubles, which were so great upon me that I could have wished I had never been born, or that I had been born blind, that I might never have seen wickedness or vanity; and deaf, that I might never have heard vain and wicked words, or the Lord's name blasphemed.

When the time called Christmas came, while others were feasting and sporting themselves I looked out poor widows from house to house, and gave them some money. When I was invited to marriages (as I sometimes was), I went to none at all; but the next day, or soon after, I would go and visit them, and if they were poor I gave them some money; for I had wherewith both to keep myself from being chargeable to others and to administer something to the necessities of those who were in need.²⁰

About the beginning of the year 1646, as I was going to Coventry, and approaching towards the gate, a consideration arose in me, how it was said that "All Christians are believers,

²⁰ It is difficult to find out where George Fox's money came from. He reports in the original MS. of the Journal, p. 17, a remark his relatives made about him when he left home: "When hee went from us hee had a greate deale of gould and sillver about him." He is always well supplied. He goes to inns, always has a good horse, wears clean linen and frequently gives to charity. In signed papers in the Spence collection he gives orders for the disposal of money invested "in ships and trade," as well as of a thousand acres of land in Pennsylvania which William Penn had assigned to him.

both Protestants and Papists"; and the Lord opened²¹ to me that if all were believers, then they were all born of God, and passed from death to life; and that none were true believers but such; and, though others said they were believers, yet they were not. At another time, as I was walking in a field on a First-day morning, the Lord opened unto me that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ; and I wondered at it, because it was the common belief of people. But I saw it clearly as the Lord opened it unto me, and was satisfied, and admired the goodness of the Lord, who had opened this thing unto me that morning. This struck at priest Stephens's ministry, namely, that "to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man fit to be a minister of Christ." So that which opened in me I saw struck at the priest's ministry.

But my relations were much troubled that I would not go with them to hear the priest; for I would go into the orchard or the fields, with my Bible, by myself. I asked them, "Did not the Apostle say to believers that they needed no man to teach them, but as the anointing teacheth them?" Though they knew this was Scripture, and that it was true, yet they were grieved because I

²¹ This expression "opened" has a mystical import, and will be of frequent occurrence. He means to say that it was directly revealed in his soul so that he assuredly knew it to be true. Often he uses the expression in reference to some truth which he might easily have discovered in the Scriptures or have learned from contemporary sources. But in this solemn way he announces that this truth has now at length come to be a *living truth for him*. It is no longer a mere statement of fact – it is a principle, the truth of which he *sees*.

could not be subject in this matter, to go to hear the priest with them. I saw that to be a true believer was another thing than they looked upon it to be; and I saw that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge did not qualify or fit a man to be a minister of Christ; what then should I follow such for? So neither them, nor any of the dissenting people, could I join with; but was as a stranger to all, relying wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

At another time it was opened in me that God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands. This at first seemed a strange word, because both priests and people used to call their temples, or churches, dreadful places, holy ground, and the temples of God. But the Lord showed me clearly that He did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts; for both Stephen and the apostle Paul bore testimony that He did not dwell in temples made with hands, not even in that which He had once commanded to be built, since He put an end to it; but that His people were His temple, and He dwelt in them.

This opened in me as I walked in the fields to my relations' house. When I came there they told me that Nathaniel Stephens, the priest, had been there, and told them he was afraid of me, for going after new lights. I smiled in myself, knowing what the Lord had opened in me concerning him and his brethren; but I told not my relations, who, though they saw beyond the priests, yet went to hear them, and were grieved because I would not go

also. But I brought them Scriptures,²² and told them there was an anointing within man to teach him, and that the Lord would teach His people Himself.

I had also great openings concerning the things written in the Revelations; and when I spoke of them the priests and professors would say that was a sealed book, and would have kept me out of it. But I told them Christ could open the seals, and that they were the nearest things to us; for the epistles were written to the saints that lived in former ages, but the Revelations were written of things to come.

After this I met with a sort of people that held women have no souls, (adding in a light manner), No more than a goose.²³ But I reproved them, and told them that was not right; for Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

Removing to another place, I came among a people that relied much on dreams. I told them, except they could distinguish between dream and dream, they would confound all together; for there were three sorts of dreams; multitude of business sometimes caused dreams, and there were whisperings of Satan in man in the night season; and there were speakings of God to man in dreams. But these people came out of these things, and

²² That is, gave them Scripture references.

²³ This was one of the many curious religious sects with which the England of the Commonwealth was overrun. (See Edwards's "Gangræna.")

at last became Friends.²⁴

Now, though I had great openings, yet great trouble and temptation came many times upon me; so that when it was day I wished for night, and when it was night I wished for day; and by reason of the openings I had in my troubles, I could say as David said, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." When I had openings they answered one another and answered the Scriptures; for I had great openings of the Scriptures: and when I was in troubles, one trouble also answered to another.

About the beginning of the year 1647 I was moved of the Lord to go into Derbyshire, where I met with some friendly people, and had many discourses with them. Then, passing into the Peak country,²⁵ I met with more friendly people, and with some in empty high notions.²⁶ Travelling through some parts of

²⁴ "Friends" is here used for the first time in the Journal as the name of the new denomination. It is not possible to determine when the name was adopted or why it was chosen. When the Journal was written the term had already become fixed and Fox uses it without comment or explanation, referring it back to a period before it came into use as the name of the Society. At first the word "friends" was probably used in an untechnical sense for those who were *friendly*, and little by little it hardened into a name. At the very beginning they called themselves "Children of the Light."

²⁵ In the northern part of Derbyshire.

²⁶ These were "Ranters" who will appear again and often. They claimed to be perfect and above the possibility of sinning. Some even went to the wild extreme of claiming to be Christ, or God. They went on living for the most part much as they chose, and justified their acts on the ground that it was God who was acting in them. It is clearly apparent from this autobiography that such persons were very numerous at the time. It will be noticed that George Fox believes also in the possibility of freedom from sin,

Leicestershire, and into Nottinghamshire, I met with a tender people, and a very tender woman, whose name was Elizabeth Hooton.²⁷ With these I had some meetings and discourses; but my troubles continued, and I was often under great temptations.

I fasted much, walked abroad in solitary places many days, and often took my Bible, and sat in hollow trees and lonesome places till night came on; and frequently in the night walked mournfully about by myself; for I was a man of sorrows in the time of the first workings of the Lord in me.

During all this time I was never joined in profession of religion with any, but gave up myself to the Lord, having forsaken all evil company, taken leave of father and mother, and all other relations, and travelled up and down as a stranger in the earth, which way the Lord inclined my heart; taking a chamber to myself in the town where I came, and tarrying, sometimes more, sometimes less, in a place. For I durst not stay long in a place, being afraid both of professor and profane, lest, being a tender young man, I should be hurt by conversing much with either. For this reason I kept much as a stranger, seeking heavenly wisdom and getting knowledge from the Lord, and was brought off from

but perfection as he holds it means something quite other than this doctrine of the Ranters, as the Journal will show.

²⁷ Elizabeth Hooton was a woman of good standing, who was born in Nottingham about the year 1600. She was the first person of her sex to become a minister in the newly-gathered Society. The preaching of women at this time was not entirely novel, as it was allowed by several of the religious sects of the period. Elizabeth Hooton had her faith severely tested by persecution and long imprisonment. She performed two religious visits to America and the West Indies and died in Jamaica in 1671.

outward things to rely on the Lord alone.

Though my exercises and troubles were very great, yet were they not so continual but that I had some intermissions, and I was sometimes brought into such an heavenly joy that I thought I had been in Abraham's bosom.

As I cannot declare the misery I was in, it was so great and heavy upon me, so neither can I set forth the mercies of God unto me in all my misery. O the everlasting love of God to my soul, when I was in great distress! When my troubles and torments were great, then was His love exceeding great. Thou, Lord, makest a fruitful field a barren wilderness, and a barren wilderness a fruitful field! Thou bringest down and settest up! Thou killest and makest alive! all honour and glory be to thee, O Lord of Glory! The knowledge of Thee in the Spirit is life; but that knowledge which is fleshly works death.²⁸

While there is this knowledge in the flesh, deceit and self will conform to anything, and will say Yes, Yes, to that it doth not know. The knowledge which the world hath of what the prophets and apostles spake, is a fleshly knowledge; and the apostates from the life in which the prophets and apostles were have got their

²⁸ All profound spiritual teachers contrast *wisdom* and *knowledge*— what is here called "knowledge in the Spirit" and "knowledge in the flesh," or, what is perhaps more frequently called "knowledge of the heart" and "knowledge of the head." The latter expression means a knowledge of fact – the knowing that a thing is so by evidence which satisfies the mind. The former expression means the soul's immediate grasp of truth by the test of practical experience. The goal in one case is the establishment of some fact; the goal in the other case is the production of positive life and character by the appreciation of the truth.

words, the Holy Scriptures, in a form, but not in the life nor spirit that gave them forth. So they all lie in confusion; and are making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, but not to fulfil the law and command of Christ in His power and Spirit. For that they say they cannot do; but to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, that they can do with delight.

Now, after I had received that opening from the Lord, that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not sufficient to fit a man to be a minister of Christ, I regarded the priests less, and looked more after the Dissenting people.²⁹ Among them I saw there was some tenderness; and many of them came afterwards to be convinced, for they had some openings.

But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition";³⁰ and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.

Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give Him

²⁹ The "Separatists" – especially here the Congregationalists and Baptists.

³⁰ Compare this great passage where George Fox describes his conversion with Paul's account of the spiritual *fiat lux* in 2 Cor. 4: 6, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness [the first *fiat lux*] hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

all the glory. For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been; that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall hinder it? and *this I knew experimentally*.

My desire after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew Him not, but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to His Son by His Spirit. Then the Lord gently led me along, and let me see His love, which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can obtain from history or books; and that love let me see myself, as I was without Him.

I was afraid of all company, for I saw them perfectly where they were, through the love of God, which let me see myself. I had not fellowship with any people, priests or professors, or any sort of separated people, but with Christ, who hath the key, and opened the door of Light and Life unto me. I was afraid of all carnal talk and talkers, for I could see nothing but corruptions, and the life lay under the burthen of corruptions.

When I myself was in the deep, shut up under all, I could not believe that I should ever overcome; my troubles, my sorrows, and my temptations were so great that I thought many times I should have despaired, I was so tempted. But when Christ opened

to me how He was tempted by the same devil, and overcame him and bruised his head, and that through Him and His power, light, grace, and Spirit, I should overcome also, I had confidence in Him; so He it was that opened to me when I was shut up and had no hope nor faith. Christ, who had enlightened me, gave me His light to believe in; He gave me hope, which He Himself revealed in me, and He gave me His Spirit and grace, which I found sufficient in the deeps and in weakness.

Thus, in the deepest miseries, and in the greatest sorrows and temptations, that many times beset me, the Lord in His mercy did keep me.

I found that there were two thirsts in me – the one after the creatures, to get help and strength there, and the other after the Lord, the Creator, and His Son Jesus Christ. I saw all the world could do me no good; if I had had a king's diet, palace, and attendance, all would have been as nothing; for nothing gave me comfort but the Lord by His power. At another time I saw the great love of God, and was filled with admiration at the infiniteness of it.

One day, when I had been walking solitarily abroad, and was come home, I was taken up in the love of God, so that I could not but admire the greatness of His love; and while I was in that condition, it was opened unto me by the eternal light and power, and I therein clearly saw that all was done and to be done in and by Christ, and how He conquers and destroys this tempter the devil, and all his works, and is atop of him; and that all these

troubles were good for me, and temptations for the trial of my faith, which Christ had given me.

The Lord opened me, that I saw all through these troubles and temptations. My living faith was raised, that I saw all was done by Christ the life, and my belief was in Him.

When at any time my condition was veiled, my secret belief was stayed firm, and hope underneath held me, as an anchor in the bottom of the sea, and anchored my immortal soul to its Bishop, causing it to swim above the sea, the world, where all the raging waves, foul weather, tempests and temptations are. But O! then did I see my troubles, trials, and temptations more clearly than ever I had done. As the light appeared all appeared that is out of the light; darkness, death, temptations, the unrighteous, the ungodly; all was manifest and seen in the light.

I heard of a woman in Lancashire that had fasted two and twenty days, and I travelled to see her; but when I came to her I saw that she was under a temptation. When I had spoken to her what I had from the Lord, I left her, her father being one high in profession.

Passing on, I went among the professors at Duckingfield and Manchester, where I stayed awhile, and declared truth among them. There were some convinced who received the Lord's teaching, by which they were confirmed and stood in the truth. But the professors were in a rage, all pleading for sin and imperfection, and could not endure to hear talk of perfection,

and of a holy and sinless life.³¹ But the Lord's power was over all, though they were chained under darkness and sin, which they pleaded for, and quenched the tender thing in them.

About this time there was a great meeting of the Baptists, at Broughton, in Leicestershire, with some that had separated from them, and people of other notions went thither, and I went also. Not many of the Baptists came, but many others were there. The Lord opened my mouth, and the everlasting truth was declared amongst them, and the power of the Lord was over them all. For in that day the Lord's power began to spring, and I had great openings in the Scriptures. Several were convinced in those parts and were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, and many were raised up to praise God. When I reasoned with professors and other people, some became convinced.

I went back into Nottinghamshire, and there the Lord showed me that the natures of those things, which were hurtful without, were within, in the hearts and minds of wicked men. The natures

³¹ At the very beginning of his ministry in 1647 George Fox evidently preached the possibility of complete freedom from sin. But he was very careful to avoid presenting the mere theory or "notion" of perfection, which was common among all the types of "Ranters." He believed that Christ came to destroy sin, and he stoutly held that when He ruled in a man sin and the dominion of it were done away. Man could come into "the condition Adam was in before he fell," to use his own expression. One of his most frequent challenges was to demand that modern Christians should come into "the same life and power which those were in who gave forth the Scriptures." But George Fox's test of holiness was the practical test of daily life. No man was to be accounted holy if he were not *in fact* holy.

of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc.; the natures of these I saw within, though people had been looking without. I cried to the Lord, saying, "Why should I be thus,³² seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?" and the Lord answered, "That it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions!" and in this I saw the infinite love of God.

I saw, also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.

Then came people from far and near to see me; but I was fearful of being drawn out by them; yet I was made to speak, and open things to them. There was one Brown, who had great prophecies and sights upon his death-bed of me. He spoke only of what I should be made instrumental by the Lord to bring forth. And of others he spoke, that they should come to nothing, which was fulfilled on some, who then were something in show.

When this man was buried a great work of the Lord fell upon me, to the admiration of many, who thought I had been dead, and many came to see me for about fourteen days. I was very much altered in countenance and person, as if my body had been new moulded or changed.³³ My sorrows and troubles began to

³² That is, why should I have suffered such troubles and temptations.

³³ For those who are interested in the psychology of George Fox this is one of the most important passages in the Journal. These sweeping psychical and physical

wear off, and tears of joy dropped from me, so that I could have wept night and day with tears of joy to the Lord, in humility and brokenness of heart.

I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infinitude of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words. For I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through and over the power of Satan, by the eternal, glorious power of Christ; even through that darkness was I brought, which covered over all the world, and which chained down all and shut up all in death. The same eternal power of God, which brought me through these things, was that which afterwards shook the nations, priests, professors and people.

Then could I say I had been in spiritual Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, and the grave; but by the eternal power of God I was come out of it, and was brought over it, and the power of it, into the power of Christ. I saw the harvest white, and the seed of God lying thick in the ground, as ever did wheat that was sown outwardly, and none to gather it; for this I mourned with tears.

A report went abroad of me, that I was a young man that had a discerning spirit; whereupon many came to me, from far and near, professors, priests, and people. The Lord's power broke

changes are most significant. On two other occasions of his life, which will be noted later, he underwent similar, though perhaps profounder, changes. These passages in the Journal reveal, to those who are familiar with such phenomena, the fact that George Fox was subject to deep subliminal transformations. The passage, too, throws much light back upon his long travail through distress and darkness.

forth, and I had great openings and prophecies, and spoke unto them of the things of God, which they heard with attention and silence, and went away and spread the fame thereof.

Then came the tempter and set upon me again, charging me that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost; but I could not tell in what. Then Paul's condition came before me, how after he had been taken up into the third heaven, and seen things not lawful to be uttered, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him. Thus by the power of Christ I got over that temptation also.

CHAPTER II

The First Years of Ministry

1648-1649

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.

³⁴ In the year 1648. "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."

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

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

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

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,

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

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,

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.

"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

⁴⁰ See Whittier's poem, "Revelation."

⁴¹ He means experience.

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

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

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. Divers 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

and of the practical character of his religion.

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

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,

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

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 on page 77 to designate the gatherings of persons who sympathized with Fox's message and who *afterwards* were called "Friends."

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

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.

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

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 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

saw the truth as an immediate revelation – as a primary fact of experience.

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

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.

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

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.

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

⁵¹ That is, the testimony of the Spirit. From Derby prison he wrote many letters, to the magistrates, to the justices, to the "priests," to the court at Derby, to the mayor, to the individual justices, and to "the ringers of bells in steeple-houses." He calls them all to obedience to the light within them. "Mind that which is eternal and invisible." "Keep in the innocency and be obedient to the faith in Him."

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.

CHAPTER III

The Challenge and the First Taste of Prison

1648-1649

Now, as I went towards Nottingham, on a First-day, in the morning, going with Friends to a meeting there, when I came on the top of a hill in sight of the town, I espied the great steeple-house. And the Lord said unto me, "Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, and against the worshippers therein."

I said nothing of this to the Friends that were with me, but went on with them to the meeting, where the mighty power of the Lord was amongst us; in which I left Friends sitting in the meeting, and went away to the steeple-house. When I came there, all the people looked like fallow ground; and the priest (like a great lump of earth) stood in his pulpit above.

He took for his text these words of Peter, "We have also a more sure Word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." And he told the people that this was the Scriptures, by which they were to try all

doctrines, religions, and opinions.

Now the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, and so strong in me, that I could not hold, but was made to cry out and say, "Oh, no; it is not the Scriptures!" and I told them what it was, namely, the Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures, whereby opinions, religions, and judgments were to be tried; for it led into all truth, and so gave the knowledge of all truth. The Jews had the Scriptures, and yet resisted the Holy Ghost, and rejected Christ, the bright morning star. They persecuted Christ and His apostles, and took upon them to try their doctrines by the Scriptures; but they erred in judgment, and did not try them aright, because they tried without the Holy Ghost.

As I spoke thus amongst them, the officers came and took me away, and put me into a nasty, stinking prison;⁵² the smell whereof got so into my nose and throat that it very much annoyed me.

But that day the Lord's power sounded so in their ears that they were amazed at the voice, and could not get it out of their ears for some time after, they were so reached by the Lord's power in the steeple-house. At night they took me before the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of the town; and when I was brought before them, the mayor was in a peevish, fretful temper, but the

⁵² This is one of the very few instances in his entire career when Fox interrupted a minister. It was neither illegal nor contrary to custom for any one to speak after the minister was done – a privilege which Fox often used. On this particular occasion, his feeling overmastered him, and he spoke before his time.

Lord's power allayed him. They examined me at large; and I told them how the Lord had moved me to come. After some discourse between them and me, they sent me back to prison again. Some time after, the head sheriff, whose name was John Reckless, sent for me to his house. When I came in, his wife met me in the hall, and said, "Salvation is come to our house." She took me by the hand, and was much wrought upon by the power of the Lord God; and her husband, and children, and servants were much changed, for the power of the Lord wrought upon them.

I lodged at the sheriff's, and great meetings we had in his house. Some persons of considerable condition in the world came to them, and the Lord's power appeared eminently amongst them.

This sheriff sent for the other sheriff, and for a woman they had had dealings with in the way of trade; and he told her, before the other sheriff, that they had wronged her in their dealings with her (for the other sheriff and he were partners), and that they ought to make her restitution. This he spoke cheerfully; but the other sheriff denied it, and the woman said she knew nothing of it. But the friendly sheriff said it was so, and that the other knew it well enough; and having discovered the matter, and acknowledged the wrong done by them, he made restitution to the woman, and exhorted the other sheriff to do the like. The Lord's power was with this friendly sheriff, and wrought a mighty change in him; and great openings he had.

The next market-day, as he was walking with me in the

chamber, he said, "I must go into the market, and preach repentance to the people." Accordingly he went in his slippers into the market, and into several streets, and preached repentance to the people. Several others also in the town were moved to speak to the mayor and magistrates, and to the people, exhorting them to repent. Hereupon the magistrates grew very angry, sent for me from the sheriff's house and committed me to the common prison.

When the assize came on, one person was moved to come and offer up himself for me, body for body, yea, life also; but when I should have been brought before the judge, the sheriff's man being somewhat long in bringing me to the sessions-house, the judge was risen before I came. At which I understood the judge was offended, and said, "I would have admonished the youth if he had been brought before me": for I was then imprisoned by the name of a youth. So I was returned to prison again, and put into the common jail.

The Lord's power was great among Friends; but the people began to be very rude: wherefore the governor of the castle sent soldiers, and dispersed them. After that they were quiet. Both priests and people were astonished at the wonderful power that broke forth. Several of the priests were made tender, and some did confess to the power of the Lord.

After I was set at liberty from Nottingham jail, where I had been kept prisoner a pretty long time, I travelled as before, in the work of the Lord.

Coming to Mansfield-Woodhouse, I found there a distracted woman under a doctor's hand, with her hair loose about her ears. He was about to let her blood,⁵³ she being first bound, and many people about her, holding her by violence; but he could get no blood from her.

I desired them to unbind her and let her alone, for they could not touch the spirit in her by which she was tormented. So they did unbind her; and I was moved to speak to her, and in the name of the Lord to bid her be quiet; and she was so. The Lord's power settled her mind, and she mended. Afterwards she received the truth, and continued in it to her death; and the Lord's name was honoured.

Many great and wonderful things were wrought by the heavenly power in those days; for the Lord made bare His omnipotent arm, and manifested His power, to the astonishment of many, by the healing virtue whereby many have been delivered from great infirmities. And the devils were made subject through His name; of which particular instances might be given, beyond what this unbelieving age is able to receive or bear.

Now while I was at Mansfield-Woodhouse, I was moved to

⁵³ This gives a glimpse at the medical practice of the time. Fox frequently showed remarkable power in dealing with cases of hysteria, such as the one here reported. He evidently did not understand the nature of the disease. But his commanding presence, his piercing eye (testified to by even his persecutors), and the absolute assurance which his voice gave that he was equal to the occasion, were worth a thousand doctors with their lancets. Those who understand the psychology of suggestion, and the effect of faith on certain diseases, will hardly question the simple accounts given here and elsewhere.

go to the steeple-house there, and declare the truth to the priest and people; but the people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down, and almost stifled and smothered me; and I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, and with Bibles and sticks. Then they haled me out, though I was hardly able to stand, and put me into the stocks, where I sat some hours; and they brought dog-whips and horse-whips, threatening to whip me.

After some time they had me before the magistrate, at a knight's house, where were many great persons; who, seeing how evilly I had been used, after much threatening, set me at liberty. But the rude people stoned me out of the town, for preaching the Word of life to them.

I was scarcely able to move or stand by reason of the ill usage I had received; yet with considerable effort I got about a mile from the town, and then I met with some people who gave me something to comfort me, because I was inwardly bruised; but the Lord's power soon healed me again. That day some people were convinced of the Lord's truth, and turned to His teaching, at which I rejoiced.

Then I went into Leicestershire, several Friends accompanying me. There were some Baptists in that country, whom I desired to see and speak with, because they were separated from the public worship. So one Oates, who was one of their chief teachers, and others of the heads of them, with several others of their company, came to meet us at Barrow; and there we discoursed with them.

One of them said that what was not of faith was sin, whereupon I asked them what faith was and how it was wrought in man. But they turned off from that, and spoke of their baptism in water. Then I asked them whether their mountain of sin was brought down and laid low in them and their rough and crooked ways made smooth and straight in them, – for they looked upon the Scriptures as meaning outward mountains and ways.⁵⁴ But I told them they must find these things in their own hearts; at which they seemed to wonder.

We asked them who baptized John the Baptist, and who baptized Peter, John and the rest of the apostles, and put them to prove by Scripture that these were baptized in water; but they were silent. Then I asked them, "Seeing Judas, who betrayed Christ, and was called the son of perdition, had hanged himself, what son of perdition was that of which Paul spoke, that sat in the temple of God, exalted above all that is called God? and what temple of God was that in which this son of perdition sat?" And I asked them whether he that betrays Christ within himself be not one in nature with that Judas that betrayed Christ without. But they could not tell what to make of this, nor what to say to it. So, after some discourse, we parted; and some of them were loving to us.

On the First-day following we came to Bagworth, and went to a steeple-house, where some Friends were got in, and the people

⁵⁴ As everywhere, he is interested in the state of the person himself, and in the real and vital things of religion. Many of Fox's followers came from the Baptists.

locked them in, and themselves, too, with the priest. But, after the priest had done, they opened the door, and we went in also, and had service for the Lord amongst them. Afterwards we had a meeting in the town, amongst several that were in high notions.

Passing thence, I heard of a people in prison at Coventry for religion. As I walked towards the jail, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "My love was always to thee, and thou art in my love." And I was ravished with the sense of the love of God, and greatly strengthened in my inward man. But when I came into the jail where those prisoners were, a great power of darkness struck at me; and I sat still, having my spirit gathered into the love of God.

At last these prisoners began to rant, vapour, and blaspheme; at which my soul was greatly grieved. They said that they were God; but we could not bear such things. When they were calm, I stood up and asked them whether they did such things by motion, or from Scripture. They said, "From Scripture." Then, a Bible lying by, I asked them for that Scripture; and they showed me that place where the sheet was let down to Peter; and it was said to him that what was sanctified he should not call common or unclean. When I had showed them that that Scripture made nothing for their purpose, they brought another, which spake of God's reconciling all things to Himself, things in heaven and things in earth. I told them I owned that Scripture also; but showed them that it likewise was nothing to their purpose.

Then, seeing they said that they were God, I asked them if

they knew whether it would rain to-morrow. They said they could not tell. I told them God could tell. I asked them if they thought they should be always in that condition, or should change. They answered that they could not tell. "Then," said I, "God can tell, and He doth not change. You say you are God, and yet you cannot tell whether you shall change or no." So they were confounded, and quite brought down for the time.

After I had reproved them for their blasphemous expressions, I went away; for I perceived they were Ranters. I had met with none before; and I admired the goodness of the Lord in appearing so unto me before I went amongst them. Not long after this one of these Ranters, whose name was Joseph Salmon, published a recantation; upon which they were set at liberty.

CHAPTER IV

A Year in Derby Jail

1650-1651

As I travelled through markets, fairs, and divers places, I saw death and darkness in all people where the power of the Lord God had not shaken them. As I was passing on in Leicestershire I came to Twy-Cross, where there were excise-men. I was moved of the Lord to go to them, and warn them to take heed of oppressing the poor; and people were much affected with it.

There was in that town a great man that had long lain sick, and was given up by the physicians; and some Friends in the town desired me to go to see him. I went up to him in his chamber, and spoke the Word of life to him, and was moved to pray by him; and the Lord was entreated, and restored him to health. But when I was come down stairs, into a lower room, and was speaking to the servants, and to some people that were there, a serving-man of his came raving out of another room, with a naked rapier in his hand, and set it just to my side. I looked steadfastly on him, and said, "Alack for thee, poor creature! what wilt thou do

with thy carnal weapon? It is no more to me than a straw." The bystanders were much troubled, and he went away in a rage and full of wrath. But when the news of it came to his master, he turned him out of his service.

Thus the Lord's power preserved me and raised up the weak man, who afterwards was very loving to Friends; and when I came to that town again both he and his wife came to see me.

After this I was moved to go into Derbyshire, where the mighty power of God was among Friends. And I went to Chesterfield, where one Britland was priest. He saw beyond the common sort of priests, for he had been partly convinced, and had spoken much on behalf of Truth before he was priest there; but when the priest of that town died, he got the parsonage, and choked himself with it. I was moved to speak to him and the people in the great love of God, that they might come off from all men's teaching unto God's teaching; and he was not able to gainsay.

But they had me before the mayor, and threatened to send me, with some others, to the house of correction, and kept us in custody till it was late in the night. Then the officers, with the watchmen, put us out of the town, leaving us to shift as we could. So I bent my course towards Derby, having a friend or two with me. In our way we met with many professors; and at Kidsey Park many were convinced.

Then, coming to Derby, I lay at the house of a doctor, whose wife was convinced; and so were several more in the town. As I

was walking in my chamber, the [steeple-house] bell rang, and it struck at my life at the very hearing of it; so I asked the woman of the house what the bell rang for. She said there was to be a great lecture there that day, and many of the officers of the army, and priests, and preachers were to be there, and a colonel, that was a preacher.

Then was I moved of the Lord to go up to them; and when they had done I spoke to them what the Lord commanded me, and they were pretty quiet. But there came an officer and took me by the hand, and said that I and the other two that were with me must go before the magistrates. It was about the first hour after noon that we came before them.

They asked me why we came thither. I said God moved us so to do; and I told them, "God dwells not in temples made with hands." I told them also that all their preaching, baptism and sacrifices would never sanctify them, and bade them look unto Christ within them, and not unto men; for it is Christ that sanctifies. Then they ran into many words; but I told them they were not to dispute of God and Christ, but to obey Him.⁵⁵

The power of God thundered among them, and they did fly like chaff before it. They put me in and out of the room often, hurrying me backward and forward, for they were from the first hour till the ninth at night in examining me. Sometimes they would tell me in a deriding manner that I was taken up in raptures.

⁵⁵ No single sentence better sums up George Fox's whole theology than this: "I told them they were not to dispute of God and Christ, *but to obey Him.*"

At last they asked me whether I was sanctified. I answered, "Yes; for I am in the paradise of God." Then they asked me if I had no sin. I answered, "Christ my Saviour has taken away my sin; and in Him there is no sin." They asked how we knew that Christ did abide in us. I said, "By His Spirit, that He hath given us." They temptingly asked if any of us were Christ. I answered, "Nay; we are nothing; Christ is all." They said, "If a man steal, is it no sin?" I answered, "All unrighteousness is sin."⁵⁶

When they had wearied themselves in examining me, they committed me and one other man to the house of correction in Derby for six months, as blasphemers,⁵⁷ as may appear by the mittimus, a copy whereof here followeth:

"To the master of the house of correction in Derby,
greeting:

"We have sent you herewithal the bodies of George Fox, late of Mansfield, in the county of Nottingham, and John Fretwell, late of Staniesby, in the county of Derby, husbandman, brought before us this present day, and charged with the avowed uttering and broaching of

⁵⁶ These answers sufficiently differentiate George Fox from the "Ranters."

⁵⁷ Here begins Fox's first serious imprisonment. The charge was direct and distinct. He was committed as a blasphemer. Under the law passed by both Houses of Parliament, in 1648, Fox might easily have been condemned to suffer a death penalty. It was an offense, punishable by death, to deny that the Scriptures are the Word of God, or that the bodies of men shall rise after they are dead. It was blasphemy to say that the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not commanded by God. It was also blasphemy to declare that man has by nature free will to turn to God. It was, of course, not difficult to find a charge of the violation of this drag-net act.

divers blasphemous opinions, contrary to the late Act of Parliament; which, upon their examination before us, they have confessed. These are therefore to require you forthwith, upon sight hereof, to receive them, the said George Fox and John Fretwell, into your custody, and them therein safely to keep during the space of six months, without bail or mainprize, or until they shall find sufficient security to be of good behaviour, or be thence delivered by order from ourselves. Hereof you are not to fail. Given under our hands and seals this 30th day of October, 1650.

"Gervase Bennet,

"Nath. Barton."

While I was here in prison divers professors came to discourse with me. I had a sense, before they spoke, that they came to plead for sin and imperfection. I asked them whether they were believers and had faith. They said, "Yes." I asked them, "In whom?" They said, "In Christ." I replied. "If ye are true believers in Christ, you are passed from death to life; and if passed from death, then from sin that bringeth death; and if your faith be true, it will give you victory over sin and the devil, purify your hearts and consciences (for the true faith is held in a pure conscience), and bring you to please God, and give you access to Him again."

But they could not endure to hear of purity, and of victory over sin and the devil. They said they could not believe any could be free from sin on this side of the grave. I bade them give over babbling about the Scriptures, which were holy men's words, whilst they pleaded for unholiness.

At another time a company of professors came, who also began to plead for sin. I asked them whether they had hope. They said, "Yes: God forbid but we should have hope." I asked them, "What hope is it that you have? Is Christ in you the hope of your glory? Doth it purify you, as He is pure?" But they could not abide to hear of being made pure here. Then I bade them forbear talking of the Scriptures, which were the holy men's words; "for," said I, "the holy men that wrote the Scriptures pleaded for holiness in heart, life, and conversation here; but since you plead for impurity and sin, which is of the devil, what have you to do with the holy men's words?"

The keeper of the prison, being a high professor, was greatly enraged against me, and spoke very wickedly of me; but it pleased the Lord one day to strike him, so that he was in great trouble and under much terror of mind. And, as I was walking in my chamber I heard a doleful noise, and, standing still, I heard him say to his wife, "Wife, I have seen the day of judgment, and I saw George there; and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and spoken so much against him to the ministers and professors, and to the justices, and in taverns and alehouses."

After this, towards the evening, he came into my chamber, and said to me, "I have been as a lion against you; but now I come like a lamb, and like the jailer that came to Paul and Silas trembling." And he desired he might lodge with me. I told him I was in his power; he might do what he would; but he said,

"Nay," that he would have my leave, and that he could desire to be always with me, but not to have me as a prisoner. He said he had been plagued, and his house had been plagued, for my sake. So I suffered him to lodge with me.

Then he told me all his heart, and said that he believed what I had said of the true faith and hope to be true; and he wondered that the other man, who was put in prison with me, did not stand it; and said, "That man was not right, but you are an honest man." He confessed also to me that at those times when I had asked him to let me go forth to speak the word of the Lord to the people, when he refused to let me go, and I laid the weight thereof upon him, he used to be under great trouble, amazed, and almost distracted for some time after, and in such a condition that he had little strength left him.

When the morning came he rose and went to the justices, and told them that he and his house had been plagued for my sake. One of the justices replied (as he reported to me) that the plagues were upon them, too, for keeping me. This was Justice Bennet, of Derby, who was the first that called us Quakers, because I bade them tremble at the word of the Lord.⁵⁸ This was in the

⁵⁸ This is the whole of our data for the origin of the name "Quaker." Fox told the Justice to tremble at the word of the Lord, and the Justice thereupon fixed the name "quaker" upon him. There is probably, however, something back of this particular incident which helped give the name significance. The editors of the New English Dictionary (see the word Quaker) have discovered the fact that this name for a religious sect was not entirely new at this time. Letter No. 2,624 of the Clarendon collection, written in 1647, speaks of a sect from the continent possessed of a remarkable capacity for trembling or quaking: "I heare of a sect of woemen (they are at Southworke) come

year 1650.

After this the justices gave leave that I should have liberty to walk a mile. I perceived their end, and told the jailer, that if they would set down to me how far a mile was, I might take the liberty of walking it sometimes. For I had a sense that they thought I would go away. And the jailer confessed afterwards they did it with that intent, to have me go away, to ease them of their plague; but I told him I was not of that spirit.

While I was in the house of correction my relations came to see me; and, being troubled for my imprisonment, they went to the justices that cast me into prison and desired to have me home with them, offering to be bound in one hundred pounds, and others of Derby in fifty pounds apiece with them, that I should come no more thither to declare against the priests.

So I was taken up before the justices; and because I would not consent that they or any should be bound for me (for I was innocent of any ill behaviour, and had spoken the Word of life and truth unto them), Justice Bennet rose up in a rage; and, as I was kneeling down to pray to the Lord to forgive him, he ran upon me, and struck me with both his hands, crying, "Away with

from beyond the Sea, called quakers, and these swell, shiver and shake, and when they come to themselves (for in all this fitt Mahomett's holy-ghost hath bin conversing with them) they begin to preach what hath been delivered to them by the Spirit." It seems probable that Justice Bennet merely employed a term of reproach already familiar. It is, further, evident that the Friends themselves were sometimes given to trembling, and that the name came into general use because it fitted. (See Sewel's "History of the People Called Quakers," Vol. I., p. 63. Philadelphia, 1823.) The name first appears in the records of Parliament, in the Journals of the House of Commons, in 1654.

him, jailer; take him away, jailer." Whereupon I was taken again to prison, and there kept till the time of my commitment for six months was expired.

But I had now the liberty of walking a mile by myself, which I made use of as I felt freedom. Sometimes I went into the market and streets, and warned the people to repent of their wickedness, and returned to prison again. And there being persons of several sorts of religion in the prison, I sometimes visited them in their meetings on First-days.

While I was yet in the house of correction there came unto me a trooper, and said that as he was sitting in the steeple-house, hearing the priest, exceeding great trouble fell upon him; and the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, "Dost thou not know that my servant is in prison? Go to him for direction." So I spake to his condition, and his understanding was opened. I told him that that which showed him his sins, and troubled him for them, would show him his salvation; for He that shows a man his sin is the same that takes it away.

While I was speaking to him the Lord's power opened his mind, so that he began to have a good understanding in the Lord's truth, and to be sensible of God's mercies. He spoke boldly in his quarters amongst the soldiers, and to others, concerning truth (for the Scriptures were very much opened to him), insomuch that he said that his colonel was "as blind as Nebuchadnezzar, to cast the servant of the Lord into prison."

Upon this his colonel conceived a spite against him, and at

Worcester fight, the year after, when the two armies lay near one another, and two came out from the king's army and challenged any two of the Parliament army to fight with them, his colonel made choice of him and another to answer the challenge. When in the encounter his companion was slain, he drove both his enemies within musket-shot of the town without firing a pistol at them. This, when he returned, he told me with his own mouth. But when the fight was over he saw the deceit and hypocrisy of the officers, and, being sensible how wonderfully the Lord had preserved him, and seeing also to the end of fighting, he laid down his arms.

The time of my commitment to the house of correction being very nearly ended, and there being many new soldiers raised, the commissioners would have made me captain over them; and the soldiers cried out that they would have none but me. So the keeper of the house of correction was commanded to bring me before the commissioners and soldiers in the market-place, where they offered me that preferment, as they called it, asking me if I would not take up arms for the Commonwealth against Charles Stuart. I told them I knew whence all wars arose, even from the lusts, according to James' doctrine; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.⁵⁹

Yet they courted me to accept of their offer, and thought I

⁵⁹ This is the true ground of opposition to war, namely, that a Christian is to live a life that does away with the *occasion* for war.

did but compliment them. But I told them I was come into the covenant of peace, which was before wars and strifes were. They said they offered it in love and kindness to me because of my virtue; and such-like flattering words they used. But I told them, if that was their love and kindness, I trampled it under my feet.

Then their rage got up, and they said, "Take him away, jailer, and put him into the prison amongst the rogues and felons." So I was put into a lousy, stinking place, without any bed, amongst thirty felons, where I was kept almost half a year;⁶⁰ yet at times they would let me walk to the garden, believing I would not go away.

When they had got me into Derby prison, it was the saying of people that I would never come out; but I had faith in God that I should be delivered in His time; for the Lord had given me to believe that I was not to be removed from that place yet, being set there for a service which He had for me to do.

While I was here in prison there was a young woman in the jail for robbing her master. When she was to be tried for her life I wrote to the judge and jury, showing them how contrary it was to the law of God in old time to put people to death for stealing, and moving them to show mercy. Yet she was condemned to die, and a grave was made for her, and at the time appointed she was carried forth to execution. Then I wrote a few words, warning all

⁶⁰ He was imprisoned on a definite charge for six months, and then, without any further trial, apparently because he would not join Cromwell's army, he was held in close confinement for nearly six months more.

to beware of greediness or covetousness, for it leads from God; and that all should fear the Lord, avoid earthly lusts, and prize their time while they have it; this I gave to be read at the gallows. And, though they had her upon the ladder, with a cloth bound over her face, ready to be turned off, yet they did not put her to death, but brought her back to prison, where she afterwards came to be convinced of God's everlasting truth.

There was also in the jail, while I was there, a wicked, ungodly man, who was reputed a conjurer. He threatened that he would talk with me, and boasted of what he would do; but he never had power to open his mouth to me. And the jailer and he falling out, he threatened to raise the devil and break his house down; so that he made the jailer afraid. I was moved of the Lord to go in His power and rebuke him, and to say to him, "Come, let us see what thou canst do; do thy worst." I told him that the devil was raised high enough in him already; but the power of God chained him down, so he slunk away from me.

The time of Worcester fight coming on, Justice Bennet sent constables to press me for a soldier, seeing I would not voluntarily accept of a command. I told them that I was brought off from outward wars. They came again to give me press-money; but I would take none. Then I was brought up to Sergeant Holes, kept there awhile, and taken down again. Afterwards the constables brought me a second time before the commissioners, who said I should go for a soldier; but I told them I was dead to it. They said I was alive. I told them that where envy and hatred is there is

confusion. They offered me money twice, but I refused it. Being disappointed, they were angry, and committed me close prisoner, without bail or mainprize.

Great was the exercise and travail in spirit that I underwent during my imprisonment here, because of the wickedness that was in this town; for though some were convinced, yet the generality were a hardened people. I saw the visitation of God's love pass away from them. I mourned over them.

There was a great judgment upon the town, and the magistrates were uneasy about me; but they could not agree what to do with me. One while they would have sent me up to the Parliament; another while they would have banished me to Ireland. At first they called me a deceiver, a seducer and a blasphemer. Afterwards, when God had brought his plagues upon them, they stiled me an honest, virtuous man. But their good report and bad report were nothing to me; for the one did not lift me up, nor the other cast me down; praised be the Lord! At length they were made to turn me out of jail, about the beginning of winter, in the year 1651, after I had been a prisoner in Derby almost a year, – six months in the house of correction, and the rest of the time in the common jail.

CHAPTER V

One Man May Shake the Country for Ten Miles

1651-1652

Being again at liberty, I went on, as before, in the work of the Lord, passing through the country into Leicestershire, having meetings as I went; and the Lord's Spirit and power accompanied me.

As I was walking with several Friends, I lifted up my head and saw three steeple-house spires, and they struck at my life. I asked them what place that was. They said, "Lichfield." Immediately the Word of the Lord came to me that I must go thither. Being come to the house we were going to, I wished the Friends to walk into the house, saying nothing to them of whither I was to go. As soon as they were gone I stepped away, and went by my eye over hedge and ditch till I came within a mile of Lichfield, where, in a great field, shepherds were keeping their sheep.

Then was I commanded by the Lord to pull off my shoes. I stood still, for it was winter; and the Word of the Lord was like a fire in me. So I put off my shoes, and left them

with the shepherds; and the poor shepherds trembled, and were astonished. Then I walked on about a mile, and as soon as I was got within the city, the Word of the Lord came to me again, saying, "Cry, 'Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!'" So I went up and down the streets, crying with a loud voice, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!" It being market-day, I went into the market-place, and to and fro in the several parts of it, and made stands, crying as before, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!" And no one laid hands on me.

As I went thus crying through the streets, there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market-place appeared like a pool of blood.

When I had declared what was upon me, and felt myself clear, I went out of the town in peace, and, returning to the shepherds, I gave them some money, and took my shoes of them again. But the fire of the Lord was so in my feet, and all over me, that I did not matter to put on my shoes again, and was at a stand whether I should or no, till I felt freedom from the Lord so to do; then, after I had washed my feet, I put on my shoes again.

After this a deep consideration came upon me, for what reason I should be sent to cry against that city, and call it the bloody city! For, though the Parliament had had the minster one while, and the King another, and much blood had been shed in the town during the wars between them, yet that was no more than had befallen many other places. But afterwards I came to understand, that in the Emperor Diocletian's time a thousand Christians were

martyred in Lichfield.⁶¹

Passing on, I was moved of the Lord to go to Beverley steeple-house, which was then a place of high profession; and being very wet with rain, I went first to an inn. As soon as I came to the door, a young woman of the house came to the door, and said, "What, is it you? come in," as if she had known me before; for the Lord's power bowed their hearts. So I refreshed myself and went to bed; and in the morning, my clothes being still wet, I got ready, and having paid for what I had had in the inn, I went up to the steeple-house, where was a man preaching. When he had done, I was moved to speak to him, and to the people, in the mighty power of God, and to turn them to their teacher, Christ Jesus. The power of the Lord was so strong, that it struck a mighty dread amongst the people. The mayor came and spoke a few words to me; but none of them had any power to meddle with me.

So I passed away out of the town, and in the afternoon went to another steeple-house about two miles off. When the priest

⁶¹ It must be remembered that this act of George Fox occurred at the close of a year of imprisonment, part of which had been in a horrible jail. He was throughout his life restless and active to an extreme degree. For an entire year, just as his work was getting well begun, he had been forced to live in this nut-shell of a prison – day after day inactive. Now he was free again, and the old restlessness to be doing something came upon him with irresistible force. He was in no condition to inhibit suggestions. It is quite possible that some subconscious memory here gave the suggestion. In 1612 one Wightman was burned at the stake in Lichfield, and the deed was fresh in the minds of men at this time. Then the name Lichfield means "field of dead bodies," a name which doubtless had its origin in some baptism of blood, and George in his boyhood may have heard some tale of those bloody times.

had done, I was moved to speak to him, and to the people very largely, showing them the way of life and truth, and the ground of election and reprobation. The priest said he was but a child, and could not dispute with me. I told him I did not come to dispute, but to hold forth the Word of life and truth unto them, that they might all know the one Seed, to which the promise of God was given, both in the male and in the female. Here the people were very loving, and would have had me come again on a week-day, and preach among them; but I directed them to their teacher, Christ Jesus, and so passed away.

The next day I went to Cranswick, to Captain Pursloe's, who accompanied me to Justice Hotham's. This Justice Hotham was a tender man, one that had had some experience of God's workings in his heart. After some discourse with him of the things of God, he took me into his closet, where, sitting with me, he told me he had known that principle⁶² these ten years, and was glad that the Lord did now publish it abroad to the people. After a while there came a priest to visit him, with whom also I had some discourse concerning the Truth. But his mouth was quickly stopped, for he was nothing but a notionist, and not in possession of what he talked of.

While I was here, there came a great woman of Beverley to speak to Justice Hotham about some business; and in discourse she told him that the last Sabbath-day (as she called it) there came an angel or spirit into the church at Beverley, and spoke

⁶² The light of Christ working on the heart.

the wonderful things of God, to the astonishment of all that were there; and when it had done, it passed away, and they did not know whence it came, nor whither it went; but it astonished all, – priest, professors, and magistrates of the town. This relation Justice Hotham gave me afterwards, and then I gave him an account of how I had been that day at Beverley steeple-house, and had declared truth to the priest and people there.

I went to another steeple-house about three miles off, where preached a great high-priest, called a doctor, one of them whom Justice Hotham would have sent for to speak with me. I went into the steeple-house, and stayed till the priest had done. The words which he took for his text were these, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Then was I moved of the Lord God to say unto him, "Come down, thou deceiver; dost thou bid people come freely, and take of the water of life freely, and yet thou takest three hundred pounds a year of them for preaching the Scriptures to them. Mayest thou not blush for shame? Did the prophet Isaiah, and Christ do so, who spoke the words, and gave them forth freely? Did not Christ say to His ministers, whom He sent to preach, 'Freely ye have received, freely give'?"

The priest, like a man amazed, hastened away. After he had left his flock, I had as much time as I could desire to speak to the people; and I directed them from the darkness to the Light,

and to the grace of God, that would teach them, and bring them salvation; to the Spirit of God in their inward parts, which would be a free teacher unto them.

Having cleared myself amongst the people, I returned to Justice Hotham's house that night. When I came in he took me in his arms, and said his house was my house; for he was exceedingly glad of the work of the Lord, and that His power was revealed.

Thence I passed on through the country, and came at night to an inn where was a company of rude people. I bade the woman of the house, if she had any meat, to bring me some; but because I said Thee and Thou to her, she looked strangely on me. I asked her if she had any milk. She said, No. I was sensible she spake falsely; and, being willing to try her further, I asked her if she had any cream? She denied that she had any.

There stood a churn in the room, and a little boy, playing about, put his hands into it and pulled it down, and threw all the cream on the floor before my eyes. Thus was the woman manifested to be a liar. She was amazed, blessed herself, took up the child, and whipped it sorely: but I reprov'd her for her lying and deceit. After the Lord had thus discovered her deceit and perverseness, I walked out of the house, and went away till I came to a stack of hay, and lay in the hay-stack that night, in rain and snow, it being but three days before the time called Christmas.

The next day I came into York, where were several very tender people. Upon the First-day following, I was commanded of the

Lord to go and speak to priest Bowles and his hearers in their great cathedral. Accordingly I went. When the priest had done, I told them I had something from the Lord God to speak to the priest and people. "Then say on quickly," said a professor, for there was frost and snow, and it was very cold weather. Then I told them that this was the Word of the Lord God unto them, – that they lived in words, but God Almighty looked for fruits amongst them.

As soon as the words were out of my mouth, they hurried me out, and threw me down the steps. But I got up again without hurt, and went to my lodging, and several were convinced there. For that which arose from the weight and oppression that was upon the Spirit of God in me, would open people, strike them, and make them confess that the groans which broke forth through me did reach them, for my life was burthened with their profession without possession, and their words without fruit.

[After being thus violently tumbled down the steps of the great minster, George Fox found his next few days crowded with hot discussion. Papists and Ranters and Scotch "priests" made him stand forth for the hope that was in him. The Ranters, he says, "had spent their portions, and not living in that which they spake of, were now become dry. They had some kind of meetings, but they took tobacco and drank ale in their meetings and were grown light and loose." After the narrative of an attempt to push him over the cliffs the account continues.]

Another priest sent to have a dispute with me, and Friends went with me to the house where he was; but when he understood we were come, he slipped out of the house, and hid himself under an hedge. The people went and found him, but could not get him to come to us.

Then I went to a steeple-house hard by, where the priest and people were in a great rage. This priest had threatened Friends what he would do; but when I came he fled; for the Lord's power came over him and them. Yea, the Lord's everlasting power was over the world, and reached to the hearts of people, and made both priests and professors tremble. It shook the earthly and airy spirit in which they held their profession of religion and worship; so that it was a dreadful thing to them when it was told them, "The man in leathern breeches is come."⁶³ At the hearing thereof the priests in many places got out of the way, they were so struck with the dread of the eternal power of God; and fear surprised the hypocrites.

[At Pickering he stood in "the steeple-house yard" and told the people what his mission was, with as clear a claim to a divine commission as a Hebrew prophet would have made.]

⁶³ This is the foundation for the famous passage on George Fox, in Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," Book III., Chap. 1. There is, however, no foundation for Carlyle's picture of Fox cutting and stitching his own leather suit. Sewel distinctly says that these leather breeches had no connection with "his former leather work." Croese says that his entire suit was leather. This form of dress was not very unusual at the time, and was probably chosen for its durability.

I was sent of the Lord God of heaven and earth to preach freely, and to bring people off from these outward temples made with hands, which God dwelleth not in; that they might know their bodies to become the temples of God and of Christ; and to draw people off from all their superstitious ceremonies, Jewish and heathenish customs, traditions, and doctrines of men; and from all the world's hireling teachers, that take tithes and great wages, preaching for hire, and divining for money, whom God and Christ never sent, as themselves confess when they say that they never heard God's nor Christ's voice. I exhorted the people to come off from all these things, directing them to the Spirit and grace of God in themselves, and to the Light of Jesus in their own hearts; that they might come to know Christ, their free teacher, to bring them salvation, and to open the Scriptures to them.

Thus the Lord gave me a good opportunity to open things largely unto them. All was quiet, and many were convinced; blessed be the Lord.

I passed to another town, where was another great meeting, the old priest being with me; and there came professors of several sorts to it. I sat on a hay-stack, and spoke nothing for some hours; for I was to famish them from words. The professors would ever and anon be speaking to the old priest, and asking him when I would begin, and when I would speak? He bade them wait; and told them that the people waited upon Christ a long while before He spoke.

At last I was moved of the Lord to speak; and they were struck

by the Lord's power. The Word of life reached to them, and there was a general convincement amongst them.

Now I came towards Cranswick, to Captain Pursloe's and Justice Hotham's, who received me kindly, being glad that the Lord's power had so appeared; that truth was spread, and so many had received it. Justice Hotham said that if God had not raised up this principle of Light and life which I preached, the nation would have been overrun with Ranterism,⁶⁴ and all the justices in the nation could not have stopped it with all their laws; "Because," said he, "they would have said as we said, and done as we commanded, and yet have kept their own principle still. But this principle of truth," said he, "overthrows their principle, and the root and ground thereof"; and therefore he was glad the Lord had raised up this principle of life and truth.

The next day Friends and friendly people having left me, I travelled alone, declaring the day of the Lord amongst people in the towns where I came, and warning them to repent. I came towards night into a town called Patrington. As I walked along the town, I warned both priest and people (for the priest was in the street) to repent and turn to the Lord. It grew dark before I came to the end of the town, and a multitude of people gathered about me, to whom I declared the Word of life.

When I had cleared myself I went to an inn, and desired them to let me have a lodging; but they would not. I desired a little

⁶⁴ This remark of Justice Hotham is an observation of considerable historical significance.

meat or milk, and said I would pay for it; but they refused. So I walked out of the town, and a company of fellows followed, and asked me, "What news?" I bade them repent, and fear the Lord.

After I was gone a pretty way, I came to another house, and desired the people to let me have a little meat, drink, and lodging for my money; but they denied me. I went to another house, and desired the same; but they refused me also. By this time it was grown so dark that I could not see the highway; but I discerned a ditch, and got a little water, and refreshed myself. Then I got over the ditch; and, being weary with travelling, I sat down amongst the furze bushes till it was day.

About break of day I got up, and passed on over the fields. A man came after me with a great pike-staff and went along with me to a town; and he raised the town upon me, with the constable and chief constable, before the sun was up. I declared God's everlasting truth amongst them, warning them of the day of the Lord, that was coming upon all sin and wickedness; and exhorted them to repent. But they seized me, and had me back to Patrington, about three miles, guarding me with watch-bills, pikes, staves, and halberds.

When I was come to Patrington, all the town was in an uproar, and the priest and constables were consulting together; so I had another opportunity to declare the Word of life amongst them, and warn them to repent. At last a professor, a tender man, called me into his house, and there I took a little milk and bread, having not eaten for some days before. Then they guarded me about nine

miles to a justice.

When I was come near his house, a man came riding after us, and asked me whether I was the man that was apprehended. I asked him wherefore he asked. He said, "For no hurt." I told him I was: so he rode away to the justice before us. The men that guarded me said it would be well if the justice were not drunk before we got to him; for he used to get drunk early.

When I was brought in before him, because I did not put off my hat, and because I said Thou to him, he asked the man that rode thither before me whether I was not mazed or fond.⁶⁵ The man told him, No; it was my principle.

I warned him to repent, and come to the light with which Christ had enlightened him; that by it he might see all his evil words and actions, and turn to Christ Jesus whilst he had time; and that whilst he had time he should prize it. "Ay, ay," said he, "the Light that is spoken of in the third of John." I desired he would mind it, and obey it.

As I admonished him, I laid my hand upon him, and he was brought down by the power of the Lord; and all the watchmen stood amazed. Then he took me into a little parlour with the other man, and desired to see what I had in my pockets of letters or intelligence. I plucked out my linen, and showed him I had no letters. He said, "He is not a vagrant, by his linen"; then he set me at liberty.

I went back to Patrington with the man that had rode before

⁶⁵ Foolish.

me to the justice: for he lived at Patrington. When I came there, he would have had me have a meeting at the Cross; but I said it was no matter; his house would serve. He desired me to go to bed, or lie down upon a bed; which he did, that they might say they had seen me in a bed, or upon a bed; for a report had been raised that I would not lie on any bed, because at that time I lay many times out of doors.⁶⁶ Now when the First-day of the week was come, I went to the steeple-house, and declared the truth to the priest and people; and the people did not molest me, for the power of God was come over them. Presently after I had a great meeting at the man's house where I lay, and many were convinced of the Lord's everlasting truth, who stand faithful witnesses of it to this day. They were exceedingly grieved that they had not received me, nor given me lodging, when I was there before.

Thence I travelled through the country, even to the furthest part thereof, warning people, in towns and villages, to repent, and directing them to Christ Jesus, their teacher.

On the First-day of the week I came to one Colonel Overton's house, and had a great meeting of the prime of the people of that country; where many things were opened out of the Scriptures which they had never heard before. Many were convinced, and received the Word of life, and were settled in the truth of God.

⁶⁶ Fox's power of endurance will be noticed in every part of this autobiography. He sleeps under hedges, fences or haystacks. He goes days without suitable food. He speaks in difficult places as often as occasion presents, and goes through the attacks of hostile crowds with an endurance which is astonishing. This iron constitution carried him through the long imprisonments which thinned the ranks of his co-laborers.

Then I returned to Patrington again, and visited those Friends that were convinced there; by whom I understood that a tailor, and some wild blades in that town, had occasioned my being carried before the justice. The tailor came to ask my forgiveness, fearing I would complain of him. The constables also were afraid, lest I should trouble them. But I forgave them all, and warned them to turn to the Lord, and to amend their lives.

Now that which made them the more afraid was this: when I was in the steeple-house at Oram, not long before, there came a professor, who gave me a push on the breast in the steeple-house, and bade me get out of the church. "Alas, poor man!" said I, "dost thou call the steeple-house the Church? The Church is the people, whom God hath purchased with His blood, and not the house." It happened that Justice Hotham came to hear of this man's abuse, sent his warrant for him, and bound him over to the sessions; so affected was he with the Truth and so zealous to keep the peace. And indeed this Justice Hotham had asked me before whether any people had meddled with me, or abused me; but I was not at liberty to tell him anything of that kind, but was to forgive all.

The next First-day I went to Tickhill, whither the Friends of that side gathered together, and a mighty brokenness by the power of God there was amongst the people. I went out of the meeting, being moved of God to go to the steeple-house. When I came there, I found the priest and most of the chief of the parish together in the chancel.

I went up to them, and began to speak; but they immediately fell upon me; the clerk up with his Bible, as I was speaking, and struck me on the face with it, so that my face gushed out with blood; and I bled exceedingly in the steeple-house. The people cried, "Let us have him out of the church." When they had got me out, they beat me exceedingly, threw me down, and turned me over a hedge. They afterwards dragged me through a house into the street, stoning and beating me as they dragged me along; so that I was all over besmeared with blood and dirt. They got my hat from me, which I never had again. Yet when I was got upon my legs, I declared the Word of life, showed them the fruits of their teacher, and how they dishonored Christianity.

After awhile I got into the meeting again amongst Friends, and the priest and people coming by the house, I went with Friends into the yard, and there spoke to the priest and people. The priest scoffed at us, and called us Quakers. But the Lord's power was so over them, and the Word of life was declared in such authority and dread to them, that the priest fell a-trembling himself; and one of the people said, "Look how the priest trembles and shakes; he is turned a Quaker also."

When the meeting was over, Friends departed; and I went without my hat to Balby, about seven or eight miles. Friends were much abused that day by the priest and his people: insomuch that some moderate justices hearing of it, two or three of them came and sat at the town to examine the business. He that had shed my blood was afraid of having his hand cut off for striking me

in the church, as they called it; but I forgave him, and would not appear against him.

Thence I went to Wakefield; and on the First-day after, I went to a steeple-house where James Nayler⁶⁷ had been a member of an Independent church; but upon his receiving truth, he was excommunicated. When I came in, and the priest had done, the people called upon me to come up to the priest, which I did; but when I began to declare the Word of life to them, and to lay open the deceit of the priest, they rushed upon me suddenly, thrust me out at the other door, punching and beating me, and cried, "Let us have him to the stocks." But the Lord's power restrained them, that they were not suffered to put me in.

So I passed away to the meeting, where were a great many professors and friendly people gathered, and a great convincement there was that day; for the people were mightily satisfied that they were directed to the Lord's teaching *in themselves*. Here we got some lodging; for four of us had lain under a hedge the night before, there being then few Friends in that place.

The priest of that church, of which James Nayler had been a member, whose name was Marshall, raised many wicked slanders about me, as that I carried bottles with me, and made people drink of them, which made them follow me; and that

⁶⁷ This James Nayler, who left his Independent church to become a Quaker had a future history of pathetic interest. He was a powerful minister, and his very success led to his downfall, which will be recorded in the proper place later on.

I rode upon a great black horse, and was seen in one country upon it in one hour, and at the same hour in another country threescore miles off; and that I would give a fellow money to follow me, when I was on my black horse. With these lies he fed his people, to make them think evil of the truth which I had declared amongst them. But by these lies he preached many of his hearers away from him; for I was then travelling on foot, and had no horse at that time; which the people generally knew.

As we travelled through the country, preaching repentance to the people, we came into a market-town, where a lecture was held that day. I went into the steeple-house, where many priests, professors and people were. The priest that preached took for his text those words of Jeremiah 5:31, "My people love to have it so": leaving out the foregoing words, viz.: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means." I showed the people his deceit; and directed them to Christ, the true teacher within; declaring that God was come to teach His people himself, and to bring them off from all the world's teachers and hirelings; that they might come to receive freely from Him. Then, warning them of the day of the Lord that was coming upon all flesh, I passed thence without much opposition.

At night we came to a country place, where there was no public house near. The people desired us to stay all night; which we did, and had good service for the Lord, declaring His truth amongst them.

The Lord had said unto me that if but one man or woman were

raised by His power to stand and live in the same Spirit that the prophets and apostles were in who gave forth the Scriptures, that man or woman should shake all the country in their profession⁶⁸ for ten miles round. For people had the Scriptures, but were not in the same Light, power, and Spirit which those were in who gave forth the Scriptures; so they neither knew God, Christ, nor the Scriptures aright; nor had they unity one with another, being out of the power and Spirit of God. Therefore we warned all, wherever we met them, of the day of the Lord that was coming upon them.

⁶⁸ "All the country in their profession" means "all the people throughout the country who are mere nominal Christians."

CHAPTER VI

A New Era Begins

1652

As we travelled we came near a very great hill, called Pendle Hill, and I was moved of the Lord to go up to the top of it; which I did with difficulty, it was so very steep and high. When I was come to the top, I saw the sea bordering upon Lancashire. From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered. As I went down, I found a spring of water in the side of the hill, with which I refreshed myself, having eaten or drunk but little for several days before.⁶⁹

At night we came to an inn, and declared truth to the man of the house, and wrote a paper to the priests and professors, declaring the day of the Lord, and that Christ was come to teach people Himself, by His power and Spirit in their hearts, and to bring people off from all the world's ways and teachers, to His own free teaching, who had bought them, and was the Saviour of all them that believed in Him. The man of the house spread

⁶⁹ This spring is still called "George Fox's well."

the paper abroad, and was mightily affected with the truth. Here the Lord opened unto me, and let me see a great people in white raiment by a river side, coming to the Lord; and the place that I saw them in was about Wensleydale and Sedbergh.⁷⁰

The next day we travelled on, and at night got a little fern or bracken to put under us, and lay upon a common. Next morning we reached a town, where Richard Farnsworth⁷¹ parted from me; and then I travelled alone again. I came up Wensleydale, and at the market-town in that Dale, there was a lecture on the market-day. I went into the steeple-house; and after the priest had done I proclaimed the day of the Lord to the priest and people, warning them to turn from darkness to the Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might come to know God and Christ aright, and to receive His teaching, who teacheth freely. Largely and freely did I declare the Word of life unto them, and had not much persecution there.

Afterwards I passed up the Dales, warning people to fear God, and preaching the everlasting gospel to them. In my way I came to a great house, where was a schoolmaster; and they got me into the

⁷⁰ No part of Fox's life is more remarkable than these few months of service that follow in Westmoreland – "in and about Wensleydale and Sedbergh." Here he gathers about himself a band of preachers only slightly less gifted than himself. He wins the support of the Fells of Swarthmore Hall, which becomes henceforth a sort of headquarters to the movement, and he gains the incalculable assistance of Margaret Fell, – for many years a wise and faithful friend, and finally his wife.

⁷¹ Richard Farnsworth was "convinced" at Balby in 1651, and became one of George Fox's most valuable helpers.

house. I asked them questions about their religion and worship; and afterwards I declared the truth to them. They had me into a parlour, and locked me in, pretending that I was a young man that was mad, and had run away from my relations; and that they would keep me till they could send to them. But I soon convinced them of their mistake, and they let me forth, and would have had me to stay; but I was not to stay there.

Then having exhorted them to repentance, and directed them to the Light of Christ Jesus, that through it they might come unto Him and be saved, I passed from them, and came in the night to a little ale-house on a common, where there was a company of rude fellows drinking. Because I would not drink with them, they struck me with their clubs; but I reprov'd them, and brought them to be somewhat cooler; and then I walked out of the house upon the common in the night.

After some time one of these drunken fellows came out, and would have come close up to me, pretending to whisper to me; but I perceived he had a knife; and therefore I kept off him, and bade him repent, and fear God. So the Lord by His power preserved me from this wicked man; and he went into the house again. The next morning I went on through other Dales, warning and exhorting people everywhere as I passed, to repent and turn to the Lord: and several were convinced. At one house that I came to, the man of the house (whom I afterwards found to be a kinsman of John Blakelin's) would have given me money, but I would not receive it.

The next day I went to a meeting at Justice Benson's, where I met a people that were separated from the public worship. This was the place I had seen, where a people came forth in white raiment. A large meeting it was, and the people were generally convinced; and they continue still a large meeting of Friends near Sedbergh; which was then first gathered through my ministry in the name of Jesus.

In the same week there was a great fair, at which servants used to be hired; and I declared the day of the Lord through the fair. After I had done so, I went into the steeple-house yard, and many of the people of the fair came thither to me, and abundance of priests and professors. There I declared the everlasting truth of the Lord and the Word of life for several hours, showing that the Lord was come to teach His people Himself, and to bring them off from all the world's ways and teachers, to Christ, the true teacher, and the true way to God. I laid open their teachers, showing that they were like them that were of old condemned by the prophets, and by Christ, and by the apostles. I exhorted the people to come off from the temples made with hands; and wait to receive the Spirit of the Lord, that they might know themselves to be the temples of God.

Not one of the priests had power to open his mouth against what I declared: but at last a captain said, "Why will you not go into the church? this is not a fit place to preach in." I told him I denied their church. Then stood up Francis Howgill, who was preacher to a congregation. He had not seen me before; yet

he undertook to answer that captain; and he soon put him to silence. Then said Francis Howgill of me, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the scribes."

After this, I opened to the people that that ground and house were no holier than another place; and that the house is not the Church, but the people, of whom Christ is the head. After awhile the priests came up to me, and I warned them to repent. One of them said I was mad; so they turned away. But many were convinced there that day, who were glad to hear the truth declared, and received it with joy. Amongst these was Captain Ward, who received the truth in the love of it, and lived and died in it.

The next First-day I came to Firbank chapel in Westmoreland, where Francis Howgill and John Audland⁷² had been preaching in the morning. The chapel was full of people, so that many could not get in. Francis said he thought I looked into the chapel, and his spirit was ready to fail, the Lord's power did so surprise him: but I did not look in. They made haste, and had quickly done, and they and some of the people went to dinner; but abundance stayed till they came again. John Blakelin and others came to me, and desired me not to reprove them publicly; for they were not parish-teachers, but pretty tender men. I could not tell them whether I should or no, though I had not at that time any drawings to declare publicly against them; but I said they must leave me

⁷² Howgill and Audland became two of the little band of powerful ministers who gave their lives to the proclamation of the truth as Fox interpreted it.

to the Lord's movings.

While others were gone to dinner, I went to a brook, got a little water, and then came and sat down on the top of a rock hard by the chapel. In the afternoon the people gathered about me, with several of their preachers. It was judged there were above a thousand people; to whom I declared God's everlasting truth and Word of life freely and largely for about the space of three hours. I directed all to the Spirit of God in themselves; that they might be turned from darkness to Light, and believe in it; that they might become the children of it, and might be turned from the power of Satan unto God; and by the Spirit of truth might be led into all truth, and sensibly understand the words of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles; and might all come to know Christ to be their teacher to instruct them, their counsellor to direct them, their shepherd to feed them, their bishop to oversee them, and their prophet to open divine mysteries to them; and might know their bodies to be prepared, sanctified, and made fit temples for God and Christ to dwell in. In the openings of heavenly life I explained unto them the prophets, and the figures and shadows, and directed them to Christ, the substance. Then I opened the parables and sayings of Christ, and things that had been long hid.

Now there were many old people who went into the chapel and looked out at the windows, thinking it a strange thing to see a man preach on a hill, and not in their church, as they called it; whereupon I was moved to open to the people that the steeple-

house, and the ground whereon it stood were no more holy than that mountain; and that those temples, which they called the dreadful houses of God were not set up by the command of God and of Christ; nor their priests called, as Aaron's priesthood was; nor their tithes appointed by God, as those amongst the Jews were; but that Christ was come, who ended both the temple and its worship, and the priests and their tithes; and that all should now hearken unto Him; for He said, "Learn of me"; and God said of Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

I declared unto them that the Lord God had sent me to preach the everlasting gospel and Word of life amongst them, and to bring them off from all these temples, tithes, priests, and rudiments of the world, which had been instituted since the apostles' days, and had been set up by such as had erred from the Spirit and power the apostles were in. Very largely was I opened at this meeting, and the Lord's convincing power accompanied my ministry, and reached the hearts of the people, whereby many were convinced; and all the teachers of that congregation (who were many) were convinced of God's everlasting truth.

At Kendal a meeting was held in the Town-hall. Several were convinced and many were loving. One whose name was Cock met me in the street and would have given me a roll of tobacco, for people were then much given to smoking. I accepted his love, but did not receive his tobacco.

Thence I went to Underbarrow, and several people going

along with me, great reasonings I had with them, especially with Edward Burrough.⁷³

At night the priest and many professors came to the house; and a great deal of disputing I had with them. Supper being provided for the priest and the rest of the company, I had not freedom to eat with them; but told them that if they would appoint a meeting for the next day at the steeple-house, and acquaint the people with it, I might meet them. They had a great deal of reasoning about it; some being for, and some against it.

In the morning, after I had spoken to them again concerning the meeting, as I walked upon a bank by the house, there came several poor travellers, asking relief, who I saw were in necessity; and they gave them nothing, but said they were cheats. It grieved me to see such hard-heartedness amongst professors; whereupon, when they were gone in to their breakfast, I ran after the poor people about a quarter of a mile, and gave them some money.

Meanwhile some that were in the house, coming out, and seeing me a quarter of a mile off, said I could not have gone so far in such an instant, if I had not had wings. Hereupon the meeting was like to have been put by; for they were filled with such strange thoughts concerning me that many of them were

⁷³ Edward Burrough has been called the Whitefield of Quakerism. He possessed a trained mind and unusual original power. He was a vigorous writer, and his ministry was remarkably effective. "Son of thunder and consolation," he was named. He was one of the early martyrs to the truth, dying in a London prison in 1662. Just before his death he said: "Now my soul and spirit is entered into its own being with God, and this form of person must return whence it was taken."

against having a meeting with me.⁷⁴

I told them that I had run after those poor people to give them some money; being grieved at the hard-heartedness of those who gave them nothing.

Then came Miles and Stephen Hubbersty, who, being more simple-hearted men, would have the meeting held. So to the chapel I went, and the priest came.

A great meeting there was, and the way of life and salvation was opened; and after awhile the priest fled away. Many of Crook and Underbarrow were convinced that day, received the Word of life, and stood fast in it under the teaching of Christ Jesus.

After I had declared the truth to them for some hours, and the meeting was ended, the chief constable and some other professors fell to reasoning with me in the chapel yard. Whereupon I took a Bible and opened the Scriptures, and dealt tenderly with them, as one would do with a child. They that were in the Light of Christ and Spirit of God knew when I spake Scripture, though I did not mention chapter and verse, after the priest's form, to them.

Then I went to an ale-house, to which many resorted betwixt the time of their morning and afternoon preaching, and had a great deal of reasoning with the people, declaring to them that God was come to teach His people, and to bring them off from the false teachers, such as the prophets, Christ, and the apostles cried against. Many received the Word of life at that time, and

⁷⁴ The superstitions everywhere existent among the people should be noted.

abode in it.

Thence I went to Ulverstone, and so to Swarthmore⁷⁵ to Judge Fell's; whither came up one Lampitt, a priest, who was a high notionist. With him I had much reasoning; for he talked of high notions and perfection, and thereby deceived the people. He would have owned me, but I could not own nor join with him, he was so full of filth.⁷⁶ He said he was above John; and made as though he knew all things. But I told him that death reigned from Adam to Moses; that he was under death, and knew not Moses, for Moses saw the paradise of God; but he knew neither Moses nor the prophets nor John; for that crooked and rough nature stood in him, and the mountain of sin and corruption; and the way was not prepared in him for the Lord.

He confessed he had been under a cross in things; but now he could sing psalms, and do anything. I told him that now he could see a thief, and join hand in hand with him; but he could not preach Moses, nor the prophets, nor John, nor Christ, except he were in the same Spirit that they were in.

Margaret Fell had been absent in the day-time; and at night her children told her that priest Lampitt and I had disagreed, which somewhat troubled her, because she was in profession with him; but he hid his dirty actions from them. At night we had much

⁷⁵ In the Furness district.

⁷⁶ Of no other minister has Fox spoken so harshly as of this man Lampitt. There is every reason for believing that the picture which he gives of Lampitt is correct, though in Calamy's "Ejected Ministers" he is spoken of as "a warm and lively preacher."

reasoning, and I declared the truth to her and her family. The next day Lampitt came again, and I had much discourse with him before Margaret Fell, who then clearly discerned the priest. A conviction of the Lord's truth came upon her and her family.

Soon after a day was to be observed for a humiliation, and Margaret Fell asked me to go with her to the steeple-house at Ulverstone, for she was not wholly come off from them. I replied, "I must do as I am ordered by the Lord." So I left her, and walked into the fields; and the Word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Go to the steeple-house after them."

When I came, Lampitt was singing with his people; but his spirit was so foul, and the matter they sung so unsuitable to their states, that after they had done singing, I was moved of the Lord to speak to him and the people. The word of the Lord to them was, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, whose praise is not of man, but of God."

As the Lord opened further, I showed them that God was come to teach His people by His Spirit, and to bring them off from all their old ways, religions, churches, and worships; for all their religions, worships, and ways were but talking with other men's words; but they were out of the life and Spirit which they were in who gave them forth.

Then cried out one, called Justice Sawrey, "Take him away"; but Judge Fell's wife said to the officers, "Let him alone; why may not he speak as well as any other?"⁷⁷ Lampitt also, the priest,

⁷⁷ During the Commonwealth period it was no violation of law or custom for a person

in deceit said, "Let him speak." So at length, when I had declared some time, Justice Sawrey caused the constable to put me out; and then I spoke to the people in the graveyard.

From thence I went into the island of Walney; and after the priest had done I spoke to him, but he got away. Then I declared the truth to the people, but they were something rude. I went to speak with the priest at his house, but he would not be seen. The people said he went to hide himself in the hay-mow; and they looked for him there, but could not find him. Then they said he was gone to hide himself in the standing corn, but they could not find him there either. I went to James Lancaster's, in the island, who was convinced, and from thence returned to Swarthmore, where the Lord's power seized upon Margaret Fell, her daughter Sarah, and several others.

Then I went to Baycliff, where Leonard Fell was convinced, and became a minister of the everlasting gospel. Several others were convinced there, and came into obedience to the truth. Here the people said they could not dispute; and would fain have put some other to hold talk with me; but I bade them fear the Lord, and not in a light way hold a talk of the Lord's words, but put the things in practice.⁷⁸

in the congregation to stand up and speak or object after the minister had finished his sermon. In most cases, where Fox spoke in the churches, he was exercising a right which was well-established. Occasionally he interrupted, which was contrary to good order, but he justified it by an appeal to the call of the Spirit, which he could not resist. (See page 110.) Justices of the Peace had authority to forbid any person to speak.

⁷⁸ Most wholesome words these, for that period of endless dispute, when religion

I directed them to the Divine Light of Christ, and His Spirit in their hearts, which would let them see all the evil thoughts, words, and actions that they had thought, spoken, and acted; by which Light they might see their sin, and also their Saviour Christ Jesus to save them from their sins. This I told them was their first step to peace, even to stand still in the Light that showed them their sins and transgressions; by which they might come to see they were in the fall of old Adam, in darkness and death, strangers to the covenant of promise, and without God in the world; and by the same Light they might see Christ that died for them to be their Redeemer and Saviour, and their way to God.

Soon after, Judge Fell being come home, Margaret Fell, his wife, sent to me, desiring me to return thither; and feeling freedom from the Lord so to do, I went back to Swarthmore. I found the priests and professors, and that envious Justice Sawrey, had much incensed Judge Fell and Captain Sands against the truth by their lies; but when I came to speak with him I answered all his objections, and so thoroughly satisfied him by the Scriptures that he was convinced in his judgment. He asked me if I was that George Fox of whom Justice Robinson spoke so much in commendation amongst many of the Parliament men? I told him I had been with Justice Robinson, and with Justice Hotham in Yorkshire, who were very civil and loving to me; and that they were convinced in their judgment by the Spirit of God that the principle to which I bore testimony was the truth; and

they saw over and beyond the priests of the nation, so that they, and many others, were now come to be wiser than their teachers.

After we had discoursed some time together, Judge Fell himself was satisfied also, and came to see, by the openings of the Spirit of God in his heart, over all the priests and teachers of the world, and did not go to hear them for some years before he died; for he knew it was the truth that I declared, and that Christ was the teacher of His people, and their Saviour. He sometimes wished that I were a while with Judge Bradshaw to discourse with him.

There came to Judge Fell's Captain Sands before-mentioned, endeavouring to incense the Judge against me, for he was an evil-minded man, and full of envy against me; and yet he could speak high things, and use the Scripture words, and say, "Behold, I make all things new." But I told him, then he must have a new God, for his God was his belly. Besides him came also that envious justice, John Sawrey. I told him his heart was rotten, and he was full of hypocrisy to the brim. Several other people also came, of whose states the Lord gave me a discerning; and I spoke to their conditions.⁷⁹ While I was in those parts, Richard Farnsworth and James Nayler came to see me and the family; and Judge Fell, being satisfied that it was the way of truth, notwithstanding all their opposition, suffered the meeting to be

⁷⁹ "Speaking to their conditions" meant describing their inward state. This meeting-house, erected near Swarthmore Hall in 1690, the gift of George Fox, is still standing, and contains many objects of interest.

kept at his house. A great meeting was settled there in the Lord's power, which continued near forty years, until the year 1690, when a new meeting-house was erected near it.⁸⁰

On the market-day I went to Lancaster, and spoke through the market in the dreadful power of God, declaring the day of the Lord to the people, and crying out against all their deceitful merchandise. I preached righteousness and truth unto them, which all should follow after, walk and live in, directing them how and where they might find and receive the Spirit of God to guide them thereinto.

After I had cleared myself in the market, I went to my lodging, whither several people came; and many were convinced who have since stood faithful to the truth.

The First-day following, in the forenoon, I had a great meeting in the street at Lancaster, amongst the soldiers and people, to whom I declared the Word of life, and the everlasting truth. I opened unto them that all the traditions they had lived in, all their worships and religions, and the profession they made of the Scriptures, were good for nothing while they lived out of the life and power which those were in who gave forth the Scriptures. I

⁸⁰ Justice Fell never became an avowed Friend. He, however, had much sympathy with the movement, and used his influence and authority to protect the Friends. He put no hindrance in the way of his wife, who did join them. Swarthmore Hall was always open to travelling ministers, and there is good reason to believe that substantial assistance went from Swarthmore Hall to those who were labouring throughout the kingdom. Margaret Fell was a great-granddaughter of Anne Askew, who was burned at the stake in 1545. Judge Fell was member for Parliament in 1645.

directed them to the Light of Christ, the heavenly man, and to the Spirit of God in their own hearts, that they might come to be acquainted with God and Christ, receive Him for their teacher, and know His kingdom set up in them.

In the afternoon I went to the steeple-house at Lancaster, and declared the truth to the priest and people, laying open before them the deceit they lived in, and directing them to the power and Spirit of God which they wanted. But they haled me out, and stoned me along the street till I came to John Lawson's house.

Another First-day I went to a steeple-house by the water-side, where one Whitehead was priest. To him and to the people I declared the truth in the dreadful power of God. There came a doctor so full of envy that he said he could find it in his heart to run me through with his rapier, though he were hanged for it the next day; yet this man came afterwards to be convinced of the truth so far as to be loving to Friends. Some were convinced thereabouts who willingly sat down under the ministry of Christ, their teacher; and a meeting was settled there in the power of God, which has continued to this day.

After this I returned into Westmoreland, and spoke through Kendal on a market-day. So dreadful was the power of God upon me, that people flew like chaff before me into their houses. I warned them of the mighty day of the Lord, and exhorted them to hearken to the voice of God in their own hearts, who was now come to teach His people Himself. When some opposed, many others took my part. At last some fell to fighting about me; but

I went and spoke to them, and they parted again. Several were convinced.

After I had travelled up and down in those countries, and had had great meetings, I came to Swarthmore again. And when I had visited Friends in those parts, I heard of a great meeting the priests were to have at Ulverstone, on a lecture-day. I went to it, and into the steeple-house in the dread and power of the Lord. When the priest had done, I spoke among them the Word of the Lord, which was as a hammer, and as a fire amongst them. And though Lampitt, the priest of the place, had been at variance with most of the priests before, yet against the truth they all joined together. But the mighty power of the Lord was over all; and so wonderful was the appearance thereof, that priest Bennett said the church shook, insomuch that he was afraid and trembled. And when he had spoken a few confused words he hastened out for fear it should fall on his head. Many priests got together there; but they had no power as yet to persecute.

When I had cleared my conscience towards them, I went up to Swarthmore again, whither came four or five of the priests. Coming to discourse, I asked them whether any one of them could say he had ever had the word of the Lord to go and speak to such or such a people. None of them durst say he had; but one of them burst out into a passion and said that he could speak his experiences as well as I.

I told him experience was one thing; but to receive and go with a message, and to have a Word from the Lord, as the prophets

and apostles had had and done, and as I had done to them, this was another thing. And therefore I put it to them again, "Can any of you say you have ever had a command or word from the Lord immediately at any time?" but none of them could say so.

Then I told them that the false prophets, the false apostles, and the antichrists, could use the words of the true prophets, the true apostles, and of Christ, and would speak of other men's experiences, though they themselves never knew or heard the voice of God or Christ; and that such as they might obtain the good words and experiences of others. This puzzled them much, and laid them open.

At another time, when I was discoursing with several priests at Judge Fell's house, and he was by, I asked them the same question, – whether any of them had ever heard the voice of God or Christ, to bid him go to such and such a people, to declare His word or message unto them. Any one, I told them, that could but read, might declare the experiences of the prophets and apostles, which were recorded in the Scriptures. Thereupon Thomas Taylor,⁸¹ an ancient priest, did ingenuously confess before Judge Fell that he had never heard the voice of God, nor of Christ, to send him to any people; but that he spoke his experiences, and the experiences of the saints in former ages, and that he preached. This very much confirmed Judge Fell in the persuasion he had that the priests were wrong; for he had thought

⁸¹ This Thomas Taylor was educated at Oxford, and was a man of profound insight. He became a valiant supporter of Fox and a convincing minister.

formerly, as the generality of people then did, that they were sent from God.

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