

A QUAKE THAT SHOOK ENGLAND

GEORGE FOX: A POWERFUL PROPHETIC VOICE IN ENGLAND

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UNADULTERATED CHRISTIANITY

"George Fox alone has, without human learning, done more than any other reformer in Protestant Christendom towards the restoration of real, primitive, unadulterated Christianity and the destruction of priest craft, superstition, and ridiculous, unavailing rites and ceremonies." - Leonard Ravenhill

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In the beginning of the Journal of George Fox he entails the reason of writing the accounts of his life: "That all may know the dealings of the Lord with me... to prepare and fit me for the work unto which he had appointed me." George Fox was an God appointed, His calling by the Spirit of God, His life was wholly given to Christ the saviour of mens souls. He took no heed to professors, books, men, but being numb to the things of earth he desired earnestly for reality and truth in God.

STRANGER TO ALL

George Fox was born in 1624, and was raised in an religious home in the shoemaker trade. Being keenly aware of the spiritual he had many experiences of God in his heart as the spirt of God was wooing this young man to Himself. At the age of 19 he had familiarity with some puritans who at peradventure one day at a tavern had him to drink, so much so their worldly actions grieved George Fox to a point of leaving and not being able to sleep that entire night. As He sought the Lord with tears the Lord spoke to his servant saying: "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 to all." And this he did! Obeying the voice of the Lord he left his town, his family, his life, without any notice or farewell's this desperate young man left as Abraham of old left 'and he went out, not knowing whither he went.' Passing from town to town professors of religion where keen to speak to this unusual young man but as he confesses in his journal, "but I was afraid of them: for I was sensible they did not possess what they professed."

For the next few years his time was spent in agony of body and soul, being grieved at the state of religion and man's hearts, even so much that at points in time he wished in his own words: "I had never been born." Then came a voice to him as clear as the one that called him from his home: "There is one, even Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition.' and he says 'When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.

David Smithers an contemporary revival historian shares some great insight into this remarkable life: "Soon after George Fox began to preach, he had a remarkable spiritual experience that lasted fourteen days. A certain Mr. Brown, while on his death bed prophesied many great things concerning Fox. "When this man was buried," says Fox, "a great work of the Lord fell on me." During this mighty baptism of the Spirit, Fox received a remarkable gift of discernment. "He seemed to be able to read the character of men by looking at them." Miraculous healing also accompanied his ministry. Through prayer and the laying on of hands, the sick were often healed and devils were cast out to the glory of Christ. When George Fox preached men would shake and tremble. "The name Quaker was given to Fox and his followers because of the quaking of the men who came to scoff but stayed to pray." This remarkable power seemed to accompany the preaching of Fox wherever he went. Fox preached that Jesus Christ is the author of a faith which purifies and gives victory over sin. He fervently exhorted men to pursue complete holiness rather than empty religious ceremonies. As a result, he was often beaten, stoned and

driven out of town. It is estimated that perhaps no other man since the time of the Reformation was persecuted and imprisoned as often as George Fox. He usually went about the country on foot, dressed in his famous suit of leather clothes, which it is believed he made himself. He often slept outside under a tree or in some haystack. Fox also often pointed out that what was commonly called the Church was only a building. He boldly declared that only the fervent believers of Christ were the living stones of the true Church."

A FREE GOSPEL

The calling out of hirelings in the church was something that George Fox did regularly, he had a peculiar spiritual gifting of being able to discern true and spurious profession. He seemed to trumpet this message against the selling of Christ and religion with a burdened jealous heart, much in the likes of Christ Himself toppling the moneychangers tables. The worldly spirit of the priests made him suffer: and when he heard the bells ring to call worshippers to the steeple-houses, it struck him to the heart, 'for it was just like a market-bell to gather people together that the priest might set forth his ware to sale. Oh, the vast sums of money that are gotten by trade they make of selling the Scriptures, and by their preaching.. notwithstanding the Scriptures were given forth freely, and Christ commanded his ministers to preach freely."

Another point that touches at the very heart of George Fox's ministry was the telling people that God has come to teach them Himself. It is brought out clearly in his journal when he said: "These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter, but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God, by whom the Holy Scriptures were written."

He further illustrates this important truth of not just having the scriptures for teaching but the Holy Spirit Himself who is the one that the scriptures came from and He is the one that leads into all truth. He gives this truth to a congregation in 1649: "And 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 the Scriptures were the touchstone and judge by which they were to try all doctrines, religions, and opinions... I... was made to cry out and say, 'Oh, no, it is not the Scriptures,' ... But I told them what it was, namely, the Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures... for it led into all Truth, and so gave the knowledge of all Truth. For the Jews had the Scriptures, and yet resisted the Holy Ghost, and rejected Christ... and took upon them to try their doctrines by the Scriptures, but erred in judgement, and did not try them aright, because they tried

without the Holy Ghost. Now as I spoke thus amongst them, the officers came and took me away and put me into prison, a pitiful stinking place."

HOLY MEN'S WORDS

George Fox taught one subject very strongly which he faced much opposition and that is purity and holiness of the Christian life. Hear the lament of Fox over this opposition to the truth: "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. 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?"

He had a boldness before men because he had a familiarity with God. Therefore he could say: "When the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low." To live for the glory of God was his supreme desire over worldly vanity and success. The Lord spoke directly and clearly to his heart and he walked in that revelation. "The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts . . . his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them." Oh to realize the boldness and zeal that Fox preached and lived in was because of the surety of the voice of God that he heard. Are you hearing God? Has he given you a clear strong word? God is desiring to speak and anoint men for His purposes in our day. Oh how we need many George Fox's to rise up and speak against the modern contraption of church and proclaim fearlessly the apostolic truth's long lost.

Thomas Ellwood a fellow 'friend' speaks of George Fox: "This Holy man was raised up by God in an extraordinary manner, for an extraordinary work, even to awaken the sleeping world. He was valiant for truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, unwearied in laboring in it, steady in his testimony to it; immovable as a rock."

William Penn one of the early leaders of the Quaker movement wrote of Fox: "His ministry and writings show they are from one that was not taught of man... Nor were they notional or speculative, but sensible and practical truths, tending to conversion and regeneration and the setting up of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men... He had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things... But above all he excelled in prayer."

The impact of his life can be hardly measured, his name carries along with it the life that was burnt out for God for on his tombstone reads simply: "Here lies George Fox!"