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The Bible: Its Authority and Dynamic in George Fox and Contemporary Quakerism

T. CANBY JONES

What part did the Bible play in the faith of George Fox? How did he use it? Did he consider it or the Holy Spirit as final authority? How can we restore his dynamic approach to biblical revelation in the Society of Friends today? These are questions of great importance to Friends in this age, and are the topics with which I will deal in this paper. The first part will discuss the use and authority of the Bible as found in George Fox, and the second part will consider a program for revitalizing biblical religion in contemporary Quakerism.

THE USE AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IN GEORGE FOX

The Message of George Fox. In order to see in its proper perspective the attitude which George Fox held toward the Bible, we must first examine, under five topics, the main part of his message.

In the first place, Fox placed great and central emphasis on the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ. In common with his fellow Puritans, Fox had a very high and universal view of the sovereign rule and providence of God. Jesus as universal and pre-existent Son of God shares in all the Father's attributes of universal power and creation. By him were all things made that were made. One of Fox's favorite Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ was Matthew 28:18—"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." For Fox this passage denoted Christ's preeminent lordship as prophet who rules from heaven and the perfect high priest who once for all entered the heavenly sanctuary, making atonement for our sins, and above all king of kings and lord of lords, Christ the ruler of all things. He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron and of his kingdom there shall be no end and against him and his kingdom the gates of hell and death shall not prevail.

Secondly, Fox speaks of man created in God's image and living a life of obedience and perfection in the Garden before the Fall. Through Adam's disobedience all mankind has fallen into sin, as Fox states clearly in this quotation:

So here Adam died, and Eve died... "What died they from?" From the purity, holiness, innocence, pure and good estate in which God placed them. So Adam died, and Eve died; and all died — in Adam. Sad words! All are baptized into the death of Adam, into death or separation from God... plunged into Adam's death, and imperfection and darkness.

The image of God in man in which he was created has been totally destroyed. Fox sees this image lying mangled among the creatures and in the nature of beasts, and serpents, and tall cedars, and oaks, and bulls, and heifers... and of dogs and swine, biting and rending, and the nature of briars, thistles, and thorns... and like the mountains and rocks, and crooked rough ways.

Nevertheless, in the third place, in the midst of this insensate matter, this rending, serpentine sinfulness in man, God has not left himself without a witness. Embedded in the "cloddy" earth of man's fallen nature is a Seed, a Seed of redemption, which is Christ, and he shall bruise the serpent's head. This Seed is otherwise termed the Measure, the Light and, rarely, that of God in every man. This Light is Christ at many points in Fox's thought. At other points the Light seems to proceed from Christ. It is a transcendent redemptive radiance that shines into the darkness of man's disobedience, bringing light, obedience, and life. As long as man remains by his own choice in a state of sin and disobedience, the Seed remains fruitless and the Light can only serve to make him conscious of his sin. But if a man turns and obeys the Light, the Seed springs to life. Then, oh then, he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus and his heart will leap for joy. It is only through obedience and regeneration that man becomes fully man again with the image of God restored in him, and Christ ruling his life.

Though, in the fourth place, the light of Christ begins his regeneration in individual hearts, it is his peculiar task in the earth to create a New Covenant community. The Old Covenant
of law made with the Jews has been completely fulfilled and superseded by the New. Christ here gathers to himself a pure and holy people to serve as the locus and center of his great work of reconciliation and restoration. In the midst of such a community men are restored not only to the condition of primal purity and obedience of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also to the state of Christ who never fell. This is quite a claim. Not only individuals but the true community of God participate in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the just One, who never fell.

The nature of the restored community is such that it is a holy, regenerate, gathered, separate people who have a triumphant message of restoration to all people, and only two legitimate weapons to use in the struggle, spiritual weapons—love and suffering. Jesus Christ has come to teach his covenant people himself without the medium of minister, priest, or ordinance. Christ is Prophet, Priest and Bishop of our souls, who makes his love, his will, and his order known directly to his voluntarily gathered people.

The final and climactic note of Fox’s message, as Geoffrey Nuttall rightly suggests, is power: power over sin, power to change society, power to restore the church, power to defeat Satan at the last day. Through grace the regenerate person is enabled to walk in holy obedience, free from sin in this life as long as he continues to walk in the Light. Holiness, purity, perfection—these are things demonstrable in us if Christ, through the Seed, reigns in our lives. This same power is manifest in his covenant community, leading it to heroic acts of corporate witness. Since Christ is the sovereign Lord of all creation and the Lord of history who has already demonstrated his power in the church, Fox believes he will also destroy all the powers of evil and enjoy the victory in the final consummation at the last day.

George Fox and the Bible. The first major consideration of this study is a delineation of Fox’s use of and attitude toward the Bible. In the first place, Fox’s message was Bible-centered. It was the custom of printers in the seventeenth century to italicize quotations. In tract after tract in Fox’s Gospel Truth Demonstrated more than two-thirds of each page is italicized, for all are quotations from the Bible. In other words, most of what Fox wrote is bursting with Scripture or references to Scripture. A concordance is a useful tool when reading Fox’s tracts but the process quickly becomes quite tedious. We have often heard the judgment of Gerard Croese, a non-Quaker Dutch historian, who said “... though the Bible were lost, it might be found in the mouth of George Fox... so all the Discourses he ever had to his people, and all the writings left on Record behind him, were nothing but a train of several texts of Scripture sewed and patched together.” Imagine what a glorious compliment it would be to our ministry if we deserved such an accusation!

The Bible which Fox practically memorized and quoted most often was the “new” or “modernist” translation of his day, the King James Version of 1611. Fox also owned what he called his “great Bible.” This was a Coverdale-Cranmer “Treacle Bible,” so-called because what is often translated as “the balm of Gilead” was called the “treacle of Gilead.” But there is little evidence that he used its language in his writings. In an article about this, Henry Cadbury points out that in his imprisonment at Worcester in 1674-75 the only Bible available to Fox was a “Breeches Bible,” a Geneva Bible of 1558. In the tracts which he wrote at that time Fox often quotes the King James version from memory. At other times he quotes the Geneva Bible, and sometimes he comes up with a mixture of both. But by and large he stuck to the “modernist translation” commissioned by the king.

When we ask what basic principle of interpretation Fox used in seeking the central message and authority of Scripture, we discover that for him Christ was the key to the Bible. Just as Fox preached Christ as sovereign Lord, Creator, Redeemer, Covenant-maker and final Victor as the heart of his message, so also Fox saw the revelation of God’s redemptive purpose through his Son as the heart of the Scripture. He judged the value of various parts of the Old Testament by their typology and foreshadowing of Christ. Christ’s great saving work in the earth as revealed in the New Covenant governed the stress Fox put on New Testament passages. Fox felt the only appropriate language to confess
Christ was that of Scripture. He dared not express himself otherwise.

Some modern interpreters of Quakerism, among whom are Henry Cadbury and Neave Brayshaw, stress the independence and novelty of revelation to Fox. Cadbury says:

"The Scriptures were for him a confirmation rather than a source of truth. You can appeal to revelation in spite of them. . . . After citing scores of examples from the Old Testament and the New he concludes, "And if there were no Scriptures for our men and women’s meetings, Christ is sufficient, who restores man and woman up into the image of God, to be helps meet in righteousness and holiness, as they were in before they fell."

This statement confirms my view that for Fox Christ is sufficient; he is the key to the Scripture.

While I accept Henry Cadbury’s judgment that the Holy Spirit and direct revelation of the Spirit were primary authority for Fox and the Scriptures secondary, nevertheless I think Hugh Doncaster and others are quite right in insisting that these so-called “new” and “independent” revelations were, as far as content is concerned, very biblical indeed. Fox’s total thought-world was scriptural. He knew no other. His very insistence on fresh and direct revelation is quite biblical in itself.

Fox used the Bible in several ways. He used it first of all devotionally. He gloried in its promises. Through scripture references he constantly voiced his faith that the power of the Lord was over all. His mind was pregnant with visions from Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Revelation. In the second place, Fox quoted the Bible from memory in his preaching. For instance Fox turned Isaiah’s lament into a query full of promise when he said: “. . . do not ye ox know his owner and ye Ass his master’s crib? thy owner is he yt purchased thee and bought thee; dost thou know thy owner, dost thou know thy crib?” Third, no one could quote the Bible more devastatingly in an argument than Fox — or at least that is the impression he gives us. He loves to tell of vanquishing priest Tombes or Dr. Wittie and dozens of others in controversy, taking special delight in the fact that each of them went away in a great rage. In arguments, Fox had a particular ability to infuriate! He had an equal ability to elicit love. Hear his tenderness in the following:

. . . and I took a Bible and showed and opened to them the Scriptures, and showed them chapter and verse and dealt with them as one would deal with a child in swaddling clothes. They that were in the light of Christ and spirit of God did know when I spoke Scripture, though I did not mention chapter and verse after the priest’s form unto them.

Though he believed in immediate revelation of truth through the immediate presence of Christ, Fox found in the Bible the chief source of his understandings. Like other Puritans he was determined not to believe anything that was not expressly scriptural. As intimated above, an astonishing number of Fox’s pronouncements are nothing more than slight variations of Scripture. For more than six years I have been teaching Bible at Wilmington College. As a result of the growth in my own knowledge, when I go back to read Fox, I find more and more passages straight out of the Bible which I had been too ignorant to recognize as such before.

We have said already that Fox interprets the Bible Christologically, devotionally, as a weapon in controversy, and as a vehicle for faith. In characteristic Anabaptist fashion, Fox interpreted Scripture in a historical and literal way. He stood against those who embroidered the Scriptures with “notions.” In some important instances Fox spiritualized the meaning of Scripture — for example in relation to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper — but most of the time he stood strongly for literal interpretation with these words: “The scripture is witnessed as it relates and speaks. And he abuseth it, when he gives private interpretations to it, and owns it not as it speaks.” I want to stress especially the last phrase, “and owns it not as it speaks.” Fox conceived of the Christian life primarily in terms of obedience; obedience to the Light as confirmed by Scripture. “What must I do?” This is the question the child of the Light asks of the Scripture. “Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you . . . This do and you shall live” the Spirit and the Lord reply.

A fascinating question remains: Which parts of the Bible were more important to Fox? A statistical study of the frequency and number of his references awaits the labor of some selfless scholar. Until such a concordance-like study appears, general impressions must suffice. As suggested above, the typology of Christ
in the Old Testament determines Fox's interest in Old Testament passages. In Genesis, Fox is particularly interested in the story of creation, man's original righteousness and perfection in the Garden, the utter disaster of man's disobedience, and especially the promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15. You will remember this is the passage in which God has just cursed the serpent for his efficiency. Verse 15 reads: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." In common with many fellow Puritans, Fox forgot all about the last phrase, "you shall bruise his heel," and rejoiced in the promise of redemption that the seed of the woman, which is Christ, shall tread down and crush all evil, symbolized by the serpent.

Fox continues by stressing the passages and incidents from the Old Testament which promise redemption. God's promise to Noah and to Abraham, the covenant with Moses, the budding of Aaron's rod, the promises to David, and above all the promises of the new and inward covenant of the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34), new hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and new visions of truth (Joel 2:28-29).

On the other hand, Fox uses the Old Testament also to cite examples of rebellion and prophetic denunciation. Cain and Abel, Korah and Dathan, and Balaam are favorites. When Fox denounced the city of London for its whoredoms or cried, barefoot, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield," or when Friends went naked as signs, they were consciously reliving the lives and testimony of the great prophets. The thrill of impending doom so characteristic of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel surged through Fox and early Friends as they condemned the social, economic, and religious evils of their time. The ministry and message of Friends has always been in the direct succession of the Old Testament prophets, and it must continue to be so or die.

It is quite significant that many of the Old Testament passages which Fox stressed most are those which are repeated in the New Testament. The New Covenant of Jeremiah appears in full in the book of Hebrews. The sins of Cain, Balaam, and Korah are fulminated against in Jude, Second Peter, and Revelation.

Frankly, as I read about Balaam in Numbers, I cannot see that he is very sinful. He did not want to bless Israel and did so in spite of himself, but after all he blessed Israel. That was a great thing — that a Gentile prophet blessed Israel! But in the three New Testament references, Balaam is more or less condemned without trial and becomes a symbol of disobedience along with Cain and Korah. This shows that in this case Fox was not relying on the Old Testament but on the New Testament rendering of the Old.

Although such a generalization is fraught with danger, I would put the Gospel of John, Hebrews, the book of Revelation, and certain passages from Paul's letters as the four New Testament sources of most importance to Fox. John is important because of its "Light" passages, especially John 1:9, and we, as Fox, must use the King James rendering. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Neither the Revised Standard nor the New English version will do here, since they both stress "the One who comes and does the enlightening" rather than the fact "that every man is enlightened," which is what Fox wanted to stress.

The whole emphasis of the Gospel of John appealed to Fox and early Friends, since it constantly stresses the spiritual and cosmic significance of Jesus' teaching, authority, and mighty works rather than its local or material meaning. The new birth, the Living Water, the Bread of Life, Eternal Life, the coming of the Comforter, all speak the message of the everliving Messiah who spoke to Fox.

Even more central, perhaps, than the Gospel of John to Fox's understanding of the Bible was the Epistle to the Hebrews. This book was for Fox the bridge between the Old and the New Covenants. The Old Testament was an inspired book for Fox because Moses, David, and the prophets foretold and foreshadowed the coming of God's chosen Son who would bring the law to an end. Fox admitted the legitimacy of sacrifices, priests, and atonements in the Old Testament dispensation. But now that Christ, the great High Priest, who is also the full and sufficient sacrifice, has come, he has entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary, the holy place, and has brought to an end all earthly

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priesthoods, ministers, and sacrifices, and now rules directly and without mediation among his covenant people. We can see at once that this whole conception of Fox's is based on Hebrews. All types and shadows must now flee away, for the Lord himself has come in the fullness of his majesty to dwell among his people.

Fox reveals his preference for the book of Revelation in his stress on the Lord's Supper as a messianic event in the heart, in which the Lord himself stands at the door and knocks and comes in to sup with us when we open to him. However, it is in Fox's belief in Christ's exalted kingship that he draws most heavily upon the book of Revelation. He frequently speaks of Christ as the Judge who will rule all nations with a rod of iron. He loves to portray the army of the Lamb, with the King of Kings at its head, going forth conquering and to conquer in a warfare of the Spirit which will vanquish all evil and chain Satan forever in the bottomless pit. Christ is the Lamb who brings the victory and shall reign forever.

This same preference for passages that express the preeminence and authority of Christ is seen in other parts of the Bible. We have already cited Matthew 28:18. Hebrews 1:1 is implied in what we said about that letter. Another favorite was Colossians 1:13-18. I quote it here since it was so central to Fox's thought:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Two other passages deserve mention, although there are literally hundreds which I have omitted. The first is a favorite passage on the unity of the church and the nature of baptism. It is 1 Corinthians 12:13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The other passage is perhaps the most important single passage next to John 1:9. It was first pointed out to me by W. W. Comfort as "the Quakers' text." It, too, strikes the note of the universality of saving grace so important to Fox. It is found in Titus 2:11-14.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Turning now to Fox's attitude toward the authority of the Bible, we are reminded by Geoffrey Nuttall that Fox, in common with his Puritan contemporaries, believed that the Holy Spirit often strikes at our lives with the living Word of God by means of and through the written word.

Fox differed from the more conservative Puritans by insisting that the written word was not the sole or exclusive means through which the Holy Spirit can reveal himself. Henry Cadbury points to three early Quaker beliefs as determinative in Friends' view of the Scriptures. They are 1) the contemporary presence of the Holy Spirit, 2) the belief in immediate guidance, and 3) the universality of the saving light of Christ.

Obviously from this viewpoint, which Fox shared with early Friends, the Bible cannot be the primary authority of faith and life in the traditional Protestant sense. Fox's Puritan opponents would heartily agree that the primary and essential meaning of the Word of God is Jesus the Living Word. But they went on to say, as their descendants do to this day, that the Scriptures were God's temporal and expressed Word, the signs of his mind to men, hence still the Word of God and the final authority in faith and practice.

Fox stressed, on the contrary, that the living Word, the Holy Spirit himself, was the only Word of God and final authority in all matters. The Scriptures were a declaration of the Word of God, not the Word itself, a vehicle of revelation, not the revelation itself. Christ alone was the true Word revealed spiritually and immediately in the heart.

The Bible, though secondary in authority to the Lord to whom it bears witness, remains finally authoritative as a history
and a record of his coming among men. We literally would not
know that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of
grace and truth did we not have the Bible, the written record
of the event. For the facts of redemption, Jesus’ life, death, and
resurrection, the Bible is indispensable. Fox exhorted children
to believe in the Scriptures that they might come to witness
Christ the Word who was made flesh and the Holy Ghost who
gave forth the Scripture. He esteemed the Scriptures because
they were a proclamation of Christ the Word, an inspired record
of the Holy Spirit, who opened their meaning and led men into
their truth.

As we have indicated above, the Bible was finally authorita-
tive for Fox as the ultimate criterion in controversy. In a similar
but more important fashion, Fox and other Friends defended
the priority of the Spirit and their respect for Scripture by in-
sisting that the Spirit would never lead them into anything con-
trary to Scripture. Any action patently contrary to the Bible was
wrong. The Scripture remained for Fox as for his fellow Purit-
ans finally authoritative as a negative check against error.

An interesting question now arises. Why is it that on some
issues Fox justified certain actions as expressly commanded by
Scripture while on others he insisted that the life, the faith,
the experience came first and Scripture could only serve to con-
firm it? In the former category we find the testimony against
oath-taking, lying, adultery, stealing, murder, covetousness, false
witness, and all matters of moral conduct. The Scripture by di-
rect command forbids all such; therefore no Christian may prac-
tice them.

In the second category, however, Fox puts all Scripture that
deals with the actual experience of the Spirit of God. In this
case, the words or commands of Scripture are subordinated to
the experience of faith being described. For instance, Fox felt
that outward baptism and the Lord’s Supper should not be ob-
served, even though they appear to be scriptural, because only
the direct unmediated communion of God in the heart can
cleanse and regenerate. Any human practice or structure, or
even any practice of the early church, which would limit or com-
promise the direct existential experience of that grace in the
hearts of individuals in the witnessing community was false and
must be denied.

Let it be emphasized in the case of baptism and the Lord’s
Supper that Fox literally believed that unless we are buried
with Christ in the baptism of the Spirit we are nothing — we are
not Christians, we are still natural earthy men. We dispense
with water that we may the more strongly witness to the work
of inner purification and cleansing wrought by the Lord himself
in our hearts.

To be baptized means to be engrafted into Christ. In like
manner, concerning the Lord’s Supper, Fox held what in fact
might be called a “eucharistic theology.” The Lord’s Supper
meant daily communion with Christ, feeding on him, the heav-
enly Bread, and drinking his blood, the heavenly Lamb. Fox
could stress with the highest sacramentarian the words of Jesus
in John 6:53, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the
flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in
you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath etern-
al life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is
meat indeed. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,
dwelleth in me and I in him.” But Fox also stressed the Lord’s
Supper in Revelation 3:20, a messianic event occurring in the
heart.

In the case of Scripture dealing both with the sacraments
and with other direct experience of God in the heart it is the
event which counts, the experience of rebirth and communion
which are essential, however important the words and content
of Scripture may be as forms, channels, or vehicles of these events.

There are two other ways in which Scripture was ultimately
normative for Fox. In true crusading fashion Fox regarded him-
self as the defender of pure Scripture against the perverse inter-
pretations of his enemies. The whole volume of The Great
Mystery of the Whore of Babylon shows Fox jousting with his
opponents in this role. Again, Fox witnesses to the ultimate
authority of Scripture when he insists that there are no better
nor more appropriate terms with which to confess Christ, his life,
death, and resurrection, than those found in the Scriptures. There
is, in fact, a language of salvation. There are certain
words pregnant with the meaning of the Gospel. These are inescapably rooted and grounded in the Bible.

Finally, we must turn briefly to George Fox's interpretation of history to see how the dynamic of the biblical revelation informed and directed it. George Fox understood history in a linear way beginning with God's creation of man and the universe and moving to man's perfect and righteous existence in the Garden. Adam's disobedience brought about the first real break in this sequence, resulting in both the degradation of man under the curse, and the promise of redemption to the Seed of the woman. The age of darkness under the levitical law was illuminated by stars, the prophets and the holy men of Israel who saw to the end of the old law and who by their radiance prefigured the coming of the Sun of righteousness.

The coming of Jesus Christ in history brought an end to the Old Covenant, broke the dominion of death and sin, and brought life and restoration to men. Through him was born the new and spiritual Israel which supersedes and makes obsolete the old Israel. Christ, the Fulness and Substance, has come, and all types and shadows have passed away. To Fox the culmination of the Incarnation came in the Apostolic Age with the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost and the gathering of those who through Christ lived in victory over "the seed of the serpent."

In Fox's view of history the apostolic church was the true spiritual and holy church, but then there came a second fall, the fall of the church. Other communions of the Anabaptist, free-church tradition believe that the Golden Age of the early church lasted until the fourth century. Heering speaks for the Mennonites when he says Constantine's baptism of the sword into the church brought about the fall of the church. But Fox was convinced this fall began almost immediately after the death of the first Apostles. Like Adam before them, Christians loved darkness rather than light even though the Son of God had been revealed to them in the flesh. They lost the power and simplicity of the original gospel fellowship and invented ordinances, ceremonies, and human traditions. They set up deacons and deans and bishops as lords over them. Thus was the apostasy made complete, and the farther away the church got from the Apostolic Age the more corrupt and fallen it became.

Thus the dark night of apostasy continued until the Reformation. Luther and Calvin had a vision of the true church to be restored, but they were satisfied with half-way measures. Fox saw the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican confessions as cases of arrested development in which the true church was partially restored but still choked and corrupted by the relics of popery.

Nevertheless, in Fox's day, that is in seventeenth-century commonwealth England, the desire of the ages and the groaning of creation was fulfilled. For Jesus Christ had come in his sovereign glory to teach his people himself, gathering unto him the true and holy community which accepted his immediate lordship and rule. The Apostolic Age had returned, for the Lord had restored the church of Peter, Paul, Philip, and Stephen in the fulness of its power. For the covenant community of his saints this is the fulfillment of all the eschatological promises. The Day of the Lord has gloriously dawned on his church. But there remains a final judgment still to come, a day of punishment and retribution for those who resist the Light within and fail to obey the Lord of the earth. That day will bring the end of history, the final victory of Christ's power over evil, and the eternal punishment of the reprobate.

Based on H. G. Wood's suggestion that William Penn lacked an adequate sense of the history of salvation, Geoffrey Nuttall says that Fox and all early Friends lack an adequate sense of Christian history. Nuttall goes on to say that Fox so 'telescopes' biblical history by reading redemption into Genesis 3:15 that he reduces the significance of the unique redemptive event of Christ and makes it merely a function of creation and original perfection in the Garden. Nuttall is quite correct that Fox has telescoped creation and redemption, but he is mistaken concerning its significance.

Actually, Fox made Christ's historic death and resurrection the foundation of his belief. He believed in the historic cross, the historicity of Christ, and the necessary reality of his flesh. Because of the compassion God felt for man's lostness, he sent his only begotten Son. Fox stresses that the old dispensation of
grace, the grace of creation and law, has been completely done away and fulfilled by the coming of Christ the Substance. The establishment of the original apostolic fellowship and its restoration in the seventeenth century are the climactic events in the history of Christ's risen power.

Thus Fox's telescoping of history between Adam and the second Adam means he is neglecting the grace of creation, not the grace of redemption. He is reading back into the original fellowship in the Garden the glorious power of the risen Lord. He often says that Christ restores persons to the state of innocence and perfection of Adam and Eve before the Fall and to the state of Christ who never fell. Further support for this view is found in Fox's understanding of universal saving grace. Fox's opponents accused him of degrading or subordinating the grace of salvation and revelation in Christ to the level of natural grace of creation. Actually, he did just the reverse. He saw the restoration of all things in the coming of the Redeemer and saw the grace of creation elevated to a participation in the universal grace of the sovereign Redeemer.

To recapitulate, for Fox the grace of creation was a form of the grace of redemption. The promise to the woman in Genesis 3:15 was the promise of a Redeemer. The whole Old Testament looked forward to his advent.

The key to Fox's message and his attitude toward Scripture and history is the exalted Christ, the Sovereign Lord, Heavenly Prophet, High Priest, King and Ruler of the Millenial Age which has already begun in his fellowship community.

MAKING BIBLICAL RELIGION LIVE

Having examined the approach of George Fox to the Bible, we should now ask what we can do to make such a spirit-centered, biblical religion come alive today. I turn first to Maurice Creasey's suggestion in his essay in the volume Then and Now. Among other things, Creasey stresses the thought that the Society of Friends must become a servant church. I should like to develop this suggestion a bit further. If you will remember, the first point of George Fox's message with which we began this paper was his exaltation of Christ as Heavenly Prophet, Priest, and, above all, King. It is time that we stressed the office of Christ as Servant. "Who . . . did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death . . ." (Philippians 2:6-8).

It was a very moving thing to witness a demonstration and explanation of the service of Footwashing and Love Feast by four Church of the Brethren ministers at a conference at Earlham College in 1961. One of them testified that when someone washes his feet and he in turn washes those of his neighbor, he feels the very presence of the Lord of creation cleansing him inside and out. Who then is this who girds himself with a towel and comes to cleanse us? It is God as Servant.

I wonder if one of the ways to restore unity and biblical obedience is not the great stress we should put on the Servant-Messiah. He both served us and vicariously bore our sins in one body on the cross. And he continues to do both in his witnessing community until the end of the age. This stress should appeal to the anti-clerical humanist Friend. The universal thrust in humanism is basically a desire to serve humanity out of a love for mankind. Such a concern is best fulfilled by a particular allegiance to the One who loved us and gave himself for us in service, humiliation, and vicarious suffering. All who serve selflessly and graciously emulate the Servant-Messiah, even though they know him not outwardly.

Franklin Littell has compared the nominal Christians in our society to those who suffer from tone-deafness. Such people are not really responsible for their deafness, but they have grown up among people who have stopped singing. Among the Amish and Old Mennonites there is not one case of tone-deafness in 100,000. But actual tone-deafness is greatly on the increase in our society in general. The significant thing is the method that must be used to cure tone-deafness. The first is to provide a self-effacing teacher who is willing to give hours and weeks and months and years to patient work with the pupil. The second is that the sufferer must be a member of a singing group which is willing to stop time and again in the midst of rehearsal to help him get on pitch. Both the individual and the group must pour out their lives in service for the tone-deaf so that they can at last
hear and sing the true pitch which unites all together in perfect harmony. The universalist-humanist may be very tone-deaf, but the Servant-Messiah incarnate in our concern may at last enable him to hear.\(^\text{16}\)

The second point of our program to restore the place of biblical religion in the church is again suggested by Franklin Littell. Littell sees Friends as a normative group in the Anabaptist, radical-Puritan, free-church tradition. He points out that when our fathers sought God's will they always came together in a meeting. In the meeting they found guidance in the presence of both the open Book and the Holy Spirit. Our fathers could rely on the Book, guidance by the Spirit, and the community of corporate obedience when they sought Truth. The Book and the Spirit and the consensus of the meeting stand in a three-way relationship. All three are absolutely necessary for a true sense of the meeting and of the Lord's leading.\(^\text{17}\) What is the nature of authority as here experienced? It is a conciliant authority, a joint authority expressed formatively and normatively through Bible, community, and Spirit, all three mutually supporting each other.

Finally, when we ask what we can do to make biblical religion real, we can conceive of ourselves as Milites Christi, soldiers in the Lamb's War, a pilgrim people on the march, led by him who is seated on a white horse and whose eyes are like flames of fire and from whose mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations. But Littell warns us before we get too quickly caught up in this vision of hope. "We are supposed to be the Milites Christi. As a matter of fact we're the most undisciplined army on the face of the earth."\(^\text{18}\) Littell is speaking of American Christianity in general, but which of us will say that we are not in some sense guilty also?

I acknowledge my debt to Hugh Barbour for his excellent description of "The Lamb's War" in early Quakerism. This concept suggests that Quakerism should no longer be conceived as a way of life, a method of worship, an exclusive concern for racial justice, peace, or pietistic evangelism, but as a great battle of the Spirit, carried forward on all fronts, with Christ at the head and other Christian groups as other regiments equally involved in the struggle. At the head of the army rides the Lamb of God. Through his death and resurrection he has already won the decisive victory over Satan and evil, and he shall win this battle. Such a vision of the church and its task is for me the solution of our differences and the substance of our hope. Someone has said: "Hope is the oxygen of the soul." Littell says, "Anxiety has no place in the Church. What are we afraid of? God's purposes are certain to be fulfilled."\(^\text{19}\)

We must recover faith in God's providence. This is why I find Fox's belief that all power and authority in heaven and on earth have been given to Christ so thrilling. God really rules! Evil and sin, through the eye of faith, can be seen as already trampled under his feet. What are we waiting for? Let's join the Lamb's War, for the future belongs to him!

To fight the good fight means first, as Hugh Barbour points out, an inward battle, victory within. Why was it that early Friends could be pummeled and beaten and kicked for their refusal to say "you" or to take off their hats? Because each one had already crucified within himself any desire to receive adulation or honor from others.\(^\text{20}\) The Lamb's War is also an outward struggle, a social struggle in the vision that finally the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ, and that he shall reign for ever and ever. The Lamb's War is seen, too, as the last act of the great divine drama which began in creation, focussed in redemption, and now moves majestically and triumphantly toward consummation.

We began this paper by stressing the centrality, authority, and power of Christ in his book and in his community. Who, then, can now restrain himself from joining in the triumphal song of the "myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying . . . Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing . . . To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and power for ever and ever! . . . Amen!"
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Contributors

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T. Canby Jones also was born in the Far East, but the country of his birth was Japan rather than China. His parents are Thomas E. and Esther B. Jones. He spent four years at Westtown School and graduated from Haverford College with a major in history. The war years were spent in Civilian Public Service camps. In 1946-1947 he did foreign relief work for the A. F. S. C. in Norway and the following year he was associate secretary of the Friends Peace Service. He took his B. D. degree from Yale Divinity School with high honors and stayed on for an extra year in graduate study. The following year he did research work on his doctoral dissertation, George Fox's Teaching on Redemption and Salvation, as a Fellow at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham. The Doctor's degree was awarded by Yale University in 1956. Before that date he had begun his teaching at Wilmington College, where he is currently associate professor of religion and philosophy.

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