

# George Fox

Contributed by David Smithers

In the year of 1647, a large man with piercing eyes named George Fox started preaching throughout the towns and villages of England. He prayed and fasted often, traveling with no other companion but his Bible. He proclaimed a gospel of purity, power and repentance.

When George Fox began preaching, many churches were dead and bound in man-made traditions and formalism. When the Church drifts into formalism, the world drifts into further ungodliness. The methods and appearance of George Fox to some, seemed quite offensive and extreme. It is sometimes necessary for God's prophets to be unconventional in order to thoroughly awaken the indifferent and hard hearted.

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 healings 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.

"Above all George Fox excelled in prayer." It was his habit to wait in silence for the movement of the Holy Spirit and then begin to pray, causing whole congregations to be shaken and humbled under the hand of God Almighty. "As he prayed the power of God came down in such a marvelous manner the very building seemed to rock." Through the ministry of George Fox, a glimmer of Apostolic power was revealed to seventeenth century England. He was a man of the Spirit in an age that emphasized theological and scriptural accuracy at the expense of the power of the Holy Ghost. He always stressed the importance of a Spirit filled life and refused to let dead orthodoxy be a veil for the works of the flesh.

If we as believers are content with a gospel that merely comforts our conscience and perseveres our traditions, then we are also content to forsake the gospel of Christ and the Apostles. God help us to truly seek the kind of praying and preaching that will once again make men tremble in the presence of Jesus Christ.