

Appreciating the Book George Fox gave to Swarthmoor Meeting



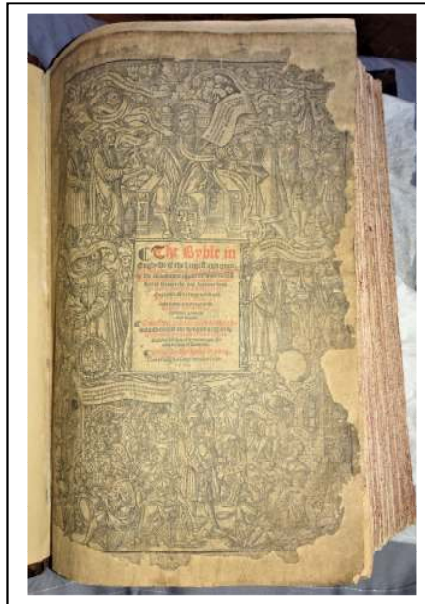
George Fox gave translation of Bible he likely read as a young man. The 1541 Great Bible presently in Swarthmoor Hall that was available chained in Churches for anyone to read.

The Miles Coverdale Translation was likely the one George Fox used because:

1/ It does not have any verse numbers (George Fox in his Journal commented unfavourably on verse numbers being added) ¹

2/ It has a Phrase “Turn Grace of God into Wantonness” from Jude 4 - used in Elwood’s edition of George Fox’s Journal.²

Maybe the Bible at Swarthmoor Hall was a good copy George Fox had for reading there.



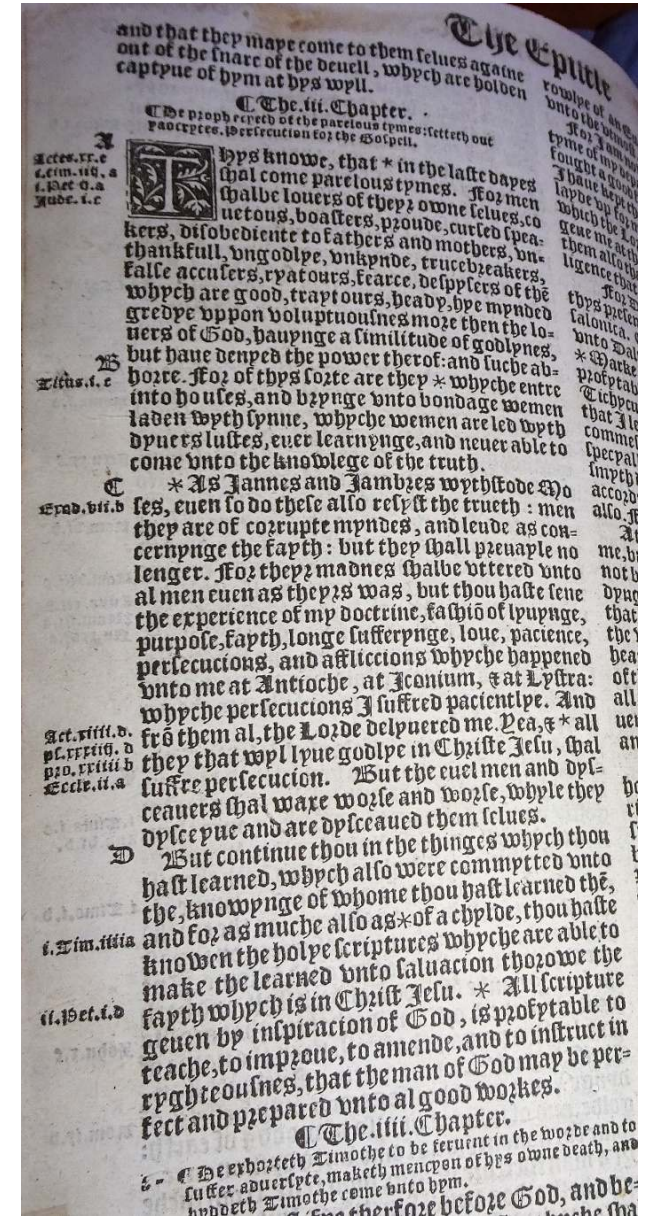
Apart from the first page, the copy looks very fresh for a nearly 500 year old book.

The Coverdale translation of 2 Timothy 3 on right “All Scripture given by inspiration³ of God, is profitable to teach, to improve, to

amend, to instruct in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect and prepared unto all good works.” **Note:** Very different from translation of verse 16 used in many English Bibles⁴ “All scripture is inspired by God.” The “is” that many professed Christians use as proof that all the Bible is inspired. Friends used Coverdale’s translation⁵ and were open to the Holy Spirit⁶ to bring to remembrance what Jesus taught and to lead into truth. So Friends were free to look at the Old Testament in the Light of the New, the light of Jesus Christ in their consciences.

³ Aramaic “Every writing which is written by the spirit is profitable”

⁴ 1881 Revised Version translation similar to Coverdale



⁵ Robert Barclay in his Apology. Elizabeth Bathurst in Truth Vindicated. The 1671 letter to Governor of Barbados was worded to avoid including the “is”

⁶ John 16:13-15 John 14:26

¹ Year 1647 can be found P 81 note 177 in George Fox Formative Years see www.cblfriend.com

² See P96 10 lines from bottom in George Fox Formative Years see www.cblfriend.com

George Fox saw that while in times past God had spoken by the prophets, he had spoken through his son.⁷ - The law was given through Moses, but Grace and



Truth were given through Jesus Christ, who taught the new and living way God had planned.⁸

The law and the prophets were until John and then the Kingdom of God was proclaimed.⁹

George Fox did a very detailed analysis of the clear distinction between the Old Testament and Old Covenant and New Testament and New Covenant. Friends realized they were called to follow Jesus where he taught different from what went before: for example, to love their enemies; find ways of overcoming evil with good; to live in that life and power that took away the occasion of all war. This resulted in Friends' Peace Testimony¹⁰ that all war is inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Christ, and that the spirit of God which leads us into truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man

with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ or the kingdoms of this world.

The translation in liberating Friends to distinguish the New and Living way revealed by Jesus Christ from the for Old Testament was very different from the Anglican commitment, in their 39 articles not to interpret one part of the Bible as contrary to another.

Also George Fox had such a revelation that Jesus Christ is the Word of God¹¹ that he felt it very disrespectful to Jesus Christ to call any book or letter the Word of God.

From 1660 Friends and other Dissenters were persecuted. Some like Margaret Fell were given severe Praemunire¹² sentence for having meeting in her home and speaking.

In 1688 when dissenting Protestants were given option to prove themselves Christians by saying "I profess faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his eternal Son, the true God and in the Holy Spirit, one God blessed be for evermore; and do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the revealed will and word of God," Friends offered the following alternative ending: "acknowledging the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration'. Which was accepted and included in the 1689 Act of toleration. So Friends avoided describing Scripture (a book) as the word of God.

It appears that Early Friends definition of 'Scripture' was limited to what was inspired by the Holy Spirit, as described in 1 Timothy 3 whereas to Anglicans for example Scripture included all the contents of the Bible. George Fox also frequently quoted from 2 Peter 1:about prophecies coming as Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.....¹³

From George Fox's Journal:

As George Fox "... was walking in a field on a first day morning, it was discovered unto his understanding that to be bred at University¹⁴ was not enough to make a man a minister of Christ. At this he wondered because it was the common belief of people; but for all that, he took this to be Divine revelation, and he admired the goodness of the Lord, believing now the ordinary ministers not to be such as they pretended to be. This made him unwilling to go any more to church, as it was called, to hear the Priest Stevens, believing that he could not profit thereby; and therefore instead of going there, he would get into the orchard, or the fields, by himself with his Bible, which he esteemed above all books, seeking thus to be edified in solitariness. At this his relations were much troubled: but he told them, "Did not John the apostle say to the believers, that they needed none to teach them; but as the anointing teacheth them?" ^{1 John 2:27}

Charles B Lamb www.cblfriend.com

⁷ Hebrews 1:1-4

⁸ Hebrews 10:20

⁹ Luke 16:16

¹⁰ The other 2 traditional Peace Churches in America, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and Friends all prioritise the New Testament over the Old.

¹¹ See what he said in 1653 Tract to all that would know the way to the kingdom see www.cblfriend.com

¹² Confiscation of all rights and property for life.

¹³ 2 Peter 1:16- 2 Peter 2:3

¹⁴ Oxford or Cambridge In Old Testament Priest's Lips were to preserve knowledge, and in new all from least to greatest were to Know God Hebrews 8:10-13