

Review of *George Fox & the Book of Revelation*, by Arthur Berk, with an introduction by Daniel Berrigan (New Foundation Fellowship publications).

In my experience, no other book of the Bible is as misunderstood, misused, or avoided as the book of Revelation. I can recall my own misguided thinking about this book of the Bible, shaped by the children's bible study and the preaching in the Baptist churches I attended with my aunt in central Illinois, and the United Church of Christ I attended with my mother near Chicago. In the former, it was seen as conveying a prophesy about a distant future, unrealizable in the present age, and preached upon with a heavy dose of gloom and doom as incentive to get right with the Lord. In the latter, it was referred to as an example of apocalyptic literature, written for those people in that day and age, but having only symbolic meaning for us today at best, or as having no place or value in our enlightened age and time, except as an academic study, at worst. As a young adult, when I lived in Colorado Springs, CO, I overheard many street corner preachers using the images in the book of Revelation to scare their listeners. Sadly, today, we have a world filled with "end-times" theologies, in which this wonderful book of the Bible is used to frighten and enslave, or in the service of a particular geopolitical ideology, and the popular media, which thrives on sensationalism, promotes these misguided views of the book of Revelation. Recently, in a letter, I wrote the following in regard to this:

Many Christians, of whatever stripe, have been misled, including myself before my conviction, about the meaning and place of the book of Revelation in our faith, and others avoid it for the same reason, thereby denying themselves a precious volume that, as George Fox pointed out, was written for us. I can recall how radically different, and refreshing, when I first read them, were Fox's openings on this book as recorded in his journal. Arthur Berk, of the New Foundation Fellowship, has written a small booklet entitled *George Fox & the Book of Revelation*, a work that I highly recommend.

I must say, when I read Fox's journal for the first time, prior to my conviction, my reaction to his openings on the book of Revelation were that his thinking was so far ahead of others of his time. After my conviction, though, it became clear through my own experience that his openings had nothing to do with him being ahead of his time, and everything to do with being in the Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures. It is only by being in the same Spirit that gave them forth that one may rightly understand them. Arthur's work is a succinct guide and aid for reflection and study, as it pulls together Fox's writings on the text and the text of Revelation itself. As said in the excerpt from my letter above, I highly recommend this

small but essential work to Friends and others who seek to be turned “from darkness to the marvelous Light of Christ” (p.12)