The Many-Headed Hydra

Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic

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VOLUME 3
“A Blackymore Maide Named Francis”

Soon fugitives will come and tell you their news by word of mouth. At once you will recover the power of speech and speak with the fugitives; you will no longer be dumb.
—Ezekiel 24:26–27

I will pour out my spirit in those days even upon slaves and slave-girls.
—Joel 2:29

... If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all her one lone, all dese togeder ought to be able to turn it back and git it right side up again.
—Sojourner Truth (1851)

The English Revolution broke out in 1640. At first the conflict appeared to be among the kingdoms of Scotland, Ireland, and England, a contest for regional dominance and religious conformity. It was not long, however, before Parliament asserted its rights and powers against the personal and absolute rule of Charles I, introducing the slogan “No taxation without representation” and expanding the writ of habeas corpus as an instrument of individual freedom against arbitrary imprisonment. Civil war pitted king (Cavaliers) against Parliament (Roundheads). The creation of the New Model Army in 1645 resulted in a series of military victories for the parliamentary side. The increasingly successful revolutionaries did away with censorship of the press, abolished repressive courts such as the Star Chamber (where Bacon had once ruled), and executed King Charles I by decapitation in January 1649. They then dissolved the monarchy and the House of Lords and declared a republic.

Oliver Cromwell and the militant Puritans led the revolutionary forces. The Atlantic merchants, lesser gentry, and nascent industrialists
who tended to back Cromwell all gained much from the economic changes encouraged by the state. The Navigation Acts protected British trade and shipping; agricultural enclosures privatized property; industrial legislation removed production from paternal restrictions on profiteering; and financial alterations in the stock market and funded debt promoted speculative capitalism. English merchants moved decisively toward the African slave trade as sugar plantations, imported from Brazil, expanded throughout the West Indies. In making their revolution, Cromwell and his propertied allies had to rely upon the radical voices of the many-headed hydra—the Levellers and the Diggers, the soldiers and sailors, the urban rioters and rural commoners—which proved to have an agenda of their own. Christopher Hill summarized the revolutionary era as a “great overturning, questioning, revaluing of everything in England”; H. N. Brailsford stated simply, “What was at stake was the ownership of England.”1 The ideas of the radicals were eventually suppressed by Cromwell and his ilk, but they were nonetheless formative, in their own day and later.2

Some of the more revolutionary notions of the day may be best illustrated by an extraordinary text about a woman named Francis, a “blackymore maide” who, as a member of a radical religious congregation in Bristol during the 1640s, provided leadership especially to the women of that congregation. The text was written by a church elder, Edward Terrill, which means that ours cannot be a simple story about Francis; it must also necessarily be a tale about the teller of it. She was black; he was white. She was a woman; he was a man. She was a sister in the congregation; he was an elder of the church. She was a servant; he was a master. Underlying these familiar oppositions was a basic antinomy: she lived and died during the revolution of the 1640s, while he came of age in the 1640s but thrived during the counterrevolution after the 1660s. The story of Francis and Terrill helps to illuminate the dynamics of race, class, and gender in the English Revolution and to show how the radical voices were ultimately silenced.3 The outcome of the English Revolution might have been dramatically altered: the commons might have been preserved; values other than those of market society and commodity production might have triumphed; work might not have been seen as the condition of human salvation; patriarchy in the family might not have
been saved, nor the labor of women devalued; torture and terror might not have survived in the law and its practice; popular assemblies might have proliferated and become open; mutual subsistence rather than individual accumulation might have become the basis of economic activity; and divisions between master and slave might have been abolished.

Edward Terrill was just a boy when the revolutionary wars erupted. Born in Almondsbury in 1634, he moved to Bristol in 1640 and was apprenticed to a scrivener in 1645. He was “convinced” by a religious experience in 1654 and baptized by immersion in 1658. In partnership with Thomas Ellis, a sugar trader who provided Broadmead Church with financial support, Terrill prospered, and he soon became an elder of the church. Meanwhile, the king, now Charles II, was restored to the throne in 1660, and a period of repression ensued. Terrill and the Broadmead Baptist Church (as it was called after the Restoration) suffered under the Corporation Act (1661), the Act of Uniformity (1662), and the Test Act (1673), which required all urban officials, all religious ministers, and all government officers to be communicants of the Church of England; they suffered further under the Conventicle Act (1664), prohibiting nonconformist worship even in private houses, and the Five Mile Act (1665), banning nonconformist ministers from living within five miles of a town.4

During this time of trial and persecution, Terrill wisely began to keep what came to be known as the “waste book,” subsequently published as The Records of a Church of Christ in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640–1687, a collection compiled between 1672 and 1678.5 The narrative is a composite document that includes oral history that Terrill recorded in conversation with Dorothy Hazzard, the founder of the congregation to which both Francis and Terrill belonged; selections from another manuscript notebook that is now lost to us; and finally, the author’s own rewriting of history, prompted by Restoration repression.6 Here is what Terrill had to say about Francis:

By the goodness of God they had one Memorable member aded unto them namely a Blackymore maide named Francis (a servant to one that lived upon y Back of Bristoll) which thing is somewhat rare in our dayes and Nation, to have an Ethyopian or Blackmore
to be truly Convinced of Sin; and of their lost State without ye Redeemer and to be truly Converted to ye Lord Jesus Christ, as she was: which by her profession or declaration at ye time of her reception: together with her Sincere Conversation; she gave greate ground for Charity to believe she was truly brought over to Christ, for this poor Æthiopian's soule savoured much of God, and she walked very humble and blamelesse in her Conversation, to her end; and when she was upon her death bed: She sent a Remarkable Exhortation, unto ye whole Church with whom she walked, as her last request unto them: which argued her holy, childlike fear of ye Lord; and how precious the Lord was to her Soule; as was observed by the manner of her Expressing it. Which was this, one of the Sisters of ye Congregation coming to visit her, in her Sickness, She solemnly took her leave of her, as to this world: and pray'd ye Sister, to remember her to ye whole Congregation, and tell them, that she did Beg every soule, To take heed that they did lett The glory of God to be dear unto them a word meet for ye Church ever to remember; and for every particular member to observe, that they doe not loose ye glory of God in their families, neighbourhoods or places where God casts them: it being ye dyeing words of a Blackmoore, fit for a White heart to store. After which this Æthiopian yielded up ye Spirit to Jesus that redeemed her and was Honourably Interred being carryed by ye Elders, & ye chiefest of note of ye Brethren in ye Congregation (Devout men bearing her) to ye grave, where she must rest untill our Lord doth come who will bring his Saints with him. By this in our days, we may see, Experimentally, that Scripture made good, οὐχ ἔστι πρόσω πολύτης ὁ Θεὸς. Ἄλλα ἐν παντὶ ἕθεοι, that is God is no respecter of faces: But among all nations, &c. Acts 10: 34:35.

This is all Terrill wrote about Francis—a fragment, it might be thought. The absence of more information means that we cannot treat her in a conventionally biographical way. Alternately, we may consider her in the context of an ensemble of social relations, four of which stand out as formative. She was a “servant” at a time when that term suggested a hewer of wood and drawer of water, both in the specific tasks of her job
Edward Terrill’s account of “a Blackymore maide named Francis.”

“The Records of a Church of Christ in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640–1687.”

Broadmead Church, Bristol.
description and in the lowly, defenseless status accorded her. She was a “blackymore” with that word’s social and religious connotations of colonialism. She was a sister in a gathered congregation recently organized by and for women. She was a Baptist given to liberty and like notions at a moment in history preceding the formation of discrete denominations.

**Servant, Blackymore, Sister, and Baptist**

As a servant, Francis was part of what was probably the biggest occupational category of her era. Agricultural workers were servants, as were domestic producers in the manifold handicrafts and plantation workers in the colonies. Francis, however, was a particular type of servant: a maid. The labors of a maid might include cooking, washing, doing laundry, gathering fuel, bearing water, nursing the sick, or comforting the afflicted, depending on whether she was a chambermaid, kitchen maid, housemaid, maid-of-all-work, or scullery maid. The patriarchal family, itself the model of guild and kingly power, depended on such labors. Yet in the seventeenth century the occupation underwent changes with the rise of capitalism. Servants were deliberately excluded from some of the proposals for the democratic franchise, and in the cities their status declined as service became increasingly polarized and feminized. "Service is a state of subjection, grounded partly in the curse of God for sin; partly in Civill constitution; it is a miserable condition," wrote a Cambridge scholar named Paul Bayne in 1643, in a thousand-page treatise on the religious justification for such service. Its basis was obedience: "I say to one, goe, he goeth, come, and he cometh, doe this, hee doth it." The scholar noted that perpetual obedience could not be expected, for once unemployed, servants would try to beard their masters and would cut their throats, too, if they could. We might say Francis was a proletarian: she did not possess any means of production, and the payment for her labor was ambiguous. She was paid by the year and otherwise lived on tips and vails, or customary rights to household items, a practice Bayne denounced as “rolling another mans pigeons to their owne lockers.” Against the ruling-class view of the lowliness of service, a buoyant spiritual tradition arose among servants—a glint of light captured by Profes-
sor Nell Painter in her description of the “unseen holy women . . . who performed household labor.”

Francis, like other servants, was thus poor, and the Bristol congregation understood that. Indeed, Terrill’s text indirectly reflects discussions within the congregation about her poverty. The economic insecurity of the 1640s made the promise of material aid from the independent churches attractive to the poor, but the suppression of conventicles (on the grounds that Protestant gatherings were heretical and illegal) during the Restoration, when Terrill was writing, rendered such obligations difficult to meet. This would explain Terrill’s emphasis on the religious sincerity or authenticity of Francis, his insistence that she had truly been brought over to Christ and was truly convinced of sin.

Terrill tells us that Francis was servant to one who lived upon the Back of Bristol. The Back was a specific location next to the river Avon, along the largest apron space by the wharves where the deep-water vessels—slave ships included—moored. A comparison of maps of the town between 1568 and 1673 shows intensive development. The Back of Bristol put Francis at the interface of the triangular trade and amid the human news of the continents. Exchanges of the North Atlantic—Gaelic, African, American, West Indian, and Dutch voices—would have been in her ear. Her eye would have spied the labor markets of men, women, and children; her soul, their spirits. Bristol was then England’s third-largest town (with twelve thousand residents) and second-largest port. There was a wealthy mercantile elite at the top and a class of former foresters and downsized weavers living in extreme poverty at the bottom. In 1640 the established traders of the Society of Merchant Adventurers were challenged by a group of younger, aggressive dealers who were deeply involved in free trade across the Atlantic. Labor-market entrepreneurs had transformed the man-trade into a highly profitable business, since 1623 using the Bristol bridewell as a transshipment center of forced labor to the Caribbean. Peter Fryer writes that the “small speculators had their snouts in the trough alongside the big merchants.” Having established a trade in labor as a transatlantic commodity, merchants now began to move into the African slave trade. This would prove to be the city’s greatest source of wealth by the end of the seventeenth century, but that was by no means clear in the 1640s. Although the Dutch governor at Fort El-
mina reported nineteen English ships hovering off the slave coast between 1645 and 1647, English dominance was not yet certain.

The immediate problem of Terrill’s passage about Francis is that while he calls her a memorable member of the congregation, he gives us little to remember her by. He buries her voice in the middle of the paragraph, quoting directly fewer than ten words. As a scrivener, Terrill was a master of the pen, his means of expression; he knew when to use capital letters, how to spell, when to increase the size of letters for emphasis. In general such skills could lead to the profession of chronicler, or to banking, and something of those professions may be found in Terrill. Penmanship led to chronicling the church as well as to profiting from West Indian trade. In this text we note how Terrill emphasizes the ethnicity of Francis, mentioning it explicitly six times and implicitly twice more. He labels the paragraph, in the margin, “Francis, a Black Woman.” He spells blackamoor and Ethiopian inconsistently, suggesting to us that something about the subject made the master scrivener nervous. The passage thus contains a mystery: why the anxiety?

Other black people had lived in Bristol before Francis. The first recorded was Cattelena, who died in 1625. But the city’s numbers were growing as Bristol’s slave traders carried ever larger number of Africans to Barbados, and some back to their own home port. “Blackness” in Francis’s day had contradictory associations. The Geneva Bible (1560) asked, “Can the blacke More change his skin?” (Jeremiah 13:23) and commented that the cloak of hypocrisy should be pulled off, thereby associating blackness with divine truthfulness. The Leveller Sexby, who had the Agreement of the People translated into French, argued at the Putney Debates (where as we will see in the next chapter the common soldiers in 1647 debated the future of England), “We have gone about to wash a blackmoor, to wash him white, which he will not. . . . I think we are going about to set up the power of kings, some part of it, which God will destroy.” He thus associated blackness with republicanism. Differences in skin color signified something other than either sincerity or republicanism by the time Terrill wrote, but if we are to understand why the subject provoked anxiety at that later time, there is much else we need to know.

Francis was a sister and an “Anabaptist” in a group that took shape in the 1630s around Dorothy Hazzard, a seamstress, who gathered a
writing-school master, a glover, a house carpenter, a countryman, a butcher, a farrier, and a young minister to worship together. They assembled to “cry day and night to the Lord to pluck down the lordly prelates of the time, and the superstitions thereof.” They did not permit bowing at the name of Jesus; they refused to kneel at the Sacrament; and they opposed idolatrous pictures and images. Nor did they observe feast days: Hazzard kept her shop open on Christmas Day and sat there sewing in the broad daylight. Terrill compared Hazzard to biblical figures such as Priscilla (a Roman who risked her neck for Saint Paul), Ruth (a gleaner who, in return for her loyalty, asked, “May I ask you as a favour not to treat me only as one of your slave-girls?”), and Deborah (who authorized resistance among the drawers of water: “Hark, the sound of the players striking up in the places where the women draw water!”) [Judges 5:11]).

Hazzard gathered around her pregnant women in need of assistance, traders, and workers, some on their way to New England in search of the simplicity and equality of the primitive first Christians. They formed a new covenant in 1640, “that they would, in ye Strength and assistance of ye Lord, come forth of ye world, and worship ye Lord more purely.” In calling Dorothy Hazzard “a he-goat before the flock” (Jeremiah 50:8), Terrill acknowledged female leadership.

When war broke out, Dorothy Hazzard was prominent among the two hundred women and girls who defended Bristol’s Frome Gate against the assault of the king’s nephew Prince Rupert, who nonetheless eventually captured the strategic port town and its heavily fortified royal arsenal. Hazzard and her fellow spiritual travelers then took to the roads. At first they sought succor from a Welsh church led by Walter Craddock; then they walked to London, “into a wilderness state, passing through a Red Sea of Blood by ye wars.” The assembly (as they called themselves) was separate, it was gathered, it was pure, it was militant, but it was not (yet) Baptist. This was the assembly, or gathering, that Francis joined.

The times were incendiary. Craddock exclaimed, “The Gospel is run over the Mountains between Brecknockshire and Monmouthshire, as the fire in the thatch.” In 1644 John Milton wrote in Areopagitica,
fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defense of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

The words expressed the revolutionary hopes, the eager spirit of inquiry, and the militant search for truth that awaited Francis and her fellowship.

Meanwhile, combat continued in Bristol. Parliamentary forces, fresh from victory at Naseby and commanded by Colonel Thomas Rainborough, launched a counterattack against Prince Rupert’s army in 1645, with soldiers’ scaling the walls of Prior’s Hill Fort amid a rain of round and case shot. When the scaling ladders proved too short, the infantry crept in at the portholes, prevailing in a two-hour battle against the push of pike. Colonel Rainborough’s victory helped to preserve the city as a stronghold of religious radicals who usurped the pulpits, preached in the streets, and engaged in ruthless iconoclastic behavior, producing a revolutionary energy in militant Calvinism or libertarian antinomianism. The former was the doctrine of puritanical work-discipline; the latter offered a gracious view of freedom.

Between 1644 and 1649, the peak of antinomianism, those who would later become Baptists “proved the most successful disseminators of radical religious ideas until the rise of the Quakers in the 1650s.” They were directly associated with the revolutionary victories of the New Model Army and with the organization and birth of the Levellers. During its sojourn to London, the small Bristol band led by Hazzard was inflamed by the reason and truth of the “approaching reformation.” Once back in Bristol, Terrill reported, “the heads and minds of many of the members were filled with controversies, insomuch that every meeting almost was filled with disputes and debates: [so] that they were in great confusion, and but little order. Some of them [were] against ordinances, as having got above them, or pleading that while the church of Christ was in her wilderness state they should not use them, and so took liberty to forbear them.” They formed another covenant, “leaveing those that sucked in Libertisme Notions to forbear.”

At their meetings, “there was liberty for any brother, and for any sister
by a brother, to propose his doubt of, or their desire of understanding, any portion of scripture.” The rest of the congregation would speak “one by one and then be silent, and another speak, and so a third.” It was a creative moment in world history, when democracy was practiced directly; these were some of its first rules. Laurence Clarkson wrote at about this time, 1647, “Who are the oppressors but the Nobility and Gentry; and who are oppressed, if not the Yeoman, the Farmer, the Tradesman and the Labourer? then consider, have you not chosen oppressors to redeem you from oppression? . . . your slavery is their liberty, your poverty is their prosperity; yea, in brief, your honoring of them, dishonoreth the communality. . . Unlord those that are lorded by you.”

The Broadmead assembly hired Nathaniel Angello to minister to its members but soon removed him for his too-great fondness for music and clothes. Walter Craddock, the itinerant antinomian, came next: he preached upon the text “All things are lawful for me” (1 Corinthians 10:23), asserting that “now the day was breaking out after a long night, and light was coming every day more than other; and there were many Gospel privileges, and of the new Jerusalem that we should then enjoy.” Craddock welcomed drunkards and adulterers into his gatherings; he encouraged preaching by “fishermen, poor men, and women sometimes.”

In 1648, preaching on “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), he said, “We are not sent to get Galley-slaves to the Oares.” He believed that the simplest people commonly understood the Gospel the best. He wrote:

> I have seen poore women in the mountaines of Wales . . . they have been so poore that when they have come to a house to beg a little whey or butter-milke, they have been faine to beg the loane of a pot, or a dish to put it in. So . . . we cannot carry one graine of grace home, unlesse God give us spirituall buckets. As that woman said, John 4, Here is water, but where is the bucket to draw? So God may say, thou wantest grace, but where is thy bucket? saith the humble soul, Lord I have none, thou must both give the water and lend the bucket to carry it home.

This is the exegesis of the poor by the poor for the poor. In 1648, some eight hundred itinerant Welsh ministers were preaching; the Vagrancy Act was passed specifically against them.
In Terrill’s account, Francis comprehends the powerlessness that might allow the spirited, kidnapped souls of Bristol to be cast nearly anywhere. She asks a sister in the congregation to carry her message to the whole assembly, not to “loose yᵉ glory of God in their families, neighbouroods or places where God casts them.” She recognizes that a neighborhood may be international, a notion of shipmates, a family of oceanic passages. Francis understands community without propinquity. For her, neighborhood is the congregation whose existence she has nurtured in deep and unforgettable ways. She would have known about slavery and the struggle against slavery. On May Day 1638, for instance, the first African slave rebellion in English history took place on Providence Island. From the wharves, Francis would have brought Atlantic news to her congregation, recounting stories of the terrors: the man-trade at Elmina Castle, the servants’ revolt in Barbados, the grinding sugar mills of Suriname, or the repression of the Boston antinomians. We do not know where Francis lived before Bristol. Was she, like Tituba of Salem in the 1690s, from Barbados? Was she from Suriname, where Aphra Behn, the novelist and playwright, passed her childhood at this time? Had she been in Boston at the time of the first legal challenge to the African slave trade? The glory of God was merely the last of her exhortations; it would be interesting to know the others.24

**Glory and No Respecer of Persons**

Terrill’s paragraph concludes with a quotation in Greek. The title page of the *Records* is likewise in Greek, while the page headers alternate between Greek and Hebrew. Terrill’s use of Greek calls attention to an important debate. Philology of this kind was characteristic of Protestantism. Does the quoting of Greek mask a murky purpose? Francis, Terrill asserts, is an example (he calls her an experiment) who proves Scripture, rather than the opposite, a recipient of the Bible’s spiritual aid. If she emphasizes the Spirit, he emphasizes the Letter. Terrill thus subverts, or even contradicts, Francis’s message. What is that message? and why does Terrill subvert it? Francis is associated in the text with two biblical ideas, one her own (“the glory of God”) and the other, apparently, Terrill’s (“God is no respecter of faces”). What did these signify in the midst of revolutionary civil war in England? Why should they be remembered?
Three primary meanings of glory may be distinguished in the Scriptures. First, found in Ezekiel and Isaiah, is an external meaning, an atmospheric sense, with secondary figures such as seraphim and cherubim surrounding the numinous Jahweh. We detect this meaning in the architecture and music of the mercantilist or Baroque state, from the Palladian Whitehall to Wren’s “glorious” Saint Paul’s—resplendence, beauty, and majesty expressed in Portland stone. This was the glory of Archbishop Laud, a looking-up, glory from the top down. It was not for Francis, but two other meanings of glory were. One of these emerged in three key episodes in the Gospels describing the life of Jesus, in which glory descended to Earth: when the shepherds kept watch at the birth of Jesus; at the Transfiguration (the “Son of man shall come in glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” [Matthew 16:27]); and during the last days in Jerusalem, when Jesus describes the end of the world. Glory was part of eschatology, the last things; it was also a time of justice. Another meaning of glory originated in the book of John and was developed in Paul’s letters. Here glory and glorification were related to the promise of an end to bondage (Romans 8:15–17) and to an interior glory that came down to Earth and entered the spirit of the children of God. It was within: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Glory was democratized; it became available to all.

Francis would have agreed with the Digger Gerrard Winstanley when he wrote, “The glory of Israel’s Commonwealth is this, They had no Beggar among them.” He explained: “What glory soever ye shall be capable of to see with your own eyes or hear with your ears, it is but the breakings forth of that glorious power that is seated within for the glory of the Father is not without him.” Lodovick Muggleton urged in 1658, “You must not imagine the kingdom of glory to be in a global condition, as this world is. . . . The world to come is a boundless kingdom, that lieth all open.” In the 1640s glory was associated with the destruction of Babylon and the building of Zion, or the New Jerusalem. The historical actors, the destroyers and the builders, were often considered to be “the poorest and the meanest,” the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Glory signified the transcendental present—not a passive waiting for a future in Heaven but actions, to be taken by the dispossessed, to create
Heaven here on Earth. Glory appeared through devout expression that mediated between holy text and subjective experience. It might sound like groaning, howling, screeching, or screams of pain, but it had the power to transform persons. Hence it was alarming to authority, as explained by Thomas Hobbes: “Glory, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind, is the passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power above the power of him that contendeth with us.” Ostentation in words and insolence in action were its signs. The discourse of glory among the humble assemblies of the 1640s was synonymous with audacity and originality. Glorifying symbolized historical agency.

These ideas appeared in an important sermon delivered and published by Hanserd Knollys, “A Glimpse of Sion’s Glory” (1641), on the Revelation text “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” Babylon falls and glory rises. There “shall be abundance of glorious prophecies fulfilled, and glorious promises accomplished.” The “poorest and meanest of all” were called to glorious revolutionary action: “Blessed is he that dasheth the brats of Babylon against the stones.” Similar ideas were expressed after the battles of Marston Moor and Naseby, which ended the first civil war, giving victory to the New Model Army of the Puritans and Parliament. Thomas Collier, a Baptist, preached a sermon at army headquarters at Putney, on September 29, 1647, on Isaiah’s text “Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth.” God’s glory, explained Collier, appeared on Earth as the saints built a New Jerusalem, where the lion and the lamb would lie down together. “The glory of this new creation . . . consists in the execution of righteousness, justice and mercy, without respect of persons. It is to undo every yoke.” Glory lay, he preached, in the struggle against slavery.

Collier was not alone in connecting glory with the second idea associated with Francis, that God is no respecter of persons, or, in Terrill’s translation, “no respecter of faces.” The phrase was an old one (Nashe had used it in 1594 in noting that the rebels of the German peasant revolt were as poor and base in trades as the twelve apostles), but it did not become part of the English Bible until it was incorporated in the authorized
version of 1611. How, we must ask, may persons be respected? By ethnicity, by nation, by race, by gender, and by class. Charles I avowed, “For the hazards of war are equal, nor doth the cannon know any respect for persons.”30 In the Americas, Captain Underhill justified the slaughter of six to seven hundred Pequot men, women, and children at Fort Mystic, Connecticut, in 1637 by invoking his God: “He hath no respect of persons.”31 The phrase thus had martial as well as egalitarian connotations, which lent it to wide use in the revolution. It is a phrase of levelling. In the quotes above, the levelling is of the dead; in contrast, it is its association with economic and social justice, or the levelling of the living, that is significant for us.

The Diggers and the Ranters associated glory with the levelling of the living. To quote from the Digger manifesto, The True Leveller’s Standard Advanced (1649), the desired end was:

that we may work in righteousness, and lay the foundation of making the earth a common treasure for all, both rich and poor. That every one that is born in the land may be fed by the earth, his mother that brought him forth, according to the reason that rules in the creation, not enclosing any part into any particular land, but all as one man working together, and feeding together as sons of one father, members of one family; not one lording over another, but all looking upon each other as equals in creation. So that our Maker may be glorified in the work of his own hands, and that every one may see he is no respecter of persons, but equally loves his whole creation, and hates nothing but the serpent. Which is covetousness. [emphasis added]

It was a fundamental concept for Winstanley; indeed, it was the “spirit of the whole creation.”32 The Ranters, for their part, published a pamphlet entitled A Justification of the Mad Crew (1650), “a true Testimony of that sweet and unspeakable Joy and everlasting glory that dwells in and breaks out.” He who would know God must let his own glory break out, the pamphlet held. Glory kept low company, “among the rogues, theevs, whoremasters, and base persons of the world.” As no respecter of persons, God “pulleth down the mighty from their Throne, and sets up men of low degree.” God’s refusal to respect persons thus constituted a kind of
internationale of glory: “He is in England, France, and Turkey,” and therefore “the people in England, France, and Turkey [must become] one people and one body, for where the one lives there liveth the other also.” In the geographic terminology of the seventeenth century, “Turkey” signified both the religion Islam and the continent Africa. A person such as Francis was specifically included. “Here glory lyeth, and is concealed to the most of men, it is coming forth to some, peeping through the lattis, and looking behind the wall; it is above board to others, well, what is it?” It was no respecter of persons; rather,

he beholds all things and persons, with the same and in the same purity, with and in the same glory, all perfect in him, compleat in him, righteous in him, children of pleasure in him: He sees dancing, lying with one another, kissing pure and perfect in him; He loves all with an everlasting love, the thief that goes to the Gallows as well as the Judge that condemns him, and the Judge with a love of and from eternity as well as the thief.

It is significant that Terrill forsook the familiar egalitarianism of the authorized version of the Bible by altering “persons” to “faces.” His translation distances him and his church from some revolutionary meanings of the phrase. “Face,” in this context, suggests something superficial, a mask; and in this case, the mask is that of a “blackamore.” The translation calls attention to skin color. These “dyeing words of a Blackmoore” were “fit for a White heart to store,” sighed Terrill, and he quotes the Greek words of Acts 10:34. His readers would have known the biblical context. The story was important to the growth of Christianity since it told of the first baptism of a non-Jew. Cornelius, a God-fearing man but a Roman or Gentile, was sent in a vision to visit Peter, before whom he prostrated himself. Peter welcomed him, saying, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” Francis thus stood for Cornelius, and Terrill for Peter. The analogy points to the universalism of early Christianity and the English Revolution and to their contribution to the doctrine of human solidarity. James Nayler asked of this decisive biblical incident: “Had Cornelius sufficient light within him before Peter preached unto him? Answer: Jesus came to open blind eyes, not to give them eyes.” Terrill’s choice of words attenuates this meaning; in a moment we shall see why.33
The last part of Terrill’s passage concerning Francis consists not so much of her own testimony as of the evidence of others, and in this case that evidence is the prominence and the devotion of the elder brethren of the church who carried her to the grave. The revolutionary implications of the idea associated with Francis help us to understand why Terrill felt the need to sandwich her words between the repetitive bona fides of her sincerity on one side of her prophetic exhortation and the elders, the brethren, the devout, as her pallbearers on the other. He precedes his discussion of Francis with a digression of seven or eight pages on John Canne, which is an astonishing interpolation because the latter came to Bristol in 1648, not in 1640–41, as Terrill implies. Why did Terrill make this interpolation? Canne was the scion of the ruling Bristol oligarchy, who had great influence within the Puritan movement (a relative held the contract for the transportation of Scottish and Irish prisoners to slavery in the plantations). He had been the leader of an independent church in Amsterdam from 1630 to 1647, he was a major publisher of English puritanism (his fully cross-referenced Bible of 1647 was authoritative), and after his return to England in 1649 he attacked the Levellers and wielded influence with the Council of State. Terrill could not have chosen a more learned, more respected Puritan to indicate the respectability of Baptist separation. Terrill presents Canne as a confident teacher whose Twelve Steps enabled the congregation to separate under an iron rod of rule. Terrill himself preached a deep baptism by immersion, not dipping or sprinkling; the trick, however, was to avoid any suspicion of the anabaptism of a century earlier, during the German peasant revolt, when both private property and the patriarchal family had been overthrown. Not only could Canne show how the German Anabaptists had taken “some very irregular actions,” he was an opponent of the Levellers. Thus, when Terrill misdates the leadership of Canne, so that Broadmead will appear to have been a Particular Baptist congregation from the beginning, the purpose of the misdating is not merely to antedate the denominational origin but also to conceal the antinomianism, or “libertism,” of the period 1641–49. The interpolation seems to prove the disciplined respectability of Baptist separation, thus protecting the church in the 1670s and 1680s. It is part of the revision of history that mutes Francis.
FROM PROPHETESSSES TO PROLETARIANS

By telling the story of Francis, and by telling it in the way he does, Terrill at first notes and then undermines the role of women’s spirituality within the community, within the governance of the church, and within its emerging doctrines. The women of the gathered congregations were notoriously outspoken in the 1640s, and Francis, “one of the Sisters of ye Congregation,” was among them. Terrill responds with an assertion of male authority, male governance, and doctrine as enunciated by male ministers, stressing that upon her death Francis “was Honourably Interred being carried by ye Elders, & ye chiefest of note of ye Brethren in ye Congregation (Devout men bearing her) to ye grave” (emphasis added).

Why was this necessary?

The millenarian Fifth Monarchist Mary Cary wrote in 1651, “The time is coming when not only men but women shall prophesy; not only aged men but young men, not only superiors but inferiors; not only those who have university learning but those who have it not, even servants and handmaids.” Every saint, declared Cary, “may be said to be a prophet . . . for when the Lord hath revealed himself unto the soul and discovered his secrets to it . . . the soul cannot choose but declare them to others.” Phyllis Mack writes that even more than the male “mechanick preacher,” the female prophet “represented a kind of authority that was inappropriate, even monstrous, by conventional standards, but conforming to a more radical vision of human equality, on earth and in heaven.” Women who prophesied before Francis included the “Woman of Ely,” an itinerant minister often denounced by heresy-hunters of the 1640s, and the poor woman whose prophecy converted the reprobate young soldier John Bunyan. Three others merit further discussion here: Sarah Wight, Dinah (a maid and “a Moor not born in England”), and the antinomian controversialist of Massachusetts, Anne Hutchinson. The meeting of Sarah and Dinah indicated the association between the end of slavery and the “new covenant,” while the case of Anne Hutchinson shows how female prophets of this era might be branded as heretics, witches, or monsters.

When Dinah (“the Moor,” as she was later described) came to visit Sarah Wight in London at the end of May 1647, “in affliction both in soul
and body,” Henry Jessey, a Baptist leader of a separatist congregation in Southwark, was in the room and recorded their dialogue. Sarah had been fasting for two months and was confined to bed and in considerable turmoil herself. Her immediate companion and maid was Hannah Guy, an Irish Baptist of Traleigh and an associate of Craddock. Also in Sarah’s circle were Richard Saltonstall, who registered the first formal protest against the slave trade in anglophone America; the future regicide Hugh Peter, who would be praised by Richard Price in 1789 and condemned by Edmund Burke; and the seeker John Saltmarsh, chaplain to the revolutionary army, a “strange genius, part poet, part whirling dervish,” who advocated “the brotherhood of man.” It was thus a meeting of Irish, African, Welsh, English, and American.

maid [DINAH]: I am oft tempted against my life.
mrs. sarah: Why, what causeth it?
maid: Sometimes this, because I am not as others are: I do not look so, as others doe.

Sarah goes on to expound on the power of Christian redemption and the equality of believers before enunciating the antinomian axiom, “This is my covenant, I will be mercifull to their iniquities; and, Ile give you a new heart, Ile put my fear in your heart, Ile write my Lawes there.” But Dinah remains in doubt: “He may do this for some few, but not to me.” And Sarah replies, “He doth not this to one onely, nor to one Nation onely; for, many Nations must be blessed in him. He came to give his life for a ransome for many, to give himselfe for the life of the world. He is a free agent; and why should you exclude your selfe?”

Sarah saw the deliverance from internal and external bondage as simultaneous; she affirmed the unity between the Kingdom Within and the Kingdom Without, the new Heaven and the new Earth. John Saltmarsh wrote an introduction to the printed version of this extraordinary dialogue. Saltmarsh, a Yorkshire countryman of Jessey’s, was, as we have said, chaplain to Fairfax’s army, whose triumphs had just put an end to the first civil war. “There is no church,” he noted in 1646, “nor ordinances yet.” People were seeking, he explained, “yet they are to begin as in primitive times with gifts and miracles.” He, too, was confused about blackness, ethnicity, and slavery. Saltmarsh wrote of Sarah, under
her legal condition, “She is in bondage, in blackness, and darkness and tempest,” while asserting that under her Gospel condition, God was “making known his glory in the dark.” Saltmarsh’s *Smoke in the Temple* argued that Christ’s kingdom was a realm not of “compliancy and obedience and submission, but of consultation, of debating, counselling, prophesying, voting, &c.”39 He believed that Sara Wight could help fulfill God’s “new covenant”; the “poore, low, and humble” were its instruments, and “more and more is to be revealed,” he wrote with revolutionary expectation. The question was, would the abolition of the slave trades be included in the “approaching reformation,” as Milton expressed the unfolding of the revolutionary program?

To help build the new Earth, Anne Hutchinson had in 1634 sailed to Massachusetts Bay, where she worked as a midwife, a healer, and, like Sarah Wight, a spiritual counselor. She prophesied and expressed her antinomian ideas as she gathered with women, drawers of water like Francis and Dinah, at the town spring on High Street. Jane Hawkins (who would later be banished from the colony for heresy) and Mary Dyer (who would later be hanged for sedition) met daily at the wellspring on High Street in Boston.40 From these humble beginnings grew ever larger conventicles to discuss the sermons of the orthodox Puritan ministers, who began to see the meetings—and Hutchinson in particular—as affronts to their own power. To them, the reproduction of antinomian ideas was closely linked to the broader reproduction of the population of the Bay colony. Hutchinson’s allies in the militia also objected to the appointment of an army chaplain, threatening to refuse to go to war against the Pequots and weakening the military power of the colony.41 The ensuing Antinomian Controversy resulted in a major challenge to the ruling authority of Governor John Winthrop and the Puritan elders in Massachusetts Bay.

Winthrop and the Puritan elders never formally charged Anne Hutchinson with witchcraft, but the whole affair, as Carol Karlsen has noted, trembled through innuendo and insinuation on the edge of such accusations.42 Winthrop and others considered Hutchinson’s miscarriage in 1638 to be “strange to amazement”: she had given “30 monstrous births or thereabouts, at once; some of them bigger, some lesser, some of one shape, some of another; few of any perfect shape, none at all of them (as
A “monstrous birth” as a many-headed hydra. The Miracle of Miracles (n.d., but likely early eighteenth century).

farre as I could ever learne) of humane shape.” Mary Dyer, for her part, was said to have given birth to a baby that had “horns like a Beast, and ears, scales on a rough skin like a fish called a Thornback, legs and claws like a Hawke.” To some it seemed clearly the work of the Devil upon typically porous and vulnerable women. Here was female power in reproduction at its most nightmarish to the puritanical patriarchs: monstrous, threatening, unregulated. With Bacon’s theory of monsters behind them, and with their own notion of Satan foremost in their minds, the first reaction of the Puritans was murderous. The second was only slightly less extreme: Anne Hutchinson was banished from the colony to Rhode Island (“island of errors”). Her defeat removed opposition to the Pequot War and cleared the way for slavery. Many surviving Pequots were enslaved and shipped off to the other Puritan colony in the New World, Providence Island; the return cargo to Massachusetts was African slaves. In writing about the Antinomian Controversy, Edward Johnson considered it “no Marvell then if so many Errours arise, like those fained heads of Hidra, as fast as one is cut off two stand up in the roome.” Cot-
ton Mather’s chapter on the same subject in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) was entitled “Hydra Decapita.”

Indeed, it was during the time of Francis and the female prophets that Matthew Hopkins, in his official capacity as the English Witch-Finder General, led a terrorist hunt against so-called witches. As the authorities used witchcraft statutes to prosecute religious radicals, an estimated one thousand women lost their lives between 1645 and 1647. Hopkins, a specialist in maritime law and insurance, worried that witches interfered with trade by cursing ships; he was advised in this matter by the royal astrologer, Lilly. Inquiries came to him from Naples and Barbados. Supported not only by Parliament but by the leading “rationalists” of the day (Hobbes, Boyle, Bodin, Harvey), this misogynist obsessed about diabolical sex, “pricking” female bodies for the Devil’s mark. His assistant wrote that Satan bound his witches “to imitate Christ in many things, as his Assemblies, and Sabbaths, Baptism and Covenants,” implying a connection between Satan and the radical religious movements led by women in the 1640s.

Female prophecy must be situated in the crisis of reproduction in the middle of the seventeenth century. This was the peak period for the criminalization of women in England and throughout Europe, as prosecutions for infanticide, abortion, and witchcraft reached their highest rate. It was also the period in which men began to wrest control of reproduction from women (male midwives appeared in 1625 and the forceps soon thereafter); previously, “childbirth and the lying-in period were a kind of ritual collectively staged and controlled by women, from which men were usually excluded.” Since the ruling class had begun to recognize its interest in increased fecundity, “attention was focussed on the ‘population’ as a fundamental category for economic and political analysis.”

The simultaneous births of modern obstetrics and modern demography were responses to the crisis. Both, like the witchcraft prosecutions, sought to rationalize social reproduction in a capitalist context—that is, as the breeding of labor power. A recurring motif in the ruling-class imagination was intercourse between the English witch and the “black man”—a devil or imp. The terror was not limited to an imaginary chamber of horrors; it was an actuality of counterrevolution.

By 1650, “the age of independent female prophecy was over.” But not without complaint. When the prophetess Anna Trapnel was arrested in
Cornwall in 1654, the “justices . . . came to fetch me out of my bed,” she wrote, “and some came upstairs, crying, A witch, a witch.” When the authorities requested that Anna’s neighbors assist them in capturing her, “one of my friends told them, that they must fetch their silk gowns to do it then, for the poor would not do it.” Women had largely been silenced; the openings of the previous decade had closed. The Leveller women had petitioned in 1649, “Considering that we have an equal share and interest with men in the commonwealth, and it cannot be laid waste, (as now it is) and not we be the greatest and most helpless sufferers therein; and considering that poverty, misery, and famine, like a mighty torrent, is breaking in upon us . . . and we are not able to see our children hang upon us, and cry out for bread, and not have wherewithall to feed them, we had rather die than see that day.”48 In Bristol, Sarah Latchett railed against Pastor Ewins at Broadmead and was imprisoned for her pains, and Mrs. Prince, who interrupted the same congregation by humming, was thrown out as a Ranter.

The fifty-second heresy described by Thomas Edwards illuminated a central contradiction of the age, “For by naturall birth all men are equally and alike born to like propriety, liberty, and freedom; and as we are delivered of God by the hand of nature into this world, every one with a naturall innate freedom and propriety, even so are we to live, every one equally and alike to enjoy his birth-right and priviledge.” Freedom for the “free-born Englishman” was based on birth, but parturition was regarded as at once monstrous, liminal, and diabolical. It was during this period that the term proletariat entered the English vocabulary; it made a learned entrance in the sense that classical scholars borrowed it from the Servian Constitution of ancient Rome. Its pejorative meaning has lasted—referring to a member of the poorest class, the lowest and most vile—but its original sense had a more exact reference, namely, “subjects to multiplie and beget issue” (1609), “reserved only to beget children” (1610), or, as James Harrington explained in Oceana (1658), “such as thro their poverty contributed nothing to the Commonwealth but children.” It thus reflects the devalorization of women’s labor of reproduction. The currency of the term belongs to the epoch of witch-burning. The nas-cency of capitalism, based as it was on exploited unpaid labor, thus required control even over human parturition.
Quietism in Word and Deed

For the male side of the movement, the repression of the counterrevolution descended more slowly, aided by squabbling among the defeated, whose growing sectarianism must be seen in the context of jockeying for power within the Cromwellian regime and competition for riches in the wars for the slave trade. Formerly, Dennis Hollister (a grocer), Thomas Ewins (a tailor), and Robert Purnel (a carpet weaver) had been elders of the Broadmead Church, the pallbearers who carried Francis to her grave. But in the new world of the Cromwellian Republic, with its Western Design, guerre de course, Dutch War, and African trade, the devout fell out with each other. In this way, once-common seekers and notionists became different denominations, Baptists and Quakers. It is not difficult to read their polemics in the scarcely veiled terms of antinomianism and the slave trade. As the Irish prisoners were being transported in 1652, Purnel accused his enemies of “notionism” and “anabaptism,” prophesying, “You shall speedily receive a total Rout: You have gathered your selves together, but you shall be scattered, yea, you shall be broken in pieces.” Hollister added ranterism to the charge of notionism and significantly charged, “You are running to the Assyrians for help, and into Aegypts land a place of darkness are ye gone, seeking to recover a vail to hide your selves from the face of the Lamb.” He concluded, “Ye are the many-headed Beast in divers forms, sects, and opinions, under the name of Papist, Atheists, Independents, Anabaptist &c.” Bristol, the epicenter for the movement that produced both Baptists and Quakers, ironically provided the scene for the most horrific act of repressive quietism of the counterrevolution, for it was there that “radical antinomianism made a last-ditch bid for expression before Puritan conservatism drove it underground”—or overseas. “Some of our way have shouted, and cryed Hossannah, holy, holy, King of Israel to James Nayler, &c.”, upon whom was visited the most odious terror.49

In October 1656 James Nayler rode through the gates of Bristol, his horse guided by three women: Martha Simmonds, Hannah Stranger, and Dorcas Erbery. They trudged knee-deep in mud, sang psalms of praise, and cast flowers across the way. Nayler was a Yorkshireman who was, at the time, a more successful evangelist even than George Fox, the
founder of the Quakers. He wandered the countryside appealing to putting-out workers; he was thrown in prison and shared the straw on the ground with pirates. His class consciousness was well developed. Nayler wrote, “For your scoffing at the plow, I am of it, knowing it to be a lawful employment, much better than the hireling that works not at all, but lives on other man’s labours, taking by violence what’s other men’s labours; but seeing the plow is a reproach with you, why should not the tithes be so also, which are a fruit of the plow?” In 1653 he explained why he did not take off his hat or bow his knee: “The Scripture saith he that respects persons commits sin.” He was a powerful preacher. He preached jubilee—the acceptable year of the lord, the liberty of the captive. He preached revolution, quoting Ezekiel, “Is not the Lord overturning, overturning, overturning?” He inveighed against the oppressors for taking the commons, “getting great estates in the world, laying house to
house and land to land, till there be no place for the poor. And when they are become poor through your deceits then you despise them and exalt yourselves above them and forget that you are all made of one mold, and one blood, and must all appear before one judge, who is no respecter of persons.” He spoke out against the slave trade: “Where can the innocent go out and not a trap laid to bring him into bondage and slavery to some of these spirits?” He proclaimed, “I have fellowship with them who live in Dens, and desolate places in the Earth.”

To the authorities, Nayler’s entry into Bristol seemed a blasphemous imitation of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem. A frightened Parliament, wanting to “send a decisive political message to insubordinate sectarians,” tried him for violation of the Blasphemy Act, which indeed had been enacted against him. He answered the charges without removing his hat, which prompted a long and unprecedented debate about how to punish him. Only a narrow vote spared his life, though George Downing argued solemnly, “We are God’s executioners, and ought to be tender of His honour.” Nayler was taken from Newgate to the Black Boy Inn near the Royal Exchange, where his agony began. He suffered 310 lashes at the cart’s tail, across London. On Tower Hill, he embraced the executioner, who branded his forehead and then with a red-hot iron bored a hole through his tongue.

Nayler was thus silenced, and many others were meant to hear the message of terror. Thousands of Protestant radicals were imprisoned; others were shipped overseas. The Quakers and the Muggletonians rewrote their own histories during the 1660s and 1670s, deradicalizing their movements and suppressing the voices of prophets and antinomians. Even Nathaniel Angello, Broadmead’s first minister, found preference and joined the mocking chorus against Nayler, publishing an allegorical romance called Bentivoglio and Urania. Nayler, a false prophet, induced “Enthusiastical Fury” and was associated with arson, superstition, sexuality, and deceit. He remained an object of vicious fun for years. For instance, in Tom Brown’s Letters from the Dead to the Living (1702), Nayler is imagined in hell, where amid “black spiritual janizaries” and “immortal negroes” Lucifer dresses him up “in a rainbow-coloured coat,” the Renaissance symbol of the fool, called the motley. Nayler dines with hungry mechanics on a meal of scorpions, West In-
bian iguanas, shovel-nosed sharks, and a leviathan. Such savage ridicule, like the theories of monstrosity of Francis Bacon and Thomas Edwards, must be read with a “Satanic light” in order to see the many heads of the hydra—the sailors, clowns, Africans, mechanics, and radical sectaries.

Meanwhile, like “new age” entrepreneurs, some Baptists and Quakers began to prosper, acquiring wealth overseas, particularly in Ireland and the Caribbean. George Bishop, a Bristol Quaker who implied tyrannicide at the Putney Debates of 1647, was by 1662 offering the consolation of the afterlife for the sufferings of this one. William Kiffin, a former fellow apprentice of Leveller John Lilburne and himself a powerful figure in English Baptist circles, who banished Elizabeth Poole from the congregation for opposing capital punishment for Charles Stuart, offered the restored king a gift of ten thousand pounds. Edward Terrill himself had become involved in many aspects of the sugar industry in Barbados, as a money-scrivener, a broker, a warehouseman, a creditor, a refiner, and a planter. His son, William, managed a family plantation in Barbados, Cabbage Tree Hall, and married Rebecca, heiress to two other plantations. On “A Topographical Description and Admeasurement of the Yland of Barbados in the West Indies with the M[aste]rs Names of the Severall Plantacons,” published in 1657, Terrill’s name appears three times adjacent to little plantation symbols. His descendants would comprise one of the leading families in the eighteenth-century planter elite.

We now may begin to understand the repressive anxiety within Terrill’s text. At one glorious time his church had been part of a movement opposed to slavery, but the history of that era was written during a different, wicked time, after slavery had become the basis of prosperity for the same church. Could these Bristol Baptists remain at once devout Christians and eager slave traders? What solution would they find to this problem? The answer lies partly in Terrill’s very anxiety, for it was racism that would begin to provide these consciences with a solution. We see such race consciousness grow and flourish in the person of another radical Baptist, John Bunyan.

A tinker’s son born in an open-field village, Bunyan was a revolutionary soldier who in 1644 took part in the siege of Leicester. He was a roarer, ranter, swearer, and bell-ringer himself, affected by the ideas of
the Ranters, Diggers, and Levellers before being converted by a poor woman, which led him to preaching, the Baptist Church, and jail. After the revolution, Bunyan began to look back on a period that was revolutionary, hopeful, millenarian. In his best-known allegory, Pilgrim’s Progress, his pilgrim, named Christian, encounters “a man black of flesh” who is a false apostle, “a man that flattereth his Neighbour [and] spreadeth a Net for his feet.” He shows a false way to the Celestial City. After this encounter Christian converses with Hope, who has found “Rioting, Revel-
ling, Drinking, Swearing, Lying, Uncleanliness, Sabbath-breaking and what not” at Vanity Fair. Bunyan thus associates the African with the activities of the Ranters, or of his own youth. Indeed, Hope says, “All our righteousness are as filthy rags, by the works of the Law no man shall be justified.” This kind of antinomianism survived in English Dissent, but here Bunyan blames the victim: it is true that the riches of the time (Vanity Fair) were accumulated by the labors of slaves who were more and more African, but it is untrue that the slaves themselves were responsible for the vanity that Bunyan so profoundly denounces. This is what Marcus Garvey was able to point out in his commentary on Pilgrim’s Progress.

Christiana, Christian’s wife, meets another black man who symbolizes “the vile Person” who can never be washed clean. One of Bunyan’s children’s poems taught a racialized theology in which Moses, “a fair and comely man,” was contrasted with his wife, “a swarthy Æthiopian.” Bunyan wrote The Holy War (1682) as an allegory, based on his experiences as a soldier during the 1640s. It begins, “Well, upon a time there was one Diabolus, a mighty Gyant, made an assault upon this famous Town of Mansoul, to take it, and make it his own habitation. This Gyant was King of the Blacks or Negroes, and most raving Prince he was.” Here Bunyan inverts the historical truth, pretending that Africans assaulted European Christendom rather than the reverse. Propaganda could not tell a greater lie: white is black, and black is white. It illustrates the value of the warning sounded by the African American theologian James Cone: “Underneath the European language of freedom and equality there is slavery and death.”

**Devils Black and White**

At the time when Francis reminded all to heed the glory of God, it was not at all clear that liberal capitalism would be created; that the sugar plantation and the Atlantic slave trade would become platforms of economic growth; that enclosed private property would become the principle of land tenure; that white supremacy would become the theory of accounting for ethnic differences; or even that the congregation of multitudes with so many different ideas would become a Baptist Church. These developments were not inevitable; they were all contested, and
many of the ideas that Francis stood for were defeated. This was revolution and counterrevolution. And yet Francis and her ideas have survived. The revolutionary notion of glory reappeared more than a century and half later, at another moment of counterrevolution, when Shelley wrote his hymn to freedom:

-Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few.

Here glory has gender and national connotations foreign to the fragment left by Francis. Nevertheless, alluding to Shelley and seeking to understand the English radical tradition, Edward Thompson wrote in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), “It is above all in Bunyan that we find the slumbering Radicalism which was preserved through the eighteenth century and which breaks out again and again in the nineteenth.” *Pilgrim’s Progress* contributed “most to the stock of ideas and attitudes which make up the raw material of the movement from 1790 [to] 1850.” Written in prison during the repression of the 1660s, bitter toward the idle rich and comforting in its faith, *Pilgrim’s Progress* remains an amusing, inspirational testament of survival and defeat. As Bunyan said of himself,

*He fell suddenly into an Allegory
About their Journey, and the way to Glory.*

In an Atlanta penitentiary, Marcus Garvey wrote *Vanity Fair* (1926), taking his title from *Pilgrim’s Progress*, though not his subtitle, *The Tragedy of White Man’s Justice*. Garvey denounced racism, saying, once again, “God is no respecter of persons.” It took a Jamaican, a pan-Africanist in-
Indeed, to rediscover the radical tradition in a way that omitted Bunyan’s racialism yet retained a full measure of his individualism and uplift.63

“Soon fugitives will come and tell you their news by word of mouth. At once you will recover the power of speech and speak with the fugitives; you will no longer be dumb” (Ezekiel 24:26–27): something like this happened in England between 1645 and 1649. Proletarians of different provenance were cast together and began to realize that together they could do more than they could separately. This is the dynamic that Francis helped to set in motion, and certainly Dinah, too, as she and Sara Wight discovered the story of deliverance from bondage. A Boston antinomian, a Yorkshire plowman, “a Moor born out of England,” and mechanic preachers met and began to talk. Of course such conversations had been going on for years, as when political and common prisoners rioted in Elizabethan prisons, and they would continue after 1649, in the jail cell where Naylor was quartered with pirates, or in Newgate, where the Muggletonians found protection from the condemned highwaymen (“No, said I, it is not for Prisoners to complain of Prisoners”).64 The most remarkable pamphlet of the Diggers was entitled A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire. It called for equal rights, free elections, a commonwealth, and a just portion for every person. Its subtitle suggested that Diggers had a local/global consciousness, for the light found in Buckinghamshire led to A Discovery of The Main Grounds and Original Causes of all the Slavery in the World, but chiefly in England (1648).

“In sanctification [black women] have located a power that has made possible survival and autonomous action when all other means fail,” Nell Painter has observed.65 That Terrill did not omit mention of Francis altogether is evidence that she possessed an undeniable spiritual power. How that power would be remembered was determined first by the emergence of eloquent new voices that were raised against Atlantic slavery between 1645 and 1649, and second by the silencing of those voices at the hands of Cromwell and the Restoration, which assured the triumph of racialized slavery. Yet even the opponents of slavery, such as Sara Wight and John Saltmarsh, expressed their views in racialized imagery. The same was true of the anonymous author of Tyranipocrat Discovered (1649), who denounced the rich, the powerful, and the propertied; inveighed bitterly against capital punishment; advocated communism; and attacked slav-
ery throughout the world. He groped toward an understanding of the complexity of class rule, seeking to understand its moments of both force and consent. Like Bunyan, he used allegory. Satan had officiated at a marriage union between Tyranny and Hypocrisy, he wrote; one was figured as a black devil, the others as a white one:

My black children, which are whores, and knaves, gluttons, drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, artlesse theeves, and all poor pro-

Francis embodied, to use the terms of Francis Bacon, three heads of the hydra: she was an Anabaptist, she was an independent woman, and she was a “West Indian.” To emphasize these aspects of her is not, of course, to qualify her as a swarm or rout deserving of extermination, but on the contrary to help us recognize her as a fellow creature and as an Atlantean proletarian. She was not a monster, even though the attempt to erase the message she carried only ensured its multiplication, like the hydra’s heads. It is impossible to accept her as the “foul little ugly Ethiop” who stained the immaculate New Atlantis, because in the actual Atlantic she brought an exceptional purity of word and intention. Those who held the view that God was no respecter of persons were themselves deeply disrespected during and after the political defeat of the English
Revolution, particularly the women, who were thought by capitalist patriarchy to be good for nothing but breeding. Since no mention is made of children at either her deathbed or her funeral, we may assume that Francis was a single woman, whose conception of family did not include the breeding of children, especially not as future slaves or labor power. She became the means of conveying to future generations on both sides of the Atlantic mountains the message that God is a respecter of neither persons nor faces. Virginia Woolf asserted “the rights of all—all men and women—to the respect in their persons of the great principles of Justice and Equality and Liberty.” Not to respect persons was to find unacceptable the power relations of hierarchy based on class, gender, or race. Francis utterly confounded all three. The glorifying, disrespecting presence of the multiple figures of the Atlantic proletariat in the English Revolution can no longer be denied.
51. Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena, or, A Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious practices of the Sectaries of this time* (1646–47).
52. Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller; Or, the Life of Jacke Wilton* (1594).

Chapter Three

5. The Broadmead Records were published by E. B. Underhill in 1847. A second edition, printed in 1865 by Nathaniel Haycroft, preserved much of the orthography, emphatic typography, capital letters, and paragraph divisions of the original. This formed the basis of a third edition, published in 1974, edited and with a long, scholarly introduction by Roger Hayden. Our analysis is based on a scrutiny of the manuscript text at the Broadmead Church in Bristol.
19. Underhill, the nineteenth-century editor, changed this to “libertinism,” surely a different thing from “Libertisme,” yet itself not without its advocates in the 1640s: Abiezer Coppe in *A Fiery Flying Roll*, 1:1–5, taught that God’s service was “perfect freedom and pure libertinism.”


32. And, “whereas the Scriptures say, That the Creator of all things is no Respecer of persons, yet this Kingly Power doth nothing else but respect persons, preferring the rich and the proud . . . .” *The Law of Freedom* (1652), 508, 530.


35. *Visionary Women*.


41. Cave, *The Pequot War*, 139.


46. Ibid.

47. Mack, Visionary Women, 123.

48. Ibid., 104; Woodhouse, ed., Puritanism and Liberty, 367.


50. A Publicke Discovery of the Open Blindness of Babel’s Builders (1656).

51. A Few Words Occasioned (1654).


53. James Nayler, The Lamb’s Warre (1657).

54. H. N. Brailsford, A Quaker from Cromwell’s Army (London, 1926).


56. Nathaniel Ingelo, The Perfection, Authority, and Credibility of the Holy Scripture (1659), and A Discourse Concerning Repentance (1677).


60. We see it also in Henry Jessie, who in the 1658 edition of The Exceeding Riches of Grace Advanced introduces Dinah as “a Moor not born in England,” an ethnic marker added eleven years after the first edition of 1647.


Chapter Four


2. A Vindication of the Army (1647); Short Memorials of Thomas Lord Fairfax (1699), 104–6.


12. William Bullock, Virginia Impartially Examined (1649), 47.
