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The Concept of Perfection as Held by Early Friends

Paul J. Puckett

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THE CONCEPT OF PERFECTION AS HELD BY EARLY FRIENDS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

by

Paul J. Puckett

May, 1961

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem

It was the purpose of this investigation to determine, if possible, the early Friends' concept of perfection.

Justification of the Study

Within the ranks of Evangelical Friends today there is some confusion and diversity of opinion regarding the early Friends' view of perfection. The problem which exists is due to several factors; (1) Very little has been written, of a contemporary nature, which deals with the question. (2) Most of that which has been written was published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, therefore making the works hard to obtain and difficult to read and interpret. (3) The association of Quakers with the Wesleyan movement has contributed to the complexity of the problem, insomuch that many have equated Fox's teaching with that of Wesley. Inasmuch as Friends maintain that they exist for a distinct purpose with a message of hope through personal faith in Jesus Christ, it was deemed necessary to investigate the writings and works of early Friends to determine what seventeenth century Friends taught regarding perfection.

Definition of Terms

There are, since the middle part of the nineteenth century, two major groups of Friends. Inasmuch as there are many who are unaware of this division, and since the division is primarily theological, it was deemed necessary to define the distinction for the benefit of the reader.

Evangelical Quaker. An evangelical Quaker is one who holds that the essence of the gospel consists mainly in its doctrines of man's sinful condition and need of salvation, the revelation of God's grace in Christ, the necessity of spiritual renovation, and participation in the experience of redemption through faith as taught by George Fox.

Conservative Quaker. A conservative Quaker refers to that branch of Quakerism which seeks to maintain the ancient testimonies of the Society with the idea of bearing witness to the Spirituality of the gospel rather than propagating it. This group meets in silence without a paid ministry and has stressed the social aspect of the gospel strongly. From this group comes the extreme pacifistic view.

Perfection. Perfection as used in this study refers to Christian perfection. Further it refers to the fact of man in a proper moral relationship with God.

Delimitation

Inasmuch as the purpose of this investigation was to determine the view of Early Friends regarding perfection, the men that were studied were those who lived during the early period of Friends' history, that is, those who were contemporary with George Fox, the founder of the movement. The years of this period cover from 1624-1691.

Method of Procedure

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the records and writings of early Friends, to determine if possible their view of perfection. In order to do this it was deemed necessary to trace the reformation in England from the time of Wycliffe until Fox. Special attention was given to the men and situations which aided in spiritual reform movement. The next step was to find the reason or reasons which occasioned the rise of the Quaker movement. The purpose of the Second Chapter was to relate the historical situation to that which gave rise to the movement and it's message.

In the Third Chapter the spiritual experiences in the lives of early Friends are cited in order to ascertain the personal testimony in regard to perfection.

A number of the most outstanding leaders and preachers of the early Friends' movement were cited in the Third Chapter, who were real dynamics of the group and whose testimonies provide rich

source of witness to perfection.

The Fourth Chapter deals with the doctrinal statements and writings of the four most noteworthy Friends writers of the early period. These men were Fox, Barclay, Penn and Penington.

Within the entire scope of the writing, original source material was used whenever possible.

CHAPTER II

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUAKER MOVEMENT

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUAKER MOVEMENT

BACKGROUND

English Reformation. The beginnings of reformation in England started as early as the protests of Wycliffe, when in 1375 he denounced the Pope as anti-Christ and used the influence which he possessed as a scholar to voice opinions in opposition to the Pope's creed. The most important thing which can be noted for him is his translation of the Holy Scriptures in an English version; it is supposed to be the first translation ever made in a modern language. Because of his forthrightness in this, he was condemned and branded a heretic and burned at the stake. But in spite of this, many people became convinced of the truths which he promulgated, and these became known as Lollards.¹

From this time on, various factors contributed to a reformation in England. There was a feeling on the part of the devout that the monasteries had outlived their usefulness and that the clergy was very slack in their moral life. The revival of Augustinian studies and the influence of the late scholastics, John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, were a positive contribution in preparing the way for the later reform movements in England.¹ The

¹Charles Evans, Friends in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia: Friends Book Shop, 1875), p. 12.

Friend's historian, Evans, states that:

From the time of Wycliffe, to the period when a formal separation from the Romish church was effected by the reformation under Henry VIII, the attention of not a few among the people was kept turned, more or less, to the perversions of Christian doctrine taught by the priests, and to the corruptions which they practiced or sanctioned, by devoted individuals, made willing to attempt stemming the superstitious ignorance and irreligion of the times.²

It was in this fallow ground that the writings of Luther found fruitage. Soon they reached the centers of learning at Oxford and Cambridge. More especially did they find a foothold at Cambridge. It was a day in which the scholars in England were earnestly studying the Greek New Testament of Erasmus and its translation. Among these was an outstanding young man named William Tyndale. His translation of the New Testament into English and its later revision was of substantial assistance to the translators of the seventeenth century King James version.³ His translations, according to Evans:

. . . proved a powerful means of diffusing light and improved feeling; thereby convincing many of the errors of the religion in which they had been educated, and emboldening them to teach doctrines at variance with those enforced by the national church.⁴

Tyndale did much of his writing while on the Continent, and

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), pp. 797-798.

²Evans, op. cit., p. 12.

³Latourette, op. cit., pp. 798-799.

⁴Evans, op. cit., p. 13.

it was at this time that he moved further toward a protestant position. In 1528 he issued The Parable of the Wicked Mammon in which he came out definitely for justification by faith. He was arrested for heresy in the Low Countries and then tried and condemned. In the year 1536 he was degraded from the priesthood, strangled, and his body was burned.¹

At this time in England, the social, political, and economic order with which the church was associated was undergoing a change. Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs and then his son Henry VIII, were insisting on being full masters in church and state. They were building an English variety of that which was growing on the Continent; a monarchy of absolute royal power.² Latourette points out that:

. . . a sturdy nationalism was restive under interference in ecclesiastical affairs by a foreign Pope and hotly resented the fashion in which Papal appointees fattened on English revenues in luxury-loving circles in Avignon and Rome. This patriotism could readily be invoked by monarchs who sought to identify themselves with it and use it for their own ends.³

King Henry VIII was among those that opposed Luther and received from Leo X the title of 'Defender of the Faith', for his polemical book upon the Sacraments. It was a title intended only for Henry VIII, but it became one which was transmitted to his successors. It is rather ironical that not too long after this,

¹ Latourette, op. cit., p. 799.

² Ibid., p. 798.

³ Ibid.

Henry VIII should strike a blow at the Papal dominion.¹

The English Reformation differed from that of the Reformation on the Continent. The Continental Reformation involved a change in the creed and a separation from the papal see, whereas in the English Reformation there was, as Fisher points out, "little departure from the dogmatic system of the medieval Church. At the outset, the creed, and, to a great extent, the polity and ritual, of the Church in England remained intact."² There was no distinctive confession and no great work on theology which emanated from this land. The most outstanding work of the Anglican Reformation was Richard Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, and this work was centered in church government and not in theology. Anglican theology was with pride called, 'The Middle Way'.³ It may be observed from this, that while there was a growing nationalism and a protestant movement within England, the driving force of the English Reformation was not that of a theological battle. They were not stirred greatly over confessional issues, at least not until nearly a century later under the Puritans.⁴ Bainton analyzes this period, by saying that:

The rhythm of English life at the moment demanded tranquility. There had been disturbance enough in the earlier period through

¹George P. Fisher, The Reformation (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1888), p. 317.

²Ibid., pp. 317-318.

³Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952), p. 184.

⁴Ibid., p. 183

sectarianism and heresy in Wycliffe and Lollards, and more than enough disorder in the political sphere in the Wars of the Roses. England wanted above all else security and order, and these were best afforded through the new nationalism which sought to ensure each sovereign state from inner dissension and outer interference.¹

Just what the course of the Reformation in England would have taken, had it not been for Henry VIII, would be hard to determine. It was this monarch who broke with the Papacy, making way for an independant course, and occasioned that which helped to give it some of its distinctive features.²

The attempt of Henry to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled was the occasion of the contention with Rome. Prior to this, as an affair of statecraft, Henry VII had arranged the marriage of Catherine to Arthur, his oldest son, the heir to the throne. Catherine was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Upon the sudden death of Arthur and the desire of Ferdinand to retain the acquired advantages of the match, he arranged to have Catherine betrothed to the future Henry VIII. Inasmuch as it was against the law of the Church for a man to marry his deceased brother's widow, a Papal dispensation was necessary. The permission was finally granted and Henry and Catherine were married. Because Catherine failed to bear him any male children, Henry soon wondered if God had visited him with divine disapproval. Then too, the added attraction of Ann Boleyn caused Henry to ask the Pope

¹Ibid., p. 184.

²Latourette, op. cit., p. 799.

for an annulment to his first marriage. This permission was never granted, which caused Henry to take matters into his own hands and have his marriage declared invalid by the Parliament. Even before this he had been secretly married to Ann to protect the legitimacy of the child to come. Parliament passed an act which affirmed that the Church of England was competent to decide its own cases and that the Papal interference would no longer be tolerated. In the year following, Henry declared himself to be the "supreme head on earth of the English Church." Thus the breach with Rome was complete.¹

While the separation of the Church of England did not arise out of a desire to promote clearer views of Christianity, it did at the same time prove to be a means for making this possible. After the breach with Rome, various changes took place in England, the most drastic of which was the suppression of the monasteries. These had long been accepted as a part of the social and religious structure of the realm. Another which followed was the promulgation of the Ten Articles. In 1536, Cromwell, who was the king's vicar-general, ordered that a Latin and an English Bible be placed in all the churches to encourage its reading by the laity. This step proved to be one of the greatest contributions in the move towards Protestantism. Henry VIII died in 1547. In spite of his immoral life, the events which took place during his lifetime

¹Ibid., pp. 801-802.

occasioned direct movement toward Protestantism.¹

EDWARD VI to CHARLES I

Henry VIII was succeeded by his son, Edward VI, who was the son of his third wife, Jane Seymour. He too followed in the move toward Protestantism, but his actions were of a much milder nature. He was responsible for the removal of the images from the churches, did away with private confession to the priest, legalized the marriage of the clergy, and introduced the Book of Common Prayer. This did not mean that the Reformation did not meet with opposition. There was still a strong Catholic element within England. The people, in the majority, were attached to their old ways and very slow to respond to the reform measures.²

With the death of Edward VI and the succession of Mary to the throne in 1553, the reaction to the Reformation was greatly intensified. Within a period of several months from the time of her accession to the throne, Mary restored the Papal authority in England. Many of the Protestants sought refuge upon the Continent and Scotland. Upon the Continent, cities where the Reformed churches were strong were Zurich, Basel, Strassburg, Geneva and others. It was into these cities that many fled for refuge.

Parliament refused to renew the relations with Rome, but did

¹Ibid., p. 804.

²Ibid., pp. 805-806.

repeal all the laws enacted under Edward's reign which affected religion. Thus it was that Roman Catholicism was, to a great measure, restored under the rule of Mary.¹ She was responsible for the fires of Smithfield, where nearly three hundred people burned on the charge of heresy. The laws regarding heresy had been revived and were, according to Catholics, "a major crime against God and society".² At the same time the fires "warmed many among the thoughtful and religious into more effective zeal," writes Evans, "and implanted more deeply in the minds of others. . . an interest in the success of some reformation."³

Mary's reign lasted but five short years and she was succeeded on the throne by her half-sister, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn.⁴

Elizabeth's accession to the throne was met with not a little opposition from the Pope. According to the Roman Catholic position, Elizabeth had been previously declared illegitimate, being the daughter of Ann and Henry. In spite of this opposition, her accession to the throne was declared valid by an act of Parliament in the year 1559.⁵ In this same year the Act of Supremacy was

¹Ibid., p. 808.

²Ibid., p. 809.

³Evans, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Lars P. Qualben, A History of The Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1933), p. 324.

⁵Ibid., p. 325.

passed which forbade the authority of the Pope and all payments to him.¹ This placed the Church of England directly under the control of the crown.

Elizabeth was anxious to satisfy as many of her subjects as possible, and in so doing sought to include both Catholic and Protestant elements. It is the opinion of Latourette, that:

She could not hope to please both Roman Catholics and extreme Protestants, but she could and did achieve a settlement which proved acceptable to the vast majority of the Englishmen of her day and which, without basic alterations, was to characterize the Church of England from then onward.²

The reign of Elizabeth was the occasion of more movement in the direction of Protestantism. She reigned for nearly half a century during one of the most glorious eras in English history.³

Latourette says further:

Although Elizabeth and her counsellors arrived at a structure, a form of worship, and a statement of belief of the Church which satisfied the large majority of Englishmen. . . it was by no means acceptable to all.⁴

There was somewhat of a revival of Roman Catholicism during the reign of Elizabeth, after her first decade of rule. It was partly due to the Continental Catholic Reformation, which was under the leadership of William Allen (1532-1594), eventually a cardinal.⁵

¹Latourette, op. cit., p. 810.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 811.

⁴Ibid., p. 813.

⁵Ibid.

Another prominent group had its beginning during this period, the Puritan Movement. Prior to this, under the persecutions of Mary, many of the English Protestants were forced to flee into Scotland or the Continent. Of those who returned during the reign of Elizabeth, many, because of their association on the Continent, had become thorough-going Calvinists. The Puritans were dissatisfied with the Elizabethan Settlement, as they felt she did not go far enough with her reform measures. According to Qualben, they desired the following changes:

(1) a purer form of worship than the Anglican, and hence the name 'Puritan'; (2) the displacement of Episcopacy by Presbyterianism which, they claimed, was the only form of church government known to the New Testament; (3) a revision of the standards of doctrine to bring about a larger incorporation of Calvinism.¹

Under the restoration of the Act of Supremacy, the king or queen of the realm was given the authority to decide in all matters of faith and practice. Qualben further states that they were given power:

. . . to prescribe what doctrines should be preached, and to amend or redress all heresies; awarding the punishment that should be suffered by those who disobeyed, whatever, on this subject, had received the royal sanction: the punishment varying from fines to imprisonment, and even death.²

It was thus the prerogative of the crown, to not only direct the whole matter of form of religion, but to do away with all enjoyment of the right of individual conscience. It became a mere

¹Qualben, op. cit., p. 326.

²Evans, op. cit., p. 11.

transfer of authority from that of the pope to that of the crown, rather than a real reform; at least in this one respect.¹

About the year 1580, a party of non-conformists called Independents or Congregationalists began to make an appearance. The Independents were strict Calvinists in doctrine, but severed all ties with the Church of England and refused to have anything whatever to do with the group. The main leaders of this movement were Robert Brown, John Greenwood, Henry Barrow, and John Robinson. They rejected the Puritan's plan of presbytery and the Established Church's Episcopacy, holding that the individual congregation was the true unit of church government. This was the beginning of Congregationalism.²

Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth, there were no direct heirs to the throne from the family of Henry VIII. Therefore the crown passed to James, the son of Mary Stuart "Queen of Scots", and greatgrandson of Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. James was King of Scotland as well as England. This did not involve any union with the two realms, but was purely a personal tie. During his reign, the years were marked by a growing prosperity.³

There was an increasing number of Puritans and extreme Protestants during this time. James, at first, seemed to be leaning

¹Ibid.

²Qualben, op. cit., p. 326.

³Latourette, op. cit., p. 816.

toward a Roman Catholic position, but very soon he changed his attitude. In 1604 he issued an order to have the priests banished, and soon after this Parliament took action and confirmed the Elizabethan laws against them. Following this, action was taken to publish a new and fresh translation of the Bible. There had been two new versions published during the preceding reign, the Geneva Bible and the Bishop's Bible. The former had strong Calvinistic and Puritan interpretations in the marginal notes, whereas the latter was used primarily in the churches. This occasioned the need for the new translation which took place during this period. In order to accomplish this momentous task, James appointed fifty-four scholars to work on it. They utilized the original languages in the best texts which were available, but also studied from previous translations. The task was started in 1607 and completed in 1611. There is no record in existence which shows that it was ever formally approved by the king.¹ As Latourette has so aptly put it:

It did not bear the stamp of the genius of any one man as distinctly as did the German translation by Luther. It was, rather, the product of many hands and minds. Although other versions appeared, especially late in the nineteenth and in the twentieth century, it remained standard in the English-speaking world.²

The place which the Bible held during this period was of

¹Latourette, op. cit., pp. 816-817.

²Ibid., p. 817.

significant importance. To quote Latourette again:

The bible was received as the complete and final revelation of the Divine will, in relation to every thing connected with the salvation of the soul, and consequently was considered the primary rule of faith and practice; but the authoritative interpretation of the text, was virtually claimed and made binding by the 'Church'; or in other words, by the 'clergy'; who, as a body, were not disposed to give any exegesis that would curtail their power, or otherwise injuriously affect their interest.¹

The Bible and the place which it received was the one thing which made the rule of James I popular. He reigned from 1603 to 1625, at which time Charles I ascended to the throne.

The Religious Turbulence in England. Seventeenth century England was the scene of a mounting religious dissatisfaction. There were a number of religious groups which arose during this period because of this increasing feeling that there was something missing in the form and religious cant of the Established Church. There were those who maintained that the Church needed purifying and endeavored to do so. Those who despaired at the point of purifying the Anglican Church were called Brownists or Separatists and came to America where they might worship as they pleased. These left-wing Puritan groups had hoped for liberty of conscience, but neither James I or Charles were sympathetic to them. Both kings believed in the Divine right of kings and did their utmost to protect this right.²

¹ Evans, op. cit., p. 24.

² Elizabeth Braithwaite Emmott, The Story of Quakerism (London: Headley Bros., 1908), p. 7.

The Elizabethan Settlement had not solved all the problem in regard to spiritual freedom. Her being a Protestant had not relieved the persecution for the sake of conscience. The way in which the Puritans suffered persecution during her reign made religious issues of great importance in the eyes of the people of England.¹ The Puritan movement did however bring to the country a great consciousness and sense of sin. To them, "sin was a terrible reality . . . and hell the common destiny of man, only to be escaped by the free but rare grace of God".²

During this time the English people did become divided into two classes, differing in religious faith and manner of life. The class or group other than Puritans at this time were the Cavaliers, who represented the feudal tradition and were insistent on maintaining their status of privileged power. They were given to an easy manner of life and a comfortable religion. "They insisted on plural dress, the doffing of the hat, and 'bowing or scraping' as the acknowledgment of the superior place of authority."³ They punished any who varied from this rule and because of it kept a constant quarrel going between themselves and the Puritans.

The Puritans were not alone in their desire to purify the Church. About this same time, a number of other groups arose with

¹Ibid., p. 6.

²Elbert Russell, The History of Quakerism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 10.

this desire also. However, these sects went much further in that they wanted to renew a more New Testament standard of spiritual reality. These groups were the Anabaptists, the Behmenists, the Mennonites, the Seekers and Ranters.¹

Because of this spiritual unrest which the conditions had brought about, and the lack of domestic security, Evans states, that:

Men of thoughtful minds . . . had become earnest in seeking for durable riches, and to find some solid foundation to rest on, amid the fluctuations of doctrines and ecclesiastical domination that surrounded them.²

With this spiritual hunger and longing for true righteousness, many,

. . . wearied and disgusted with the self-seeking and hypocritical profession of many who made themselves conspicuous as spiritual guides, withdrew from the ordinary places of worship, and in retirement, self-examination and study of the Scriptures, sought to ascertain and to perform their religious duties.³

In the midst of all the political unrest and spiritual turmoil which had brought confusion to the people, there were those who felt that "Luther and Cranmer had not gone far enough, and that there was still much sacerdotalism to be purged away, before the original simplicity of Christianity would be restored."⁴ It was

¹ Ibid., p. 15.

² Evans, op. cit., p. 31.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Society of Friends", Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IV, 393.

in the message of Fox that these aims were realized, for it was the purpose of Fox and his followers to restore primitive Christianity.¹

GEORGE FOX, THE NEW VOICE

His Quest for Spiritual Certainty. The spiritual sensitivity of the many who hungered for true righteousness was a fallow field into which the revival of true Christianity could come. The intense desire of Fox for wholeness in spiritual experience gave impetus to the message and movement which followed.

George Fox was born in 1624, in the village of Drayton-in-the-Clay, Leicestershire. His parents, Christopher and Mary Fox, were "simple, homely people of the middle class, who, amidst the religious upheavals, . . . led a humble and Christlike life, and tried to train their children in truth."² Christopher Fox was a weaver by trade and because of his honesty and integrity, he was known as 'Righteous Christer', by all who knew him. Mary Fox was of the stock of martyrs and was a guiding influence in spiritual matters to young George.

He was an intense and earnest lad, and at a very early age became aware of the Lord's dealing with him. He was, says the biographer Sewell, ". . . a child . . . of another frame of mind

¹Ibid.

²Emmott, op. cit., p. 13.

than his brethren; for he was more religious, retired, still, and solid, and was also observing beyond his age . . . concerning religious matters."¹ Fox writes in his Journal:

When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness; for while I was a child I was taught how to walk so as to keep pure. The Lord taught me to be faithful two ways, viz. inwardly to God, and outwardly to man; and to keep to yea and nay in all things.²

He had very little, if any, formal education, but was of an intensely keen mind, which helped him to acquire an extensive informal education. He attended the parish church regularly with his parents and the other children of the family. He was earnest in his study and pursuit of the Scriptures until he came to know much of it by heart. During the several years of his teenage life, he sat under a notable preacher and writer of the day, Nathaniel Stephens. It was during this period of his life that he received a thorough exposition of the Calvinistic theology.³

In his youth he became apprentice to a shoemaker, who also was a grazier and wool dealer. Much of his time was spent tending the sheep which gave him opportunity to meditate and study the Bible. But all was not as it should be for young Fox. He was disturbed in his inner spirit.⁴

¹ Ibid.

² George Fox, Journal (Philadelphia: Friend's Book Store, n.d.), p. 55.

³ Russell, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴ Emmott, op. cit., p. 15.

The gross hypocrisy which surrounded him, of the lives of his associates, was a factor in the disturbance. But this was not all, for a sense of acute spiritual hunger in his own heart caused him at the age of nineteen to begin his wanderings in search of help. Because of his earnestness and sincerity, the Lord saw fit to make himself known to him. Fox records in his Journal that:

. . . though the people of the world have mouths full of deceit and changeable words, that I was to keep to yea and nay in all things, that my words should be few and savoury, seasoned with grace: and that I might not eat and drink to make myself wanton, but for health, using the creatures in their service, as servants in their places, to the glory of him that created them.¹

He set out to find someone who could give him the answer to his spiritual thirst by wandering over the countryside. He countered with the religious leaders around the country side and received a number of suggested solutions to his problem. One priest advised that Fox should take tobacco and sing songs. But, says Fox in his Journal, "Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing; I could not sing."² Still another advised him to take the popular remedy of physic and blood-letting. But none of these met the need of Fox in his search for help.

After a period of time in which he sought help from men, he spent time in solitude endeavoring to know help from God. Thus it

¹Fox, op. cit., p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 57.

was, at this time, the Lord was pleased to open a new experience of joy to his heart. He describes his experience as follows:

But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly, to help me, nor could tell what to do; then, O then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory. For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the preeminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, faith, and power.¹

The testimony of Fox in his Journal is explicit as to the change that had been wrought in his heart. He seems to burst with new found joy. Thus it was that in the year 1647, Fox found the inner answer to his quest for spiritual certainty. The emptiness of his former life had been filled with new joy and meaningfulness.²

The Message of Hope. The time was ripe in the seething turmoil of England for a man with just such a message as Fox brought. Religion was of central importance and many people were waiting for someone to point the way to reality. Fox, having come into this vital experience with Christ, seemed destined to be the messenger for the hour of time into which he came. As Charles Evans, the historian, points out, there were numbers of people within the Established Church of England that "were seeking a more

¹Ibid., p. 60.

²Ibid., p. 61.

full exemplification of the transforming power and purity of the gospel, and were earnestly looking for a clearer light to shine upon the path of the just."¹

One writer states that:

The soil was ready for the seed, and the rapid spread of Fox's doctrine was surprising. All classes flocked to his preaching; and among his converts were persons of the best families in his kingdom, priests of the Established Church, and ministers of other societies, and many men of wealth and learning.²

Fox's message was one which was centered in New Testament simplicity. He decried all the superficial forms of the Church which had replaced this genuine Christianity. He preached repentance to God and faith in Christ and showed that:

One became a true disciple not by a bare assent of the understanding to the truths contained in the Bible, nor by any outward rite, but by a real change of the heart and affection, through the power of the Holy Spirit.³

The central purpose of Fox's message was to restore the true principle of primitive Christianity. Newton Flew declares, that George Fox's teaching "may be regarded as the logical outcome of the Lutheran conception of faith . . . the sense of personal responsibility."⁴ He further notes, that; "in religious and ethical insight, George Fox went far deeper than the Reformers, and

¹Charles Evans, Friends in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia: Friend's Book Store, 1875), p. 25.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 281.

he did so precisely in virtue of his teaching on perfection."¹

Fox was deeply moved because the sects of Christendom were so complacent and undisturbed about perfection. His Journal shows his feeling about this matter, for he states:

. . . of all the sects in Christendom (so called) that I discoursed withal, I found none who could bear to be told, that any should come to Adam's perfection, into that image of God, that righteousness and holiness that Adam was in before he fell; to be clear and pure without sin as he was.²

A message which calls for such demands is bound to have its effect on the lives of people; and Fox's was no exception.

The experience which gave rise to his message of perfection will be seen in the next chapter.

¹Ibid., pp. 282-283.

²Fox, op. cit., p. 72.

CHAPTER III

HEART PURITY AS EXPERIENCED BY EARLY FRIENDS

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The Testimony of Fox. "A religion of the spirit expresses itself primarily through the personalities of men and women."¹ Thus writes one Quaker historian, Elbert Russell. The Quaker movement has served the role of helping sensitive souls to find reality in Christian experience. Inasmuch as creed and form have not been primary in the movement, but rather the emphasis being experience, it is to these early experiences one must look to see the doctrine.²

There were a number of things which were contributing factors in the spiritual hunger of George Fox. The confusion of the religious situation in England, the extremely pessimistic system of Calvinism, and most important was his own sense of personal sin.³ Fox testifies to this in his account of his experience of Christ, which was the climax to his seeking experience. He states: "For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, faith, and power."⁴

¹ Russell, op. cit., p. 15.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁴ Fox, op. cit., p. 60.

Fox had not been content to let a mere speculative doctrine be a substitute for a relationship with Christ which he knew "experimentally".¹ His own experience with Christ, along with the testimony of the Scripture, became the bulwark of the message which he preached and the doctrine he taught. His knowledge of Christ came, Fox says, "by revelation";² as is seen in his testimony; for, says he:

My desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the scriptures that spake of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not but by revelation, as he who hath the key did open; and as the Father of life drew me to his Son by his spirit.³

In Fox's use of the term "revelation" here, he refers to the work of the Holy Spirit within his own heart. He speaks to this when he says:

For I saw in the Light and Spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all must come to that Spirit, if they would know God or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, which they that gave them forth were led and taught by.⁴

Fox's early Christian experience was not easy, for it was beset by temptations; but the Lord helped him to be an overcomer. This help came at a time when things seemed the hardest, thus he

¹ Ibid., p. 61.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

testifies that ". . . in the deepest miseries, in the greatest sorrows and temptations that beset me, the Lord in his mercy did keep me."¹

He was also conscious of a dual-thirst, which he expresses thus: "I found two thirsts in me; the one after the creatures, to have got help and strength there; and the other after the Lord the Creator, and his son Jesus Christ."²

He was convinced of the power of God through Christ to work in his life, which is shown by the statement which follows:

I was taken up in the love of God, so that I could not but admire the greatness of his love; . . . that all was done and to be done in Christ; . . . My living faith was raised, that I saw all was done by Christ the life, and my belief was in him.³

Fox further testifies, that: "After this, a pure fire appeared in me: then I saw how he sat as a refiner's fire, and as the fuller's soap."⁴ He describes an inner conflict of spirit, as "That which could not abide in patience, nor endure the fire, in the light I found to be the groans of the flesh, that could not give up to the will of God; . . . that I could not give up self."⁵ Thus it was that he sensed something deeper than outward sins in that of an inner condition.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 62.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

For a period of some two years, Fox continued to wait upon the Lord. During this time he saw, what he termed "the infinite love of God",¹ and further speaks of ". . . an ocean of darkness and death; but an ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness."² This would depict a power which would supercede the power of darkness; or, in other words, power to overcome.

Renewal in the Image of God By Christ. Fox in these first few years was experiencing not only temptation, but deliverance through God's power. He traveled about preaching repentance to the people. During this time many things were, as he termed it, "opened" to him and he knew that these things came from God.

The Lord had worked not only in the life of George Fox, but also in the lives of many with whom he worked. His quick spiritual insight and desire to please God only, were rewarded insomuch, that many people turned to God.

His testimony of renewal in the image of God is as follows:

Now was I come up in Spirit, through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus; so that I was come up to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me; and it showed me, how all things had their names given them, according to their nature and virtue. . . . I was immediately taken up in Spirit, to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam's in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus, that should never fall. The Lord shewed me, that such as were

¹ Ibid., p. 65.

² Ibid.

faithful to him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell.¹

Fox had come to know salvation through Christ, as his diary shows; he had seen the sinfulness of human nature; and now he had come to know as he says above: "pureness, innocency, and righteousness".²

According to his testimony, Fox claims to have experienced a restoration to that state of purity which Adam had before the Fall, and further that this could be possible for others, as he states, "The Lord shewed me, that such as were faithful to him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell."³ He continues his testimony, to an experience of perfection by showing that the Lord did open many wonderful things to him beyond words to declare. He interprets his experience to mean, that; "As people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being."⁴

It is noted from his Journal that from this time forward there was a stability in his experience, and his purpose of life was to bring others into this renewal of spirit which he had come

¹Ibid., p. 69.

²Ibid.

³Fox, loc. cit.

⁴Ibid., p. 69.

to know through Christ.¹

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT BARCLAY

The victories of the early Quakers were not won by the force of argument. Rather, as T. Edmund Harvey points out, "Their constant appeal was to the witness of God in the soul. . . . it was a power beyond the expression of words which made itself felt on those who came in contact with them."² This was the case with the early leader, Robert Barclay.

Robert Barclay, the man who was to become the theologian of the Friends' movement had a careful home training and was then sent to the Scottish Jesuit College at Paris. He became thoroughly exposed to the doctrines of Romanism at this time. Upon his return to Scotland, he found that Quakerism had reached this country and that his father had become a convert to it. After a few years Robert also became convinced.

He gives a description of his experience in his Apology. It took place during one of the quiet Quaker meetings for worship. He describes it as follows:

I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good

¹Ibid., pp. 70 et seqq.

²T. Edmund Harvey, The Rise of the Quakers (London: Friends' Bookshop, 1921), p. 4.

³"Barclay, Robert", Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, I, 482.

raised up; and so I became thus knit and united to them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed.¹

Thus it was that the Holy Spirit worked in the life of Robert Barclay. From this time on, his life showed the mark of one who had given himself to God to be used in his service. The thing which stands out in his life is his writing, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, which he wrote at the age of twenty-eight.²

TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM PENN

William Penn was born in London in the year 1644. At the age of fifteen he was admitted as a gentleman commoner at Christ Church College, at Oxford, where he made large acquisitions as a scholar. At this time his life was seriously influenced by the preaching of a Quaker, Thomas Loe, an old Oxford student. Because of his strict life, he was sent to France by his father to be cured of the same. While there, he attended the lectures of a Calvinistic theologian. He was intensely interested in finding an answer to inner peace, for at this time he had not yet found satisfaction of soul for which he so longed. Upon his return to England, he again came in contact with Thomas Loe and under the influence of his preaching found Christ.³

¹Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1908 ed.), Prop. xi, sec. vii.

²Schaff, op. cit., p. 482.

³William Penn, No Cross, No Crown (Philadelphia: Friend's Book Store, n.d.), pp. 4-6.

The time at which this experience took place was at a meeting at Cork. Thomas Lee had preached his message with these words: "There is a faith which overcomes the world, and there is a faith which is overcome by the world."¹ This struck deep at the heart of this young man, who felt keenly that, "He had been long striving against or slighting his known duty to his Maker, and allowing the world to overcome the drawing of his heavenly Father's love."² After this experience at Cork, the change which came across Penn's life is most notable. The following statement taken from the preface of his work, No Cross, No Crown, bears out the genuineness of righteousness which came as a manifestation of this regenerate person. The writer of the preface, says of Penn:

As the Light of Christ shone with more and more clearness upon his soul, he saw how grievously he had departed from the right way of the Lord, and was brought under deep repentance therefore. Convinced of the truth of the doctrines . . . he heartily embraced them, and firmly resolved to live and die by them, whatever sacrifices it might cost him.³

As a result of this change of heart and life, Penn underwent many persecutions from his family, especially his father. Coming from a well-to-do family, the things which he underwent for his stand were most noteworthy. At the age of twenty-four, he began his public ministry of "the gospel of life and salvation".⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 11.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

Penn suffered not only bitter mockings and scornings, but also was locked in prison for charges of blasphemy. It was from the Tower, that Penn wrote the classic, No Cross, No Crown. The main thesis of this work "enforces the self-denying requisitions of the religion of Christ."¹

THE TESTIMONY OF ISAAC PENINGTON

Isaac Penington had been a leader among the Independents for a period of ten years prior to his contact with the Quakers, in 1658. His testimony is similar to that of Fox; after a time of searching, assurance came.

He did have a sense of forgiveness, for he states that the Lord, "did testify his acceptance of me many times, the refreshing and joy of my heart before him."²

There was, however, a sense of lack, for he writes:

But my soul was not satisfied with what I met with, nor indeed could be, there being further quickenings and pressings in my spirit, after a more full, certain, and satisfactory knowledge; even after the sense, sight, and enjoyment of God, as was testified in the Scriptures to have been felt and enjoyed in the former times: for I saw plainly, that there was a stop of the streams, and a great falling short of the power, life, and glory which they partook of. We had not so in the Spirit, nor were so in the faith, nor did so walk and live in God, as they did.³

¹Ibid., p. 17.

²Isaac Penington, Selections from the Works, ed. John Barclay (London: Darton and Harvey, 1837), Prefix by Thomas Ellwood, p. xxv.

³Ibid.

He gives further testimony to his experience of the Spirit speaking to his heart. As he came into a meeting of Friends, he felt the presence of God in their midst and that the Spirit was speaking to his own heart. He relates it in the following words:

Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised; insomuch that my heart, in certainty of light, and clearness of true sense, said, This is He, this is He, there is no other: this is He whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood; who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart; but I knew him not distinctly, nor how to receive him, or dwell with him. And then, in this sense, in the melting and breakings of my spirit, was I given up to the Lord, to become his, both in waiting for the further revealing of his seed in me and to serve him in the life and power of his seed.¹

Penington concludes his testimony by saying, "I have met with the true peace, the true righteousness, the true holiness, the true rest of the soul, which the redeemed dwell in."²

TESTIMONIES OF OTHER EARLY FRIENDS

William Caton. It was early in 1652, that William Caton first heard George Fox preach. Caton was an earnest and serious minded young lad and receptive to the message which he heard. He was at this time seventeen years of age. His testimony is as follows:

. . . The power of the Lord God did work mightily and effectually in me to the cleansing, purging, and sanctifying of me. . . . God which sprang in my heart, and the Divine and precious promises that were confirmed in my soul.³

¹ Ibid., p. xxviii.

² Ibid., p. xxx.

³ Cited by Frances Anne Budge, Annals of the Early Friends (London: Sam'l. Harris, 1877), No. 1, p. 5.

Young Caton went forth to preach and for twelve years "was an example in innocence, simplicity, and purity."¹ At the age of twenty-nine he died, having suffered much from hardship and persecution for the message he preached.

John Audland. This young man, too, was the fruit of George Fox's ministry. Audland was a very popular minister among the Independents when in 1652 he first heard Fox preach. At this time he listened as Fox proclaimed the heritage which awaited the believer in Christ. This message was, that they "might know their bodies to be prepared, sanctified, and made fit temples for God and Christ to dwell in."²

Francis Howgill. Another who heard the message which Fox preached that day at Westmoreland was Francis Howgill. Sewell has this to say about him:

But although he, who had been trained up in the university to be a minister, became a teacher amongst the Independents, and was zealous in virtue, yet he remained dissatisfied in himself, finding that notwithstanding all his fasting, praying, and good works, the root of sin still remained in him; and although the common doctrine was, that Christ had taken the guilt of sin upon himself, yet this could not satisfy him; because his conscience told him, 'His servant thou art whom thou obeyest'.³

¹Ibid., p. 6.

²Fox, Journal, op. cit., p. 115.

³William Sewell, The History of the Quakers (Philadelphia: Friend's Bookstore, n.d.), I, p. 81.

Edward Burrough. The spiritual experience of this early Quaker leader, is similar to that of George Fox. Burrough had long sought for that which would bring true satisfaction and joy. His testimony of the Lord's revelation is seen in his own words:

. . . When I was about seventeen it pleased God to show Himself . . . in love to me, and I had sweet refreshment coming in from Him to my soul, and had joy and peace in abundance, and openings of the living truth in me which the world knew not of.¹

"But", he continues, "not knowing the cross of Christ I ran forth in my wisdom comprehending the mysteries of God. . . . the earthly spirit ruled."² At this time in his life, he came in contact with George Fox's ministry and the message which Fox preached came at a time when it was needed most. He saw that George Fox's message agreed with the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit showed him his true condition. He had this testimony: "Praised be the Lord for evermore, who made me partaker of His love, in whom my soul hath full satisfaction, joy, and content."³

William Dewsbury. The testimony of this eminent preacher among early Friends, gives witness to the way in which he found the answer to the unrest of his own spirit. While quite young, his father died. During this experience of sorrow, he says, "I knew not what to do to get acquaintance with the God of my life."⁴

¹ Budge, op. cit., p. 54.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

After searching for inner peace, in a sense of disquietude, he writes, "The flaming sword, the righteous law of God, cried in me for a perfect fulfilling of the law, so that I could find no peace that in worship of God the world had set up."¹ He soon discovered that the love of God "could not be attained to by anything I could do in any outward observances. . . . then my mind was turned within by the power of the Lord."² Thus it was that he struggled to be freed from the power of sin in his life. This tender spirit of his was rewarded as he waited upon God, as can be noted by the following testimony:

And by the power of this Word, I was armed with patience to wait in His counsel; groaning under the body of sin in the day and hour of temptation, until it pleased the Lord to manifest His power to free me, which was in the year 1651.³

George Whitehead. The autobiography of this early missionary, gives a vivid picture of his early life. When he was in search of a better food than the Presbyterians had been able to give him, he attended a meeting of the Quakers at Sunny Bank, near Grayrigg, in Westmoreland. He testifies in his diary:

. . . there appeared to me a great work of the power of the Lord in the Meeting, breaking of the hearts of divers into great sorrow, weeping and contrition of a godly sorrow for sin, in order to unfeigned repentance. . . . I was the more confirmed herein, seeing a young maid go mourning out of the

¹ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

² Ibid., p. 93.

³ Ibid., p. 96.

Meeting, whom I seriously followed to observe her sorrowful condition, and beholding her being, she sat down on the ground, with her face down toward the earth, as if she regarded nobody present, she, mourning bitterly, cried out, 'Lord, make me clean; O Lord, make me clean'. Which did far more tenderly and deeply affect my heart than what I had heard spoken, and more than all the preaching that ever I had heard from man or men; and was a certain testimony to me, the Spirit of the Lord evidencing to my spirit that it was a real work of His power upon her heart.¹

John Crook. The sense of spiritual conflict came quite early in the life of this early Friends' preacher. At the age of nine or ten, he made this testimony of purpose: "I will not serve thee, O satan, but I will serve the Lord God of heaven and earth whatsoever I suffer or becometh of me therefor."² During these early years of his life, he spent much time in solitude and prayer and writes:

I remember when I was most fervent in my devotion, something in me would be still pulling me back, as it were, as if I would not wholly yet leave those evils I knew myself guilty of, but would gladly have them pardoned and forgiven, and yet would I continue in them, which at last made me conclude I was but a hypocrite. . . . I continued professing, and praying, and hearing, and reading, and yet I would not perceive any amendment in myself; but the same youthful vanities drew away my mind as before.³

Through an uneven experience, Crook continued to seek after true righteousness. He writes of trouble overtaking him "through some negligence and coldness which gendered to distrust and unbe-

¹T. Edmund Harvey, op. cit., p. 6.

²Budge, op. cit., p. 104.

³Ibid., p. 105.

lief."¹ During this turbulence, he wrote:

That on a sudden there arose in him a voice audible to the spiritual ear, 'Fear not, O thou tossed as with a tempest and not comforted, I will help thee; and although I have hid my face from thee for a moment, yet with everlasting loving kindness will I visit thee, and thou shalt be mine.'²

He speaks of this as an experience which opened up a whole new world of peace and joy. He further testifies that:

. . . I was so gathered up in the marvellous light of the Lord, and filled with a joyful dominion over all things in this world; in which time I saw plainly, and to my great comfort and satisfaction, that whatever the Lord would communicate and make known of Himself and the mysteries of His kingdom, He would do it in a way of purity and holiness. I saw then such a brightness in holiness, and such a beauty in an upright and pure righteous conversation and close circumspect walking with God in a holy life, . . . that it sprang freely in me, that all religion and all profession without it were as nothing in comparison with this communion.³

He fell away in disobedience and longed to know victory over sin again. It was under the preaching of Drewsbury that John Crook found complete deliverance. His long desire had been fulfilled, that of "walking with God in holiness and purity."⁴

Many years later he wrote:

Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord is so far from lessening or undervaluing the merits or conquests of Christ, that it manifests Him to be able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. Not only from the guilt, but from the filth of sin also, . . . to make them whole every whit as He did those he cured outwardly.⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 106.

² Ibid., p. 107.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 109.

⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

Stephen Crisp. At the age of twenty-seven years, this young man came under the influence of the preaching of James Parnell, a noted Quaker preacher. This was in the year 1655. Crisp had heard that the Quakers taught that sin might be overcome in this life, which at first seemed a mistake; for, he says, "His arm was never so long as to reach thereunto."¹ After he had listened to the message of Parnell, he wrote:

And the cross was laid upon me and I bore it; and as I became willing to take it up I found it to be to me that thing which I had sought from my childhood, even the power of God. . . .²

Later, after he had been preaching for some time, he speaks his own experience; when he says to a group of listeners in London:

. . . Is not man God's creature, and cannot he new-make him and cast sin out of him? If you say sin is rooted deeply in man, I say so too; yet not so deeply rooted but Christ Jesus is entered so deeply into the root of the nature of man that He hath received power to destroy the devil and his works, and to recover and redeem man into his primitive nature of righteousness and holiness. . . .³

He became a most noted preacher and missionary among the early Quakers.

Thomas Story. This remarkable man was a poet and a statesman. He tells of his own experience in these graphic words:

¹Ibid., pp. 119-120.

²Ibid., p. 121.

³Budge, op. cit., p. 124.

God called for my life, and I offered it at His footstool; but He gave it me, as a prey, with unspeakable addition. He called for my will, and I resigned it at His call; but He returned me His own in token of His love. . . . I begged HIMSELF and He gave me all.¹

In the year 1689 he experienced a "thirsting unto death for the knowledge of the way of life",² and he states that "The Lord knew my case could not admit further delay."³ His testimony bears further that which took place:

. . . I had a taste and view of the agony of the Son of God, and of His death upon the cross, when the weight of the sins of all human kind were upon Him. Now all my past sins were pardoned and done away, and my carnal reasonings and conceivings about the knowledge of God and the mysteries of religion were over. . . I now found the true Sabbath, a holy, heavenly, divine, and free rest, and most sweet repose.⁴

His account of complete victory is best seen by his own testimony which he gives as follows:

From about eight in the evening till midnight the eye of my mind was fixed on the love of God, which still remained sensible in me, my soul cleaving thereto in great simplicity, humility, and trust therein, without any yielding to Satan and his reasonings on those subjects where flesh and blood, in its own strength, is easily overcome. But about twelve at night the Lord put him to utter silence with all his temptations for that season, and the life of the Son of God alone remained in my soul. And then, from a sense of his wonderful work and redeeming arm, this saying of the Apostle arose in me with power. 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

¹ Ibid., p. 370.

² Ibid., p. 372.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 377.

The testimonies of these early Friends provide a wealth of material in which may be seen several things regarding their view of perfection. Each one was first aware of a hunger and lack in his own heart. Upon recognizing this need of God, and responding in obedience to the light within, each came into a perfect relationship with God. This new experience could not be kept secret, but from this new found victory each one became a messenger of the gospel. As a result of these early Friends' faithfulness to testify and preach of their own experience, many people came to know Christ through the preaching of these men.

Conclusions

(1) These early Friends testified to a renewal in man of the Image of God through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

(2) They each testified to an inner conflict of the flesh and Spirit. This conflict was overcome as they yielded themselves to God's will.

(3) They testified to holiness and purity in living effected by the inner workings of God in their hearts in daily experience.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION PROCLAIMED

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The Concept of Fox

An Instrument of God. Fox has never been considered the theologian of the Friends' movement, but rather as that instrument of light which God brought to a people which sat in darkness. Fox saw theology in terms of life experience. His own conversion and background provided much upon which to build. His was not the result of the logic of philosophical systems, but was founded upon the basis of a living relationship with God by the "light" of Christ. Fox's theology is not to be considered inferior in any way to that of Barclay or Penn, but Fox was too concerned with that of proclaiming the message to take time to put it in systematic form.

The impact which the Scriptures had on the life of Fox was without doubt, a major contribution to his ministry. He had read and studied them to such an extent that he knew much of their contents. He quoted widely and with great facility. His regard for the scriptures is shown in a testimony which he gave before a group of some forty priests who had charged him with heresy and had him arrested at Lancaster. He testifies:

That the holy scriptures were given forth by the Spirit of God; and all people must first come to the Spirit of God in themselves, by which they might know God and Christ, of whom the

prophets and apostles learnt: and by the same Spirit know the holy scriptures; for as the Spirit of God was in them that gave forth the scriptures, so the same Spirit must be in all them that come to understand the scriptures.¹

Thus according to Fox, the Scriptures could not be properly understood except as one was in the same Spirit by which they were given forth.

The writings of George Fox are in the form of his Journal, Works, and Testimonies. He has left a total of only eight volumes, which constitute his work as an author. The Journal is in two volumes and in them are found his life experience and testimony, teachings, exhortations, and many letters.

Fox's writing indicates that he was assured of the direct access to God, through Christ and that God's will was revealed to man through the Holy Spirit. This is shown by his usage of the words such as "openings" or "the Lord showed me".

Fox's Doctrinal Position Stated. Living experience and relationship to God provided the basis for the doctrines of which Fox wrote. These he supported by scripture. The holiness which Fox wrote about and testified to was not imputed but real. This was central to the whole Quaker movement. Newton Flew attests, that:

On the one hand, the teaching of George Fox may be regarded as the logical outcome of the Lutheran conception of faith . . . But on the other hand, in religious and ethical insight,

¹ Fox, op. cit., p. 128.

George Fox went far deeper than the Reformers, and he did so precisely in virtue of his teaching on perfection.¹

Basic to Fox's view of perfection was his view of the natural or present condition of man. He not only had a personal, but a general sense of sin, for he states, "For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief."² Yet he maintained that people could be freed from the power of sin in this life. This went very counter to the Calvinistic teaching of the times. The Puritan divines maintained that man must always be sinful while they were upon this earth. This, according to Fox, nullified the sacrifice of Christ. He asserted that the Calvinists "make Christ's dying in vain, and the one offering of no value, which hath perfected forever all them that are sanctified, and his blood of none effect, which cleanseth from all sin."³

The fact that many of the early friends had come from a Calvinistic theological background accounts for their emphasis on those points which differed from that system. Russell points out that: "When they did attempt to give a theological statement, as when they sought to disprove charges that they were atheists or heretics, . . . it was usually quite orthodox."⁴

¹Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 284.

²Fox, op. cit., p. 60

³Fox, Works, IV, p. 128.

⁴Russell, op. cit., p. 47.

While Fox held that man was concluded under sin, yet he also held that the "light of Christ" enabled man to respond to the divine overtures of God's love. The purpose of the light of Christ, was that man might come "to the second Adam, from the first Adam; that . . . (man) might have (his) sins and transgressions blotted out."¹ This light of Christ was in no way that of a pantheistic concept of an "extension of God" in every man, but a capacity in him to which God could speak. As Fox puts it, this light is for all people to come "to know Christ in you the hope of glory. . . which hope purifies, even as he is pure."² It was the Holy Spirit which spoke to Fox's condition, and pointed Fox to Christ, who could meet his inner struggle.

Fox taught a thorough justification, through the work of Jesus Christ, for he says, ". . . I saw that Christ died for all men, and was a propitiation for all; and enlightened all men and women with his divine and saving light; and that none could be a true believer, but who believed in it."³ To Fox, salvation was primarily a moral act, rather than a mere judicial relationship. It was the work of the Spirit in the believer that transformed his life and effected righteousness within.⁴ That the work of

¹Fox, Works, op. cit., p. 127.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Russell, op. cit., p. 53.

Christ is a complete one wrought in the heart, is seen in the following:

So if you mind the light, and in it stand, you will see the Lord giving issue, whereby you will find deliverance standing in the light, which comes from the word, which is a fire, and a hammer, and a sword, which beats down that which is contrary to the truth, divides and burns up, but keeping the word, the temptations will not come nigh, but the word of reconciliation be witnessed, and the word of faith which makes clean, and purifies, and sanctifies. . .¹

The work of Christ in the heart, according to Fox, makes possible a life of victory over sin. This he shows by a statement he makes in a discourse from a passage in Romans. He writes:

And this we witness who are in scorn called Quakers, but Christ did not die for sinners, that they should live all their lifetime in sin, and die in their sins; but that as sin had reigned unto death, so grace might also reign through righteousness unto eternal life.²

Fox attributed the work of perfection which he experienced and taught, to Christ, and Christ alone. The atonement of Christ on the cross made possible man's full redemption, for he writes: "That which purges this out of him, is the blood of Christ, who by his blood and fiery baptism hath purged out our sins, and sanctifies us."³ In another of his discourses, on the centrality of Christ as the effective agent of man's sanctification, he writes: "But I say you are redeemed by Christ; it cost him his

¹ Fox, Works, IV, op. cit., p. 305.

² Ibid., V, p. 94.

³ Ibid., p. 270.

blood to purchase man out of this state he is in, in the fall, and bring him up to the state man was in before he fell."¹ On one occasion in his ministry, Fox declared to those who were pleading for imperfection:

That Adam and Eve were perfect before they fell; and all that God made was perfect; and that the imperfection came by the devil and the fall; but Christ, who came to destroy the devil, said, 'Be ye perfect'.²

One of the professors alledged that the "body of sin and death" was the outward body. Fox, quick to discern the error of the statement, stated that the "body of sin and death" was not the outward body but that it was that of a broken and estranged relationship with God, as the result of disobedience.³ Later in a discourse regarding this subject, Fox with clarity, denounces those who teach that the body of sin and death must be carried in this life. He speaks of these as the "Devils teachers", who preach such a doctrine. His judgment is pronounced against them, in that they labor with their strength "to keep up the devil's works in men and women, and tell them, there is no perfection here, no overcoming here, while on this side the grave."⁴

During one of his imprisonments at Derby in 1650, he spoke again to the problem, to those who came to plead for sin and

¹Ibid., VII, p. 232.

²Fox, Journal, op. cit., p. 152-153.

³Ibid.

⁴Fox, Works, op. cit., VI, p. 439.

imperfection. He writes:

If your faith be true, it will give you victory over sin and the devil, purify your hearts and consciences (for the true faith is held in a pure conscience), and bring you to please God, and give you access to Him again. But they could not endure to hear of purity, and of victory over sin and the devil; for they said they could not believe that any could be free from sin on this side the grave.¹

Fox's great concern for a living relationship with Christ overshadowed his concern for the usage of theological terminology. His writings are rich in Biblical imagery and meaning. He uses such terms as "the devils works and imperfection", "the bad cursed state", and "the body of sin and death", to describe that condition in man which must be reconciled.

The Position of Barclay. Even though early Friends were not primarily concerned about creedal statements in defense of Christian faith, yet Barclay has been considered as the Theologian of the movement.

His Apology has been considered to be the most systematic doctrinal work of Friends. Barclay's extensive education had much to do with the fact that he wrote more systematically than did Fox, however it was from Fox that he received his instruction in righteousness. As to the place of prominence which this writing holds, Thomas Evans has written, that "it has always been held to be of the highest authority, both among ancient and modern (day)

¹Fox, Journal, op. cit., p. 56.

Friends, as a standard doctrinal treatise."¹

Barclay's views of perfection are found in both his Catechism, published in 1673, and the Apology, published in 1675. His close association with Fox during the latter half of the founders life had a great deal of effect on his thinking, which can be seen in his writings.

Barclay, in his Apology, viewed redemption in a two-fold manner.

The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us in his crucified body without us: the other is the redemption wrought by Christ in us, which no less properly is called and accounted a redemption than the former.²

He distinguishes them by saying, that:

. . . The first then is that whereby man, as he stands in the fall, is put into a capacity of salvation, and hath conveyed unto him a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life, and grace that was in Christ Jesus.³

Barclay describes the first part of redemption as that not only which was wrought for man by the crucifixion of Christ, or that of a perfect provision, but also, that man is created with a capacity to respond to the work which was wrought on the cross for him.

¹Thomas Evans, An Exposition of the Faith of Friends (Philadelphia: Friend's Book Store, 1878), p. 69.

²Robert Barclay, Apology (Philadelphia: Friend's Book Store, 1908), Prop. vii., sec. iii. Reference is given to "Proposition" and "Section" rather than to edition page. Hereafter "Prop." and "Sec." will be omitted.

³Ibid.

Secondly, he points out that redemption is:

. . . that whereby we witness and know this pure and perfect redemption in ourselves, purifying, cleansing, and redeeming us from the power of corruption, and bringing us into unity, favour, and friendship with God.¹

Thus it can be seen by the discussion of justification, that he guards against a Calvinistic doctrine of imputed righteousness on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification by merit on the other hand. He includes sanctification in the work of justification, for he states:

As many as resist not this light, but receive the same, it becomes in them a holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all those other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God; by which holy birth, to wit, Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us, as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God, according to the apostles words, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God'.²

Barclay very carefully pointed out that this work is wrought neither by mere application of the death of Christ in an imputed sense, nor a justification without the renewing of the mind, "but by Christ, who is both the gift and giver, and the cause producing the effect in us; who as he hath reconciled us while we were enemies, doth also in his wisdom save us and justify us".³ He again quotes the apostle Paul, in his letter to Titus; "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., vii, i.

³ Ibid.

of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5."¹ Thus, Barclay includes sanctification within the framework of justification. He shows that real justification in the heart will eventuate a change of life.

From his statement regarding justification, in which he includes sanctification as a part, Barclay moves to the next Proposition, viii, "Concerning Perfection". He writes:

In whom this pure and holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect: yet doth this perfection still admit of growth; and there remaineth always a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord.²

Barclay here asserts that this relationship is not possible in and of man's natural state, as the son of fallen Adam. Rather, he states, "We attribute it wholly to man, as he is born again, renewed in his mind, raised by Christ, knowing Christ alive, reigning and ruling in him."³ This does not, he continues, mean that there is not a daily growth but rather "a perfection proportionable and answerable to man's measure, whereby we are kept from transgressing the law of God, and able to answer what he requires of us."⁴ He carefully points out that it is only as one is careful

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., viii, i.

³ Ibid., viii, ii.

⁴ Ibid.

and mindful of God, that he may maintain this relationship. This restoration never in this life becomes so common that one cannot sin.

He proceeds in his Proposition by discussing the doctrine of freedom from sin in this life. To those who do not hold to such a teaching, he states, that:

This is inconsistent with the wisdom of God, for what greater stain then can there be than this upon God's wisdom, as if he had been wanting to prepare a means whereby his children might perfectly serve and worship Him.¹

In further discussion of this problem he says in summary:

. . . Now who would not account him a foolish master among men, who being able to do it, (delivery from the practice of sin), and also desirous it might be so, yet would not provide a way whereby his children and servants might serve him more entirely than his avowed enemy; or would not guard against their serving of him, but be so imprudent and unadvised in his contrivance, that whatever way his servants and children served him, they should no less, yea, often much more, serve his enemy?²

Next, Barclay shows by the use of Scripture, the feasibility of the doctrine of perfection. He cites the scriptures, Romans 6:14; "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace"; and Romans 8:3; "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, . . . that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., viii, iii.

In answering objections to the doctrine of perfection, Barclay shows that in reference to I John 1:9, "Here is both a forgiveness and removing of the guilt, and a cleansing or removing of the filth."¹ It is apparent, from Barclay's argument, that he believed there to be freedom from actual sinning in this life. As to what he means by his statement in regard to the "body of sin removed", may be seen in Proposition iv, section ii., "Of Man in the Fall", in which he discusses the natural or corrupted state of man. Barclay maintains that in this corrupted state;

Man is deprived of the sensation or feeling of this inward testimony or seed of God; and is subject unto the power, nature, and seed of the serpent, . . . that . . . their words and deeds, . . . are perpetually evil in the sight of God.²

He continues by saying that it is only the "seed of God", or the universal or saving light of Christ which enables man to be brought out of this corrupted estate. He writes regarding Adam's guilt:

So that, though we do not ascribe any whit of Adam's guilt to men, until they make it theirs by the like acts of disobedience; yet we cannot suppose that men, who are come of Adam naturally, can have any good thing in their nature, as belonging to it; which he, from whom they derive their nature, had not himself to communicate unto them.³

He affirms that, that which man lost in the fall was "spiritual communion and fellowship", so that the darkness and absence of God in the human heart constituted the "body of death".

¹Ibid., viii, ix.

²Ibid., iv, i.

³Ibid., iv, ii.

Barclay believes that there is a remedy for this condition of man, according to the promise of Christ. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Proposition xii, he declares:

Now this answer cannot be but where the Spirit of God hath purified the soul, and the fire of his judgment hath burned up the unrighteous nature; and those in whom this work is wrought may be truly said to be baptised with the baptism of Christ, i.e., of the spirit and of fire.¹

Thus Barclay feels, that the "body of death" is removed and the Christ reigns supreme within the heart.

William Penn's Concept of Perfection

His Doctrines Stated. The two works of Penn which show his concept of perfection are his Journal and his work entitled The Rise and Progress of the Quakers, which often prefaces the Journal of Fox.

In his epistle entitled "A Tender Visitation", Penn sets forth the possibilities of the work which Christ performed. Penn asks the question, "Can you feel that there is brought forth in you the new heaven and the new earth wherein righteousness dwelleth?"² To this he assures them that Jesus Christ can perform such a work, of making known unto them their condition and redeeming them from all unrighteousness. His exhortation is for them to

¹Ibid., xii, iv.

²William Penn, Tender Visitation (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, n.d.), p. 133.

yield to the Holy Spirit in obedience to his requests, leaving aside those things which hinder them. It is through this submission that the Holy Spirit can work out his plan in the individual heart. He states:

Now then, if you desire and expect ever to be filled and satisfied from Him, then must you receive Him as He is revealed, and as His holy will is made known in your hearts; and keep yourselves under His holy judgments and reproofs: for the reproofs of instruction are the way of eternal life. . . . and all those that love His reproofs and willingly suffer his chastenings and fatherly rebukes, they shall see judgment brought forth into victory, and that the prince of this world, the corrupt nature, ground, or origin in you, as well as the evil fruits and ungodly works thereof, shall be judged.¹

He further describes this experience with Christ as giving victory over sin. This he does with the use of descriptive language, the use of imagery. Penn attributes this work to that of Christ in the heart, by saying:

. . . for it is the fiery part of the baptism of Christ, whereby that wicked one shall be revealed, and burnt up, and rooted out; the thorns and the briars shall be burned up, and devoured, and the filthiness both of flesh and spirit purged away. If now your sins are become a burthen to you; if you thereby are wearied, and if you heartily desire that they may be weakened in you, and at last conquered also; then let the holy watch of Jesus be sincerely and earnestly kept in your hearts; which watch is light; for in darkness is no safe nor true watching.²

He continues by exhorting the Christian to:

Watch therefore with the light of Christ wherewith you are enlightened; warch, I say against every unfruitful thought, word, and work of darkness. Stand upon your guard in the blessed light, and be you armed therewith, like the saints of old, that

¹Ibid., p. 133-134.

²Ibid., p. 135

you may discern the enemy, and resist him, when and howsoever he does appear and approach unto you; that so he may not overcome you, but that you may obtain victory over him; for when he sees his allurements ineffectual, his snares discovered and broken, (as this is done in the light of Christ), then is he weakened in his attempts, and your souls grow stronger to resist him, until at last he be wholly defeated and conquered.¹

In this rather extended statement of Penn is seen the concept that sin is conquered as man continues to obey, and that complete conquering is only after a time of proving. This is not sanctification by man's own efforts and abilities, but rather a process which takes place in the life of man as he, in obedience, yields to the will of God. During this time the soul grows stronger to resist the power of the enemy, until at last he is wholly defeated and conquered.

This idea is further brought out in other of his writings, as is seen in a letter to a friend. He writes:

Well, my friend, this know, and by these shalt thou be judged, and in it I am clear, that as without holiness none can see God, so without subjection to the Spirit, Light, or Grace in the heart, which God in love hath made to appear to all, that teacheth to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; I say without subjection hereunto, there is no attaining to that holiness which will give thee an entrance into his presence, in which is joy and pleasure forever.²

In the day in which Penn lived the Puritans and others misinterpreted what Friends believed and taught. One of these state-

¹ Ibid.

² William Penn, Passages From (His) Life and Writings (Philadelphia: Friend's Bookstore, n.d.), p. 23.

ments was that, "They (Friends) trust not in his death for pardon and salvation, but in a pretended sinless perfection."¹ In answer to this Penn sets forth a defense of that which Quakers truly held. He asserts that:

They are so far from disowning the death and sufferings of Christ that there is not a people on the earth that so assuredly witness and demonstrate a fellowship therewith, confessing before men and angels that Christ died for the sins of the world, and gave his life a ransom. Perfection from sin they hold attainable, because he that is born of God sins not, and that nothing which is unclean can enter the kingdom of God.²

From one of Penn's most outstanding works, Rise and Progress of Quakers, comes a fuller doctrinal treatment of heart purity and holiness. In his explanation of the doctrines, he treats it from what he terms a "natural and experimental order".³

The following passages taken from the above work gives Penn's doctrine in a nutshell:

First, repentance from dead works to serve the living God; which comprehends three operations. First, a sight of sin; secondly, a sense and godly sorrow for sin; thirdly, an amendment for the time to come. . . which doctrine of repentance leads to justification, that is, forgiveness of the sins that are past, through Christ the alone propitiation; and to the sanctification or purgation of the soul, from the defiling nature and habits of sin present, by the Spirit of Christ in the soul.⁴

From this basic deliniation of the concept, Penn says that this

¹Ibid., p. 26, (the quotation from his work, entitled, "The Guide Mistaken").

²Ibid., pp. 26-27.

³Penn, op. cit., (Everyman's Library), p. 183.

⁴Ibid.

work is:

. . . justification in the complete sense of that word; comprehending both justification from the guilt of the sins that are past. . . through the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus; and the creature's being made inwardly just, through the cleansing and sanctifying power and Spirit of Christ revealed in the soul; which is commonly called sanctification. But none can come to know Christ to be their sacrifice that reject Him as their Sanctifier; the end of His coming being to save people from the nature and defilement as well as guilt of sin; and that therefore those that resist His Light and Spirit, make His coming and offering of none effect to them.¹

Thus he denotes the meaning of justification in its full sense. It is both that of being justified from the guilt of the sins of the past and the creature being made inwardly just. This indicates that it is not only necessary for man to be forgiven but also brought into a just condition to live righteously before God and man.

Penn in further analysis of the doctrine of early Friends, states that:

From this sprang a second doctrine they were led to declare, as the mark of the prize of the high calling to all true Christians, viz., perfection from sin, according to the Scriptures of truth; which testify it to be the end of Christ's coming, and the nature of His kingdom, and for which His spirit was and is given, viz., to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, and holy because God is holy. And this the apostles laboured for, that the Christians should be sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit, but they never held a perfection in wisdom and glory in this life or from natural infirmities or death as some have with a weak or ill mind imagined and insinuated against them.²

These quotations of Penn show two things: that he believed

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 183-184.

perfection to be the purpose of redemption and that it was a relationship which is attainable in the present life. Of early Friends and their expression of this relationship, he says;

This they called a redeemed state, re-generation, or the new birth; teaching everywhere according to their foundation, that without this work were known there was no inheriting the kingdom of God.¹

According to Penn, this was the entire stress of their ministry; namely, a call for men to become new creatures in Christ Jesus. He declares that "The bent and stress of their ministry was conversion to God; regeneration and holiness."² Interestingly enough, Penn feels that to be truly Christian, man must know Christ in this complete sense. He expresses this by saying:

Theory and practice, speculation and enjoyment, words and life, are two things. O it is the penitent, the reformed, the lowly, the watchful, the self-denying and holy soul that is the Christian! And that frame is the fruit and work of the spirit, which is the life of Jesus: whose life though hid in the fullness of it in God the Father, is shed abroad in the hearts of them that truly believe.³

Penn, a man of high ability and integrity, felt that the true expression of the Christian life was in the life that was lived out before men. His doctrine is like that of Fox. His doctrine is distinguished by his expression of the work of justification. This he felt was comprised in two halves, both pardon and sanctification. This was wrought by the grace of God in the heart,

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 195.

³ Ibid., p. 192.

through the operation of the Holy Spirit. True righteousness, according to him, was imparted and not imputed. Therefore it is obedience to God which makes it possible for God to work a perfect work in man.

Penington's Concept of Perfection

Concerning Justification. That Penington was in basic agreement with other early leaders of Quakerism is indicated by his writings, which are rich in biblical terms and insight. In speaking of justification, he writes:

. . . this we say, that alone in the faith, in the obedience of the new covenant, the justification of the new covenant is witnessed: and the new covenant justifieth from it, washing off the venom and defilement of the wicked spirit from the conscience, which the Lord purgeth by the faith . . . and here we know and find certainly and infallibly, that it is not the law of works which justifieth the believer, nor the obedience or righteousness thereof; but there is a righteousness revealed, . . . And this is Christ's righteousness, . . . which is revealed in the soul, in which in the union with Christ, becomes the soul's and Christ thereby is made unto us righteousness.¹

Again in writing concerning perfection, he states:

Christ is a perfect physician, and is able to work a perfect cure on the heart that believeth in him, and waiteth upon him: yea, he came to destroy the works of the devil, to cleanse man's mind of the darkness and power of Satan, and to fill it with the life and power of truth; and he sent forth a ministry not only for the beginning, but for the perfecting of the work.²

In his analysis of the condition of man, he states that even

¹Isaac Penington, A Further Testimony to Truth, Revived Out of the Ruins of Apostasy, Vol. IV of Works (3rd ed.; London: James Philips, 1784), p. 224.

²Ibid., p. 227.

though man is in a state of darkness and bondage, yet Christ is sufficient for the problem as the perfect physician. Penington considered the work of Christ all sufficient as he indicates in a further statement from his Works:

But there is a power in Christ to perfect the work of redemption in the heart; to sanctify the creature wholly, in body, soul, and spirit; yea, his leaven received will work, and works daily, till it hath wrought all out, and the whole be leavened; and he that truly feeleth it so, and can say in God's presence, and in the true fear and humility of heart, The old leaven is wholly wrought out, and the new hath wholly leavened me; this is not the voice of deceit, but of truth in him.¹

Penington felt that sanctification was a gradual process until such a time came in which the victory was completed.

The Life of Growth in Perfection. Penington, in describing the life of the Christian, speaks of it as a daily exercise of righteousness. He writes:

They that own his inward appearance in their hearts, and turn (from the enmity there) to him, receiving his light, his law, his life, his Spirit, them doth he exercise daily, and is daily reforming their hearts and ways thereby. But if a man receiveth not his light, his life, his Spirit, within, such an one is none of his; and he may reform himself as much as he can, but he knoweth not yet the day of the true reformation.²

This would indicate that Penington viewed the work of perfection, not only as the work of Christ within the heart; and only through his power, but also the perfecting of the Christian was a daily growth. He goes on further to state that the work of Christ is

¹ Ibid., p. 229.

² Ibid.

implemented by the power of the Spirit. To him holiness was not a static experience, but rather a living real relationship with God in daily life.

Conclusions

(1) Basic to the early Friends' view of perfection was the fact that all men are concluded under sin.

(2) They taught that through Christ's provision on the cross and the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, man could find peace by full surrender to God.

(3) They believed perfection to be freedom from the power and dominion of sin in this life.

(4) Perfection, to early Friends was viewed as a proper relationship with God, based on obedience to the Holy Spirit in a daily walk with Christ.

(5) They taught that perfection was actual righteousness, because God has conveyed unto the Christian a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life and grace that is in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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Summary

The contents of the second chapter were prepared with the intention of introducing the reader to the background of reformation in England which gave rise to the Quaker movement. It was shown that the movement of Quakers arose because Fox and others who were not content with a mere break with Rome to suffice, desired spiritual certainty and reality. The spiritual reformers from the time of Wycliffe to Fox did much to pave the way for the movement which became the logical outcome of Reformation. This movement, the Quakers, with Fox as the spiritual and organizational leader, upon finding this reality, went forth to proclaim a message of hope and life. The message of Fox was that Christ alone would bring complete salvation and meet the need of the human heart. This he felt was made possible through the divine light of Christ within the human heart; the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the third chapter, the spiritual experiences of a number of the early leaders were reviewed. These experiences not only evidenced the clarity of their spiritual expression, but also provided a basis for the later investigation of their doctrinal position.

The fourth and last chapter dealt with the doctrinal position

of four men, which were major to the movement. These men were Fox, Barclay, Penn, and Penington. It was discovered that these leaders were in basic agreement in their doctrinal position.

Because of the agreement of these early leaders who have been recognized as important to the movement theologically, certain conclusions have been reached.

Conclusions

The experiences of early Friends, their testimonies, and their doctrinal statements regarding perfection have been cited. Whereas the main thrust of the early movement was in that of preaching and teaching, yet much can be seen in the writings of early Friends regarding the message of perfection which they preached. None of the writings of the early Friends are written systematically, except Barclay, and this is one of the difficulties in attempting to discover their views. But nonetheless, they write with clarity and their purpose is displayed in their writings. The following conclusions are those which the writer felt were important.

(1) Early Friends held that the work and purpose of Christ's mission made possible a perfect restoration for man.

(2) Perfection was viewed as the whole program of God's redemptive work in this restoration.

(3) Early Friends saw perfection, as restoration to the image of God in Christ, so that righteousness was imparted to him

and not imputed.

(4) Perfection was viewed as a sphere, made up of justification and sanctification, each incomplete in themselves. As regarding justification, it was held to have a two-fold sense. First, that work of Christ which made possible this complete restoration, and second, the revelation of Christ to the human heart. They regarded justification as complete in sanctification. Accordingly, pardon for the sins of the past cannot be separated from the change which is wrought by sanctification. Justification was viewed, not as a mere legal reconciliation, but also as a work wrought within the human heart, making possible a life of joy and peace in Christ.

(5) Perfection, to them, was not the end but rather the beginning. The emphasis upon the entrance into a new relationship was made real by the life of obedience to the Spirit, based on a renewal of the will of man to the will of God.

Suggestions for Further Study

Inasmuch as the foregoing study was not exhaustive in scope and that there are other studies which could be done beneficially, several other areas of study are listed below.

(1) Early Friends' use of the Scripture in preaching and teaching.

(2) Early Friends' view of perfection compared with Evangelical Friends' view of perfection.

(3) Early Friends' view of perfection compared with Wesley's view of perfection.

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