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The Early Quaker Doctrine of Communion in the Light of the New Testament

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THE EARLY QUAKER DOCTRINE OF COMMUNION
IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

by

Mahlon LeRoy Macy

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requirements for the degree of Bachelor of
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DEDICATED

To my wife, Hazel
who lovingly assisted, and
was a constant encouragement to the
author in the course of this investigation

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Thesis

Anyone offering something new in theology, new in philosophy, or new in science is leaving himself open to criticism. An organization which sets forth a point of view contrary to the traditional point of view may receive much condemnation. This was the situation with the early Quakers. Their Biblical interpretation of the doctrine of Communion was unlike that of the traditional views; therefore, it was questioned.

Our purpose in this presentation is threefold. In the first place, we will re-examine the early Quaker doctrine of Communion. It is not that anything new might be drawn out that has not been thought of before, but that the people of our day might consider the view of the early Quakers in regard to Communion. Our desire is to set forth as clearly as possible the position which was held by the early Quakers during the lifetime of George Fox.

In the second place, we will consider the reasons why the early Friends rejected the traditional

view and accepted the position they did concerning the Lord's Supper or Communion. There are certain reasons which should be considered; for, when the Quakers took the stand they did, there must have been reasons which they felt were valid.

In the third place, we will consider the validity of the reasons given in the light of the New Testament. An effort will be made to examine early Friends' use of the Scripture to see if their interpretations will stand up in the light of exegetical examination. Individual texts will be examined, and then the texts will be read in the light of the context to see if there is any misinterpretation in the use of proof texts.

There will be some Scripture that will never be fully explained and about which there will always be controversy. There is much Scripture which, according to the evangelical Protestant's interpretation, substantiates the Friends' view. There are other Scriptures that need careful study. Many people have taken a traditional interpretation of the Word of God without really making a close study of it for themselves. Many have criticized the Friends' view before they were properly informed. It is unfair to fully condemn or

criticize a group for their beliefs before the beliefs of that group have been carefully studied.

This does not mean that error should be tolerated. If such is found, it should be exposed and everything done to set forth that error. If this presentation should reveal instances when the early Friends misused the Scriptures, it will be pointed out. If certain traditions in the churches have issued from wrong interpretations and men have so fitted the Word of God to agree with preconceived notions, this, too, should be exposed and the truth be known.

Where there is truth, it ought to be admitted. If the early Friends had a true doctrine, let there be frankness to admit the truth of such doctrine.

B. Definition of Terms

In our English language, there is always some difficulty concerning the definition of words. Men are often grossly misunderstood because their terms were not correctly defined or because wrong meanings are read into terms by readers.

It must be remembered that, over a period of time, our English words change their meaning. For this reason, translators have found it necessary to set forth a new translation of the Scriptures. Many words have a different connotation than they did three or four hundred years ago. Since the early Quakers date back over three hundred years, it is likely we will be confused unless our terms are fully understood.

There are several terms that have, through the years, been used almost synonymously. The terms are communion, the Lord's Supper, the sacrament, and the eucharist. Whenever these terms are used, they are most generally used in connection with the ritual of the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine in the church. The words, however, carry more than just the meaning of an outward ceremony.

The words communion and eucharist carry the following meanings:

Communion:

1. act of sharing; community of condition or relation; participation
2. intercourse between persons; esp. intimate or spiritual intercourse; interchange of thoughts, purposes, etc.; fellowship; as, the communion of the saints
5. the sacrament of the Eucharist, the celebration of the Lord's Supper: act of partaking of the sacrament; as to go to communion; to partake of communion.¹

Eucharist:

1. Eccl. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the solemn act or ceremony of the commemorating the death of Christ, in the use of bread and wine as the appointed emblems; the communion; also the consecrated elements, esp. the bread.
2. A vessel for consecrated bread; a pyx.
3. Act of giving thanks, a thanksgiving.²

The definition that is given in International

Standard Bible Encyclopedia for "eucharist" is as follows:

"The distinctive rite of Christian worship, instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ upon the eve of His atoning death, being a religious partaking of bread and wine, which, having been presented before God the Father in thankful memorial of Christ's inexhaustible sacrifice, have become (through the sacramental blessing) the communion of the body and blood of Christ."³

1. Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, Springfield, Mass., G and C Merriam Company, 1911, page 452.

2. Ibid., page 755.

3. Orr, James, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947, page 1921.

In most religious circles today, anyone using the term communion is thought of as speaking of the Sacrament. Though these two terms are often used synonymously in popular usage, yet there is a vast difference in the meaning. It will be noted that even Webster lists communion as the sacrament of the Eucharist as one of its meanings, the reason being that it is one of its popular usages.

In a more strict sense of the word, communion is not the outward ordinance of the Sacrament; but it is an inward relationship between one person and another. The communion or relationship between two persons is not dependent upon external circumstances, but it is dependent upon the attitude of the hearts of the communicants.

It might be well to note the use of the terms just mentioned as they are related to the Scriptures. The term sacrament is not used in the Scriptures. This was a fact early noted by George Fox.⁴ He felt that his doctrines should be based on Scriptures, and he desired to use Scriptural terms as much as possible.

The term communion is used only a few times in the Scriptures, and it is not used once in connection with the passages that are generally taken to substantiate the

⁴. Fox, George, Doctrinals, London, T. Sowle, 1706, page 24.

outward rite of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The term Lord's Supper is used only once and that by Paul in writing to the Church at Corinth. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is often referred to as the Eucharist, but this word is not used as such in the Word. However, the Greek word "εὐχαρίστος" or its derivatives is used in the Scripture approximately fifty-five times and carries the meaning of thankfulness, thanks, or that of thanksgiving. It is from this Greek word that the term eucharist has come.

Then, as to the terminology, it must be remembered that there is a difference in the meaning of communion from that of the Sacrament. The early Quakers set forth a doctrine of Communion which emphasized the spiritual partaking of the body and the blood of Christ, but they denied the need of the practice of the Sacrament.

Chapter II

THE HISTORICAL SETTING AND THE DOCTRINE

A. The Church of the 17th Century

In order to get a proper perspective of the early Quaker movement, it will be necessary to understand the condition of the prevailing church of that day. The state of the church contributed directly to the reform movement.

The Church of England was the main established church of that day. The Quakers were reformers, but there were other reform groups also. Many of these movements were evangelical, and they stood alongside the Quakers in many points of doctrine. However, none of them set forth the doctrine of Communion as did the Quakers.

The religious stir on the continent had moved across the channel, and by 1600 there was much religious unrest in England. The Puritans had begun their work under the leadership of Laurence Humphery and Thomas Cartwright.⁵ It was not their desire to start a new church, but it was their aim to bring about a purifying in the Church. Walker says that "Cartwright and his

5. Walker, Williston, A History of The Christian Church, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943, page 459.

fellow Puritans opposed all separation from the Church of England."⁶

The desire of the Puritans to purify the Church is indicative of the fact that the Church was very corrupt in many ways. England had but one church and that had been the Roman Catholic Church until the days of Henry the VIII. Henry broke away from the Papal tie, not because he desired ecclesiastical reform, but for political and personal reasons. Though there was a break with the Papacy, the new Church of England kept most of the Roman Catholic ways. This made the need of reform as great in England as it had been in Germany, France, and other countries.

The Church of England was void of spiritual life and fervor. It had been controlled by the state, and, in order to be a good churchman, it was generally necessary for a man to be a good politician. The interests of the Church came last when the interests of the state were at stake. Many of the clergy were mere stool pigeons for the king or their ecclesiastical superiors.

6. Ibid., page 400.

When James I came to the throne in 1603, it was thought by many Puritans that he would do much in favor of the Puritan movement; but, as time elapsed, it was found that, due to his religious advisors, he did much to give the High Church a more firm basis. The Puritans had wanted to do away with much of the Roman Catholic forms in the English Church, but, because of the influence of William Laud and others, the Prayer Book and many other things were kept within the Church.

The hope of the Puritans never did materialize for they were not able to bring about the changes they had desired. Many of them migrated to America as soon as the colonies were opened.

The reform movements did not get the approval of the kings, and it will be noted that the Quakers received their worst treatment under Charles the Second.

It was not the intention of George Fox to write a secular history, but his Journal does give many insights into the times in which he lived. His picture of the Church of England and his description of the priesthood is most vivid, and it will need consideration.

The Church had little more than dead formality. It retained most of the Roman Catholic forms and

emphasized ritualism. The people had to pay their tithes and participate in the church ritual, and then most people believed they had fulfilled their obligation to God. The Church was getting wealthy, and, of course, the state was sharing in part in this wealth.

Since most institutions can be judged by their personnel, the Church of England can be better seen if a view of the priests is given. George Fox brings many charges against the priests. He makes this statement:

"But the black earthly spirit of the priests wounded my life: and when I heard the bell toll to call people together to the steeple house, it struck at my life; for it was like a market-bell to gather people together, that the priest might set forth his ware to sale. Oh! the vast sums of money that are got by that trade they make of selling the scriptures, and by their preaching, from the highest bishop to the lowest priest."⁷

The Church put much stress upon the paying of tithes, and it was up to the priest to see that the people did pay such tithes. Because the Quakers refused to pay tithes to such a corrupt organization, they were severely abused by the priests. The priests stirred up the people; and the people in turn, because they were under the thumb of the Church, followed the suggestions of these church leaders.

7. Fox, George, Journal, Philadelphia, Friends Book Store, n.d., page 76.

The Church with which the Quakers came into conflict had little, if any, conviction about sin. The priests were accused of pleading for sin and imperfection.⁸ Such accusation seemed to be very valid in the eyes of the Quakers; for the people of the Church, for the most part, were living in sin and degradation. If the priesthood had been calling out against sin, there would have been a different attitude among the people.

There was a special dislike on the part of the priests for George Fox. Fox had been very bold to enter the steeple houses; and, even in their services, he would openly dispute with them. The Quakers testified to the fact that Fox was so filled with the power of God and helped of the Lord that he was able to put the priests to silence and to show them the error of their ways. Because Fox and others had exposed the true nature of the priesthood and of the established Church, many people turned to the Quakers. Because of this, there came a great hatred for the Quakers, and they were opposed at every turn. Many false accusations were raised against them, and everything was done by the Church that it could do to rid England of this reform group.

8. Ibid., pages 81, 85, 97.

The attitude of the Church toward the Quakers and other reform movements (for there were other movements that were persecuted also by the Church) indicates its true nature. The Church was satisfied with itself, and it opposed anyone who made an effort to bring a change either inside or outside of its organization.

Fox, in his outcry against the Church, was not doing this to make a name for himself. Neither was he taking the stand he did to raise up a new church. He believed the Church that existed was wrong in its teaching and practice. The whole matter struck deep at his heart, and he went forth to do everything within his power to expose error. This conviction was so deep with Fox that he was willing to suffer long imprisonments, many times he was stoned, and many times he was beaten; yet he felt that he must tell forth the good news and bring people to what he believed to be the true light.

In the next section, we will deal with the conversion and the events which led to his widespread ministry.

B. George Fox and the Quakers

George Fox is to the Quakers what Martin Luther is to the Lutherans and what John Wesley is to the Methodists. Fox is considered the founder of the Quaker movement. The rise of the Quakers is an outgrowth of George Fox's experience. According to his testimony, he came to know Christ apart from the existing church. Therefore, he felt constrained to follow the course he did.

The early life of Fox was not much different from that of the life of other boys in his community--the little town of Drayton-in-the-Clay, in Leicestershire, England. His parents were not poor folk, but they were humble people who worked with their hands. Christopher Fox, George's father, was a weaver and he was known as an honest and upright man. There is little doubt but that the home training that Fox received made a great impact upon him.

His training probably had greater effect because he was religiously inclined even in his early years. Fox says, "in my very young years I had gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children."⁹ There was a soberness about his life that caused him to ponder some of the great problems of life.

9. Ibid., page 55.

One of these problems that greatly disturbed Fox in his early years was that of the conduct of the people who professed to be religious. In his late teens, Fox went with a group of supposedly religious friends to a fair. The hypocritical lives of these young men thoroughly disgusted Fox, for these professors of religion went to excess in drinking and other things. This experience caused Fox to turn his back upon this type of life.¹⁰

After that experience at the fair, he set out to find something that would satisfy the need he felt existed within his own heart. He even left home for a time to see if he could find someone who could give him some aid. He visited many priests and professors of religion, but without satisfactory result. As he made these many contacts, he received much advice. Some told him he should marry, others suggested that he join the soldiery, one priest urged him to use tobacco, and another even recommended the letting of blood.¹¹

Fox speaks of that period as being the darkest experience of his life. He was seeking help, but he only found the blind trying to lead the blind. The condition of the Church has already been noted, and it is

10. Ibid., page 56.

11. Ibid., page 58.

little wonder she offered no help for the needy soul.

These dark days were not idle days for George Fox, for he spent much time reading the Bible. He believed he was coming to the truth through his careful study of the Word.

For his actual conversion experience, it will be best to quote Fox himself.

"For I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in 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 the 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 pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall let it? This I knew experimentally. 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."¹²

One of the most significant things to be noted in Fox's conversion is that it took place completely apart from priests and the established Church. It was because

12. Ibid., page 60.

of this fact that he took his stand against the Church of England, for the Church had had very little part, if any, in his conversion.

Little did this young man from Drayton-in-the-Clay realize the influence his testimony was going to have in England and around the world. After the Lord had dealt in this special way with Fox, he went forth with a witness and a boldness such as England had not known.

In a short period of time, many were won to Christ through the testimony of Fox. His witness was clear and true, and Christ was so magnified in his life that it dispelled doubt about the reality of his experience with the Lord. Those who were won were soon winning others because they were bearing witness to the "true light....." which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

As Fox bore witness to his Christian experience, there was no thought in his mind of starting another church. His early mission was that all might know the Christ whom he had come to know. He went everywhere telling people, and pointing out to them, through the Scriptures, the way of salvation; and, from the beginning, he cried out against the existing Church. He felt that the Church

was keeping the people in darkness and the only hope for them was to come out of the Church.

The first and most basic teaching of Fox was that of the "light within," the key Scripture being John 1:9: "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." Fox made it very clear that this light was in us, but it was not of us and also that this light was the divine light of Christ.¹³ The early Quakers told men everywhere concerning the "light within" and many believed, entering into a vital experience with the Lord. Fox was among the first of the reformers of England to place a stress upon the work of the Holy Spirit. It was at this point of emphasis that he and his followers were so greatly opposed.

This experience of Fox through the Holy Spirit and his emphasis upon it brought opposition; for, this emphasis upon the Holy Spirit led Fox on to interpretations of Scripture which brought an avalanche of condemnation upon his head from the churchmen of England. He was immediately called fanatical, and soon steps were taken to get him out of the way.

Fox accepted many of the doctrines as held by the existing church groups, yet there were several points

13. Ibid., page 72.

of difference which should be mentioned. The first has already been mentioned--that of laying stress upon the immediate teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine has been misused and George Fox has been misinterpreted at this point, but it does not nullify the fact that he taught this basic truth which he felt was in harmony with the Scriptures.

Another point of difference came concerning the disuse of all types of outward ordinances. That indeed was a bold step and one which has brought controversy even unto this day. The existing Church had the ritual and the ordinances, and they had linked salvation with these things. When Fox met the Lord apart from such things, it is little wonder that he felt they were unnecessary to the Christian. Not only did he feel that they were unnecessary, but he found much Scripture which he believed substantiated his views. His view concerning the Lord's Supper will be set forth later.

Quakers were different as to their manner of worship and as to the appointment of their ministers. In the matter of their worship, they depended upon the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit. They met together and, for a period, there was an outward silence while

they tarried for the Holy Spirit to speak to their hearts. After a period of waiting and as the Spirit moved different ones, they arose in the meeting and spoke according to "the moving of the Spirit." Oftentimes they would wait in silence for an hour or more, and then Fox or someone would preach for an hour or two. Their worship was informal, yet all things were in order and conducted as though they could see Jesus actually abiding in their midst.

Among the early Friends, they made an effort to make and keep all things plain and simple. Their places for worship, called meeting houses, were of the simplest type of structure, and in most cases, were small, square, frame buildings. The furniture in the meeting house, too, was very plain and simple. They had not elaborate fixtures such as were found in the other churches. Even musical instruments were not given a place among early Friends. Their desire was to be led of the Spirit, and they made an attempt to slough off everything they felt was unnecessary and superfluous.

The ministry was looked upon differently by the early Quakers than it had been viewed by the other churches of that day. Fox had observed that the ministers of the established Church were such simply because it was

a good profession. They were primarily interested in monetary values. Consequently, the call of God had little effect as an impelling force.

Fox felt that a man was not a minister unless he was definitely called of God. He further felt that, if a man was called of God to preach the Word, he would give some evidence of that call of God and others would recognize his call to the ministry. The early Friends did not have a paid ministry, and they cried out against those churches that did.

It was not difficult to spot a Quaker in those early days, for he could be identified by his walk and his talk. In his speech, he used the terms "thee" and "thou." He refused to take off his hat to anyone. If in court, he would not take the oath, and his dress was peculiar to those of his faith. The fact that the Quakers were different and could be easily sought out brought them much grief and persecution. Yet they were not hypocritical about their worship or their life. They never apologized, nor did they hide their practices. Some Presbyterians were accused of covering up their assemblies for worship, but Fox denounced them for their practice.¹⁴

¹⁴. Ibid., page 407.

Something more should be said concerning the growth of the Quaker movement. As has been stated, Fox did not intend to start a new church, but went forth to proclaim the "truth" which had come to him. In the early years, there was not a concerted move on the part of any one of the Quakers to form an organization whereby their new doctrine might be preached. There were numerous preachers who went forth, and, after much preaching and many converts, it became manifest that some type of simple church organization was needed.

At first, they did not call themselves a church, but were known as the Society of Friends. The name Quaker was a nickname given to them as a matter of ridicule, for there had been those that had actually quaked under the power of the Holy Spirit in their meetings.¹⁵ Fox had also bidden men to tremble at the Word of the Lord.

One of the outstanding features of the Quaker movement was the intense missionary zeal shown by those who were converted under the ministry of the Quakers. It was not long until all of England had been touched by travelling preachers. But this was not all. Some people went to Germany, to France, and to other European countries, and there were those who came to America. The

15. Ibid., page 85.

story of the Quakers in America is one all its own. Some Quakers went to Rome to see the Pope; others went to the rulers of the Turks and to the leaders of other nations.

Those early Quakers had come to know Christ in reality, and they were willing to spend and to be spent for the spreading of this "good news". Because of the close tie between the Church and the state, it was easy for the Church of England to influence the king in taking steps which would halt the growth of the Quaker movement. The steps were taken and the records give proof of the result.

"The severity and extent of their sufferings is shown by the fact that during the twenty-five years of Charles the Second's reign 13,562 Friends were imprisoned in various parts of England, 198 were transported as slaves beyond seas, 338 died in prison or of wounds received in violent assaults on their meetings."¹⁶

In spite of the terrible persecutions which came upon them, their numbers increased very rapidly, and, by the time of the death of George Fox, there were 75,000 Quakers.

There is much more that could be said concerning the rise of the Quakers, but it is not

16. Thomas, Allen C. and Richard Henry, A History of The Friends In America, Philadelphia, The John C. Winston Co., 1905, page 59.

necessarily pertinent to the subject at hand, so that
which is given will have to suffice.

C. The Early Quaker Doctrine of Communion

It will be readily recognized that the early Quakers set forth a doctrine of Communion unlike that of the existing churches. Though they set forth a new doctrine, they did so from a positive standpoint. Before Fox began to preach as he did, he had searched the Scriptures and found therein the message which he proclaimed. He felt that he could be positive and dogmatic about the truths of God. This explains his frontal attack upon the traditions of the time and his positive approach concerning communion. In referring to the Church and the priests, Fox makes this statement:

"And they tell the people of a sacrament, for which they have no scripture,.....but the Supper of the Lord we own: The Bread that we break is the communion of the Body of Christ, the Cup we drink is the Communion of the Blood of Christ, all made to drink into one Spirit."¹⁷

The early Quakers testified to the fact of a communion which they avowed to be the only true communion. Though they had charity with those that had linked communion to the ordinance, yet they made every effort to show forth the truth, as they believed it, that real communion, apart from any ordinance, was made possible by the Lord Jesus Christ.

17. Fox, Doctrinals, loc. cit.

Some have asked why it was the Quakers took the view they did. The question is not difficult if a person is familiar with the life of George Fox. This man had attended the various churches throughout England, and he had participated frequently in their rites and rituals. There is every reason to believe that Fox was baptized and had partaken of the rite of the Lord's Supper in the church of his father. In all this participation, Fox had not found the help for which his soul had cried out.

It was apart from the Church and ritual that Fox came to know peace in his heart. This peace had come to Fox when he was alone, and it came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither priest nor Sacrament played any part in this man's conversion. Fox came to know communion with God the same way he had known his conversion experience. His communion with God through Christ was spiritual, direct, and immediate. Why should a man submit himself to an ordinance or ritual to get something he felt he already had? Fox believed that he had gone beyond the remembrance stage, and had come to know Christ in his heart. He communed and supped with the Lord daily.

The experience which had come to Fox was not foreign to the teaching of the Scriptures. Chapters four

and six of John's Gospel confirmed Fox's emphasis upon the spiritual, inward communion. This position, taken by the early Quakers, is consistent with the rest of their doctrines which place stress upon the spiritual and the inward relationship with the Lord Jesus.

In order to get a concise statement from which to work, it will be well to quote the summary of Barclay's proposition concerning communion.

"The communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, which is the participation of his flesh and blood, by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells. Of which things the breaking of bread by Christ with his disciples was a figure, which even they who had received the substance used in the church for a time, for the sake of the weak; even as abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, the washing one another's feet, and the anointing of the sick with oil: all which are commanded with no less authority and solemnity than the former; yet seeing they are but shadows of better things, they cease in such as have obtained the substance."¹⁸

True communion is something of a mystery. It is not possible for the natural man in an unregenerated state to understand, to comprehend, nor to partake of the body and blood of Christ in real communion. It is possible for all to partake of an outward bread, but this in no way

¹⁸. Barclay, Robert, Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Philadelphia, Friends Book Store, 1908, page 422.

signifies that they have had the real and true communion which can only be of and through the Spirit.

The fact that the early Quakers held to a spiritual communion is further borne out by a statement made by James Nayler as he was answering a group of false accusers.

"Concerning the Lord's Supper. The true supper of the Lord is the spiritual eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ spiritually; which the spiritual man only eateth, and is thereby nourished up unto eternal life: without which eating there can be no life in the creature, profess what you will. And all who eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, have real communion in Christ the head, and also one with another, as members; and are of one heart, and one mind, a complete body in Christ."¹⁹

As a Scriptural basis for their teaching, both Fox and Barclay quote the sixth chapter of John, where Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, it was not Moses that gave you bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:32,33) Again in John 6:35 "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." Many other verses

19. Fox, George, Works, Philadelphia, Marcus T. C. Gould, 1831, Volume 3, page 599.

in this chapter make it plain that our partaking of the Lord Jesus Christ is strictly a spiritual matter. For in John 6:63, Jesus, in his concluding remarks, said, "it is the spirit that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

The Quakers pointed out the fact that there was no actual relationship between the bread and the wine and the actual body and blood of Christ. The outward elements only went to the stomach and profited nothing, but it is the relation of the Spirit that is vital. Unless there is a spiritual contact, there is no communion. The bread and blood of Christ are necessary for the Christian, but this life-giving source cannot be passed around by men and handed out at random. Men are saved through the Spirit, they are sanctified through the Spirit, and they can only know communion with Christ through the Spirit.

Barclay makes a summary of this matter of the spiritual communion that it will be well to quote:

"First, That it is not Moses, but his Father, that giveth the true bread from heaven, vers. 32 and 48. Secondly, This bread he calls himself, vers. 35, "I am the bread of life:" and vers. 51, "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." Thirdly, He declares that this bread is his flesh, vers. 51, "The bread

that I will give, is my flesh;" and vers. 55, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Fourthly, The necessity of partaking thereof, vers. 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And lastly, The blessed fruits and necessary effects of this communion of the body and blood of Christ, vers. 33, "This bread giveth life to the world." Vers. 50, He that eateth thereof, dieth not. Vers. 58, "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." Vers. 54, Whoso eateth this flesh, and drinketh this blood, shall live for ever. Vers. 56, and he dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him. Vers. 57, And shall live by Christ. From this large description of the origin, nature, and effects of this body, flesh and blood of Christ, it is apparent that it is spiritual, and to be understood of a spiritual body, and not of that body, or temple of Jesus Christ."²⁰

While those early Quakers did admit that the early church practiced a type of the Lord's Supper, yet they affirm that there has come a new communion. The Lord set forth this new communion even as he set forth a new covenant. In the book of Hebrews and in Paul's epistles, especially Galatians, the thought of the new covenant and a day for a spiritual religion is borne out.

John gives insight to this matter in Revelation 3:20 where he tells of a call to a spiritual supper. Fox draws a parallel between what is known as the Last Supper and this supper referred to by John. He points out that

²⁰. Barclay, op. cit., page 424. This Scripture quoted by Barclay is in John 6.

John was one of the disciples closest to Christ, and he probably knew the Lord Jesus as well as anyone on earth. John was at the Last Supper, but he does not in his gospel depict the supper as do the other three writers and Paul, nor does he in any way make the Last Supper observance obligatory. However, in his writing in the book of Revelation, he sets forth the conditions of the spiritual supper.

"And after that Christ was ascended, and sat at the right hand of God, and the churches were gathered, as yet they were not come off many outward elementary things. And did not Christ send John, after he was ascended, to call the church to another supper, and said, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me; he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.'

"Now they that come to this inward and heavenly supper, and to sup with Christ, the heavenly and spiritual man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, since he is risen and ascended, they must have their spiritual ear to hear the spiritual voice of Christ, and his spiritual knocking at the door of their immortal souls and hearts, and with his spirit, the spiritual man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the king of glory, that he may come into their hearts and souls, and then they to sup with him, and he to sup with them the spiritual and heavenly supper. And to this heavenly and spiritual supper did Christ send John, to call the church of Christ, after he was risen and ascended."²¹

21. Fox, Works, Volume VI, page 284.

This call to sup with the Master is indeed a universal call, an ample and adequate call. The method of communion as held by the early Quakers was that opening the door of the heart and letting Christ come in and have right of way. If Christ was truly within, then there would be real communion and no one could prevent it. In this true communion, only those will partake of it that are fully qualified to do so, and, if a person is qualified, no one can prevent it.

It was well remembered by the early Quakers that Christ brought with him a new way. He did away with the types and the shadows. He laid aside form and ritual. He put away the priesthood as such, and everyone came to be a priest in his own right, if abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:26-28). The Passover feast which Christ ate with His disciples was a type or shadow of that great event which took place in Egypt. He displaced this type by shedding His blood, but, in displacing one shadow, did He produce an antitype and bring in another shadow?²²

It does not seem consistent for Christ to produce another type or shadow when He came to do away with

22. Sewell, William, History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the People Called Quakers, Philadelphia, Uriah Hunt, 1832, page 306.

such types and shadows. The question was asked: Why should we participate in a remembrance ceremony when it is possible right now to know the One whom we are remembering? Is it necessary to look at a loved one's picture when that loved one is in the room with you? Why then is it essential to have a remembrance ceremony when Christ is with us?

Not only did the early Quakers give a positive reply as to this matter of communion, but they also stood up against those that would make the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper obligatory.

"Another great objection they had, "That the Quaker's denied "the sacrament," as they called it, "of bread and wine, which," they said, "they were to take, and do in remembrance of Christ to the end of the world." A great deal of work we had with the priests and professors about this, and about the several modes of receiving it in Christendom, so called: for some of them take it kneeling, some sitting; but none of them all, that ever I could find, take it as the disciples took it. For they took it in a chamber after supper; but these generally take it before dinner; and some say, after the priest hath blessed it, it is "Christ's body." But as to the matter, Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He did not tell them how oft they should do it, or how long; neither did he enjoin them to do it always as long as they lived, or that all believers in him should do it to the world's end. The apostle Paul, who was not converted till after Christ's death, tells the Corinthians, that he had received of the Lord that which he delivered unto them concerning this matter, and relates Christ's words concerning the cup thus; "This do ye," as oft as

ye drink it, "in remembrance of me:" and himself adds, "For (as often as) ye do eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." So according to what the apostle here delivers, neither Christ nor he did enjoin people to do this always, but leaves it to their liberty, ("as oft as ye drink it," &c.) The Jews did use to take a cup, and to break bread and divide it among them in their feasts; as may be seen in the Jewish Antiquities; so the breaking of bread and drinking of wine were Jewish rites, which were not to last always."²³

The main church that Fox had to deal with was the Church of England which had had a Catholic background. Their view of the Lord's Supper was that of transubstantiation. They held that, after the priest had blessed the bread and wine, it became the actual blood and body of Christ. This is the most extreme view of the Sacrament, and, of course, the early Quakers felt absolutely impelled to cry out against such an error as this.

Another thing should be said as to the Friends' position of the Lord's Supper. They felt that they did practice the Lord's Supper and that they had a great bulk of Scripture to fully substantiate their spiritual interpretation of it. They set forth more Scripture to substantiate their view than did the ones practicing the outward rite. Three of the gospel writers give an

23. Fox, Journal, op. cit., page 247.

account of the Lord's Supper, but only one of them in any sense makes a statement as to its continued observance.

Paul deals with the matter in his letter to the Corinthians, and tells them that, if they are going to practice such a thing in the church, it should be done in a way pleasing to the Lord.

If this rite was to be continued, would not there have been more explicit instructions as to the method? There is nothing said as to how often this should be done, how it should be taken, or just who was to administer the Communion cup. There are many things that could be asked, but the question remains--are there Scriptural grounds for keeping the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and not doing many of the other things commanded in Scripture?

Barclay makes much of the command Jesus gave to His disciples to wash one another's feet. Jesus did give very plain instructions concerning feet washing, and yet it was little practiced in Fox's day nor is it practiced widely today. Why do people keep one outward ordinance and not keep another?

As a final statement, it will be well to let George Fox speak for himself.

"The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." "So here are many states and conditions to be gone through before people come to see that, and partake of that which "cometh down from above." For first, there was "a taking of the outward bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death." This was temporary, and not of necessity; but at their liberty, "As oft as ye do it," &c. Secondly, there must be "a coming into his death, a suffering with Christ;" and this is of necessity to salvation; and not temporary, but continual: there must be "a dying daily." Thirdly, "a being buried with Christ." Fourthly, "a rising with Christ." Fifthly, After they are risen with Christ, then "a seeking those things which are above, a seeking the bread that comes down from heaven," and a "feeding on that and having fellowship in that." For outward bread, wine, and water are from below, and are visible and temporal; but, saith the apostle, "We look not at things that are seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." So the fellowship that stands in the use of bread, wine, water, circumcision, outward temple, and things seen will have an end: but the fellowship which stands in the gospel, the power of God, which was before the devil was, and which brings life and immortality to light, by which people may see over the devil that has darkened them, this fellowship is eternal, and will stand. And all that are in it seek that which is heavenly and eternal, which comes down from above, and are settled in the eternal mystery of the fellowship of the gospel, which is hid from all eyes that look only at visible things. The apostle told the Corinthians, who were in disorder about water, bread and wine, that he "desired to know nothing amongst them, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified."²⁴

²⁴. Ibid., page 248.

Chapter III

THE QUAKER DOCTRINE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT BASIS

A. The Scriptural Basis of the Doctrine

It has been said that a person can find Scripture to corroborate most any view that he wishes to hold. This can be clearly seen when the great number of religious bodies are taken into consideration. Most all of them claim to be Biblical to some extent at least. Many of these have abused and misused Scripture to fit their own petty doctrine. Therefore, when the Quakers claimed to have full Scriptural authority for their doctrine, they made the same claim that all other reform groups had made.

It is possible, however, to have a true Scriptural basis for a doctrine, but it takes more than one text to properly substantiate a doctrine and all texts used for proof must be in accord with other related passages of Scripture. The Word of God does not contradict itself if each Scripture is viewed in the light of the rest of Scripture. This doctrine of Scripture is that which is held in orthodox Protestant circles.

Our purpose is to examine the Scriptures the early Quakers used in the presentation of their doctrine and to study these in the light of exegetical principles.

The Quakers proclaimed the fact that the Lord's Supper was to be taken in a spiritual way. This was a positive approach to the matter and they spoke of the substance that was to be partaken of, its origin, nature, and effect, and also they set forth the method by which this communion was to be taken.

The substance to be partaken of is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the true bread of which all must partake if they come to know true communion. This bread does not originate with man but with God. "It was not Moses that gave you bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:32b, 33). Jesus made it clear when He said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48). He was the One of whom all men were to partake, but this was impossible in a physical sense and these words can only be taken in a spiritual way.

The nature of this bread is set forth in John's Gospel, chapter 6 and verses 35, 51, 53, and 55. Since Christ is the bread, it will follow that the nature of the bread would be the nature of Christ. The Lord said that the bread which He would give was His own flesh. The very

nature of this bread makes it essential. As stated in verse 53, "I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." It is therefore an essential and that which must be partaken of by all who desire to be with the Lord.

In John 6:33, 50, 54, 56-58, the effects of this partaking of Christ will be noted. The Quakers affirmed this to be the true communion. This bread gives life to the world and everyone eating of it shall not die. To those who partake of this spiritual communion will come the joy of having Christ abiding in them and they in Christ. Those that ate bread in the wilderness died and so did those that ate of the Passover, but Jesus said that those eating of the bread that He gave would live forever and ever. Those that offer the outward ordinance cannot say as much for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They partake of elements that are earthy and soon disappear and have no necessary relation to the true blood and the true body of Christ.

In the church that practices the Sacrament, there is much discussion about the method which should be employed in administering the Sacrament. They do it at different times, they serve different elements, and they

strive over who is to serve the elements. The Scripture is very plain as to the method of spiritual communion.

In the first place, it is offered to any and all (John 1:9, 12; 6:35, 51, 56). Through the Light that shines into the hearts of all men, there comes a call to communion. It is fully stated that any man coming could partake and he would receive all the benefits that Christ had made provision for in this communion. Another passage that was a favorite of the early Quakers was Revelation 3:20: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." They saw in this a call to the true communion, not of the outward bread and wine, but an inward relation to Christ. This communion was the most vital, for it brought the one who opened his heart's door into direct contact with Christ.

The men of God of the Old Testament times partook of this spiritual communion. "And did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the same spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:3, 4). Men of all times have partaken of the true spiritual communion, and it has been this that has saved them and given them a fellowship with Christ.

Paul, in writing the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter ten, verses 15 and 16, speaks of this spiritual communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread." This passage makes plain that there is a spiritual breaking of bread, the one Bread which is Christ Jesus.²⁵

Both Barclay²⁶ and later Quakers²⁷ make reference to the Lord's prayer as found in Matthew 6:11 and Luke 11:3. They both favored the interpretation that would make this bread prayed for "a spiritual bread." The term used by Barclay is the "super-substantial bread." The later Quakers were not as strong in their use of the term even though they do make reference to the Greek at this point. A spiritual interpretation of that passage would not render hurt to it, but it may not be the best rendering. This matter will be discussed a little later in connection with problem passages.

25. Other passages referred to by the Quakers not quoted in this section are II Cor. 6:14, I Cor. 6:17 and I Cor. 10:21.

26. Barclay, op. cit., page 433.

27. Sewell, op. cit., page 304.

The Quakers struck deeply at the heart of those that held to transubstantiation. The ones holding this view believed that every time they took the cup that had been blessed by the priest they actually partook of the body and the blood of Christ. There are many arguments against transubstantiation and even consubstantiation, and a careful exegetical study of the Scriptures will reveal the errors of these two interpretations.

As has been set forth, the body and the blood of Christ can only be known through the Spirit. Our physical bodies need an earthy food, but our soul requires that which is spiritual. The Scriptures used by the early Quakers are very clear, and there is reason to believe they will bear up under exegetical scrutiny. If the early Quakers misused or misinterpreted any Scripture, any error which can be found will be pointed out.

B. The Quaker Use of Scripture in the Light of Scripture

The most difficult part of this presentation is now to be considered. The material that is to be dealt with has been transversed many times. Books have been written about this, and yet today the matter is not at all settled.

The early Quakers not only set forth the doctrine of a spiritual Communion, but they also pointed out that the Lord's Supper, as an outward sacrament, was not obligatory. Most all evangelical bodies would agree to the Quaker interpretation concerning spiritual communion, but, when it comes to the matter of the Sacrament, there is confusion. When I Corinthians 11 is considered along with John 6, a problem immediately arises. It will be best to consider the related Scriptures used by the Quakers and then check to see if they erred in interpretation.

Because of the nature of the spiritual communion made clear by Jesus, the Quakers felt this fully displaced any continuing ordinance. They first dealt with the Scripture directly related to the subject as found in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and I Corinthians 11. Neither Matthew nor Mark, in relating the Last Supper experience, attach any command. They simply point out the fact that Jesus

took bread and broke it, etc. In Luke and Corinthians, there would appear to be more of a command. Luke states it thus, "this do in remembrance of me", and Paul said, "this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." In regard to this, Barclay makes the following statement:

"Now this act was no singular thing, neither any solemn institution of a gospel ordinance; because it was a constant custom among the Jews, as Paulus Riccius observes at length in his Celestial Agriculture, that when they did eat the passover, the master of the family did take bread, and bless it, and breaking it, gave of it to the rest; and likewise taking wine, did the same; so that there can nothing further appear in this, than that Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness, and also observed the Jewish feasts and customs, used this also among his disciples only, that as in most other things he laboured to draw their minds to a further thing, so in the use of this he takes occasion to put them in mind of his death and sufferings, which were shortly to be; which he did the oftener inculcate unto them, for that they were averse from believing it. And as for that expression of Luke, "Do this in remembrance of me," it will amount to no more than this, that being the last time that Christ did eat with his disciples, he desired them, that in their eating and drinking they might have regard to him, and by the remembering of that opportunity, be the more stirred up to follow him diligently through sufferings and death."²⁸

As concerning the passage found in I Corinthians 11, the Quakers took the following attitude: the Quakers admitted that the early church, in many sectors, participated in a type of communion supper. This was true at Corinth,

²⁸. Barclay, op. cit., pages 441, 442.

but the condition had been very much corrupted, and the whole church was divided. Paul wrote to the church to put them somewhat straight. He told them that their "coming together into one place, is not to eat the Lord's Supper." Barclay felt the reason for this statement was that Paul realized the true Supper of the Lord was spiritual and a mystery. Paul thoroughly reprimands the church and further points out to them that all things that are done in the church must be done as unto the Lord. In dealing with this church at Corinth, Paul narrates again the story of the Last Supper. This is not a command, but a narration. It may be a command to the degree that Paul was insistent that everything which was brought into the circle of the church's activity be done as unto the Lord. Paul goes a step farther than Luke in saying, "this do, as often as ye drink it,.....for as often as ye eat this bread." These statements carry no command and indicate that, if this ceremony is to be done at any future time, it is to be done as unto the Lord and in decent order. But, according to the early Quakers, to make this supper, in which the Corinthians were indulging, obligatory was to read something into the Scripture that was not intended. This will be considered to some degree later when the problem passages are under consideration.

This church at Corinth had made itself liable and in line for judgment by using and misusing this ceremony in the church. There is little doubt that, in the beginning, they had some type of a fellowship supper together; and, in this, they made special remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now their supper had come to be a very offensive thing to anyone that was spiritual. There were divisions--some were gluttonous, others went hungry, and there were those who were drunk in the church.

The Quakers believed that Paul was setting the people straight as to their conduct in the church more than he was trying to perpetuate an ordinance. They felt that all things should be done in order whether it be singing of hymns, saying of prayers, or the preaching of God's Word. If any one of these things was done in disorder, the ones that were guilty would be bringing judgment upon themselves and would be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

One of the traits of humanity is inconsistency. The Quakers found it most difficult to see how people could hold so tenaciously to some of the commands and dismiss so glibly some of the other very explicit commands. It was observed by the Quakers in John 13:4-5, 8, 12, 14-15 that some very definite things are

commanded by Jesus. This passage sets forth the scene in which Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. There are three things to be noted about this scene. It was done at the same supper as was the matter under consideration. It was done with more solemnity, and it was prescribed far more punctually. Yet how many observe today this command to wash one another's feet? It is true that there are a few, but only a few. Barclay does not ask that this be made a command to be continued, for he believed that it was done to teach a spiritual lesson; however, he makes the same claim for the Lord's Supper. When Jesus took bread, He did not begin a new order, for He was but teaching a spiritual lesson. This was not foreign to the method of Jesus. He taught spiritual lessons by drawing upon the common things of life. Many times Christ was misunderstood because people could not see beyond the material to the truly spiritual nature of that which Christ was trying to present.

Two other commands are mentioned by Barclay, one found in Acts 15:28-29: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled,....." The other passage is found

in James 5:14 where it is definitely commanded that the sick be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord. Neither of these commands were being kept in Barclay's day, and he could see no reason why his adversaries persecuted him when they did not keep all the law themselves. His view was that these commands were just as obligatory as those claimed for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and, if communion should be kept in an outward ordinance, then these should be also. He advocated that these things were allowed and practiced for a time, but there was nothing about them that made them a continuing ordinance.²⁹

The Quakers further presented Scripture to show that the day of types, shadows, and ordinances was removed by Christ. This does not include those things that refer to the future, especially mentioned by John in the book of Revelation. The Church of Fox's time held the view that circumcision gave way to water baptism and the paschal lamb gave way to the bread and the wine. One of the first passages referred to was Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom of God then stands not in meats and drinks, for these pass with

29. Ibid., page 454.

the passing day; but the kingdom of God for men of this world is spiritual, and men can know the kingdom of God in their hearts only through the Spirit.

Colossians 2:16-23 is called on to bear witness to the fact that our relation to the Lord is spiritual and that ordinances pass away with the using. The whole of this second chapter to the Colossians deals with traditions, rudiments of this world, and the matter of ordinances. Verse 20 is very pointed in stating, "If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances." Paul recognized that the Christian was dependent upon a spiritual relationship to Christ and ordinances would have no continuing value. Hebrews 9:10 also makes reference to the fact that carnal ordinances were allowed; but, when Jesus came, He put away those things and rendered them no longer necessary. It must be remembered that the early church carried for a time many of the old Jewish rites, and they even incorporated some of the local customs into their ceremonies. These were allowed for awhile, but they were not obligatory and were not intended to be carried down through the centuries.

C. The Problem of Interpretation

One of the reasons for so many church divisions today lies in the field of interpretation. Many religious groups have given an interpretation to Scripture contrary to the context in which it is found. They also have been inconsistent in their use of Scripture. Some passages they take very literally, and others they wish to make symbolical. It is true that there are passages which are symbolical and some which are literal, but to claim that a passage is symbolic or literal to fit one's own private doctrine is doing an injustice to the Word of God.

In the first place, Scripture used by the early Quakers will be noted which might have had a better interpretation than that given by the Quakers.

The first reference is made to the Lord's prayer. Both Barclay and Fox chose the view that the reference to bread, "give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11), meant spiritual bread. The Greek word "ἐπιούσιον" is the word that is usually translated "daily." The word means more than daily. It means "the bread of our necessity" or "the bread for sustenance, which serves to sustain life."³⁰ As has been pointed out, the physical body is

³⁰. Thayer, J. H., Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1889, page 241.

not the only one which needs sustaining. The spiritual body, too, must be fed. I feel that the early Quakers were not wrong in giving this passage a spiritual meaning, but, in the light of that meaning, they should have recognized that this "daily bread" included both physical bread and spiritual bread.

The interpretation given Colossians 2:20 might be called into question. The passage reads thus: "If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances." The Quakers pointed out that Paul was speaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and other ordinances when he spoke thus. It may be that Paul did have such in mind, but, in view of the meaning of the word "rudiments", it means more than the rites of the Lord's Supper and baptism. The word "rudiments" refers more to the heathen rite which had been brought into the church. It also refers to traditions that the Jews had held, which were no longer to be carried on in the church. While Paul might have been referring to the Sacraments, he meant much more than the limited interpretation of the early Quakers.

Robert Barclay could not see that I Corinthians 10:16-17 had reference to the ceremony of the Lord's

Supper. He pointed out that the whole of the chapter dealt with spiritual matters, and there is no mention of the ceremony in this chapter. He further made the observation that the one bread which is partaken of could only be inward and spiritual. Since it was one bread and is partaken of by all the saints, it would necessarily follow that it was a spiritual partaking. The cup of communion of the blood of Jesus Christ can only be taken in a spiritual manner. If verse 16 is referring to the ceremony, then it will necessarily follow that the view of either transubstantiation or consubstantiation will have to be held. This passage is a difficult one to fully understand, but it is made even more difficult when given a materialistic interpretation.

The statement, "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper.....," found in I Corinthians 11:20 was taken very literally by the Quakers. They said that the true Supper of the Lord was spiritual; and, when men came together, it was not to eat the Lord's Supper. In the light of the context, this interpretation is not the best one. These Corinthians had come to such an abominable state of affairs that it was not possible for them to carry on their worship in a way pleasing to the Lord. They had formerly been having a love feast and a time of

remembrance of Jesus Christ, but they had turned this time into a selfish debauch. Therefore, it was not possible to do it unto the Lord.

The passage found in I Corinthians 11:26 was given different meanings. The verse reads thus: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." There was a question as to when He was to come. Fox favored the view that Christ had, in a sense, come. Jesus told his disciples that He would not eat or drink with them until He did it new in His Kingdom (Matthew 26:29). Christ did come again to His disciples after the resurrection and did eat and drink with them. In this sense, he had come again.

Barclay suggested that this ceremony was allowed these carnal Christians at Corinth for a time. Paul allowed them to practice this bit of ritual until the day when they would come to know Jesus Christ in their hearts as they ought. They were to do this to show forth Christ's death till He should come to dwell in their hearts in His fullness.

The interpretation which is commonly accepted and which does justice to the Scripture is that Paul here refers to the rapture of the Church of Christ. "Till He

come" then is a looking forward by the Christian until that great day when the Church shall be caught up in the air to meet the Lord. It is possible, I suppose, to show forth the Lord's death in this manner, that is, through the remembrance ceremony; but there are many other ways in which this can be done. The Quaker view of this passage does carry some truth, but their interpretation is not the best one in this case.

Now that we have treated sufficiently some of the passages about which there was a question of interpretation, some other passages of Scripture which are problematic will be considered.

One of these passages is found in John 13:1-17. This relates the incident which took place at the Last Supper. This passage states that Jesus laid aside his garments and took a towel and gird Himself. After so doing, He proceeded to pour water into a basin, and He washed the feet of His disciples. After He had finished with the washing of their feet, He sat down again with them and expounded unto them what He had done. The direct commands that are made are very striking. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you

an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14, 15). Barclay was of the opinion that there was more commanded in this passage than could be found in the one that is claimed for the Lord's Supper.

Many have been careful to point out the fact that foot washing was something of a very common nature and Jesus was only wanting to teach a lesson of humility by His act. They say that it was not a continuing command, but was only done by the Lord to teach a spiritual lesson. The same people that take such a stand concerning foot washing would never think of allowing the same view for the Lord's Supper. This appears to many to be the height of inconsistency. Should one be accepted as spiritual and not continued and the other accepted as a physical ordinance to be fostered by the church?

It should be noted that both of these incidents took place the same night. The Passover that was being eaten together was a usual exercise with the Jews. It was customary for the Jews to break bread, and there was nothing new about it. The Jews even at times had a special blessing offered during the meal. Therefore, it is difficult to see how Jesus truly instituted a new thing.

In the light of Scripture, it appears that the washing of feet is as much commanded as the continuance of the bread and the wine. The washing of feet is referred to again in I Timothy 5:10, and it is in connection with the church. It is a fact that the washing of feet was carried on in many areas of the New Testament church. It never gained any great acceptance, and the reason may have been the inconvenience and the seeming uselessness of it. They saw how they could be humble and have a servant's spirit without the ceremony. The ceremony of the bread and the wine might have continued because it could be administered much more easily than the washing of feet. It does seem highly inconsistent in the light of the Scripture to cry for the one ceremony and neglect the other.

Is the keeping of the Lord's Supper obligatory? This question has been a problem for almost every generation. In considering the Scripture itself, the whole problem centers around a few Scriptures, namely, Luke 22:19 and I Corinthians 11:24-26. In these passages, the words "τοῦτο ποιεῖτε" ³¹ are the words translated "this do." Many have taken this as being a direct command to do now and

³¹. Westcott, B. F. and Hort, F.J.A., New Testament in the Original Greek, New York, Macmillan, 1947. Greek words referred to are from this text.

forever. Some have examined the Greek and discovered that "ΠΟΛΕΛΤΕ" can be translated in the imperative mood and have published the fact as though this were the only mood in which it could be taken.

This, however, is not true. The term "ΠΟΛΕΛΤΕ" can and is also used as present active indicative. When used as such, it does not necessarily carry a continuing command.

Just what was Jesus referring to when he said, "this do in remembrance of me"? The disciples were to partake with Jesus in mind. This was the last supper they were going to be together before Jesus was offered up, and soon Jesus' body was to be broken in a real way. His blood was going to be literally shed for them. He was to become the Lamb that was slain, and, instead of thinking in terms of the Passover lamb, Jesus wanted His disciples to anticipate Him as the Lamb to be slain. Jesus was ready to issue in the new covenant, and He wanted His own disciples to follow through in the transition.

Paul makes it very clear about the necessity of the Lord's Supper in writing to the Corinthians. The two statements are plain, "as often as" and "for as often as." These statements remove any sense of obligation as to the

continuing of the ordinance. The Greek word for "as often as" is "ὡσάκις." It originates from the word "ὥσως"³² which means in one sense "as long as." The verb in the phrase, "as often as ye drink it," is subjunctive and has the thought of being conditional. The conditional particle "εἰάν" is also used. So to give this phrase a literal rendering, it would read thus, "as long as if ye drink." Paul told the Corinthians and Christ told His disciples that, if they should carry on a type of the Passover, they should do it in remembrance of Him. The "if" clause removes and, in a very real sense, nullifies any thought of this ordinance being obligatory. Even though a remembrance ceremony was carried on in the New Testament church, in the light of Scripture it cannot be proven that Jesus instituted such a ceremony, nor can it be proven that He commanded that such a ceremony was to be continued until His coming in the rapture.

If this ceremony were obligatory, it would be reasonable to suppose that Jesus would have given more specific commands as to its keeping. The Passover had specific instructions regulating it. The time, the elements, and the ones to administer the Passover were very clear. If the

³². Thayer, op. cit., page 456.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be continually perpetuated by the Church, it would not be anticipating too much to expect to find more explicit instructions given by Jesus concerning this matter.

D. The Evaluation of the Doctrine in the
Light of Exegesis

To evaluate is to give an appraisal. It is to show forth the worth of a thing. It is the desire in this brief section to see what remains or to see what was destroyed of the early Quaker doctrine by the exegetical consideration.

As has been noted, only a few Scriptures were misinterpreted by the Quakers in relation to their doctrine of Communion. Where there was error, an effort was made to point out the error and to give the correct interpretation of the Scripture. The Scriptures that I have been critical of, even if they were left out of the picture, would not change the doctrine and its firm Scriptural basis.

In looking at the doctrine as a whole in the light of Scripture, it is sound. The Quaker emphasis concerning communion was proper, and anyone placing any different emphasis today will not know true spiritual communion.

Exegesis substantiated the fact that communion is essential to salvation, and all who are looking forward to abiding with Christ must partake of His body and His blood. Furthermore, this communion is not in any

sense dependent upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Often the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is far more pernicious than it is helpful. The Corinthian church is an example of this, for they were not having communion with the Lord. Their use of the ceremony had caused them to venture into gross sin, and it brought shame upon the Church. The Catholic Church today is an example of the excesses to which these things can be carried, if allowed.

The fact that the spiritual communion is the communion and the ceremony is not obligatory was further borne out in the exegetical examination. At this point, many have criticized the Quakers, but it has been before they fully understood the Quaker doctrine and its Scriptural basis.

The early Quaker doctrine of Communion has a firm basis and will stand up under the test which should be given any doctrine. There is little wonder that the early Quakers were so zealous to get forth this new message--this true message--and new note which had not been sounded as it ought for many, many centuries.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY

In this summary, I should like to do two things: first, to state that which has been substantiated, and, second, to state some of the problems that are unanswered.

It will be unnecessary to cover the ground again that has already been considered to some length. Therefore, I will proceed to set forth that which was upheld.

I. Concerning the Ceremony:

- A. The ceremony is not obligatory.
- B. If the ceremony was instituted, it was not to be a continuing ordinance.
- C. The bread and the wine of the Sacrament have no necessary relation to the body and the blood of Christ.

II. Concerning True Spiritual Communion:

- A. It is spiritual and can only be known through the Spirit.
- B. It is necessary to salvation.
- C. It is a mystery to all but the saints.
- D. It is made possible through the blood of Christ.
- E. It is possible for us to have if we will but open our hearts unto the Lord.
- F. It will lead to that eternal life in heaven with Christ Jesus.

Communion, as taught by the early Quakers, was that which was vital and vibrant. It was an essential, and their concept of it lifted it to a height such as has blessed the world ever since. Quaker communion was not practiced once a quarter, but it was practiced daily, and this made the Quaker what he was.

I believe the matter of communion has been considered to the extent that it will be possible for those who desire, to see, to understand, and to know the validity of the Quaker doctrine of Communion.

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