

1-1-1965

Front Matter--Quaker Religious Thought, no. 13

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Recommended Citation

Jones, T Canby (1965) "Front Matter--Quaker Religious Thought, no. 13," *Quaker Religious Thought*: Vol. 13, Article 1.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol13/iss1/1>

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Quaker
Religious
Thought

The Thought of Robert Barclay:
An Evaluation
Francis B. Hall

COMMENTS

By Maurice A. Creasey, James J. Flood, and D. Elton Trueblood

Vol. VII, No. 1

Spring 1965

75 cents

QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Volume VII, Number 1

Spring, 1965

Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

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Additional copies of this and other issues can be obtained from *Quaker Religious Thought*, P. O. Box 1066, Owensboro, Kentucky 42301, at the prices listed on the back cover.

Editorial

The theme of this issue develops a fascinating counterpoint between two commentators who severely criticize the thought of Robert Barclay, another who stoutly defends him, and the author of the lead article who demurs at some of Barclay's tenets but by and large supports him vigorously.

Dualism looms large in the thought of all four of our writers. James Flood, our Catholic commentator, feels that Robert Barclay's dualism was an unfortunate fruit of his Calvinist training, serves as the basis for his inadequate view of man as depraved, and undermines Barclay's mystical thrust for union with God by immediate revelation. James Flood goes on to say that the traditional Catholic teaching of the basic concord between nature and grace would have solved Barclay's problem and avoided the distressing passivity and quietism which resulted from his dualism.

Elton Trueblood on the other hand insists that Barclay is no Calvinist and proceeds to defend and rejoice in Barclay's dualism as timely, realistic and true. Which commentator is right?

Maurice Creasey objects to Robert Barclay's reliance on terms such as "light," "seed," and "immediate revelation," as too abstract or mythological to speak to modern man's condition. He feels that Barclay had little historical sense and hence lacks proper emphasis on the Incarnation and God's seeking and saving the lost.

Francis Hall, author of the lead article and final response, endorses Barclay's *qualified* dualism, stresses the centrality of worship in Barclay's thought, and champions as extremely relevant to our time Barclay's strong belief in the Light as one, universal and saving. Francis Hall's comparison of the roots of Quietism in Catholic mysticism with those in Barclay and Quakerism, I find extremely instructive.

This issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* is a provocative challenge to a re-examination on our own of the thought of Robert Barclay, for two hundred years the palladium of Quaker belief and for the past sixty falsely discredited.

T. C. J.