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Abridger's Introduction--Quaker Religious Thought, no. 47

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Abridger's Introduction

"Early Quaker Ecclesiology" is a condensation which is only half the length of the original fifth chapter of *Catholic and Quaker Study No. 3*, by Dr. Donald S. Nesti, a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

Many of the supporting quotations from Quaker and other sources had to be left out. The references, even to the remaining quotations, were also omitted because of their number and length. (There were almost 300 in this particular chapter.) Those who find the condensation of interest are urged to obtain the complete volume with the quotations and references.

The chapter titles in that volume are: Preface, Historical and Religious Setting, Early Quaker Religious Experience, Revelation and the Means of Salvation, Early Quaker Christology, Early Quaker Ecclesiology, and a Conclusion in which, as a Roman Catholic scholar, the author gives his impressions of early Quakerism.

A word should be said to the reader in advance. As a theologian, Dr. Nesti naturally uses theological language. If some of the vocabulary seems a bit strange at first, as reading continues the basic meaning will become apparent. One point, however, may need explanation for Friends. The author thinks of the Quaker way as a form of salvation through *faith*. In view of the Quaker emphasis upon inner experience, this may seem a misplaced usage of a many-sided word until one understands the meaning he gives to the word. On page 10 of this abridged version, Donald Nesti defines *faith*, as used here, to be the "positive response to the grace of God which he [an individual] experiences within him."

J. Calvin Keene