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## Comment--Quaker Religious Thought, no. 70

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## Comment

DEAN FREIDAY

Margaret Benefiel enlarges the discussion of the Atonement and Quakerism by bringing a second grid to the data. I employed Gustaf Aulén's which she considers to be in error. Actually, I think his grid is as valid a way of looking at the data as Bernard Lonergan's, especially if you are interested in making historical judgments.

There is a tremendous range, even today, in the way in which the doctrine of the Atonement is handled. Finding adequate categories to analyze and criticize the vast array of data is no small task. Aulén's work of sifting and organizing has been considered monumental. Naturally, as a good Lutheran, his findings are quite favorable to Luther. Is it any more objective to use Lonergan's grid to make laudatory claims for the early Quakers?

Neither Aulén nor Lonergan is easy reading, but Lonergan has a way of stimulating intuitional leaps, whereas Aulén tends to be more of a paleontologist looking at "fossil remains." Since Fr. Lonergan was looking at "meaning," in the chapter from which his grid was taken, that ought to be broad enough for the present purpose.

I invite the reader to see if the following alternative classifications are justifiable for application to both my article and Margaret Benefiel's "revisionist view." Lonergan's might be called: (1) symbolic, mythical, or narrative; (2) theoretical or metaphysical; and (3) interior experiential. Aulén's division, also tripartite could be labelled: (4) metaphorical, analogic, or mythical ("cosmic drama"); (5) juridical ("satisfaction, propitiation, expiation"); and (6) subjective — as indeed Abelard's was, since it concentrated not on what Christ had done "for men" but on what "is done in men and by men."

Viewed in this way, (1) and (4) have much in common; as do (3) and (6). The parallels are not as clear between (2) and (5), but obviously the theoretical has a major role in both, whether the outcome is metaphysical or jurisprudential.

Fox certainly uses "evil, darkness, worldliness and a host of other metaphors," (1) and (4), more frequently to identify the "enemy" than the personalization as Satan or the Devil favored by Anselm or Luther. Quakers (then and now) tend to be allergic to metaphysics or the juridical, (2) and (5), — although there are references in both Fox (25 times) and Barclay (11 times) to being "bought/purchased/paid for and redeemed by the blood of Christ."

Admittedly, the experiential and subjective, (3) and (6), are more prominent in both Barclay's and Fox's treatments. But I don't think Margaret Benefiel's claim that they made "the first attempt at third-order reflection in the history of the doctrine of the Atonement" can be substantiated. Not only was that Anselm's basic thrust, but in 17th-century Lutheranism Johann Arndt's *True Christianity* (1606) influenced others. Philipp Jakob Spener, often known as the father of Pietism, was influenced to publish his *Pia Desideria* (Pious Wishes) when asked to write an introduction for a book of Arndt's sermons. That was in 1675, the very time when Barclay was writing the *Apology*.

Pietism strove to restore spiritual content to the dry neo-Scholasticism of the day, which had honed theological distinctions more finely than Roman Catholic Scholasticism had ever done. So formal and lifeless was worship in the state church that the Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard (usually ranked third in significance — after Luther and Melancthon) "was expressly praised at his funeral for never having slept in church."

Theodore G. Tappert, in his introduction (p. 9) to the 1964 edition of the *Pia Desideria*, makes the point that Spener was influenced by a number of English Puritan devotional books. Tappert also says (p. 11) that the "Jansenist movement within Roman Catholicism and the Hasidist movement in Judaism" and others were all part of "a common historical climate, although they reacted differently in their concrete historical situations."

Perhaps the Quaker "genius," if that is the right characterization, in dealing with the Atonement, was in firmly uniting the Christ who lived, died, and was resurrected in 1st-century Palestine with the Christ who has "come [again] to teach his people Himself," to instruct them in sharing his suffering *when necessary*, and putting into practice his values and example *always and everywhere*.