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J Calvin Keene

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QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

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Persons wishing to have their names added to the Quaker Theological Discussion Group can do so by sending \$2.00, and those sympathetic to this endeavor are invited to make contributions to it in any amount. These will be gratefully received. Those on the mailing list receive Quaker Theological *Newsnotes* and announcements, in addition to the two issues of *Quaker Religious Thought* annually.

Additional copies of this and previous issues can be obtained from *Quaker Religious Thought*, 379 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn., at the prices listed on the back cover.

Editorial

In the early development of the Christian church in Europe, the questions concerning the Sacraments — their number, nature, and power — were matters of central importance in theological discussion. Starting with the two practices found in the gospels, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, others were added until at one time 30 Sacraments were recognized. But by the time of the Middle Ages just seven such received general acceptance and in the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century these seven were defined as "containing and conveying saving grace." That is, by their nature and when properly administered, they were understood as containing God's power for the transformation and divinization of the lives of church members. Their effects were considered automatic, irrespective of the virtues of celebrant or the one receiving them.

Protestants in the Reformation rejected the Sacraments as the principal carriers of God's grace to men, and replaced them by faith. Friends went even further, disowning their practice entirely and thereby becoming the only Christian body not using them. It is this witness against the practice of the central Sacraments of Baptism and Communion and the attitude toward the Sacraments which modern Friends might hold that this issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* investigates under the guidance of the British Friend, Maurice A. Creasey, whose earlier article on the significance of Christ has been one of our most widely read issues.

Also in this issue appear the first "letters to the editor" — two communications sent in response to the invitation in the preceding issue to comment on Elton Trueblood's article concerning the Quaker ministry.

J. C. K.