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A Study of the Friends Doctrine of the Person of Christ

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A STUDY OF THE FRIENDS

DOCTRINE OF

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

by

May O. Wallace

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

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of the Requirements for the Degree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Friends (often called Quakers) are distinctive in their doctrines in some areas of theology and among Friends there are differences of opinion. Various theological positions concerning Christ have been held among Friends which have been classed as unorthodox. It was the purpose of this investigation to determine if possible whether or not the basic concept of the Person of Christ has a direct bearing upon these theological varieties. It was necessary to find whatever varieties there may be in the contemporary Quaker view of Christ and compare them with the seventeenth century Friends' view and both in relation to the traditional historic Christian position. Of particular interest was the Evangelical Quaker position in relation to Evangelical Orthodoxy. Special attention was given to the seventeenth century and the Christological problems as dealt with by the Friends. The answers to the following questions helped to clarify the issues: (1) Did the seventeenth century Quakers have anything to say concerning the Person of Christ or did they speak to another problem. (2) What was the seventeenth century Friends view of the Person of Christ? (3) Did their view differ from the decisions of the ecumenical councils? (4) Did the Friends make a contribution to the doctrine of the Person of Christ?

Justification of the Study

Since the Person of Christ has been assailed both as to His deity and His humanity among modern Quakers, it is deemed profitable to give careful consideration to this subject because it stands as one of the most important subjects in Christian theology. If Jesus were not God, then all that follows in the doctrines of the Gospel could have no force. Underlying all doctrinal structure is one's basic concept of the Person of Christ, and for this reason the main stream of Christological history is to be examined with special reference being given to the Quakers of the seventeenth century.

Every student of history must recognize that the present is vitally affected by the past but a resolute determination must be made not to weave the error of the past into the fabric of the present. As an evangelical Quaker this writer desires to make a careful survey of the historical concept of the Person of Christ and relate it to Quaker theology. Early Friends' writing reveal their stand on this issue when accused by their opposers of not believing in Christ as divine. From these writings both liberal and evangelical Friends have claimed a position in line with historical Christianity. Consequently a more thorough and accurate analysis must be made to determine a definitive evangelical Quaker position on the Person of Christ.

Definition of Terms

Evangelical Quaker. An evangelical Quaker is one who holds that the essence of the gospel consists mainly in its doctrines of man's sinful condition and need of salvation, the revelation of God's grace in Christ, the necessity of spiritual renovation, and participation in the experience of redemption through faith as propounded by George Fox.

Conservative Quaker. A conservative Quaker refers to that branch of Quakerism which seeks to maintain the ancient testimonies of the Society with the idea of bearing witness to the spirituality of the gospel rather than propagating it. This group meets in silence without a paid ministry and has stressed the social aspect of the gospel strongly. From this group comes the extreme pacifist view.

Orthodox. The term, orthodox, as used in this study refers to the beliefs held by the evangelical Quakers. The terms are used synonymously.

Unorthodox. An unorthodox view would be one held in opposition to the accepted standard belief of the evangelical or orthodox view.

Apostasy. The term apostasy as used in this study means the abandonment of the principles of faith which one has previously professed.

Social gospel. The "social gospel" means in this study emphasis on the social welfare of human society as a means of propagating the gospel of Christ.

Delimitation

Because of the wide range to be covered in the doctrine of the Person of Christ and the vast amount of material to be combed, the subject must be limited to a brief study of the periods in Church history when it became a problem of major emphasis. This investigation has attempted to recognize the trends in the Quaker movement which have prevailed as an outgrowth of the Christological controversies. This beginning is to serve as an incentive for further investigation and study of the subject.

Procedure

It is the purpose of this study to survey the doctrine of the Person of Christ during the time of the Apostles and in the first few centuries following them. Special attention has been given to the decisions of the major councils as they relate to the Christological problem. The seventeenth century has been viewed with reference to the Friends' concept of the Person of Christ and related or compared to the decisions of the Councils. Consideration has been given to the prominent leaders in the early Church and their specific views concerning Christ. Outstanding leaders in the Quaker movement have been studied to determine their position and how it compares or differs with the early Church. In chapters II and III an attempt to summarize the prevailing views of the Person of Christ has been made from the time of the apostles through the Reformation. Chapter IV has dealt with the Friends' concept of Christ and some interpreting will be necessary. Chapter V has been an attempt to show how the basic

concept of the Person of Christ relates to current trends toward unorthodoxy in the Friends Church. The conclusion of this research and study has been presented in chapter VI.

As much as possible original sources have been sought such as: Fox's Journal, Barclay's Apology, and The Works of George Fox.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY CHURCH

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A. THE APOSTLES

In theology the department which deals with the Person of Christ is called Christology. The whole subject matter of Christology is most intimately related to revelation. Involved is the revelation of God to men. The Incarnation of Christ is the central fact of all history and the truth of Christianity and is tied up with the whole work of creation and redemption.¹

A proper conception of the Advent involves the two terms, God and Man, and their reciprocal relations. We must view it as an incarnation, in which God and man are conjoined in one person--the eternal Son.²

In making a historical approach to the subject of Christology one must recognize that the doctrine of the Person of Christ has not been always defined and limited with sufficient strictness. As soon as serious efforts began to be made to give rational explanations of the Biblical facts as to our Lord's Person, many one-sided and incomplete statements were formulated which required correction and complementing before at length a mode of statement was devised which did full justice to the Biblical data and the faith of the early Church.

¹H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1947), II, 143.

²Ibid.

The Chalcedonian Council in 451 A.D. finally expressed the Christology which has become formative for all Christendom by stressing the Divine and human natures in Christ in such a way as to preserve the single Personality without loss of the integrity of the two natures. It is desirable therefore to be acquainted somewhat with the pronouncements of the early church when the church was compelled by the rise of heresies to confess its faith in objective terms. Without entering fully into the details one can say that the ancient church rose to defend its faith both in the deity and the humanity of Christ.

New Testament Christology is connected with the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Christ is the heart of the Scripture, and the key to its spiritual understanding. Schaff stated that:

The promise of the Messiah runs like a golden chain through the whole Old Testament. The Messianic promise binds together the primitive, the patriarchal, the Mosiac, the prophetic, the exilic, and the post-exilic periods.¹

Dr. Dorner sums up the New Testament Christology by saying that in Christ has appeared the perfect revelation of God, and at the same time the perfection of humanity.²

During Christ's sojourn on earth, widely divergent ideas of him were already current. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"³ Christ

¹Philip Schaff, Christ and Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885), p. 46

²J. A. Dorner, History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ trans. William Lindsay Alexander (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1858), I.

³Matthew 16:13.

asked his disciples. As an answer to this question one discovers in Him John the Baptist, another Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Peter's reply as the spokesman for the group shows his customary prominence, which may be considered as that of dean of the apostolic twelve: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹

Jesus instructed and exhorted the disciples concerning his person and their mission. Seeberg brought this out when he said:

His authority, claims and promises during his earthly life now first attain for them their full significance and force. . . It is one of the most certain facts of history, that the thought and feeling of the apostolic age was based, not upon the man Jesus, but upon the Lord in heaven, who pervades and governs the universe, omnipotent and omniscient.²

This explanation is conceivable only upon the supposition that the disciples received from the Risen One impressions and evidence of his power and presence which compelled them to believe. But despite all this, the question, how divinity and humanity are related to one another in Christ, finds no solution.

The living and dynamic center of the Christology of St. Paul is his experience of the glorified Lord. He is convinced that the exalted Jesus is "the Christ" or Messiah, but he transcends the current Messianic idea of his day, perceiving the cardinal significance of Jesus, not for Jews merely, but for mankind. No part of the apostle's teaching has a more vital bearing on his thought of the Exalted One than his mystic conception

¹Matthew 16:16

²Reinhold Seeberg, The History of Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 35, 40.

of the believer's union with Christ. The phrase "in Christ" or "in the Lord" occurs approximately 240 times, and is used with reference to every aspect of experience.

It is certain that he held to the deity of Christ. Romans 9:5 is at least significant at this point. His habitual use of "Lord" as the proper title of the exalted Christ, and his frequent bracketing of Christ with God as the fount of grace and peace is important. The fact that he could write "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," is really decisive.¹ The words mean that in Christ there is to be found, as a unity or in organic relation, the entire sum of qualities and attributes by which the being of God is constituted.

In evaluating Paul's Christology, Warfield says that Paul was not trying to subordinate Christ to God, but to equate Him with God. His conception of the two natures is not with Paul a negligible speculation attached to his Gospel. He preached that Jesus was the Messiah. This Messiah was the Son of God who was of the seed of David. And He was demonstrated to be what He really was by His resurrection from the dead.²

The Church, indeed, from the first received the Christian truth in its totality, but not in a fully developed form. She abode by declarations such as the immediate necessity required, and which were to a cer-

¹Colossians 2:9

²Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, The Person and Work of Christ Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1950), p. 89.

tain extent unsatisfactory to a later age, and in want of completion.

In this connection we may observe that there are crescendoes in this conflict, namely when the Church's central confession is attacked and disputed. . . And in answering the church will always have to fall back on the witness concerning the disclosure in Caesarea Philippi. The Church must know what it is about when it defends the ancient creeds. And in this defense it will not be enough merely to extend a protective hand over the common property of tradition, but if it is to speak with the ring of sincerity, it will have to show something of the necessity which is laid upon it.¹

In summing up this era it may be said that the general views prevalent in the apostolic age laid the foundations upon which the post-apostolic age carried forward the work of construction. The Apostles believed in the Person of Christ as the personal agent of God's love for the redemption of man. They also accepted him as the sole perfect representative of human righteousness and obedience to God's will. All the essential elements of the apostolic Christology are clearly contained in Christ's own testimony concerning himself, and are confirmed by his life and work.

B. APOSTOLIC FATHERS 90-140 A.D.

Clement of Rome (95)

From Clement came a manuscript of the Roman congregation addressed to the church at Corinth. In this letter his view of Christ is learned when he said Christ is the Son of God, exalted above the angels;

¹G. C. Berkouwer, The Person of Christ (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1955), p. 12-17.

the sceptre of the majesty of God: and yet he came as the Humble One into the world.¹

Ignatius (cir. 115).

Ignatius assumed in respect of doctrine the highest place among the Apostolic Fathers but he was bent upon the organization of the church. He was fond of combining the two terms God and man. He expressed this by saying that Christ is both fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn.²

He is, therefore, perfect man and just as truly God. God became incarnate, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord.³

Ignatius worshipped God in person, through Christ, who became man to reveal God to man, and through his passion and death to redeem men and to make them partakers of eternal salvation. His view of the Person of Christ is so constructed as to subject it to the practical thought, that the Person and work of Christ is carried forward as a continuous living copy by the Church; and that in this way He ever abides immanent in it (the church) as the uniting principle of the Divine and the human.⁴

Barnabas (cir. 130).

Barnabas affirmed the pre-existence of Christ. The Son of God

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 56.

²Ibid., p. 64.

³Ibid., p. 65.

⁴Dorner, op. cit., p. 108.

assumed human flesh and suffered upon the cross chiefly for the forgiveness of sins. He interprets the Jewish ceremonial law as an allusion to Christ and His redemption.

Polycarp (cir. 155)

Polycarp in writing to the Philippians assumes that the divinity of Christ is acknowledged. His stress was upon walking in the Commandment. The culmination of his thought was that God will raise from the dead all who, following Christ, keep his commandments.

The leading thoughts of Polycarp are seen in the Christian, who has apprehended Christ in faith, will in love fulfill the law of Christ, following him with patience, in hope of being, like Christ, raised up by God to everlasting life and of enjoying eternal fellowship with Christ.¹

In summarizing this period Neve says that the Divinity and humanity of Christ was an accepted fact among these Fathers. But concerning the relation between Christ's divinity and humanity, and the relation of his divinity to that of the Father, the Apostolic Fathers did not yet speculate.²

C. THE APOLOGISTS

Irenaeus (130-200) - School of Asia Minor.

Irenaeus is one of the leading figures in this period of doc-

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 69.

²J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), I, 37.

trinal development. Zahn says, "Ireneaus is the first writer of the Post-Apostolic Age who deserves the name of theologian."¹ Harnack acknowledges that the theology of Irenaeus is a deciding factor in the history of dogma. Seeberg remarks that Irenaeus clarifies the heritage bequeathed to the Church by the apostolic age. Thomasius characterizes the theology of Irenaeus as "sound to the core."²

To Irenaeus God was known through revelation. Christ is pre-existent and co-eternal and understood to be the revelation of God. The starting point for Irenaeus is the historically revealed Son of God. He feels that Christ actually was born, lived and suffered as a man, and died.³ The historical Jesus became the eternal Logos through the incarnation.

He became a real man, assuming not only the body but the soul. This is maintained, not only as expressing a traditional conception, but from practical religious interest, since the reality of the work of redemption depends upon the real humanity of Christ and his personal experience.⁴

For Irenaeus the greatest religious significance is this union of God with the human nature. The center of the thinking of Irenaeus was the God-Man, Christ. His theology was thoroughly Christocentric.

¹Ibid., p. 81.

²Ibid.

³Seeberg, op. cit., p. 124.

⁴Ibid., p. 125.

Justin Martyr (d. 166)

Justin Martyr took up the idea of the Logos with the suggested double meaning of the Greek Logos (reason and word) and distinguished in it two elements, the immanent and the transitive. He teaches the procession of the Logos without division or diminution of the divine substance. This begotten Logos is understood as a hypostatical being, distinct from the Father and subordinate to him.¹ Neve says, "The Apologists, especially Justin, taught the subordination of the Son to the Father."² But to Justin only the Father is the real God; the Logos is of a lower rank.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) - School of Alexandria.

Clement is considered more as a Christian philosopher than as a theologian. He was of the School which viewed theology as a science and expressed it in terms of philosophical thought. Seeberg says that Clement was a "talented dilettante with the virtues and vices which belong to such character."³

Probably Clement's greatest contribution was in the creation of the attitude of mind which formed the foundation and background of the systematic theology of the Greek Fathers. He was incapable of understanding the revelation of divine life in the purely human form, as it was pre-

¹Schaff, Christ and Christianity, p. 53.

²Neve, A History of Christian Thought, I, p. 47.

³Neve, p. 82.

sented in the person of Christ.

Christ was, indeed, in ancient times this Logos and (the cause) of our being . . . and of our well-being; but now this same Logos has appeared to men, the only One both God and man, the cause of all things good to us, by whom, having been thoroughly instructed in right living, we are conducted to eternal life. He was a man with a human body and soul. Clement seeks, although without success, to avoid Docetism.¹

According to Clement Christ, as God, forgives sins, and his humanity serves the purpose of moral instruction.

Origen (185-254) - Alexandrian School.

Origen was a pupil of Clement and was considered the greatest representative of the Alexandrian School. He later became a teacher at the School of Alexandria.

Origen spoke of the Father as always begetting the Son. This was the first advance made towards stating the Son's co-eternity with the Father. Origen believed that Christ had to become the God-Man for the sake of the Christian incapable of deeper knowledge. Seeberg says Origen's doctrine of the Logos is indicative of the conception of his age. "Christ is God as is the Father, like him eternal; yet he is the "second God," and dependent upon the Father."²

Origen felt the whole weight of the Christological problem, As relating to the two natures in Christ, he was the first to use the term

¹Seeberg, p. 143.

²Ibid., p. 150.

- (1) The pre-existent, eternal immanence of the Son in the Father, they being as inseparable as reason and word in man, who was created in the image of God, and hence in a measure reflects his being;
- (2) The coming-forth of the Son with the Father for the purpose of the creation;
- (3) The manifestation of the Son in the world by the incarnation.¹

In summarizing this period it is apparent that a belief in the humanity and divinity of Christ existed though it was interpreted differently by some. Irenaeus held strongly to the thought of Christ as the God-Man. His views were thoroughly Christocentric. Justin Martyr thought only of the Father as being God and Christ of a lower class or rank. To Clement Christ was God in order to forgive sins and He was human for the purpose of serving moral instructions. Origen was the first to use the term God-Man in relation to the two natures of Christ. Origen attempted to maintain the unity of the person and the integrity of the union of the two natures, but he never rose above his subordinationism. Tertullian is probably the only one of this period who tried to deal specifically with the relation of the two natures of Christ to each other. It is out of the words of Tertullian that the thought expressed later in the Chalcedonian creed comes.

The significance of this period for later times lay in the fact that it preserved the traditional doctrines of the church in a form which impressed its own generation. Seeberg says that the Christianity of the

¹Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), II, 555.

Apostolic Fathers was that which characterized the church of the second century.¹

D. MAJOR CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES

The errors which disturbed the peace of the early church on the person of Christ arose either from Judaism or from heathen philosophy. Two opposite heresies which agitated the church during the second century were Ebionism and Gnosticism; the one essentially Jewish, and the other essentially heathen. One affirmed the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of his divinity, while the other went to the opposite extreme by resolving his humanity into a delusive show or empty phantom; both agreeing in the denial of the incarnation; or the real and abiding union of the divine and human in the person of our Lord.

The Ebionites represented a heterodox Christology. They were considered Jewish Christians but with the influx of Gentile ideas resulted in a sort of Jewish-Christian Gnosticism. They denied the reality of Christ's divine nature and held him to merely a man. They rejected the Virgin Birth. The man Jesus, however, held a peculiar relation to God, in that, from the time of his baptism, an unmeasured fulness of the divine Spirit rested upon him. There must have existed different forms and shades of opinion, arising out of the various combination of Jewish and Christian points of view. Origen sites two classes of Ebionites, a class

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 161.

which denied the supernatural birth of Jesus, and another which admitted it.¹ Neve maintains that the effect this group had upon the Church was to force the Church toward the formulation of a correct Christology.²

Gnosticism was an eclectic movement which approached Christianity with the intention of adding it to the long list of contributing religions. It proposed to form an alliance between the religions of paganism and that of the Church. Neve quoting Seeberg calls this the first attempt in the history of the Church to bring the world into subjection to the Church by interpreting Christianity in harmony with the world.³

Gnosticism is characterized by at least four features:

- (1) It professes that it is divine revelation;
- (2) It seeks to be the world-religion;
- (3) It seeks to save the soul by imparting the truth by formulas of enchantment;
- (4) It presents the truth in the form of mysteries.⁴

The Gnostics were led to a denial of the humanity of Jesus by their views of the origin of evil. God is the source only of good. Evil arises from matter. A high estimate is placed upon the person of Christ and His appearance is praised as a great turning-point in history. An atonement for sin through the death of Christ was not necessary. The doctrine of the Incarnation must be rejected on the basis that the absolute

¹Neander, I, 348.

²Neve, I, 51.

³Ibid., p. 52.

⁴Seeberg, op. cit., p. 94.

cannot enter into a real union with the finite and the spiritual world is always in conflict with matter which is evil.

The Gnostic doctrine of the "two natures" has nothing in common with the teaching of the church, but the Gnostics were the first to recognize the problem which is presented to the mind by the presence of the divine and the human in Christ.¹

The historical significance of Gnosticism lies in the fact that the church was compelled to determine positively what is Christian doctrine. Marcion, classed as a Gnostic by the Church Fathers, identified Christ with the good God. However, he failed to clarify the relationship between Christ and the good God. To him, Christ had a docetic body and did not really die.

In summing up these two errors it is evident that they are witnesses against each other; for they reciprocally accuse of omitting an essential part of Christianity. Ebionism put aside entirely the one side of the Person of Christ, and asserted that the genuine Church truth held only His humanity; while Gnosticism proposed to find the deeper meaning of Christianity by laying stress on the divine side in Christ.

With these proofs mutually supplanting each other, they are the last, and, as opponents, the indubitably credible witnesses for primitive Christianity, attesting that, in its representation of Christ, the divine as well as the human side was set forth.²

In the third century there arose an Antitrinitarian group called Monarchians. Two opposite classes must be distinguished in this group:

¹Ibid., p. 101.

²Dorner, Doctrine of the Person of Christ, I, 252.

the dynamistic Monarchians, who denied the divinity of Christ and the patripassian or modalistic Monarchians, who identified the Son with the Father, and at most admitted only a modal trinity.

Paul of Samosata is one of the most famous leaders of the dynamistic Monarchians. From 620 A.D. he was bishop of Antioch in Syria. He regarded the divinity of Christ as a mere power or influence. They started with the human person of Jesus who was eventually deified. The excellence of the character of Christ was emphasized. He taught a gradual elevation of Christ determined by His own moral development.

Thus Jesus in his moral development united himself intimately with God by the influence of the Spirit and unity of will, thus securing the power to perform miracles and fitness to become the Redeemer, and in addition attaining a permanent oneness with God.¹

After two unsuccessful synods Paul was rejected at the third synod. His rejection marked a turning-point in the history of Christology in the Church. Harnack observes that with the deposition of Paul of Samosata, it was not possible to gain a hearing for a Christology which denied the personal, independent pre-existence of the Redeemer.²

Modal Monarchianism's most significant leader was Sabellius (215 A.D.) They taught that the one supreme God became man, so that the Son is the Father veiled in the flesh. Sabellius was probably a Lybian from the Pentapolis. His system is known only from a few fragments. To him God is a Unity. There are no distinctions in the divine Being. He likened it to one person having a body, soul and spirit. Tertullian called them

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 165.

²Neve, op. cit., I, 110.

Patripassians as did some others.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are identical and it was this supposed identity which lay at the bottom of the entire system. The God Sabellianism was therefore a Unity, a Monas, a single Person viewed under three different forms.¹

Sabellianism endeavored to understand the divine-human nature of Christ from the point of view of his historical significance without regard to the prevalent formulas. Seeberg points out that we must give them credit for placing strong emphasis upon the personal unity of God and to reconcile it with the divinity of Christ. There was an attempt to establish the divine-human nature of Christ from that of the personal life, and thus of the will.²

The teaching of Sabellius prepared the way for the homoousios in the orthodox Christology of a later time. He hinted at a positive truth in the co-essence, co-equality, and co-eternity of the Three Persons and thus breaking the way for the Nicene church doctrine, by its full coordination of the three persons.

The Nicene Christology was the outgrowth of one of the most subtle and bitter controversies in church history. The two men who fought the great battle, Arius and Athanasius, were both from the Church at Alexandria.

Arius was a presbyter of the Alexandrian Church. He is described as being a rigid ascetic and a man of acknowledged learning, but not of

¹Ibid., p. 111.

²Seeberg, op. cit., p. 169.

the deepest philosophy. He was educated at Antioch under Lucian who was a pupil of Paul of Samosata. Though he differed radically from some of the views of his teacher, yet he tried to combine other views to fit his system. He was opposed to modalistic monarchianism but desired to save the monotheistic principle of Christianity. Wiley states that he tried to find a place for Christ above creation and yet outside the Godhead.¹ In an attempt to explain Christ he introduced a mythological figure-- something like the demiurge of the Gnostics. Christ was divine but not co-equal with the Father.

When God would create the world, it was necessary for Him first to create the Son or "Word" as His Agent. The Son as a creature suggests that God was not always Father but became such only in the creation of the Son, who therefore, was of a different essence from the Father.²

In a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia Arius maintained that is the Father begat the Son, the Son must have had a beginning; it followed that there was a time when he was not, and that his substance was made from nothing.³ Thus Seeberg explains that a mythological element is introduced into Christianity, and bare Monotheism is transformed into the Polytheism of heroes and demigods.⁴ Harnack remarked that evidently the real point in dispute with Arius was not subordination and co-ordination, but with

¹Wiley, Christian Theology, I, 415.

²Ibid.

³Eusebius, Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, trans by Isaac Boyle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), Council of Nice p. 6.

⁴Seeberg, p. 204.

unity of substance and difference of substance.¹

Therefore to Arius Christ took only a human body in the incarnation, not a human soul. He denied the integrity of the divine nature and brought Christ down to the rank of a creature.

Athanasius (d. 300 A.D.) was the chief champion for the orthodox faith. He was an archdeacon at the Council of Nicea and later became bishop. He is known as the Father of Orthodoxy. Athanasius believed in the co-eternity and the co-equality of the Son with the Father. To him the Son had always been eternally the Son. Upon this thought Neve declares that Athanasius based his insistence upon the full divinity of Christ.² In the words of Seeberg he reduced the various representations of Christ to a simple formula, and established the necessity of this formula firmly by displaying its relation to the doctrine of redemption.³ Harnack in evaluating Athanasius declares that the peculiarity of Athanasius which made his teaching normative for the future was in the fact that he strictly guarded the unity of God, and at the same time maintained the divinity of Christ--and of the historical Christ.⁴

This controversy between Arius and Athanasius was remarkable for its wide extent. It involved the very heart of Christianity. Hurst states that this controversy prevented Christianity from ever dwindling

¹H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 179.

²Neve, I, 117.

³Seeberg, p. 210.

⁴Ibid., p. 215.

away into a mere religion of culture by bringing it into the full consciousness of its divine origin.¹ The Council of Nicea affirmed the Deity of Christ and this left the question of His humanity unsolved. After this time the problem of His humanity became even more insistent and it is at this stage that Apollinaris stated the Christological problem and in a clear and challenging way attempted a solution.

Apollinaris (362 A.D.) was bishop of Laodicea and one of the most learned men in the ancient church. He was considered to be a theologian of the first rank and set the problems at which after-centuries laboured. His dominating aim was to secure the complete unity of Christ's person without sacrificing His real deity, or representing Him, with Paul of Somosata as a demigod or man made God. Apollinaris was convinced that Christ must be God and man in order to be our Redeemer. The question which puzzled him was how perfect humanity and perfect divinity could be contained in one person. In order to solve this problem he taught that the humanity of Christ consisted of body and animal soul. Thus he maintained that Christ was not made man, but only became incarnate by assuming a human body and not a human soul. Wiley shows that the Church felt Apollinaris had sacrificed the true humanity of Jesus in order to maintain His deity.² Loof says that Apollinaris set forth the questions

¹John Fletcher Hurst, Short History of the Christian Church, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1892), p. 48.

²Wiley, Christian Theology, II, 158.

here involved with such acumen and with such completeness that the discussion which followed could add but little to the debate that was really new. Even the technical terms of the later controversies were found with him.¹

In the Arian controversy the true divinity of Christ had been established; and in the Apollinarian conflict, His true humanity.

The next great controversy came while Nestorius was Patriarch of Constantinople in 428. He was of the School of Antioch. The Antiochan theologians seemed to develop the doctrine of two persons in Christ. In his zeal for orthodoxy he vigorously assailed the Arian, Apollinarians, the Novatians, and the Macedonians. He objected to the term Theotokos which they applied to Mary as "Mother of God." He could not accept the implication that a human mother could give the divine nature to the Logos, and thus the divinity of Christ originate from Mary.

Nestorius maintained the full deity of Christ and also His perfect humanity; but he regarded these rather as a loose connection or affinity than as an indissoluble union.²

He said that only the human nature can be born, suffer and die; and only the divine nature is eternal, omnipresent and omniscient. From this it made Christ appear as a God-bearing man. Christ was in effect only a perfect man who was morally linked to deity. He was a God-bearer rather than the God-man.³

¹Neve, History of Christian Thought, I, 127.

²Wiley, op. cit., II, 159.

³Earle E. Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), p. 146.

Nestorius was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431) for dividing the one Christ into two persons or two hypostases.¹ Seeberg claims that there is nothing heterodox in Nestorius' Christology. Nestorius was simply following the usual doctrine of the Antiochean school and that it was not his thought to deny the divinity of Christ, or the doctrine of the two natures.² But, as stated, his view seemed to fail to unite the two natures into a real person.

The chief opponent of Nestorius was Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria of the Alexandrian School. Loofs comments that without Cyril there would have been no Nestorian controversy.³ It is admitted by most historians that an ecclesiastical rivalry between the two Sees of Alexandria and Constantinople played an important part in this whole controversy.

Cyril maintained that in the incarnation two complete natures, divine and human, were united to form one theanthropic or divine-human nature. These two natures when united are the same as they were before, but they are combined in indissoluble unity through the Logos by means of the mutual communicative attributes.

Cyril's view in essence was identical with that of Apollinarius but he avoided Apollinarianism, which had been pronounced a heresy, by asserting that the human nature of Christ possessed spirit or mind as well as body and soul, thus meeting the principle objection brought against Apollinarius by his opponents.⁴

¹Neve, op. cit., I, 132.

²Seeberg, op. cit., p. 262.

³Ibid.

⁴Arthur Cushman McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), I, 281-282.

Seeberg points out that Cyril's conception of the historical Christ dominates his thought and lifts his ideas above their normal plane. His significance lies in the fact that he emphasized the unity of his person and of his manifestation.¹

In the Nestorian controversy both Nestorius and Cyril were deposed from their office. In 433 A.D. a confession was drawn up in an attempt to bring back together the Antiochean and Alexandrian Schools. This confession represented concessions on both sides, and thus their union was not based on any doctrinal settlement of the Christological problem.

The Antiocheans had in this the rejection of Apollinarianism and the recognition of the two natures; Cyril; the one person, the union of the two natures, and the Theotokos.²

A few years later this quarrel broke out again by the teaching of Eutyches. He was Archimandrite of a monastery in Constantinople. He was a strong adherent to the Alexandrian School. Eutyches insisted that after the Incarnation the two natures of Christ, the human and the divine, were fused into one nature, the divine. This resulted in the loss of the true humanity of Christ. This position was the exact opposite of the Nestorians. Wiley declares that the absorption of the human by the divine was carried to such extreme length as to deify human nature. Consequently the Eutychians found it permissible to say that "God was born," and "God died."³

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 253, 255.

²Ibid., p. 266.

³Wiley, op. cit., II, 161.

Eutyches was condemned and deposed by a synod of Constantinople. Much high-handed business was carried on at this meeting and finally Eutyches was restored. After the death of the Emperor a new Ecumenical Council was called to meet at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This was the largest council which had thus far been held. This council followed the suggestions of a letter of Leo to Flavian, and framed a creed, parallel in importance, with the Nicene formulary. It was attended by about 600 bishops. The Chalcedon Council was directed against the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches, who agreed with the Nicene Creed as opposed to Arianism, but put the Godhead of Christ in a false relation to his humanity. Schaff states that as the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity stands midway between Tritheism and Sabellianism, so the Chalcedonian formula strikes the true mean between Nestorianism and Eutychianism.¹

Since the Chalcedonian Creed is considered definitive of orthodox Christology it is deemed wise to quote the creed.

We, the, following the holy Father, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly inseparably, the distinction of natures being concurring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two per-

¹Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom (New York: Harper & Brothers, publishers, 1919), I, 30.

sons but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ; Himself has taught us, and the creed of the Holy Fathers has handed down to us.¹

It cannot be said that this Council resulted in the establishment of a good understanding and settlement of differences, but a mean was sought between them by saving clauses and negative distinctions on both sides. But as to the immediate results, peace could not be restored in the Eastern Church by the decisions of the council; for the advocates of the strict Egyptian doctrine felt themselves encroached upon, and continued to maintain the doctrine of the one nature of the Incarnate Logos.

The distinction between a "nature" and a "person" is of as great consequence in Christology, as in Trinitarianism; and the Chalcedon divines were enabled, by carefully observing it, to combine all the Scripture data relating to the Incarnation into a form of statement that has been accepted by the church universal ever since, and beyond which it is probable the human mind is unable to go, in the endeavor to unfold the mystery of Christ's complex Person.²

But it may be said that these decisions were fundamental and served as a compass to the church in later ages. The statements of this council fixed a barrier against extreme views in either direction and proved to be a norm and corrective for future centuries.

While many yielded to the authority of the council, yet many others refused to accept the decrees of the council and called for a

¹Neve, op. cit., I, 135.

²William T. Shedd, History of Christian Doctrine (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 172.

statement regarding the two wills of Christ. Those who dissented were called Monophysites. This was a revival of Eutychianism and followed closely the doctrine of Cyril. The Monophysites stressed the divine nature in Christ, believing that the divine nature transformed the human nature in such a way that the whole became divine, yet retained some human characteristics.¹ This doctrine held that Christ had but one composite nature. At the Fifth Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople in 553 A.D. Monophysitism was condemned. This decision however failed to conciliate the opponents of the Chalcedon creed. Their churches remain today under the names of Jacobites in Syria, the Copts in Egypt and the Armenians.

Closely connected with Monophysitism is the doctrine that Christ has but one will, as he has but one person and this is called Monothelism. A compromise was proposed between Monophysitism and Monothelism by the Emperor Heraclius. This teaching said that the one Christ works the human and divine things through one divine human energy. In 680 A.D. the Sixth Ecumenical Council gathered at Constantinople to settle the controversy. This Council condemned the Monothelitic error and repeated the Chalcedonian Creed of the one Christ in two natures and added a supplement concerning the two wills. This paragraph added to the Chalcedonian Creed reads as follows:

And we likewise preach two natural wills in him (Jesus Christ), and two natural operations undivided, inconvertible, inseparable,

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 172.

unmixed, according to the doctrine of the holy fathers; and the two natural wills are far from being contrary (as the impious heretics assert), but his human will follows the divine will, and is not resisting or reluctant, but rather subject to his divine and omnipotent will. For it was proper that the will of the flesh should be moved, but be subjected to the divine will, according to the wise Athanasius.¹

This period of major controversies concerning the Person of Christ closes with the sixth ecumenical council.

E. SUMMARY

In summarizing the period of the Apostles concerning the Person of Christ it is clear that both the divinity and humanity of Christ was a universal conviction among them. The Apostles believed in the Person of Christ as God's personal agent of love for the redemption of mankind. They accepted him as the perfect representative of human righteousness and obedience to God's will. The general view of Christ in this age laid the foundations upon which the further work of construction would be built.

During the age of the Apostolic Fathers the divinity and humanity of Christ was an accepted fact. Ignatius ranks highest among the Fathers and he believed that Christ was perfect man and just as truly God. To him the Person and work of Christ was to be carried on through the Church.

It is evident that a belief in the humanity and divinity of

¹Schaff, Christ and Christianity, p. 63.

Christ existed during the period of the Apologists, though that belief was interpreted differently by different individuals. To Irenaeus the historically revealed Son of God was the starting point. His theology was thoroughly Christocentric. Justin Martyr held to a subordination of the Son to the Father. Only the Father was the real God to him. Origen was the first to use the term God-Man in relation to the two natures of Christ. He felt the whole weight of the Christological problem as perhaps no other had done up to this time. Tertullian dealt specifically with the relation of the two natures of Christ to each other. Out of the terms which he used arose the thought which was expressed later in the Chalcedonian creed.

The Elionites represented a heterodox Christology. They denied the divine nature of Christ. Gnosticism rejected the humanity of Christ by their views of the origin of evil. They stressed the divine side only. Dynamistic Monarchians represented by Paul of Samosata regarded the divinity of Christ as a mere power or influence. To them the human person of Jesus was eventually deified. Modalistic Monarchianism led by Sabellius taught that God is an undivided unity. They sought to understand the divine-human nature of Christ from the point of view of his historical significance without regard to the prevalent formulas.

Arius tried to find a place for Christ superior to creation and yet outside the Godhead. To him Christ was divine but not co-equal with the Father. He denied the integrity of the divine nature and brought Christ down to the rank of a creature. Athanasius strictly guarded the

unity of God and at the same time maintained the divinity of Christ-- and of the historical Christ.

The Council of Nicea affirmed the Deity of Christ and this left the question of His humanity unsolved. The dominate aim of Apollinaris was to secure the complete unity of Christ's person without sacrificing His real deity, or representing Him as a demigod. In doing this it was felt that he had sacrificed the true humanity of Jesus in order to maintain His deity.

Nestorius maintained the full deity of Christ and also His perfect humanity but his view seemed to fail to unite the two natures into a real person. Cyril maintained that in the incarnation two complete natures, divine and human, were united to form one theanthropic or divine-human nature.

Eutyches emphasized the fusion of the human and divine natures into one nature, the divine. This resulted in the loss of the true humanity of Christ.

The results of the Chalcedon Council proved to be a guard and became criteria for orthodoxy and a norm for a proper Christology. The four major points of this creed were (1) Christ is truly God, (2) truly man (3) unity of Person (4) distinction of natures.

The revival of Eutychianism came in the form of Monophysites. It stressed the divine nature in Christ and held that Christ had but one composite nature. The Monotheleites declared that Christ has but one will as he has but one person.

It is clear that all the later problems depend for solution upon the meaning and implications of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and therefore it is well that the first effort of the Church was to give an explicit answer to the question, what think ye of Christ?

CHAPTER III

THE MIDDLE AGES

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Christianity in this period can be said to be a further development of ancient Catholicism and yet it must be seen also to be a preparation for Protestantism. The major forces in this period were the papacy, monasticism, and scholasticism. The dogmas of the preceding period were those of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. To this the Middle Ages added a doctrine of the Church, the doctrine of the Sacraments, and had worked on Soteriology.

It may be said that with the Reformation and particularly with Luther in Germany there came into the world a deeper understanding of the person of Christ than had prevailed since the apostolic age. Luther saw the organic union in the personal union of the two natures of Christ. The intimate conjoining of the divine and human natures is closely connected with the most profound tendencies of Luther's thought in the words and works of Jesus, God is revealed.

Luther accepted the ecumenical creeds of Christendom. He saw the organic union between God and Christ in the incarnation of the Logos as expressed by the trinitarian relation. He wholeheartedly accepted the Christological dogma of the ancient Church. Never said the genuine redemptive theology of Athanasius was revived in Luther's teaching of Christ.¹

¹Neve, op. cit., I, 228.

Harnack writes that since Cyril, no teacher has arisen in the Church, to whom the mystery of the unity of the two natures in Christ was so deep a consolation.¹ Seeberg states that Luther was not a Monarchian. But he had a vigorous consciousness of the absolute unity of God, and this enabled him to see in each trinitarian person the entire Godhead.²

Zwingli emerged during the Reformation in contrast to Luther. Zwingli's approach was humanistic. Modern historians of the liberalistic trend have praised Zwingli as being the pioneer of modernistic ideas among the Reformers.³ Yet Zwingli believed in the fundamentals of conservative Protestantism, including the divinity of Christ.

Zwingli held strictly to a world-view of the Person of Christ which distinguished rigidly between the divine and the human. While separating the two natures he maintained the unity of the Person of Christ. He distinguished so sharply between the two natures that he laid himself open to the charge of Nestorianism. According to Zwingli, it is stated thus:

Christ, after his ascent, is omnipresent only according to His divinity, but according to His humanity He is now limited to a definite locality in heaven. In this language we miss the appreciation of the organic relation of the two natures in the living historic person.⁴

Zwingli felt in full accord with the Christology found in the ancient sym-

¹Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 234.

²Seeberg, op. cit., p. 306.

³Neve, op. cit., I, 243

⁴Ibid., p. 245.

bolds. At this point he added no original ideas. Seeberg said Zwingli's Christology remains upon the plane of the Medieval conception. The divine and human natures are assigned to the opposite categories of finite and infinite nature.¹

Calvin, though not a follower of Zwingli, effected a doctrinal agreement with the followers of Zwingli and proved to be one of the greatest churchmen and theologians of the second generation. He was outstanding as a systematizer of the new conception of Christianity because he had the advantage of perspective.

Both Neve and Seeberg declared that Calvin accepted the Scriptures alone as the source and norm of Christianity.² Calvin stressed the Bible as a book of laws and rules to be carried out to the letter. Nevertheless he did make a distinction between the written work and the Living Word. Neve comments that the question is whether that which seems to be an immediate revelation has not after all in some way been mediated through the revelation from the Word.³

Calvin had no place in his Christology for a participation of Christ's human nature in the attributes of His divinity. He bridges this gap by the Holy Spirit. Neve states that Calvin has the Chalcedonian conception of the two natures of Christ but he refuses particularly the

¹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 321

²Neve, op. cit., p. 288.

³Ibid., p. 283.

participation of Christ's humanity in the omnipresence of his divinity.¹

SUMMARY

Reviewing this period one is faced with the fact that until the time of Luther nothing new was added to the doctrine of the Person of Christ. Luther saw the organic union in the personal union of the two natures of Christ. Zwingli separated the two natures but maintained the unity of the Person of Christ and in this laid himself open to the charge of Nestorianism. Calvin held to such a view of Scripture that it almost became the voice of God and a substitute for Christ. He had no place in his Christology for a participation of Christ's human nature in the attributes of His divinity.

¹Ibid., p. 283.

CHAPTER IV

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY QUAKERS

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Quakers arose in England as a reaction against the Calvinistic views and formalism of the established Church. The purpose of the Quakers was to revive primitive Christianity and to translate it into a working experience. For this reason it is necessary to note the political and religious conditions in England in the seventeenth century as a background. This whole century was marked by unrest, theological warfare and division, antagonism between parties in power in Church and State and a struggle for religious liberty. The Bible was accepted as the complete and final revelation of the Divine will and was considered the primary rule of faith and practice, but it was to be interpreted by the Church. The clergy had become very corrupt.

During this chaotic period, the year before the death of James I and the accession of Charles I, George Fox was born in 1624 at Fenny-Drayton, Leicestershire. He was to become the founder of the Quaker movement.

Many reforming and transforming movements found voice in one way or another in England. The Anabaptists, the Seekers and many small sects arose at this time. There were multitudes of persons who were detached from the Anglican communion, who at the same time felt a marked disapproval of Calvinistic forms of thought and organization, and who were struggling to create what they thought of as an apostolic type of Chris-

tianity. Out of these movements and out of this spiritual atmosphere Quakerism emerged.

Churchmen were at variance with each other. The Independents, the Presbyterian, those of the Episcopal Church were all involved in the debates and controversies.

Too much emphasis had been placed upon the great historical facts of Christianity and too little attention given to the personal experience of Christ in the heart. Quakerism was an attempt to translate Christianity into a working experience. This emphasis resulted in a dead orthodoxy and external religious authority and religious form. The philosophical attitude, the theology and life theory of Quakerism, stressed the fact of individual experience as a reaction. Many of those who first became members of the Society of Friends arrived at their religious views and way of life before they met George Fox. He proved to be the instrument in the hands of God to direct these people into a way of life that had heart and experience in it. Reception was readily given to the Quaker message because there were many honest-hearted men craving after something more real than the outward perfection of religion.

In comparison with contemporary standards Quakers were heretics for they were nonconformists in relation to the liturgical and sacerdotal requirements of the established communions. As mystics they believed in an invisible church only. Comfort notes that the Society of Friends was one of many historical groups that sought in freedom from forms, the simplicity, sincerity and innocence of primitive Christianity. They

substituted personal experience for vicarious religious worship and for exacting creeds devised by man.¹

To better understand the Quaker position concerning the Person of Christ and His place in history it is deemed necessary to investigate the life of George Fox and his followers.

B. GEORGE FOX AND FOLLOWERS

The religious movement of the seventeenth century called Quakerism had as its fundamental principle the revival of primitive Christianity. The central doctrine of the Quaker message is that of the universal and saving Light of Christ.

The philosophical attitude, the theology and life theory of Quakerism, is bound up with a fact of individual experience.... It is an attitude of soul resulting from inward experience, and necessarily affecting the whole conduct of life in every way.²

The parents of George Fox were members of the Episcopal Church and were esteemed for their piety. It is said that from a youth George Fox was remarkable for his seriousness and righteousness. Fox was a believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity but was dissatisfied with the teachings and practices of the day and longed for a higher and more spiritual life. While searching for peace and rest of heart he heard a voice saying to him

¹William Wistar Comfort, Quakers in the Modern World (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 14.

²T. Edmund Harvey, The Rise of the Quakers (London: Friends' Bookshop, 1905), p. 59.

There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition, When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.¹

After this experience he relates that he knew Christ experimentally. His desires for the Lord grew and his zeal for the knowledge of God increased without the assistance of 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. Then the Lord gently led me along, and let me see his love, which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can get by history or books.²

He was further led to see that Christ had enlightened him and through His light was able to believe and have hope. In this experience he discovered that Christ is no dead Christ but a living one who was able to speak to any man's heart condition. This type of religion begins in a purpose to find God, it ends with a conscious likeness of Him. George Fox variously calls this new discovery "the Christ within," or the "inner light."

This "seed" or "light," which he proclaimed, was thought of as a capacity of response to divine intimations and openings, a basis of inward communication and correspondence between God and man and a moral searchlight revealing to man the absolute distinction between right and wrong, making the path of righteousness and truth unmistakable.³

These experiences came to George Fox when he was about twenty-

¹George Fox, George Fox's Journal (Philadelphia: Friends' Bookstore, n.d.), p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 61.

³Rufus M. Jones, The Faith and Practice of the Quakers (London: Methuen and Co., LTD. 1930), p. 28.

four years old. At about this same time he received a divine call to enter the work of the ministry and his first recorded appearance was in 1647. He found that others were wearied and disgusted with the self-seeking and hypocritical profession of many who made themselves conspicuous as spiritual guides. They withdrew from the regular places of worship, and in retirement, self-examination and study of the Scriptures, sought to ascertain and to perform their religious duties.¹

Harvey maintains that all the peculiarities of the early Quakers can be traced to one central principle: the immediate revelation of Christ in every heart, and the consequent call for submission of the whole life to the Divine source of Light and power.² The whole aim of the ministry of George Fox was to take men to Christ and leave them there. This was the reason why the Quakers saw in the Bible more than a Book. They saw it as a book with messages living and real to their minds only as the Spirit of Truth quickened it to their minds and hearts. By believing the Scriptures to be true channels of revelation their faith was strengthened in the historic Christ who had become real and living to them.

The Bible took its right place, not as a wonderful God-made book, fallen from heaven among men, without a parallel of any kind, and with nothing in our lives to correspond to its revelation, but as

¹Charles Evans, Friends in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, 1875), p. 31.

²Harvey, op. cit., p. 60.

the unique revelation amidst a never ending series of revelations, containing the history of God's dealings with men exemplified in the story of the nation which had listened best to His voice and had in some measure risen to its call to be the medium of revelation to others; above all, as containing the great record of God's supremeness self-manifestation to man in Christ, and of His work for us, to which the Light in all our hearts calls us to respond.¹

If this Light of Christ were not at work in us, the Incarnation would be useless because we could never understand it. The earthly life of Christ was to them a fact of supreme importance. George Fox in writing a letter to the Governor of Barbados in 1671 declared:

We own and believe in Jesus Christ, his beloved and only begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. . . . This Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly man, the Emanuel, God with us, we all own and believe in.²

On another occasion George Fox was asked if any of the Quakers were Christ. He answered that they were nothing but Christ was all. They were often misunderstood and accused of disbelieving the Deity and manhood of Christ because of their speaking of Christ within, the hope of glory, and because of their emphatic declaration that no one could be in a state of justification before God while still subservient to the law of sin and death. This accusation they boldly and explicitly denied. Robert Barclay (1648-1690) became the theologian of the movement. In answering this accusation cast upon them Barclay denied that speaking of Christ within destroys the reality of His present existence. They

¹Ibid., p. 65.

²Fox, op. cit., p. 444.

were conscious of the errors which had prevailed in other generations.

We also freely reject the heresy of Apollinarius who denied him to have any soul, but said the body was only actuated by the Godhead. As also the error of Eutyches, who made the manhood to be wholly swalled up of the Godhead. Wherefore, as we believe he was a true and real man, so we also believe that he continues to be glorified in the heavens in soul and body, by whom God shall judge the world, in the great and eternal day of judgment.¹

Friends in England sensing the need of clearly informing the public concerning their doctrine prepared and published a document entitled, The Christian Doctrine and the Society of the people called Quakers, cleared. In this document they clearly stated that the Word, or Son of God had come in the fulness of time and had taken flesh, became perfect man, according to the flesh, descended and came of the seed of Abraham and David.

We sincerely confess and believe in Jesus Christ, both as He is true God and perfect man, and that He is the author of our living faith in the power and goodness of God, as manifested in his Son Jesus Christ.²

Friends have never confined their interest in Christ to his earthly life and death. William Penn quoting from a more obscure Friend in a classic expression declares that if you confine Christ's body to a local heaven, you are ignorant of that which is the greatest joy that can be. Christ dwells in the heart.³ William Penn prepared some articles on the doc-

¹Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity Being and Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1908), p. 138.

²Evans, op. cit., p. 634.

³Comfort, op. cit., p. 85.

trines of Quakers to counteract the perversion prevalent. In two separate statements he declares that the Quakers do not deny the divinity and humanity of Christ. In him was Life, and that Life the light of men; and he is God over all, blessed forever. As they believed him to be God, so they truly believed him to be the seed of Abraham and David after the flesh.¹

Clarkson stated that the Quakers believed that Jesus Christ was man because he took flesh, and inhabited the body prepared for him, and was subject to human infirmities; but they believed also in his divinity, because he was the Word.² Evans recounts a treatise written by George Whitehead representing and vindicating the Quakers. In this treatise it is stated that there is nothing more openly and apparently asserted by the Quakers than the divinity of Christ and the essential union of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is asserted to be the blessed Lord and Saviour, that He is the Eternal Word, the true God as well as truly man. The divinity of Christ was not to be considered inconsistent with his divine wisdom, love, and great condescension in assuming holy humanity.³

In a Declaration of Faith presented to Parliament in 1689 the following occurs:

Question: Do you believe the divinity and humanity of Jesus

¹William Penn, The Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, n.d.), p. 16-17.

²Thomas Clarkson, A Portraiture of Quakerism (Indianapolis: Merrill & Field, 1870), p. 287.

³Thomas Evans, A Concise Account of the Religious Society of Friends (Philadelphia: Friends Book-Store, n.d.), p. 64.

Christ, the eternal Son of God, or that Jesus Christ is truly God and man?

Answer: Yes; we verily believe that Jesus Christ is truly God and man, according as Holy Scriptures testifies of him; God over all, blessed forever; the true God and eternal life; the one Mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus.¹

A Declaration of Faith was given forth four years later concerning the Saviour saying this Word, or Son of God took flesh, became perfect man in the fulness of time. According to the flesh He descended and came of the seed of Abraham and David, but was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. They confessed to believe in Jesus Christ, both as He is true God and perfect man, and that He is the Author of our living faith.²

Evans further testifies that the Society of Friends has uniformly declared their belief in the divinity and manhood of Jesus Christ and that He was both true God and perfect man. The remission of sins which any partake of is only in, and by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice which Christ made.³

Upon one occasion the Quakers were called to dispute with the Baptists publicly. The Baptists intended to prove that the Quakers were not Christians. One of the basic charges the Baptists were making against the Quakers was that they denied the Lord's Christ. The whole dispute was carried on upon this premise. The Quakers represented by William

¹Ibid., p. 65.

²Thomas Evans, op. cit., p. 66

³Ibid., p. 34.

George Whitehead and George Keith, ably answered all the questions which were put to them. One such question asked by the main representative of the Baptists, Jeremy Ives, was:

Question: But he was Christ as he was man: how then was not Christ seen with carnal eyes?

Answer: We are to consider that the terms or names Jesus Christ, are sometimes applied to him as God, and sometimes to him as man; yea, sometimes to the very body of Jesus: but the question is, whether do those names more properly, immediately, and originally belong to him as God or as he was before he took the manhood upon him; or to the manhood? We affirm, those names are given to him most properly and eminently as God; and less properly, yet truly, as man; and least properly to his body, yea to his dead body.¹

This indicates with what the thoroughness the Friends endeavored to answer the questions and accusations put to them. They were aware of the problems involved and by word of mouth and pen declared their faith in Christ as the God-Man.

Perhaps one of their greatest battles was not concerning their belief in Christ as human and divine, but in His provision of salvation for all mankind. This Light was a universal Light. This view went against the grain of the prevailing view of the day of a limited atonement. In evaluating this point of the Quaker doctrine Schaff points out that they teach the absolute universality, not indeed of salvation, but of the offer and the opportunity of salvation.² At this point they break through the

¹William Sewel, The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers (Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, n.d.), II, 218.

²Philip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, p. 870.

confines of historical Christianity and extend the benefits of Christ to all. He is the personal Light of the whole world. God wills all men to be saved, Christ died for all; the light is sent to all for salvation, if not resisted.

Both Fox and Barclay in their writings indicate and teach very clearly that Christ is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, that all knowledge of the Father comes through the Son, and all knowledge of the Son through the Holy Spirit but they do not use the term Trinity.

Braithwaite in evaluating the Christology of some of the early Quaker sites Pennington as being fettered by the dualistic thought of the age. Pennington put the natural and Divine in two separate compartments and failed to reach a unified conception either of human personality or of the person of Christ. This led him to view Jesus as a vessel through which the Divine Life worked and of man as such a vessel, if he gave entrance to the Life. This divided rather than unified personality, and, through such division, failed to give either the historic Christ, possessed of a human mind and body, or the mind and body of man a full place in the purposes of God. In his own mind Pennington made a sharp distinction between that which is called the Christ and the bodily garment which he took.¹ And yet from some of his other writings it is evident that he had no intention of slighting the manhood of Christ. In one of his letters he stated:

¹William C. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), p. 383.

We own Christ to be a Saviour; but we lay the main stress upon the life which took upon it the manhood. . . yet none, in the measure of this life, can deny the appearance of the fulness of life in that body of flesh, and what He did therein towards the redemption and salvation of mankind.¹

William Penn followed this mode of expression but Robert Barclay avoided it as did also the Declaration of 1693.

To preach faith in the same Christ, both as within and without us, cannot be to preach two Christs, but one and the same Lord Jesus Christ. . . Wherein Christ Himself and the least measure of His Light or Life are not divided nor separable, no more than the sun is from its light.²

This statement affirms the value both of the historic life of Christ in the flesh and of the inward experience of His life, without attempting to explain their relation to one another fully.

William Penn defended his doctrinal position against the attack of George Keith who wrote The Deism of William Penn and his brethren. Once having belonged to the Society, George Keith later in his life left the Friends and became an opposer. It is clear that the whole tenor of William Penn's book was to assert and defend the Divinity of Christ, and his spiritual appearance, by his Divine Light, in the hearts of man, yet there is enough said concerning his Manhood, his outward appearance and suffering in the flesh, to free him from the imputation or suspicion of deism.

Another Quaker, Alexander Arscott, published in three parts a

¹Ibid., p. 385.

²Ibid.

work called, Considerations Relating to the Present State of the Christian Religion, in which he said:

Christ, the Author of the Christian Religion, is to be considered under a twofold character; as Man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; and as God, in which sense He was in the beginning, before all worlds, and is called in the Scripture, the Word, the Wisdom, and the Power of God.¹

He believed it was not proper to enter upon an enquiry into the Divine nature; or how it subsisted in its different manifestations; or how the Divinity was connected with human nature; or why this was necessary. He said that the secrets of the Divine counsels do not belong to us; and we have no occasion to enter into discussion respecting them. On the contrary, he pointed out that wherever they have been made the subjects of curious and speculative enquiry, the mind has been in danger of being led, by specious reasonings, into views and sentiments incompatible with those which have been presented through the medium of Divine Revelation; and thus the whole ground of infidelity lies open before those who enter into such inquiries.²

It may be asserted from these excerpts that George Fox and his followers faced the questions regarding the Person of Christ and attempted solutions or answers to them. They did not evade the issues presented to them but endeavored to answer by word or pen or debate. Though

¹Elisha Bates, The Doctrines of Friends (Mountpleasant, O: Leeds, 1829), p. 93.

²Ibid., p. 124.

some of the literature may not have been highly scholarly yet the writings of the early Quakers are voluminous. Most of it was written either to clear the Quaker position in the eyes of the world or to entreat men to salvation. They never seemed to lose sight of their first purpose, that of leading men to Christ. Christ became to them a living person and the Word became life. Through the Scriptures as channels of revelation their faith was strengthened in the historic Christ who had become real and living.

Robert Barclay, after contemplating being either a Presbyterian or a Catholic was convinced as he came into the assemblies of God's people and felt a secret power among them which touched his heart. He was well educated and prepared to become the theologian of the Quaker movement. In his Apology his main plea is that religion cannot be based upon dogmatic theology, but must come directly from God to the human heart, and that God's spiritual power is able to transform human nature. His strong belief in the Person of Christ as both human and divine is expounded in his works.

William Penn has been called one of the greatest Englishmen of the seventeenth century. He became one of the most influential in the expansion of Quakerism in the Colonies. He became one of the foremost champions and defenders of religious liberty in England, and the author of notable essays and treatises written often in a style of rare charm and beauty. He asserted that Christ, as the Divine Word, lighteth the souls of all men that come into the world, with a spiritual and saving

light, according to John 1:9; 8:12. In him was Life, and that Life the light of men; and he is God over all. He confessed Christ to be of the seed of Abraham and David after the flesh, and therefore truly and properly man.

In Declarations which were made to kings and parliaments the Quakers reiterated their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as both the Son of God and Son of Man.

C. SUMMARY

To fully understand and evaluate the Society of Friends in the seventeenth century it must be remembered that they were reacting against the formalism of the Church at that time. They were seeking to be free from forms and exacting creeds devised by men. To many the Bible had become a dead book without meaning to their personal life. The Quakers rose up to translate Christianity and the Bible into a living experience through a living Person. George Fox and his followers were convinced of the "light within" and thus sought to make Christ known to man. Though the Scripture was held in esteem, yet the central principle of the message was the immediate revelation of Christ in every heart. They were often misunderstood and accused of disbelieving the Deity and Manhood of Christ because of their speaking of Christ within. Yet in much of their writing can be found an affirmation of their belief in the humanity and divinity of Christ.

They believed that he was the God-man and that Christ lights

every man that comes into the world and that light is sent to all for salvation if not rejected and thus they held to a universal atonement.

Though the divinity and humanity of Christ was not the major issue of that day, yet this problem was spoken to indirectly by George Fox and others. George Fox's greatest contribution was in stressing the personal experience of Christ and the Word of God as being Christ. Christ became a living person and the Word became life.

CHAPTER V

CURRENT TRENDS

CHAPTER V

CURRENT TRENDS AMONG FRIENDS

A. INTRODUCTION

George Fox and his co-laborers had an understanding of the truth, and were able to state in unmistakable terms the message of the Gospel. The successors of these early leaders did not continue in those marked paths and a period of quietness ensued. Under these conditions there was a retrogression in matters of doctrine. Contemporary Friends have many times shown evidence of a fearful drift toward apostasy. The apostasy of any church can be traced in the following signs:

1. An emphasis on the by-products of the gospel.
2. An emphasis on education and culture.
3. An emphasis on man-pleasing appearances.
4. A multiplicity of disciplinary rules and organization.¹

Another step which could be added is the growing disbelief in the Word of God as an authoritative guide among Quakers. From the time of Elias Hicks this trend has never been wholly removed.

During the latter years of the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth century the attention of Friends had been more engrossed with the enforcement of the Discipline, the carrying out of certain moral

¹Roy P. Clark, "Contend for the Faith," Northwest Friend, VII (May, 1949), 3.

reforms, and with philanthropy.¹ The condition of spiritual life was low and a large proportion were Friends by tradition rather than conviction. The soil was thus prepared for the introduction of almost any new opinions that might be plausibly presented.

B. DIVISIONS

Elias Hicks. A separation occurred in 1827-28 which sharply divides the earlier history of Friends from the later. The prominent person connected with this separation was Elias Hicks. He is described as having a mind that was strong, logical, intense, and practical. He had a strong personal influence and where he labored most could be found his greatest following. The thought that "God is a Spirit" so possessed his mind that he came to think everything outward was unessential and carnal. He carried this to its logical conclusion and held that the coming and work of Christ in the flesh, the Scriptures, and all outward things were not essential. To him the "Light within" was all that one needed to follow. Thomas stated that the central cause of the controversy was his teaching as to the person and work of Jesus Christ.² He taught that Christ was superior to mankind because he had a greater task to do but beyond this Jesus was placed on an equality with man. Thomas said that;

¹Allen C. Thomas, Richard Henry Thomas, A History of The Friends In America (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co, 1905), p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 125.

In his scheme Jesus was a man liable to sin, yet free from it on account of his obedience, so that at the time of his baptism in the Jordan he became the Son of God, going through an experience in this respect that all of us must go through. In his view, Jesus Christ died because he was killed by wicked men, just as any other prophet was martyred. . . . That the death of Christ is of any value to us beyond the example of it, Hicks denied.¹

He seems to have thought that in order to emphasize the inward it was necessary to deny the outward.

The controversy arose between Elias Hicks and the Philadelphia elders. An attempt was made by the elders to interview him concerning the reported unsoundness of his preaching, but proved unsuccessful. Charges and counter-charges were made and party spirit ran high on both sides. Doctrines which were unimportant to the Hicks party were important to the Orthodox party. The effect of the separation on the doctrinal position of the Orthodox bodies was to make them insist more strongly than ever on the deity and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and on the authenticity of the Scriptures. It would be unjust to credit all the Hicksite doctrines to Hicks himself. Many of them followed in order to maintain what they felt was right liberty. Thomas points out that this branch has given special attention to philanthropy and moral reform. First for the slave, then for peace, total abstinence and alcholic beverages, and other movements uplifting humanity.² A statement of faith was given for this group by Howard M. Jenkins and concerning the divinity of Christ he said:

Convinced that the divine nature, the Christ spirit, the Word 'Which

¹Ibid., p. 126.

²Ibid., p. 164.

was in the beginning,' dwelt in Jesus in an unparalleled and, to our finite perceptions, an immeasurable degree, we regard him as 'the highest possible manifestation of God in man.'¹

Here there is no statement of their belief as to salvation through Christ Jesus.

John Wilbur and Joseph John Gurney were leaders in what proved to be another separation. Wilbur emphasized a heeding of the "light within" to the point of over stressing the immanence of Christ. Gurney stressed the importance of a knowledge of the facts of the work of Christ though he did not teach that these were essential to salvation. The difference was really in the definition of terms, but the practical result of Wilbur's teaching is that the individual does not expect to know that he is saved.² The actual results of this separation in 1845 were small numerically but it affected a greater part of Quakerdom. Another essential difference between the two was the attitude of both toward Christian work. The Wilbur party was afraid of what they called "creaturely activity" and so their Gospel service was almost entirely limited to the Meetings for Worship which were held in silence. The Gurney party did this but added other methods for more definite and regular teaching.

Primitive or Conservative is still another body of Friends. It was very close to the "Wilburites" but more exclusive and entirely indepen-

¹Ibid., p. 168.

²Ibid., p. 147.

dent. Its chief interest is to maintain the ancient testimonies of the Society intact, with the idea of bearing witness to the spirituality of the gospel rather than of propagating it. Thomas points out that they have continued in their quiet unaggressive course and must die out as their losses by death greatly exceed the gains by birth and they have few accessions.¹ Yet it is through this branch that much of the social work for Quakerdom is performed in the name of the American Friends Service Committee.

Orthodox or Evangelical is the title given to the last group of Quakers to be considered. Throughout the controversies and separations this is the group that attempted to hold true to the Bible and its teachings and the historic belief of Friends as set forth by George Fox. In 1887 a general conference of all Orthodox Friends was called to meet in Richmond, Indiana for the purpose of taking into consideration matters of general interest to the body at large. The most important of its actions were the issuing of a Declaration of Faith. Even Rufus Jones said of the statement that it was soundly orthodox and unequivocally evangelical.² It stated the Quaker doctrine of peace, future rewards and punishments and reaffirmed the deity of Christ and salvation through Him. This conference suggested that a similar meeting be held every five years and thus

¹Ibid., p. 208.

²Rufus M. Jones, The Later Periods of Quakerism (London: MacMillan and Co., 1921) II, 931.

developed the Five Years Meeting of Friends. While the old fundamental principles and doctrines of Quakerism were reaffirmed, there was a strong feeling, but slightly tempered with conservatism, that, if needful, old methods and even some doctrines, must give place to new, in order to meet present issues and to solve present problems. Later a uniform discipline was adopted and this marks an era in the history of Orthodox Friends in America. This movement, while fraught with possibilities of evil and of good, is to be regarded with some hope. The Orthodox Friends are the only ones who are engaged in organized foreign mission work. This interest in missions came as a result of the increased interest in the home work.

C. BASIC TENDENCIES

Many among Friends today are giving mental assent to creeds who do not practice what those creeds say. Some are even attempting to change the statements of faith to conform to their particular view. Perhaps none have been more outspoken along this line than the Hicksite group. A general observation to be made is that those of the Orthodox Friends use the term, "The Friends Church" while the Hicksites and other related groups use the term, "The Society of Friends."¹

In 1929 an All Friends Conference was called to be held in Oskaloosa, Iowa. The purpose of this meeting was to re-interpret the message of

¹Edward Mott, Sixty Years of Gospel Ministry (Portland: Edward Mott, n.d.), p. 179.

Christ to this generation, as a responsibility resting equally upon all Friends. In the prospectus issued they said;

Those who were responsible for the past divisions of the Society have gone. Present day responsibilities call for a closer acquaintance among all our groups in order that we who are living may properly appraise our own strength and weakness. We ought not to acquiesce in the decisions of the past without first knowing how the living members of the society feel.¹

Edward Mott was asked to present the orthodox position at this conference. This he did with a message entitled, "Christ the Evangel." The next day Friends of the Hicksite group came to him and declared they did not accept what he had said. Edward Mott called upon them to stand with him on the Scriptures regarding the Deity of Christ and His sacrificial atonement, but this they also declined. An English Friend wrote in the "Friends Intelligencer," the official organ of the General Conference of the Hicksites, that it was clear that the address of Edward Mott's was not acceptable to most people. Yet an orthodox Friend writing expressed appreciation for the clear setting forth of the true Quaker message contained in the Foundation Truth, Christ's Deity.² One purpose of this conference was to promote fellowship between the groups, especially as related to the Hicksite and the Orthodox. Recognition is sought by the Hicksites through fellowship as Christians, yet they deny the very truths that are the basis of orthodox Christianity.

¹Edward Mott, The Friends Church In The Light of Its Recent History Portland: Loomis Printing Co., 1935), p. 97.

²Ibid., p. 98.

In the January 24th, 1948 issue of "Friends Intelligencer" an article appeared written by Howard H. Brinton stating;

The tripartite division of Wilburite, Hicksite and Gurneyite is no longer a matter of major importance. . . In these days of increasing unity in the whole Society of Friends there are still divergent views calling for expression. . . . These groups may be designated for want of better, more genuinely descriptive terms as the 'non-pastoral,' the 'pastoral-modernist' and the 'pastor fundamentalist'. The 'non-pastoral,' which centers in the historic type of Quaker meeting and in acts of social service, comprises the Friends General Conference, the six Conservative Yearly Meetings including Philadelphia Arch Street, the new Pacific Yearly Meeting, the new independent Meetings, and various parts of the Five Years Meeting. The 'pastoral-modernist' meetings, which have programmed services and which unite in maintaining a single foreign mission board, and which hold a somewhat liberal theology, include a majority of the Five Years Meeting. The 'pastoral-fundamentalist' group with programmed meetings of a more revivalistic and emotion type, holds to an ultra-evangelical theology and supports mission boards in various Yearly Meetings. . . In the non-pastoral group theological opinion runs through the whole spectrum from secular humanism to fundamentalism, but the majority are somewhere in the middle or hold only vaguely developed theological opinions.¹

Concerning this article Edward Mott points out that this presentation regarding the non-pastoral group clearly presents unbelief in the evangelical truths of God's Word as almost completely prevalent. Secular humanism is anti-Christian regarding the deity of Christ, and other fundamentals of the Gospel of the Word.²

A further difference between the orthodox Friends and the Hicksites is brought out in an article issued in the October 2, 1948 "Friends Intelligencer" written by Bliss Forbush. Before quoting from the article it is

¹Edward Mott, "Facts in the Case Considered," Northwest Friend, VI (April, 1948), 2.

²Ibid.

necessary to recall that the Hicksite (General Conference) Friends failed to acquire membership in the World Council of Churches which met and organized in Amsterdam in 1948, and it was solely because of their position concerning the Godhead and Saviorhood of Christ. A part of the article follows:

The third issue of special importance to Friends General Conference was the more fundamental problem involved in the basis on which the World Council of Churches gathered. This was "a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." The General Conference proposed an addition to the basis which would broaden the fellowship to include those who do not feel that unity can be found in creedal statements, but rather in the inward desire for unity expressed in loving fellowship. This suggestion for broadening the Basis was rejected. . . . Friends General Conference, through its Central Committee and by reference to the six Yearly Meetings, may take one of three courses. Since our proposed addition to the Basis was rejected, the Conference may decide that further cooperation with the World Council is impossible. We could draft a request for clarification of the Basis with the hope that the Basis might then be in greater harmony with our general interpretation of the place of Jesus in our religious thinking. The Conference may accept the earlier statement made by the World Council that the Basis "is an affirmation of the Christian faith of the participating Churches, and not a creedal test to judge Churches or persons." The third course open to the Conference would be to accept the interpretation that the Basis is not a creedal test and to put our own interpretation on the words, "Jesus Christ is God and Saviour," realizing that our interpretation would be untenable to most of the member churches in the World Council.

Upon reading this article Edward Mott remarks that under the conditions prevailing Friends should give careful attention to matters in which the doctrine of the deity of Christ is being entirely repudiated. He asks the

¹Edward Mott, "The Evidence," Northwest Friend, VII (November, 1948),

question, "Are we willing that our historic faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior shall be set aside and corrupted and discarded?"¹

Quite an extreme to the Hicksite gatherings was the Evangelical Friends Conference which met in Denver, Colorado in 1956. This association approved a statement of faith coinciding with the Richmond Declaration of Faith of 1887. The document states:

We believe in the person of Jesus Christ wherein the divine and human natures are united so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man, belief in His virgin Birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension, and in His personal return.²

Evangelical Friends represents no special movement or Yearly Meeting but a true fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Objectives of the conference is to revive every Quaker area that has any breath of spiritual life. Future conferences were outlined to cover a doctrinal conference when beliefs will be restated in present-day form.

Some of the by-products of such as the Hicksite groups are an emphasis upon the "social gospel" and the "Inner Light". By a "social gospel" is meant a belief that the ills of the human race can be solved at the social level by the application of the ethical principles of Christianity to society at large. There is much talk about race-prejudice, war, labor-capital relationship, the starving people of the world, and many other kindred topics. These have a legitimate place within Christian-

¹Ibid., p. 10.

²L. Dell Lamb, "Evangelical Friends Meet," Northwest Friend XXXV (September, 1956), 2.

ity but when the solution is sought independently of the atonement of Christ, and without the necessity of individual regeneration this gospel is not of Jesus Christ. This has been true of a large segment of Quakerdom through such organizations as the American Friends Service Committee and affiliated groups. The tendency has been to shelve the belief in the atoning death of Christ for sin and to lose interest in a Biblical missionary program. The whole basis of such a view is a humanistic approach to the problems of the world.

The distinction which is made concerning the "Inner Light" is one of the vital elements in the difference between the Orthodox and the Hicksite groups. The term used by George Fox is "the Light of Christ." George Fox stated in his journal:

I turned the people to the divine light, which Christ, the heavenly and spiritual man, enlighteneth them withal; that with that light they might see their sins, and that they were in death and darkness, and without God in the world; and that with the same light they might also see Christ, from whom it comes, their Saviour and Redeemer, who shed His blood and died for them, and who is the way to God, the truth, and life.¹

Under the leadership of Elias Hicks the term later was used to convey the idea that man has in his being inherently a light which, if followed, will lead him in the way of righteousness, and that he needs no atonement nor mediator. Today the Hicksites have modernized this term by saying "the seed of God in every man." In a general epistle this thought is expressed:

¹Allen C. Thomas, A History of The Friends in America, p. 42.

²Edward Mott, The Friends Church in The Light of Its Recent History, p. 96.

Our vision of the larger issues is as yet dim; but we are clear that there is a call to us as Friends, individually, in groups, and in the wider community, to prepare for that more Christian order by personal experiments in friendship, and by a renewed application of our belief in the seed of God in every man.¹

Another general epistle expresses the term in the following manner:

For us Friends rings the challenge not only to believe in God and His omnipotence but, more difficult, to believe in man and his inherent goodness and to so address ourselves to him that we may be taught by that of God in him. . . Friends of the Inner Light, we are forever devoted to the splendor of the indwelt man enobled with the consciousness of God whose perfect love has cast out fear.²

To these epistles Edward Mott made this judgment:

The expression, "The seed of God in every man" is clearly unitarian in that it upholds the idea that man has in him a goodness apart from divine grace. The Scriptures give no warrant for any such idea, but on the contrary plainly declare that the seed of God is in those who are born of God, a distinct work of divine grace by which man is changed from his natural corrupt state and becomes a child of God, possessed of the divine nature.³

Bliss Forbush delivered an address at the General Conference of Hicksites which appeared in printed form in the Friends Intelligencer. In this address he stated that one of the rods by which we walk can be called religious humanism. He further points out that in the Society of Friends religious humanism was chiefly a revolt against the views of John Wesley and the evangelical leaders of the Anglican Church who influenced a portion of the Society. To Forbush, Elias Hicks is the best exponent of religious humanism in Quakerism of the nineteenth century. Forbush states

¹Edward Mott, The Friends Church in the Light of Its Recent History, p. 96.

²Ibid., Loc. Cit.

³Ibid., Loc. Cit.

that the final portion of our staff goes by a very modern term, humanitarianism or the social gospelThe interest of Friends is rooted in their belief that since "there is that of God in every man," God gives the light of His truth and presence to men of all classes and races.¹ In these epistles can be seen expressions used in a way that George Fox and the early followers never intended should be applied.

D. SUMMARY

In summarizing the current trends it is to be noted that one of the first tendencies away from an orthodox position was to discount the Word of God as an authoritative guide. From this point Friends were engaged in the enforcement of the Discipline and carrying out philanthropic acts. Elias Hicks as the leader of a new movement among Friends became so obsessed with the thought that "God is a Spirit" that he felt it necessary to cast off everything outward as nonessentials. He carried this to its logical conclusion and held that the coming and work of Christ in the flesh, the Scriptures, and all outward things were not essential. To him Christ was superior to mankind because he had a greater task to do but beyond this Jesus was placed on an equality with man.

The Wilburites emphasized heeding the "light within" to the point of overstressing the immanence of Christ.

Gurney stressed the importance of a knowledge of the facts of the

¹Edward Mott, Sixty Years of Gospel Ministry (Portland: Edward Mott, n.d.), p. 111.

work of Christ.

The Primitive or Conservative group was not particularly concerned with the Christological problems but to maintain the ancient testimonies of the Society. Their outreach has been through social activities to the neglect and virtual denial of the need for personal redemption.

The Orthodox or Evangelical branch has attempted through the years to hold true to the Bible and its teachings and the historic belief of Friends as set forth by George Fox.

The trend today is to try to find some basis upon which to fellowship and unite apart from Christ and His Word. In order to unite some are willing to agree to creeds if given the liberty to interpret them as they choose.

The tendencies of those who refuse to acknowledge the Word of God as an authoritative guide and Christ as the Divine Son of God are to lose interest in missions, to proclaim a "social gospel" and to give a humanistic approach to problems. From this can be seen that the very basic concept one has of Christ determines the areas in which one will operate. Those who hold to an unorthodox view of Christ will work in the area of social reform while those who hold the orthodox view will place their main emphasis upon evangelism but not neglect the obligation to the social needs of man.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the various views of the Person of Christ as held by Friends and to compare those views with the classic doctrine of the Church. It is apparent that the early Church was compelled to formulate creeds because of the errors which prevailed. The Chalcedonian Council in 451 A. D. finally expressed the Christology which had become formative for all Christendom and has served as a guard against error and become a criterion for orthodoxy and proved to be a Christological normative. From this time until after the Reformation the main emphasis and discussion was not concerning the Person of Christ.

The Quaker arose in the seventeenth century amidst chaos, religious unrest and theological warfare. They were attempting to translate Christianity into a working experience in contrast to ritualism and dead orthodoxy. It is evident that the Quaker message was to revive primitive Christianity. The central emphasis of George Fox and his followers was the immediate revelation of Christ in every heart. The earthly life of Christ was a fact of supreme importance to them. From the voluminous writings of the early Quakers it seems evident that they believed in Jesus Christ as both true God and perfect man and that He was the author of their living faith. They were often misunderstood and misquoted on the deity and humanity of Christ because they spoke of "Christ within." To

George Fox the "Light within" was simply the capacity of response to divine intimations and openings or a moral searchlight revealing to man the absolute distinction between right and wrong. The belief that Christ lights every man that comes into the world led them to hold to a universal atonement in contrast to a limited atonement as held by many of their contemporaries.

Perhaps it cannot be said that the Friends added anything new to the doctrine of the Person of Christ but their contribution was in making people of their day aware of a living Christ outside of rituals and ceremonies and creeds. The Word of God was not just a book but a real living Person and through Him salvation was provided. The written Word was not the highest authority but was accepted as an authoritative guide in faith and practice. Through the Scriptures as channels of revelation their faith was strengthened in the historic Christ who had become real and living.

The concept of Christ as held by Friends did have divergent tendencies if not properly guarded. By an overemphasis in some areas some Friends went off into error from which they have never quite recovered. The early Quakers were united in their belief in the "Inner Light" coupled with the exaltation of Christ as the only one who could speak to their condition. Later the tendency was to dwell upon the sufficiency of the individual guide and to view Jesus as an example of the perfect life rather than as the propitiation for the sins of the world. For some Friends the existence of the eternal Christ, the Word, within them,

caused them to place less emphasis upon the Biblical account of the historical Christ and the meaning of his sacrificial death there attributed to him. There was also the tendency of leading to Unitarianism and even deism. By the denial of all revealed religion as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and asserting that there never can be any other guide given unto men by God but his own reason and denying any sense of knowledge of the Spirit the soil had been favorably prepared for the seed.

It has been said that the separation in 1827-28 was due to a conflict between liberalism and rationalism inclining toward Unitarianism on one side and a rigid orthodox attitude on the other. However true this may be it is evident that there were real dangers in the rationalistic view of Elias Hicks.

CONCLUSION

It would seem that the Evangelical Friends view of Christ does not conflict with the classic doctrine of the Church, and could be expressed in the same terms as the Chalcedonian Creed. The difference in emphasis has seemed to be more on the Living Word than primarily upon the written Word alone. A more effective method of expressing the terms was sought without changing the meaning. The Friends' concept of Christ has had tendencies which could and did lead into error or unorthodox views if not properly defined and guarded. The immediate revelation of Christ in every heart, and the consequent call for submission of the whole life to the Divine source of Light and power was the contribution of George Fox to the doctrine of the Person of Christ.

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