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The Concept of Christ as Servant as Motivation to Quaker Service

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rily of the good that comes from disunity and disagreement among us. I find that it is less the things we have in common than the things we have not which most strengthen my life in my encounter with others. I find myself, therefore, asking what we hope for in the mutual irradiation Douglas welcomes between the world faiths and Quakerism. Wilfred Cantwell Smith said to us last year that to talk of revealed religion was wrong, for surely what God reveals is himself, and religion is the response to that revelation. In my encounters with believers from other traditions, I want to know where we do not differ, but I also want to know that, when we differ, the differences matter. Mutual irradiation, I take it, must involve, in part, a respectful and loving attempt at mutual conversion at precisely those points where the differences are real and vital. Jacques Maritain, in On the Use of Philosophy, insists that what we want is not a fellowship of beliefs but a fellowship of men who believe: “I distrust any easy and comfortable friendship between believers of all denominations. I mean a friendship which is not accompanied, as it were, by a kind of compunction or soul’s sorrow... The duty of being faithful to the light, and of always following it to the extent one sees it, is a duty which cannot be evaded.” Maritain is speaking of mutual irradiation, but he is warning us that the price of this fellowship is heart- soreness; if we are to try to meet men where they are and be true to where we are simultaneously, we must be prepared for discomfort and unease. The alternative Maritain describes as a World’s Fair Temple, “which would make all faiths have their stand, window display, and loudspeaker... on the condition that all of them should confess they are not sure that they are conveying the word of God, and that none of them should claim to be the true Faith..." This alternative is not mutual irradiation but what modern physics calls the heat death.

Though I value the emphasis Douglas Steere has made in this paper, I feel something by way of counterbalance is needed. Douglas has taught us all the value of learning where words come from; in what I have written I have tried to remind us that one way to do this is to listen to what the words actually say, to give the letter its proper valuation in relation to the spirit.

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tudes and fed them when hungry. He cleansed lepers, cured epilepsy and arthritis, and gave sight to the blind. But all of these works of mercy served only to confirm and demonstrate the truth of his teaching that the kingdom of God was at hand and that men should therefore repent and enter it at once.

The average Jew was tremendously excited both by Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom and by his mighty works of healing which showed that the kingdom had already begun. To him this meant that Jesus was either a great prophet or the Messiah, and his preaching of the kingdom of God meant freedom from Roman oppression and the restoration of Jewish independence and the full restoration of the Covenant of Moses. Besides, Jesus called himself the Son of man, a great apocalyptic figure from Daniel and Enoch who would bring about cosmic salvation, the overthrow of all evil, and the hegemony of the God of Israel over all nations.

However, as we shall see more clearly in the second part of this paper, Jesus conceived of himself not as the violent ruler of Daniel’s fifth monarchy but as a suffering servant, who by eschewing all violence and politico-economic power methods would inaugurate a kingdom based on redemptive love and service. This is attested by our theme: “Whosoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve…”

Our second scripture passage is the climactic Servant of Yahweh song from Isaiah chapter 53. I shall not quote it here but shall summarize its message.

In the first place, the Servant of Yahweh has suffered vicariously in the place of others. The passage asserts that he has surely borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions and by his stripes we are healed.

Second, even though all men have gone astray, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. His soul is made an offering for our sins. He bears our sins and transgressions and makes intercession and atonement for all.

In the next place, in order to accomplish his task of intercession and vicarious suffering, he was despised, rejected by men, and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed and afflicted and opened not his mouth. No violence or deceit was found in him, and he poured out his soul unto death. Therefore, the Servant of Yahweh shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and the Lord will divide his portion with the great and his spoil with the strong. The key verse for us is 53:11 — by his vicarious suffering and “by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many.”

There are many scholars both Jewish and Christian who hurry to point out that the servant figure in Isaiah is a collective figure representing either the whole people of Israel or a righteous remnant thereof. Others, and among them Morna D. Hooker in her book Jesus and the Servant, go to great pains to demonstrate that neither Jesus nor the Gospel writers made an explicit identification of Jesus with the suffering servant of God found in Isaiah. However, many others, among them T. W. Manson and Vincent Taylor and myself, do identify Jesus as the Christian fulfillment of Isaiah’s servant songs, and even claim that motifs of vicarious suffering, service, intercession, and final exaltation are the key to Jesus’ own understanding of his mission as Son of man.

In our next scripture passage, I Peter 2:21, the early church explicitly identifies Jesus with the Servant of Isaiah in these words:

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

What a wonderful application of the servant image is this passage from First Peter! In it we are called to follow the example of Christ, to walk in his steps, which means that no sin, no
guile, no reviling or threats may be found on our lips. As servants of the Servant of God we must trust in God to judge justly. Jesus as servant suffered that we might be healed by his wounds, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness!

Both this passage from Peter and the one from Isaiah 53 show us what real service means. It means we must suffer on behalf of others. We must follow in Christ's steps, always seeking to act with redemptive love. Conscious of his forgiveness and atonement for our iniquities we must seek in some measure to bear the sins and violence of men in our own bodies, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.

Because it fits so well this point about service, I would like to quote a vision of Kenneth Boulding's which appeared in a Friends' paper some years ago:

I see a hand of men and women going out unto all people preaching the splendid news of God's love by word and deed, using all the resources of their minds, and of the knowledge of our day, but speaking principally to the spiritual hunger that grips the hearts of men everywhere.

I see them preaching fearlessly
Love God *
more than your country,
more than your class,
more than your race,
more than your creed.

I see them persecuted,
and cast into prison,
and put to death,
but conquering all these things through love that fills
their whole being,
leaving no room for mistrust, or fear, or pain.

* I would add, “and Jesus the Servant.”

They shall absorb the world's hate and anger into their own bodies, and give none in return, so that the streams of hatred that fly around the world, bounding and rebounding from the flinty surfaces of unredeemed souls, will dwindle and pass away.

I see the hardness melting from men's souls, a new and eager look brightening in their eyes, a dissolving of old hates, a coming together in joyful unity.

It is a curious thing that one of the most striking examples in Scripture of Jesus acting as servant is not mentioned in the three important books dealing with the subject which I have consulted recently. The passage I refer to is John, chapter 13, verses 3-15. You will remember that it is the account of Jesus' washing the disciples' feet.

On the night when he was betrayed Jesus arose from supper and girded himself with a towel and having poured water into a basin began to wash the disciples' feet. When he came to Peter, Peter in consternation said, "Lord, you shall never wash my feet!" At which Jesus looked up at him and said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Cut to the heart, Peter cried out, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus concludes the scene by telling his disciples that he has given them an example. "If I, your Lord and teacher," he says, "have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

A friend of mine suggested recently that this scene of the footwashing in the Gospel of John is really the climax of the first half of the book. You will remember that there are seven great signs that Jesus performs, the most important of which were the healing of the lame man at the pool of Siloam, the feeding of the five thousand, the healing of the man born blind,
and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. There are several
great "I am" sayings in John, most of them connected with these
great signs. You recall that Jesus says as the climax to the feed-
ing of the five thousand, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes
to me shall never be hungry, and whoever believes in me shall
never be thirsty." In similar fashion he says, "I am the light of
the world," before healing the blind man, and at the raising of
Lazarus he asserts, "I am the resurrection and the life!"

Jesus' washing his disciples' feet is his final sign. In it the
serene and exalted son of God pictured in John's Gospel hum-
bles himself and girds himself as a slave and washes their dirty
feet. It is an astonishing act, completely out of character with
the cosmic claims of his "I am" sayings. The contrast makes the
footwashing the more impressive. The point of this discussion
is that there ought to be another "I am" saying which precedes
the footwashing, namely, "I am the servant of all."

What can be said about Jesus' command that we ought to
wash one another's feet? Some churches feel he meant it liter-
ally and they practice footwashing at regular intervals during
the church year. I have been deeply grateful to be permitted
to participate in the Church of the Brethren Love Feast and
Footwashing service three times in recent years. I shall never
forget the testimony of John Hurst, a convinced member of the
Church of the Brethren, concerning this. "When someone hum-
bly washes my feet," he said, "I feel clean all over!" It is a deep-
ly moving experience to participate in a footwashing service,
and how eloquently it dramatizes Jesus, the servant!

In a larger sense, Jesus' washing his disciples' feet and his
command that we wash one another's feet means selfless, humble
service at its widest. Whenever we visit orphans and widows in
their affliction, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or visit those
in prison, we are carrying out his command to love and serve.

Few Protestant thinkers have shown much sensitivity to
this servant image in the New Testament, but Jonathan
Edwards was one who did, and his statement about it will be a
fitting conclusion to this section on John 13. He says:

Washing the feet of guests was the office of ser-
vants and one of their meanest offices, and there-
fore was fitly chosen by our Saviour to represent
that great abasement which he was to be the
subject of in the form of a servant, in becoming
obedient unto death..."

The quotation from Edwards suggests our final passage,
Philippians 2:6-11, considered by many to be a hymn of the
earliest Christian community. It reads as follows:

... who, though he was in the form of God, did
not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men. And being
found in human form he humbled himself and
became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed
on him the name which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and
every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to
the glory of God the Father.

Manifestly this passage reflects a very exalted view of Jesus
the Messiah, and that is why I have saved it until last. The
assumption in the sixth verse is not only that Christ is both Lord
and Messiah but that he existed eternally with God the Father
before becoming man. The key verse for our purpose is verse
seven. Here the divine Logos emptied himself, made himself
nothing, taking the form of a servant, assuming the nature of a
slave. This verse is the so-called Kenosis or self-emptying verse
on which the so-called "Kenotic" views of the incarnation are
based. I find it impossible to explain the why of this self-abase-
ment of God. All I can do is joyfully affirm it and want to sing
it and commend it to you as the greatest passage of all showing
Jesus as servant.

I have noticed, too, a strong parallel to the Servant Song in
Isaiah 53. The affirmation of Christ's pre-existence belongs to
the Philippians passage, of course, but thereafter the self-empty-
ing, the taking the form of a servant, the humbling himself and
becoming obedient unto death is strongly reminiscent of Isaiah
53. The greatest similarity comes in the "therefore" in verse 9.
"Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he

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shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death,” says Isaiah 53:12. Philippians is even more triumphant. “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.”

It is striking that the New English Version translates verse 12 which follows this hymn to say, “So you too must be obedient . . .” What, become a slave to all and obedient unto death?

Who then is this who is among us as one who serves, who goes about healing and doing good, who suffers vicariously for others, who empties himself and obeys to the death and thereby is exalted above all? It is Jesus, the Lord’s anointed one, acting as servant.

Perhaps now we can see a new or deeper meaning to our theme sentence: “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant.”

II. A THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

We now turn to a theological approach to the concept of Christ as servant as motivation for Quaker service. Here we shall speak of the tasks or functions of Christ, what are called in traditional language the offices of Christ. John Calvin in the sixteenth century revived a trilogy of the ancient church which described the works of Christ in three functions or offices: as prophet, priest, and king. Part of our task in this paper is to suggest that there ought now to be added a fourth office or function of the eternal Christ — the office of servant.

It is of great significance for our discussion that George Fox often spoke of Christ in his kingly, priestly, and prophetic offices. Fox put strong emphasis on Christ the king, as the following quotation attests:

The Lord God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . . who hath all power in heaven and earth given to him . . . [that] thrones, and rule and government should be subject to him who is Lord of lords and King of kings . . . upholding all things by his word and power.

George Fox speaks less often of Christ as priest but nevertheless stresses this function especially in answer to why God became man. The following illustrates both emphases:

And he took not upon him the nature of Angels, but of the Seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it became him to be made like unto his Brethren (to wit, Christ) that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest . . . that he might make reconciliation for the sins of the People. For in that he suffered and was tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

If we were to include Christ’s function as servant in one of the three traditional categories, it would fit best in his office as priest and sacrificial lamb, as the book of Hebrews expresses it.

Certainly Fox’s distinctive emphasis falls on Christ as the prophet who speaks from heaven. When Fox speaks of Christ as prophet he means the Logos, the eternal Word of God, a transcendent, timeless, and everlasting figure. In this majestic role Christ is not so much a foreteller of future events as a direct witness of God in the heart.

Fox ascribes four functions to Christ as prophet. First, he is to reveal the will of God to men. Second, he has inaugurated a new age of grace and truth. Fox says, “and this grace and truth we witness, which is our teacher and brings salvation, and establisheth our hearts.” The third function of Christ as prophet is to write the new covenant of God promised by Jeremiah on men’s hearts; whereby he shall be their God and they his people forever. But the fourth and major function of Christ as prophet in Fox’s thought is summed up in the well-known phrase, “Jesus Christ is come to teach His people Himself,” directly, without mediation of sacrament or priest, a living, teaching, guiding presence.

But our concern in this paper is to discuss Christ in his office as servant, and about this Fox and for that matter until our own day almost no one since John Calvin has had anything significant to say. T. W. Manson has written a very perceptive little book of lectures called The Servant-Messiah which I have found most illuminating. We have indicated in part one something of the burning desire for Jewish independence which centered in the messianic hope of the average Jew of Jesus’ day. Manson highlights this political-economic messianic longing by saying:
For the average Jew the remembering of the Covenant by God, the performance of the promise made to the Patriarchs, in other words the establishment of the kingdom of God, meant 'freedom from fear and the control of our enemies; so that we should worship him in holiness and righteousness...'. It meant complete Jewish autonomy with Temple and Torah here and now.4

The same average Jew was as impatient with a benevolent conqueror as with an Antiochus Epiphanes:

For any sensitive Jewish spirit the affront of Gentile overlordship was present and real, humiliating and sacrilegious, whether the Gentile overlord was tolerant or the reverse. . . . any thinking Jew . . . might quite reasonably look upon armed revolt against the foreigner not merely as a patriotic act, but also as a religious protest against insult offered to Almighty God.5

But Jesus rejected the temptation to become political or economic savior of mankind or to convince men by fantastic miracles. Jesus rejected Jewish Messianism in favor of a Messianism based on the suffering servant of Isaiah. Love, forgiveness, and service replace hatred, revenge, and nationalism as the motif.

Manson explains the temptations of Jesus in these terms:

In the Temptations the Messiah is being invited to take the centre of the stage in one role or another. It is significant that each time the response of Jesus puts God in the centre of the stage; and each time the implication is made perfectly clear: even the Messiah is only God's servant — indeed, just because he is Messiah he must be pre-eminently God's servant. The Messiah is the chief man in Israel: then he must be the servant of all. But above all he must be completely and unreservedly the servant of the Lord.6

Jesus further demonstrated his mission as servant by his attitude toward the law of Moses. Manson says:

For Jesus the thing of first importance, the only thing of any importance, is his own Ministry, that is to say his task of manifesting the perfect rule of God by being the Servant in perfect love of God and man. . . . Not even the law can compare with this supreme obligation. . . . Jesus does not claim to be a greater legislator than Moses, or even a more learned lawyer than Hillel. He claims nothing for himself. He appears as the servant par excellence of the kingdom of God and . . . for [its] merciful redemptive work.7

Concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus was fully aware, continues Manson, that

In the kingdom of God God is King. He had accepted fully all the consequences that follow when this proposition is taken seriously; for example that the messianic task is to be the servant of the Lord . . . that the servant of the Lord must work in God's way of merciful redemptive love; that he must be the 'friend of publicans and sinners'; that he must proclaim a kingdom of God that is a Ministry of this kind and cannot be anything else . . . [It] is not one that is 'brought in', whether by political action or by any other kind of coup d'etat. It is a kingdom in which God rules through the messianic Ministry. The kingdom is not something to be added to the Ministry: it is already present in the Ministry. The sacrifice and the suffering of the Son of man are not the prelude to triumph: properly understood they are the supreme triumph.8

As servant of Yahweh, Jesus rejected Jewish political Messianism and was therefore despised and betrayed by a Zealot. He demonstrates the fulfillment of the law and the rule of God by acting as servant in perfect love to God and man. He understood the kingdom of God essentially as a redemptive fellowship where deeds of love culminate in the triumph of his love on the cross. By humbling himself and washing his disciples' feet and becoming obedient unto death he demonstrates his highest claim to be God's servant-Messiah!
If Jesus' concept of his ministry was essentially that of the Son of man who had laid aside his glory to become the servant of all, then logically and appropriately, even necessarily, a kenotic view of the work of Christ is implied. In his exegesis of Philippians 2:6-11, Vincent Taylor makes the self-emptying or *kenosis* of Christ the key to his understanding of him. After asserting that self-emptying implies an act of preincarnate renunciation, Taylor goes on to say:

The same emphasis on renunciation is seen in Christ's acceptance of a full humanity. He was 'made in the likeness of men'. He knew weariness, hunger, thirst, trial, temptation, disappointment, fear, the hampering conditions of space, want of knowledge, restricted power. The Apostle does not say this, but in the light of history, we see that all these experiences are involved in the words, 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death'. He accepted an incognito. He became the unknown whom men might ceride, the Stranger on whom they might spit. Such, St. Paul is saying, was the mind of Christ. In particular, that mind was revealed in His obedience even unto death.  

The climax of the self-emptying or renunciation of God in Christ is his exaltation at the end. This exaltation only serves to emphasize the fact that Christ was and continued to be Lord throughout his humiliation and abasement. It might be said that his Lordship is most clearly and fully demonstrated in his taking the form of Servant. This shows the depth of incarnation. Taylor continues:

The exaltation tears away the veil. What is true all the time is confessed by heaven and earth. ... The idea of renunciation persists to the end, and Christ's word is illustrated in Himself, 'If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.'  

The problem of the *kenosis* or self-abasement of our Lord is the problem of all Christology. The life of Jesus on earth was unambiguously human. Taylor states that also:

His humanity was real. In all respects He lived as a man, with a humanity perfect and inclusive. Equally clearly He is divine, Lord and Christ, Son of man, Son of God, with a unique knowledge of the Father as 'my Father'. ... The problem of the Person of Christ is the coexistence of these two manifestations of His divine human personality in His human life. The Son of God is not omniscient, and not omnipotent. There are things that He does not know, there are things that He cannot do, and yet He is the Lord and Son of God, venerated and worshipped, the object of faith, the inspiration of an obedience which has no parallel.  

Some form of *kenosis* theory of the incarnation and works of Christ is therefore unavoidable.  

The usual objection to the kenotic theory focuses on the question of what happens to the omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of God during the self-abasement of the Son. Taylor meets this objection completely and conclusively, I think, by saying that the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence are not totally discarded but remain in our Lord in his servanthood as latent, potential, and undestroyed but still capable of being manifested under certain circumstances. This is the hidden messiahship, the messianic consciousness known only to Jesus and not fully recognized by his disciples until the resurrection.  

Another important point to stress is the fact that the self-abasement of God in becoming a servant is self-imposed. This is done by divine initiative, not by external forces or human dictates. It is, says Taylor, "self-imposed by divine love and by the redemptive purpose flowing from it."  

This free divine initiative in incarnation is beautifully expressed by Karl Barth, who says:

In so far as Jesus Christ is true God, that is, God in his self-abasement, he is true man, that is, man exalted above all men in his total humanity. ... In so far as God made himself captive in him, so in him has he again become free. In so far as the Lord became servant in him, so in him the servant has again become Lord.
It is significant that the “kenotic mood” has been a keynote of spirituality in Russian Orthodoxy for centuries. Nadeja Gorodetsky in her study of the subject describes this mood as, “meekness, self-abasement, voluntary poverty, humility, obedience, non-resistance, and acceptance of suffering and death.”

Many of the great saints of the Russian Church have exemplified these kenotic traits. Let me mention just one of them here, St. Tykhon of Zadonsk.

Tykhon was a bishop of Voronezh from 1724 to 1783. A great writer, he gave up the riches of his bishopric, sold all, and gave to the poor in order to become a monk. So many came to him for spiritual solace and counsel that he had little time for the solitude and silence of the hermit’s life he craved.

One time he journeyed to the home of a large landowner who was oppressing his serfs. The landowner became so enraged at Tykhon’s rebuke that he struck him full in the face. Whereupon Tykhon fell on his knees and implored the landlord’s pardon for having led him into temptation to anger and violence. As a final symbol of his humility he asked to be buried under a stone in the courtyard on which everyone would tread on the way to church. The suffering of Christ on the cross and the love shown by the crucified one were constantly on the mind of Tykhon. Concerning the kenosis he said, “This condescension of the Son of God is the cause of all our spiritual bliss.”

I feel that all doctrines of the incarnation and atonement and Christology should focus on this kenotic theory of Christ as Servant. Taylor concludes his argument for the kenotic theory with these words:

Above all, it sets the incarnation within the context of eternal love and sacrifice... It is claimed that by setting self-limitation and surrender at the centre of the Godhead, it gives expression to the exercise of the love and sacrifice of the Triune God as no other Christological presentation does or can. It finds the final proof of divine love in the Son’s journey into a strange country at supreme cost for the redemption of mankind.

This discussion points up the main concern of our paper, which is to show that Jesus, the Messiah, in his humiliation and human limitations, in becoming obedient unto death, and in his becoming servant of all, most powerfully demonstrates his exalted lordship, his kingly power, the fact that he is the conquering lamb worthy of all power and riches and wisdom and honor and glory and blessing. He has become first among us and first in the whole creation because he is in truth the servant of all.

III. A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

What then has the role of Jesus as servant, the one who said that he who would be great among you must be your servant; what has his ministry as one who served, and his self-emptying of his divine powers to redeem mankind, to do with modern-day Quaker service?

I am sure it is an oversimplification, but today we find many Friends who tend to exemplify two divergent tendencies: on the one hand are those who accept the Lordship of Jesus as the Christ and have personally experienced his saving work, but are weak in serving humanity through works of mercy. On the other hand are Friends who focus on man and his needs, doing good to mankind on a world-wide scale, yet failing to see Jesus as the Servant-Messiah whom every tongue should confess as Lord. It will be clear to the careful observer that virtually no Friend fits precisely into either of these groups. The dichotomy is here adopted primarily for the sake of clarity in argument, yet in the opinion of this writer the two tendencies do exist in recognizable form.

I like to think of these two groups of Friends in terms of Jesus’ parable of the two sons, in Matthew. The first group, like the first son, agreed to obey the father’s orders but did not carry them out. Can it be that in some sense the second group is like the second son, who refused to obey but later relented and did what he was told? In Quakerism of the first or generally evangelical type there is much willingness to honor Christ as prophet, priest, or even king, but few who are willing to do what he says and to follow in his steps of service, suffering, humiliation, and redemptive love. Why is it that Christians are so conformist, so prudent, so dainty? Why do we fear to plunge into the mudderole of the world and save the people?
If this first group of Friends with cautious faith in Christ could understand that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Moses and the prophets, is a God who acts, who delivers from oppression, then they would see that they too, like Jesus the servant, must throw caution to the winds and act to deliver men from sin and all forms of oppression in this barbaric world of the twentieth century. In the trenchant phrase of James, “faith without works is dead.” And Jesus as servant was known for his mighty works which demonstrated that the rule of God was already beginning among men.

But the second group of Friends, who specialize in service and seek to speak only through their lives and deeds, are, hopefully, like the second son who said no and then carried out the task anyway. The great question here is whether the gospel of workcamps, international student seminars, Quaker United Nations Programs, and Volunteers for International Service Assignments, when not done in the name or power of the Servant who loved us and gave himself for us, is an adequate or sufficient gospel?

Actually great deeds done solely out of human kindness and concern are still great deeds and elicit an appropriate response of human love and gratitude. But if they are not tinged with Galilean compassion or demonstrate the pattern seen on the Mount or reflect the love of God’s chosen servant can they do permanent good or reach the deepest need in the hearts of men? Service on a purely humanitarian basis is like a great dam backing up billions of cubic feet of water while the power is produced only by the auxiliary direct current generators. The men in charge of the dam will not turn the water into the great dynamo, even though humanity is crying for its kilowatts and the alternating current the great dynamo can give. The great dynamo is the one who is servant of all because he laid down his life for all, brought reconciliation and a new kind of love, a new light to men’s eyes — the light of eternal life.

Where can we find the power to love and serve men even though it mean scorn, derision, defeat, and death? Surely not in a gospel of good deeds based on human need and human response alone. We can find it only in the man of sorrows who is acquainted with grief. We find it in him who turned death, defeat, despair, and oblivion into victory, the victory of love over death. We can hear even now echoing down the centuries that cry of triumph signalling the greatest of all conquests, “Jesus Christ is risen!” Can we reply, “He is risen indeed”?

P. L. Lehmann points out another important function of the servant image as seen in Jesus. In him we see what humanity can and should become. His example, his compassion, his service to sinners, outcasts, Gentiles, and all, are the demonstration of true human concern and authentic humanism. It is in Jesus as servant that man is truly himself. Lehmann puts it thus:

In the last analysis, the servant image means that the mission and unity of the Church is the unity of an obedient witness in word and in behaviour to what God has done and is doing in the world to make and keep human life human. The recovery of the servant image points to . . . the possibility that the Church of Christ on earth may, by its own servanthood, take its . . . place . . . as the guardian and guarantee of authentic humanism.

Oh, how Friends need to come together! How they need one another! How much the “Christ-centered Quakers” need to do and to serve, to act as Jesus the servant did and to follow in his steps. On the other hand, how much the “humanist” or “service-minded” Friends need to see humanitarian concern fulfilled and climaxd and all humanity reconciled to God and to one another through God’s Servant-Messiah from whose love all selfless service springs. In whichever group we find ourselves, can we find it in our hearts to wash one another’s feet?

Think again of the servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 58, wound-ed for our transgressions, bearing our sins and our griefs, reconciling us to God and to one another. Think, too, of Jesus, the serene Messiah of the gospel of John, humbling himself and washing the disciples’ feet and calling us in like manner to wash the feet of all. Remember, too, him who counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being obedient unto death, even death on a cross, wherefore God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.
And as we think with sorrow of Friends divided between those who support service and not missions, and those who support missions and not service, let us remember and determine to live by the words of the theme scripture of this paper: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

References
5. Ibid., p. 8.
6. Ibid., pp. 57f.
7. Ibid., pp. 61f.
8. Ibid., pp. 76f.
10. Ibid., p. 7f.
11. Ibid., pp. 298, 303.
12. Ibid., p. 29f.
15. Ibid., pp. 101-103.
17. Lehmann, op. cit., p. 35f.

Comments

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In a very helpful way Canby Jones reminds us that Christ is the standard against which we measure our motivation for service. My criticism aims only to sharpen the issue and to clarify the implications of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of a believer — Quaker or otherwise — which Canby examines scripturally, theologically, and pragmatically.

At the outset I must question his use of the terms "Christ-centered Quakers" and "service-minded Quakers" by which he characterizes the divergent groups which may be reconciled through understanding Christ as servant. From what follows I doubt his intention to strike a mean between group "A" which is Christ-centered and group "B" which is service-minded, perhaps at point C, which is Quaker — some happy limbo between Christian and non-Christian. His purpose is deeper, to bring groups, each in its own way tangential, unto Christ in a new dimension of discipleship. Either his wording is imprecise or I failed to gather the full force of the quotation marks which surround the terms.

I am favorably impressed by the elucidation of Scripture showing the servant role of Jesus, both in Old Testament prophecy such as Isaiah and in the self-disclosures of Jesus as given in the New Testament. Certainly the Messiah of God's covenant people and the Lord of his church — this "light to the Gentiles" — conquers by love and self-abnegation. How refreshing to have presented to us the exemplary Christ who is also the anointed one who suffers vicariously for our sins and is our atonement. Such are the winds of Christian doctrine which will blow away the smog of vague romanticism which has nearly smothered our Society!

I wish more might have been said, however, about the difference between Christ's suffering and our own, between the Cross and our crosses. All service to another, all suffering, even that of comrades in arms, within a limited range of loyalty, partakes of righteousness; and yet the scriptural word is that our righteousness is as filthy rags, that none of the actions of man can atone for another. In contrast, Christ died for all. Both in theory and in experience the Cross remains as a scandal of particularity which offends the noble and the altruist.

The great kevōsis passage from Philippians, which Canby Jones refers to, surely does support an attitude of self-denying service which is characteristic of our Lord's actions and descriptive of the meaning of his atonement. In determining what it