

## Lecture 7 – Roman Catholicism and Religious Movements in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

### 1. A Revived Roman Catholicism in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

- Theological debate after Luther and Calvin became more technical.
- Roman Catholics began to respond.
- Calvin's theology did not solve every detail (some subjects receive more detail than other). There was a greater need for a more detailed presentation of the Reformed faith (e.g. did Calvin believe in Limited Atonement?—not much explicit material).
- Why was a book like Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* so critical and useful to the people during his time? Why the proliferation of voluminous works of scholastic, orthodox theology, both positive and polemical?
- A key contextual factor driving both the Reformed and Lutherans into a more scholastic route was because of a revived Roman Catholicism.
- This environment of revived Roman Catholicism, particularly in its 17<sup>th</sup> century manifestation, is what we will consider today (really a further renewal of the counter-Reformation consolidated at the Council of Trent).
- One of the things that was revived in the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation and especially post-Reformation era was its institutional character.
- The reforms of the Council of Trent included a more educated training for the clergy.
- Rome showed flexibility and ingenuity in allowing and developing more effective educational channels (e.g. Jesuits).
- Rome also refined, or further developed a more effective Episcopalian system; bishops in the post-Reformation era are actually overseeing the priests/parish pastors and aim to ensure the churches are properly run.
- This leads to a general improvement in moral life by the clergy.
- Rome also developed a standard liturgy, more regulated, including standardized texts to help the bishops and the priests to consistently minister the liturgy.
- In some countries there were also some important reforming figures, writing books, forcing the Protestant to become more scholastic (e.g. Carlos Borromeo in Italy).
- Furthermore, some of the popes took a stronger stand to reform the church in practice and ideals.
- But the question is: Was the RCC equally effective in reaching the common man with these reforms?
- What did the common RC people really know?
- In 1570, the people were very ignorant. The people were caught by surprise by the Protestant churches, and it took some time for the Roman Catholic Church to respond to the Protestants (it took time to grasp, assess and formulate responses to Protestant doctrine).
- The **Society of Jesus (Jesuits)**, founded by **Ignatius of Loyola** were the leading frontal attack against the Protestants.
- They did a great deal (see Reformation Church History). By sharpening their doctrine and intellect they put pressure on the Protestants to become more precise. What Calvin could get away with saying, Beza could not, for he would have to defend something more precisely. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. there was a real tussle in the arena of theology between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

## 2. The Theological Character of Roman Catholicism During the Era of Protestant Orthodoxy

- Despite a significant blow to the movement of Roman Catholic evangelicals by Trent, (those sympathetic with aspects of Protestant theological and practical Reformation, but willing to remain within the Church of Rome) Augustinianism was not totally dead after the Council of Trent.
- There were Roman Catholic theologians, particularly from this camp, that were very upset with Trent's theology.
- They wanted the RCC to be more Augustinian and focused on salvation by grace alone. [This does not mean that they are justified by faith alone].
- They continued believe that the grace Christ's righteousness is infused into the Christian, enabling him to stand on the day of judgment.
- But they did stress avidly that they were saved by grace alone. They also maintained a RCC view of the sacraments, holding that grace was infused by the sacraments. But nonetheless they taught sola gratia.
- One of these men was a Low Countries (Belgian/Flemish) theologian, **Michael Baius (1513-1589)**.
- He influenced RCC theologians for a few decades. A contemporary of Calvin, Baius attended many sessions of Trent.
- He argued for language that was more in line with sola gratia.
- He boasted of reading Augustine 9 times through, and read the anti-Pelagian works 70 times through. He wanted to maintain sola gratia.
- After Trent, he ignored the grace-work teaching and continued teaching grace alone.
- A pope issued a bull of 79 propositions against him; Baius acknowledged that he is right on matters of doctrine, but not on matters of fact (because I do not believe precisely these views). The effect of this was that Baius and his followers had the noose tightened around their neck (they had to be more careful).

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## 3. The Jansenists vs. the Jesuits

- Jansenism becomes a powerful movement in the RCC. It is oriented to Augustinism. It becomes quite powerful in some pockets, like France & Belgium.
- The movement comes from **Cornelius Jansen (1510-1576)**. He devoted his life to the study of Augustine.
- He had read through Augustine 10 times, and read the anti-Pelagian material 30 times.
- He noted with great alarm that the decisions of the council of Trent could only be read in an anti-Pelagian way.
- He was upset that the Jesuits followed this semi-Pelagian teaching.
- Jansen become more at odds with the Jesuits.
- In 1619, he is called to teach Bible & theology at Louvain. He teaches sola gratia at a RC university at the same time as Dort is battling semi-Pelagians in the Protestant church.
- When the Canons of Dort are written he says openly and publicly that he agrees with every single sentence of the Canons.
- He writes a book on Augustine and tries to persuade RCC to embrace Augustine's teaching.
- In 1636, Jansen becomes a bishop in Belgium.

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Jansen



- There he enters a great debate with Dutch theologian Gilbertus Voetius. The discussion is over justification by faith alone and the sacraments. [He still affirms the Canons, but denies justification by faith.]
- His book is published 5 years after his death. The pope issues a bull condemning it. The followers agree with the bull of the pope, but say that Jansen never embraced those teachings.
- After Jansen's death, the leadership of the movement passes on to Arnot. He has a sister, who identifies with Jansen and impacts her convent.
- Now it becomes stronger. The Jansenists are very godly people, concerned about piety, cultivating holiness and true religion.
- They become more at odds with the Jesuits. They are concerned about the Jesuits' theological teachings and their ethical way of life.
- The Jansenists also despise the Jesuits for their political power among kings & noblemen. The Jansenists see a need for higher holiness. Arnot writes: "The frequency of communion" focused on ethics and holiness.
- It seemed to Arnot that the implications of the Jesuits was something like this: live the way you want, come sometimes to communion, and before the end make sure you are right with God.
- Piety for him was the frequency of communion, and be serious about our Roman Catholicism.
- Meanwhile the issue of sola gratia is still on the hot burner. Many Catholics continue to hold on to sola gratia (followers of Jansen, Baius and Arnot). Pope Clement XI makes a bull distinguishing facts from doctrine. Some Jansenists became schismatics and formed a new church, which left the RCC w/o much support. Then the RCC tried to stamp out those Jansenists that remained.
- It was a problem that would not go away quickly, as at this point, in Western Europe, the Jansenists had more of the popular support of the RCC than the Jesuits. What were some of the points of doctrinal and practical contention between the Jansenists and Jesuits? Four key areas were:

#### ***i. Attrition and Contrition***

- For example attrition and contrition. Attrition was related to the sacrament of penance (for Jesuits).
- For the medieval church, in order to receive the grace of the sacraments you needed more than attrition. The RCC had taught that to receive the grace you needed contrition, sorry for your sin, having offended a holy God. Since no one is perfectly sorry for their sin, really everyone needs the sacrament (for else you would not need the sacrament).
- The Jesuits teach that the minimum that you need is attrition (still ideal is contrition). Attrition is that feeling that you don't want to be punished for your sin (regret for punishment).

#### ***ii. Probabalism***

- Second problem is probabalism. It is related to cases of conscience (deal with every individual according to certain principles; not situational ethics).
- They would make up hypothetical cases. The Jesuits come up with this theory: probabalism. They say that if you (as father-confessor, who was also an ethicist) are aware of any serious ethicists who teaches a different point of view than you hold to, if you had someone (only one) on your side in the past of the church, then you were OK.
- The RCC in the past went with the majority and not the minority position.
- In other words, the Jesuits are lowering the bar.
- **Blaise Pascal** (one of the Jansenists) takes up pen (d. 1671) and writes against the Jesuits, "provincial letters." These are filled with satirical attacks against the Jesuits and

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Pascal

the games they play with various ethical issues. This is so popular with people, that the pope writes 65 condemning propositions against the Jesuits.

- The Jansenists ended up defending that the majority of ethicists determine the advice that needs to be given by the father confessors (the majority of ethicists is the probable truth)

### **iii. The movement of Presbyterianism.**

- It insisted that the affairs of the local church need to be hands of the local bishop, who was called a Presbyterianer, instead of having decisions that are made from far away.
- This was against the Jesuits who tried to bring their complaints against the Jansenists to the pope. This was squashed by Pope Clement IX (against independent authority).

### **iv. Reading of Scriptures**

- Reading of the Scriptures. The Jansenists had proposed that everyone should read the Scriptures. The pope condemned this too in the same bull (as previous one).

## **4. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621)**

- A fourth, and significant factor in the development of Roman Catholicism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the influence of the Roman Catholic theologian Robert Bellarmine.

### **a. Education**

- Robert Bellarmine was an interesting and challenging theologian (d 1621).
- His mother is a sister to a pope. He was raised in pious family and came to love the church from an early age, becoming a Jesuit. He did not always think the same as the Jesuits.
- He immersed himself in Aristotle, taught himself Greek, had a tremendous memory, was disciplined in his study.
- In 1569, the Jesuits sent them to Louvain and became familiar with Baius and the strong Augustinianism in Louvain. The Jesuits wanted him to become a counterweight to Baius (which he felt his calling to be). He became a serious student of Augustine.
- The more he studied Augustine the more he saw the global picture to attack the Protestants (not simply infighting). No one had sought to refute comprehensively Protestant theology.
- He devoted his entire life to develop a comprehensive anti-Protestant theology. He realized he had to learn Hebrew & Greek. He studied some more years in theology and asked for papal permission to read widely the Protestant authors, which he received.
- After reading them at great length, he studied church history. Afterwards he was given the chair to teach in Italy. He wants to give an answer to the Protestants.
- **b. Disputations concerning controversies on the Christian faith against the [Protestant] heretics** (3 fat volumes).
- Bellarmine set to work creating this substantial work to counter Protestantism, which was first published in 1581.
- Contents: vol. 1: Scripture, tradition, church; vol. 2: sacraments; Vol. 3: grace, free will & justification.
- Bellarmine's massive work electrified the Protestant community.
- It was the impetus for number of Protestant books – for example, William Whitaker's (1548-1595) *Disputations on Holy Scripture, Against the Papists*. [Whitaker was an English, CoE, Reformed theologian].
- Some two thousand Protestants would respond either to the whole of his work or a part of it (incl. Francis Turretin in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century).
- Bellarmine during his own lifetime would engage some of these responses through further additions and revisions to the work, up to 1596.

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Bellarmine



- Theodore Beza called Bellarmine's general work: a "dunghill". Elsewhere Beza said that Bellarmine's "Controversies" is an infinite heap of dung.
- Such strong wording was common at the time (people actually believed what said they believed). The reality was that Bellarmine's writing was a real threat to Protestantism.
- Within the first century after the publication of this major work by Bellarmine some two hundred Protestants had replied either to part of, or the whole of this work by Bellarmine.
- William Ames said in 1628 – "so notorious is Bell, that at bare mention of his name all men think straightway of Goliath who in helmet & fearful accoutrements terrified army of living God." He tells us that Protestants felt like David going against Goliath in engaging him.
- The fascinating thing is that RC's weren't all happy about Bellarmine either.
- Some criticized his work as being too soft on Protestantism. Pope Sixtes V considered putting *Controversies* on list of forbidden books because it didn't teach pope had direct temporal authority over whole world. However, because it so effectively and publicly attacked the Protestant cause, the pope never made that decision.

### **c. Other important works of Robert Bellarmine**

- Prepared the Clementine edition of the Vulgate (1592), which would remain the dominant edition of the Vulgate in use in the Roman church until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bellarmine, along with other scholars sought to develop an authentic text of the Vulgate that could be used universally in churches, their version had around 4000 textual variants from the previous Vulgate edition – for which it was heavily criticized by the Protestants.
- Bellarmine also helped develop basic courses of study to be followed at Jesuit seminaries. His hope was that if all would learn the same thing, there would be more consistency and unity.
- He also wrote two catechisms that were fairly influential (one for adults, one for children)
- In 1599, he was made a cardinal. At convocation of 1605 he came very close to being elected as pope. Had very important career in church, died in 1621 and canonized as saint in 1930.

## **5. A Roman Catholic Controversy about "Grace"**

### **a. Louis Molina**

- Free will & works. This controversy was not specifically linked to the Jansenists.
- Rather a debate had flared between Jesuit and Dominican theologians. In 1588 the Jesuit, Louis Molina published a book called *The Harmony of Free Will with the Gift of Grace*.
- In this volume he sought to do just that – harmonize free will theology with grace. The work created quite a stir because it was blatantly Pelagian – far more so than Council of Trent.
- It became more controversial when it was defended by a Spanish Jesuit. Both men were very philosophical and Pelagian in their theological orientation. Interestingly Molina's thought would be influential on that of Arminius, some good work has been done on this by Eef Dekker and Richard Muller.

### **b. Domingo Banez**

- The book by Molina produced reaction led by Domingo Banez, a Spanish Dominican.
- However, Banez's response in effect stirred up more controversy in the Roman Catholic Church.

- As the debate roiled the church, appeals were made to the Pope to intervene. However, he was not a good theologian, something he realized of himself. As a result Clement VIII decided to put this matter in hands of best theologian he knew – Bellarmine.

### **c. Robert Bellarmine**

- Asked for a pronouncement, Bellarmine studied the issue and reported his assessment to the pope.
- At this point, one would think that if he were to judge between a Jesuit and a Dominican, he would side with Jesuit; but he doesn't.
- Bellarmine wrote: both Molina & Suarez view grace as being efficient in one sense and sufficient in another.
- By sufficient these men mean that grace is able to save. By efficient they mean that grace actually saves you. Therefore they say all grace is sufficient but not always efficient. Sufficient grace in an individual becomes efficient only when the free will accepts it. Therefore there is no efficient grace apart from the will of man. This was Bellarmine's read of these two semi-Pelagian theologians.
- He acknowledged that this is then semi-pelagian. Bellarmine then says: this viewpoint of both is false, but especially that of Molina who more radical in his formulations.
- Molina, according to Bellarmine deserves to be censored.
- Turning to the other side of the debate, Bellarmine says Banez says that not only does the efficacy of grace in no way depend on the consent of will – but that the consent of the will is physically, intrinsically determined by grace.
- The Dominicans at this point have a consistent, Augustinian point of view where grace operates as inherently efficacious. It accomplishes saving purpose not by free will but by its own character.
- Bellarmine concludes that Banez puts too much emphasis on efficient grace –to the extent that he ignores sufficient grace.
- His overall conclusion is as follows: Banez's position is safer than Molina's, but isn't altogether sound. For one it appears to contradict the council of Trent, because according to Bellarmine – it seems there is no room in Banez for free will. The other problem with Banez, according to Bellarmine – one can scarcely distinguish his view from modern heretics, i.e. Protestants! However, Bellarmine says I do not dare to condemn Banez absolutely because his view is defended by great men in the tradition of the church, like Augustine. Bellarmine states finally that he is willing to submit to voice of Holy See in this matter.
- As to his own theological position Bellarmine says: I believe in congruism, i.e. grace doesn't consist only in interior movement & excitation of will (Augustinian), but also in the circumstances accompanying its bestowal. Grace isn't only what God does in you, but also circumstances in which God puts you. If the same grace accorded is to two people so that one believes, the other doesn't – it is due to the fact that the one who believes receives impulse of grace in manner, place, outward circumstances that God saw as congruous to his disposition. Therefore Bellarmine is saying: there is a specific election and man has free will. (e.g. like a hungry child in candy store – will eat – b/c of situation).
- Note: it was this kind of nuanced scholastic Roman Catholic theology that led to the need for Reformed theologians to develop a more precise and detailed theology i.e. scholasticism
- While Bellarmine speaks of free grace, in effect it depends on free will. That said, it is less semi-Pelagian than many evangelical Protestants today. But it stands as an example of a ½ way house between Augustine and Pelagius.
- What is clever on Bell's part and not Augustinian is to say that circumstances so operate that free will must respond to grace in those circumstances.



- The reality is that our bondage to sin means we will never exercise our will for God. Technically we have a free will, but it is bound. As Luther would state, because man is inherently corrupt all he does is corrupt.

#### **d. Papal conclusion**

- The pope died before being able to make a decision. Bellarmine at that point was nearly elected to succeed pope. But instead the man who became pope is Paul V.
- He reviews the situation and decides that all 3 views are within range of Roman Catholic acceptability. In terms of Roman tradition since, there has been no pope since then that has ruled these 3 options are wrong.
- Therefore, for Roman Catholics, the doctrine of justification and its precise articulation has never been very critical. They are rather much more concerned with establishing how sanctification leads to salvation than establishing the precise character of justification. This is why Roman Catholics tend not to be overly concerned, have allowed a range of opinions on justification.
- Where they are much more concerned is about sacraments and the teaching of the infusion of grace.

### **5. Revived Roman Catholicism and the Rise of Roman Catholic Foreign Missions**

#### **a. Francis Xavier and the Far East**

- The influence of the Jesuits, Bellarmine, and others in doctrine and education was only part of the renewed Roman Catholic offensive.
- Not only were the Roman Catholics being revived intellectually and actively challenging Protestants but they also became increasingly zealous missionaries.
- Why did the Protestants at this point have less involvement in foreign missions?
- Certainly it was not because they had less zeal. But much of the gospel effort in the 17<sup>th</sup> century still lay in bringing the Reformation to the hearts of the people in Protestant nations, and non-Protestant parts of Europe. As we've noted a state directed transition of national churches to become Protestant did not equate with a spiritually transformed populace; there was still much work to be done.
- Meanwhile the Roman Catholics picked themselves up by bootstraps, pushed through a general moral reform, fine-tuned their theology at Trent and following, and then – while busy retaking militarily or otherwise those parts of Europe they could, they also pushed hard in outward focus through the vehicles of exploration and colonization: Spain, Portugal, and France all being active in the race for global economic power and wealth.
- Through these means the Roman Catholics went to the ends of the earth and very seriously challenged Protestants also in area of missions.
- By the early 17<sup>th</sup> C Protestants had defined 3 marks of church: pure preaching of the Word, right administration of sacraments, church discipline (sometimes the latter being understood under right administration of the sacraments).
- Roman Catholics agreed with the first two, but also included others. For example, the Roman Catholic Bellarmine had 12-14 marks. One of these marks was apostolic zeal. By this he meant that where there was true church would be missionary spirit.
- Well the possibility for missions arose particular with trade by Portuguese and Spanish merchants.
- The Portuguese had already reached China by the early 16<sup>th</sup> C. By time of the Reformation the Roman Catholics became concerned to make contacts in the Far East.
- Francis Xavier, a close associate of Ignatius de Loyola, felt a burden for missions and became one of the first "great" Jesuit missionaries.

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Xavier  
map

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Matteo Ricci
- He went to India, Indonesia, and Japan laying foundations for Christianity. Japan saw a remarkable expansion of Jesuit led Roman Catholicism for about 50 years; but then it was crushed with persecution.
  - Xavier wanted to penetrate China, but at this point in time, China forbade westerners to enter. He tried to smuggle himself in but got caught, and would die on an island off the coast, still hoping to enter.
  - Eventually other Jesuit missionaries arrived and penetrated into Chinese civilization.
  - In the early 1600s **Matteo Ricci** (1552-1610) led the Chinese mission. He was a brilliant scholar, spoke Chinese well. Developed theory that only way to reach Chinese people was to be grounded in their language and culture. To attract their attention and interest, Ricci wanted to impress Chinese with European technological accomplishments e.g. Clocks, maps, telescopes. He took clocks, etc. and brought them to government bureaucrats, especially the upper scholarly class of the bureaucracy. By 1601 Ricci received an invitation to visit the monarch in Beijing. Through the king (who didn't become Christian) Ricci was successful in getting attention of many Chinese. After making these inroad he then began to preach his Jesuit (per)version of the gospel. Where in 1596 he had made some 100 converts, by 1636 he had 30 000 converts, many of whom were Chinese scholars.
  - Ricci and others also began to study Confucius, and came to the conclusion that Confucius was a great philosopher. The Jesuit mission encouraged the development of a synthesis between Christianity and Chinese culture; stripping away the Buddhist character of Chinese Confucianism and going with what Confucius himself said: it was a picture of particularly the Italian renaissance idea – go back to sources.
  - The general attitude of the Jesuits in China and elsewhere was quite open towards syncretism.
  - When Franciscans and Dominicans began working in China tensions rose between them and the Jesuits – the Jesuits were allowing aspects of ancestral veneration practices. While they condemned prayers to the dead, and opposed the concept of souls dwelling in the tablet shrines, they would allow greetings of respect to, burnings of incense and candles, and maintenance of the shrine tablets.
  - The Jesuits also come out strongly in defense of Confucius, leading to other Roman Catholics charging them with converting to Confucianism.
  - Several papal bulls were issued against the Jesuit practices, in the end, in the mid-1700's a pope issuing a bull revoking the order as a whole; the Jesuit order not being reconstituted till well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - While we note this, it should be seen that the Jesuit practice of both education and syncretism was carried out elsewhere in missions, as was the broader Roman Catholic missionary enterprise – throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a steady and thorough effort throughout Central and South America, along with parts of North America (by 1674 Quebec had been made a diocese, and the establishment of a local Roman Catholic hierarchy was underway; an early Huguenot presence effectively eliminated by the period of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685).
  - The Jesuits were not the only order to allow for syncretic practices – other orders did as well to varying degrees. In Central and South America the cult of Mary gained tremendous popularity – likely in part because of the overlap with previous worship of goddesses in native cultures.
  - The other main area of Catholic mission at this time was western sub-Saharan Africa, which had seen bishoprics established in the sixteenth century. Parts of Angola and the Congo had a Roman Catholic population of over a half a million by 1700. However, the ugly realities of the slave trade would greatly diminish the viability of a Roman Catholic



missionary presence, particularly as the Spanish and Portuguese were fully engaged in slave trade in relation to their American holdings.

- This then was the Roman Catholicism of the era of Protestant orthodoxy and scholasticism – diverse, challenging, intellectual, adaptive – and deeply hostile to Protestantism.

## 6. Other Religious Movements: Quakerism

- Roman Catholicism was not the only challenge to Reformed orthodoxy.
- There were also other external challenges: we've already mentioned repeatedly the Socinians threat, and have noted some of the internal challenges, such as the rise of the Remonstrant movement from within the Reformed stream.
- Another external challenge came in the form of the Quaker movement – a movement in many respects which multiplies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but whose roots are in the 17<sup>th</sup> century figure George Fox.
- **George Fox (1624-1691)**
- George Fox was born and raised in a strongly Puritan region of England, and is described as having had a serious, religious disposition from childhood.
- By the age of eleven he recorded his religious reflections noting his pursuit of purity of life, and desire of relatives that he pursue becoming a clergyman. However, he desired a contemplative life, and was marked by a strong pursuit of a somewhat ascetic simplicity.
- The "English Puritan" period Fox grew up in was one of a wide variety of religious movements in England: along with a remaining minority of Roman Catholics, there were the Episcopalian Anglicans, Puritans (Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregationalist), Puritan Separatists (including early English Baptists and Brethren movements), and other splinter groups and fringe sects like the Ranters, who moved away from scriptural authority and began to posit a pantheism – God is in all and every creature, as well as an antinomianism: Christians are freed by grace from the necessity of obedience to the Mosaic law.
- Fox as a young man had become disillusioned with his nominal Church of England friends and their drunkenness; he often noted hearing an inner voice directing him in ways of purity – this along with visions persuaded him that he was called to ministry which he embarked on individually.
- Feeling an inner calling he began an itinerant public ministry in 1647 – the era of the Westminster Assembly, and also a period when the Church of England had no formal structure or organization. In 1652 he declared that he had received a vision from God.
- Fox began to proclaim that all men possessed an inner light granted by Jesus Christ, and could receive direct revelation from the Spirit as well as direct experience of Christ;
- While he stated that Scripture was valuable in informing the believer, he held it as being coordinate with the inner light, hence effectively secondary.
- As an itinerant preacher Fox soon gained converts, who called themselves "Friends."
- Fox encouraged an emotional enthusiasm in his gatherings, and gained followers from among the Ranters. His movement gained the derogatory reference "the Quakers" because of the physical and emotional intensity "trembling, shaking, and ecstasy" of their gatherings.
- What unified the Friends/Quakers were some basic beliefs, such as the inner light, but beyond this in many respects it was a unity of practices that developed. Individual Quakers could hold to a wide range of beliefs, many refused to take oaths, and in time moved in a pacifist direction.

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George  
Fox

- Fox believed that by his teaching he was returning the church to the practices of the early church.
- The Quakers became marked by simplicity in living, encouragement of all to preach, including women, allowing all to participate in speaking at meetings. They refused to remove hats to those in authority (baring one's head was at this point a sign of deference/respect), and used the singular "thee" and "thou" in speech to all.
- In 17<sup>th</sup> century English and Puritan society commoners were expected to address those in authority over them with the more respectful plural "you", rather than the "thee" and "thou" used in addressing equals.
- One of the reason for the growth of the Quakers was their manifest concern for and compassion for the poor, the aged, insane, and those in prisons; this also extended to slaves and servants.
- Fox was often imprisoned (eight times) for his teaching which was declared errant/heretical. Despite persecutions the movement continued to spread in English society, though never beyond fringe levels.
- One of the best known figures during this era was William Penn. Born in 1644, he became a Quaker in 1667, much to the embarrassment of his father, Admiral Penn. King Charles II gave young William a grant of land in America to repay a debt to his father – launching Pennsylvania, a Quaker/Friends holy experiment in creating a tolerant society.
- One, we should note, which did also prove a great blessing to early colonial Presbyterians who were unwelcome in both Puritan Congregationalist New England and Anglican New York and Virginia.