

A BRIEFER BARCLAY

Being a simplification and condensation of Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, an explanation of the principles of the people called Quakers, first published in 1676.

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I TRUE KNOWLEDGE

In as much as the knowledge of God is the height of all treasured possessions, (For this is the life that endures, to know the one God and the Saviour), The means of obtaining this end should be known and believed in the first place.

II IMMEDIATE REVELATION

Since no one knows God but the Son, and none know the Son but the Father, And seeing that only the Spirit can truly reveal who the Son is, The knowledge of Father and Son is only made known by the Spirit.

III THE SCRIPTURES

Revelations of God to the saints are truly recorded in Scripture, In value surpassing all books; God's words to be studied and pondered, Containing a faithful account of the children of God in past ages, Forecasting the course of events, revealed to God's servants, the prophets; Predictions already fulfilled, and some that remain to be witnessed; A full and ample account of the principal doctrines of Jesus, Exhortations of warning and love, dictated by seer and apostle.

Yet since they but witness the source, and are not themselves the real fountain, They should not be lightly esteemed as the chief rule of manners and doctrine; For the Spirit from which they proceed is the foremost and principal leader.

But seeing their witness is true, they are and they should be considered To fill a subordinate role, with dependence alone on the Spirit, From which they derive their support, their commission and true inspiration. A creed contradicting the text is a fancy, at most a delusion.

IV FALLEN MAN

All races of men on the earth, the nations both Hebrew and Gentile, In their natural unredeemed state are fallen, depraved and corrupted, To evil they ever incline and are subject to Satan's enchantments; Are slaves to their selfish desires, unable to climb out of darkness, Until God, who beholds their distress, affords them the help of the Gospel

Though infants to evil incline, they may not be counted as sinners Until by their actual choice, they commit their initial offences.

V and VI REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST'S OFFERING AND BY HIS LIGHT

God out of infinite love desires not the death of a sinner, But willeth that all may be saved, and brought to the place of repentance.

In pity He gave us His Son, in Bethlehem, born of a virgin, A babe by the angels adored, in swaddling-clothes laid in a manger; A Teacher and Healer of men, by the orthodox slighted and hated, Condemned to cruel death on the cross, and dead for three days in succession. He, who Himself knew no sin, by His sacrifice made an atonement, For Man's sake bore the burden of sin, and offered Himself as a ransom. Triumphantly rose from the dead, and ascended in glory to heaven.

This Jesus whom once the world knew, is our present Redeemer and Saviour, Who lighteth all men for a day, to ward them from hell and destruction. Our measure of light and of grace, though little and oft times rejected, Scorned, hated and trodden to earth, is our King and our Captain to lead us, The Comforter, sent us by Christ, the Paraclete, promised companion.

VII JUSTIFICATION

To men who resist not this Light, but treasure their gift and obey it, It produces a spiritual birth, and Christ is begotten within them, These branches abide in the Vine, they are plentifully nourished and fruitful, Their virtue is not in themselves; but in Christ who supplieth their nurture; It is He, both the gift and the giver, who effecteth man's justification, This justification proceeds *pari passu* with sanctification.

VIII PERFECTION

Where this spiritual birth is brought forth and the will of the creature subjected, The body of sin and of death is crucified, slain and rejected; That soul is not subject to sin, and in that respect may be called perfect, But perfection admits of a growth, and sinning is ever a danger, Where watchfulness is not maintained, there is always temptation to evil.

IX PERSEVERANCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING

Although man's allotment of grace is sufficient to work his salvation, Yet it follows that those who resist will bring to themselves condemnation. By their fall they make shipwreck of faith, grow careless, deceitful and wanton. Yet grace may prevail to that point, where a man cannot wholly apostate.

X MINISTRY

By grace is heart-knowledge received, and by grace is the pastor provided To minister food to the flock, to warn and regather the wayward, To know when and where to proceed, to whom and what words to deliver, God's message of light and of love, God's counsel to friend and to stranger. The decision of fallible men confers not the seal of appointment, The mind of the Head of the church may be wanting in synod and council.

Since the minister freely receives, he is called to administer freely, To give, without thought of return, to preach without wages or bargain. Yet the pastor may freely receive meat and drink which are offered him freely.

XI WORSHIP

All true and acceptable worship is offered through help of God's Spirit; Neither places nor persons nor times set a limit upon our devotions, For though we should worship God always, our preaching and praying and singing Are ever to be at the call of our God, when He inwardly moves us. While clothed in this temporal veil, we neglect not the right of assembling.

XII BAPTISM

One Lord and one faith and one Spirit, which inwardly purges the conscience; The Baptist's commission was water, a rite in itself rudimental, John told of the coming of Christ, who baptises the heart by His Spirit.

XIII BREAD AND WINE

The body and blood of our Lord are inwardly known and partaken. As bread and as water are basic, without which the body is helpless, So the life of the Spirit is fed by partaking of Christ's broken body.

XIV THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

Man's conscience is not to be forced, but is free to conform to God's pattern. Where individual acts are not in themselves anti-social, No party or church or estate has the right to intrude or to meddle.

XV SALUTATIONS AND RECREATIONS

Salutations, recreations and arts should conform to orderly standards; The world has invented a code of foolish and heathenish customs From which the true church should reform and return to its primitive practice.

CONCLUSION

Here, Reader, thou seest in brief a sketch of the Christian religion, Consistent in scope and in parts, in accord with the truths of the Gospel, The way to Christ's crown, is Christ's cross; a light and agreeable burden; God prosper His work in thy heart, and bring thee the joy of salvation. Christ knocks at the door for a day; mistake not then Love's invitation.