

## *Apology* — Robert Barclay — To the Reader

R.B. wishes Salvation to the Friendly Reader

I have given up and devoted myself and all that is mine for the ministry\* of the Truth, and my purpose, above all else, is to declare and defend it. There is nothing which I will not attempt for its sake, by the help and assistance<sup>1</sup> of God.<sup>2</sup> In this confidence I published some time ago certain theological theses, summarizing briefly the chief principles and doctrines of Truth. Some people thought these propositions of some value, and they were well received beyond my expectations by foreigners and by people who differ from us,<sup>3</sup> although they were also opposed by some hostile people; the theses had enough success to remove the false and monstrous opinion about us and our doctrines which lying reports and the malice of our adversaries had implanted in the minds of some people. For this reason it didn't seem proper to me to spare any efforts.

Moved by the same measure of the Divine Spirit and the same intention of spreading the Truth by which I published the theses, I therefore considered it proper to explain them in somewhat more length at this time, and defend them by certain arguments. It does not concern me that perhaps my method of writing may seem not only different, but even contrary, to the method which is commonly used by the men called theologians. I frankly\* confess that I not only do

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<sup>1</sup> Latin: *annuente divino numine*, "with the consent of the divine power"

<sup>2</sup> Latin: *nihil mihi ejus causâ non experiri & non audere, posse videor*, "nothing can seem to me something that cannot be dared or endured."

<sup>3</sup> Translated from the Latin: & *ab alienis & alienegenis benevolè receptæ sint*; the original English is less clear: "well received both by foreigners though dissenting from us."

not admire nor imitate the scholastics,<sup>4</sup> but also I oppose and despise them, since I believe that the Christian religion is far from being improved by their work, but rather it is destroyed.<sup>5</sup> I have not tried to accommodate my work to the itching ears<sup>6</sup> who desire to comprehend the sublime notions of Truth in their head rather than to embrace it in their heart. What I have written comes more from my heart than from my head; it is what I have heard with the ears of my soul and seen with my inward eyes and my hands have touched of the Word of Life, and what I declare is what has been shown to me inwardly of the things of God. I do not think about eloquence and excellence of speech but rather I desire to show the efficacy and the workings of Truth. If I err sometimes in the former it is of little importance because my role here is not the grammarian or the orator, but the Christian. Therefore in this I have followed the certain rule of the Divine Light and of the Holy Scriptures.

Finally, I have not written to feed the wisdom and knowledge, or rather the vain pride of this world,<sup>7</sup> but to starve and oppose it<sup>8</sup>, as the little preface prefixed to the theses shows, which is as follows.

Sources: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 7-8

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<sup>4</sup> Scholasticism was a theological and philosophical tradition in medieval thought. It is noted for its proposals about the relation between faith and reason, and for its emphasis on rigorously structured logical argument. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is the most noted and influential figure in the movement.

<sup>5</sup> Latin: *penè annihilatam*, "It is almost annihilated."

<sup>6</sup> 2 Timothy 2:3

<sup>7</sup> Latin: *non ad fovendam sapientiam, & hujus seculi doctorum scientiam, vel potius inanem superbiam*, "not to foment the wisdom and the knowledge of the doctors of this age"

<sup>8</sup> Latin: *ad eam expugnandam & solo aequandam*, "attack and wipe it out."

and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*,  
facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676).