

Inward Knowledge

extract from Proposition II § i, iv

§ i. . . . To understand this proposition well, we distinguish between the certain knowledge of God, and the uncertain; between spiritual knowledge and reading; between the saving knowledge in the heart and the soaring, airy knowledge in the head. We recognize that the latter may be obtained in several ways, but the former may only be obtained by the inward, unmediated revelation of God's Spirit, shining in the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding.

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§ iv. I don't want to give the impression that I deny that those secondary* means of knowledge can be useful to man. I am very far from such an opinion, as will be evident in the next Proposition concerning the Scriptures. The question is not what may be useful or helpful, but rather what is absolutely necessary. Many things may contribute to the progress of a work, which are not the main thing that makes it possible to continue it.

Here is a summary of what has been said: Where the true inward knowledge of God exists, through the revelation of his Spirit, everything is there; there is no absolute necessity of anything else. But where the best, highest, and most profound knowledge exists, without this inward knowledge there is still nothing which leads to the great goal of salvation. This truth is very clearly stated in the first part of the thesis itself, which in a few words includes several unquestionable arguments, which I shall summarize briefly.

First, *that there is no knowledge of the Father but by the Son.*

Second, *that there is no knowledge of the Son but by the Spirit.*

Third, *that God has always revealed himself to his children by his Spirit.*

Fourth, *that these revelations were the formal object of the saints' faith.*

Finally, *that the same thing continues to be the object of the saints' faith to this day.*

Sources: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition II § i, iv (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 23-29 and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 4, 9.