

Apology — Robert Barclay — 116-118
the doctrine of the universal grace of God
extract of Proposition V & VI § xi

Firstly,¹ the mercy of God is very well shown in this doctrine, because no one is necessarily shut out from salvation. And God's justice is shown because he doesn't condemn anyone to whom he has not really made the offer of salvation, and given the means to accept it.

Secondly, if this doctrine is well considered, it will be found to be the foundation of Christianity, salvation, and assurance.

Thirdly, the doctrine agrees with the whole tone of the promises and threats of the Gospel, and with the nature of the ministry of Christ which commands that the Gospel, salvation, and repentance must be preached to every creature, without any difference among nations, kindred, families, or languages.

Fourthly, it magnifies and praises the merits and death of Christ. It not only considers them sufficient to save everyone, but declares that they are placed so near to everyone that salvation is within everyone's reach.

Fifthly, it exalts the grace of God above everything; it attributes all good to that grace, even the smallest actions that are good. It ascribes to God's grace not only the first beginnings and motions of good, but also the whole conversion and salvation of the soul.

Sixthly, this doctrine contradicts, overturns, and takes away the power of the false doctrine of the Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Socinians, and others who exalt the light of

¹ This is the beginning of a long numbered series of reasons which demonstrate goodness of the doctrine expressed in the previous three points.

nature and the freedom of man's will, because it wholly excludes the natural man from having any place or part in his own salvation by any action or motion of his own, until he is first awakened, raised up, and moved by the Spirit of God.

Seventhly, just as it makes the whole salvation of man depend only upon God, so also it makes man's condemnation wholly to come from himself, because he refused and resisted something from God which wrestled and strove in his heart. It forces man to acknowledge God's just judgment in rejecting and forsaking him.

Eighthly, the doctrine removes all reason for despair, because it gives everyone a reason for hope and certain assurance of salvation. But it does not lull anyone into a mistaken sense of security, because no one is certain of when their day may end, and therefore it is a constant incitement and a lively encouragement to everyone, to forsake evil and hold on to what is good.

Ninthly, among non-christians it wonderfully commends the certainty of the Christian religion; it shows its own truth to everyone because it is confirmed and established by the experience of all men. There is no man in any place on earth, however barbarous and wild, who has not acknowledged that at some time, in some degree, he has felt something in his heart which reproves him for some evil things which he has done; it threatens a certain horror if he continues in those things, and also promises and communicates a certain peace and sweetness if he gives way to that influence and does not resist it.

Tenthly, this doctrine wonderfully shows the excellent wisdom of God, which has made the means of salvation so universal and comprehensive that it is not necessary to resort to miraculous and strange means. According to this most true doctrine the Gospel reaches everyone, of every condition, age, or nation.

Eleventhly, by their deeds though not in so many words, the doctrine is really and effectively established and confirmed by all the preachers, evangelists, and doctors of the Christian religion that ever existed, even by those who oppose this doctrine in their opinions. Wherever they have been or are; whatever people, place, or country they come to, they all preach to the people and to every individual so that they may be saved. They ask them, beg them, to believe in Christ who died for them. In this way, they acknowledge in every particular case what they deny in general. There is no man to whom they do not preach salvation; they tell him that Jesus Christ calls and wants him to believe and be saved. They tell him that if he refuses to believe he will be condemned and his condemnation is his own fault. The evidence and power of the Truth compels even its adversaries to advocate for it against their will.

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition V & VI § xi (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 116-118; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianæ apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 79-81.