

*Apología* — Robert Barclay — 127-128

The Light invites Man

extract of Proposition V & VI § xvi

§ xvi. Finally, it is clear<sup>1</sup> that this Light, Seed, etc. is not a power or a natural faculty of the human mind. A man who is in good natural health can call upon and use the faculties of his soul whenever he pleases; he is the absolute master of those abilities and can use them as he likes as long as there is no natural impediment or obstacle. However he cannot call upon or use this Light and Seed of God in the human mind whenever he pleases; it moves in man, and blows on him, and wrestles with him when the Lord pleases.

Although everyone has a possibility of salvation on the day of his visitation, nevertheless no one can call upon that Light and Grace whenever he likes or whenever he has a feeling of his own miserable condition, so that his heart will be softened. He must wait for it. It comes to everyone at some certain time, and during that time it works powerfully on the soul, softening and breaking the heart. During that time, if a man doesn't resist it but accepts it, he comes to know salvation by it.

The pool of Bethesda<sup>2</sup> didn't cure everybody who bathed in it, but only the first person who bathed there after the angel had stirred the water; in the same way God moves in love to humankind through this seed in the heart, at some particular times, showing him all his sins in order before his eyes,\* seriously inviting him to repentance, and offering him

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<sup>1</sup> In the original, "this Light, Seed, &c. appears to be no power or natural faculty of man's mind," the verb "to appear" gives the impression in modern English that the idea is uncertain. However one of its meanings in seventeenth century is "to be clear, to be evident" – exactly the opposite of the modern meaning. The word does not appear at all in the Latin, which reaffirms our interpretation of "to appear" in this case.

<sup>2</sup> John 5.

remission of sins and salvation. If a man accepts that, he may be saved. There is no one alive, and I am confident that there will be none who reads this book, who will not be compelled to acknowledge, if they deal faithfully and honestly with their own hearts, that they have been aware of this in some measure, less or more. This is a thing that a man cannot make happen to himself no matter how hard he tries.

This then, oh man and woman, is the day of God's gracious visitation to your soul, and if you don't resist it you will be happy forever. This is the day of the Lord, which, as Christ said, is like the lightning which comes from the east and flashes to the west; and like the wind or spirit, which blows upon the heart, and no one can tell where it goes nor where it comes from.<sup>1</sup>

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition V & VI § xvi (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 127-128; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 89-90.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:27; John 3:8

Latin: *sicut ventus, vel Spiritus sprians in animam, & vox ejus auditur, sed nescimus unde veniat, aut quo vadat*, like the wind or Sprit blowing in the soul, and its voice can be heard, but we don't know where it comes from or where it goes.