

§ xxiii Thirdly, this saving spiritual Light is the *Gospel*, which the apostle explicitly says is preached “in every creature under heaven.”<sup>1</sup> It is that same “Gospel of which Paul was made a minister” (Colossians 1:23). The Gospel is not a mere declaration of good things; it is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). Although the outward declaration of the gospel is sometimes misunderstood to be the actual Gospel, in fact that is only a figure of speech, a metonymy.<sup>2</sup> To speak properly, the Gospel is the inward life and power which preaches good news *in* the hearts of all people, offering them salvation and seeking to redeem them from their sins. Therefore Paul says it is preached “in every creature under heaven” although there are many thousands of men and women to whom the outward gospel has never been preached.

That is why, when the apostle Paul says in Romans 1, “the Gospel is the power of God for salvation,” he adds that “In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,” and also “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” Because, he says, “what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.” What may be known about God is known by means of the Gospel, which was manifest *in* them. The people the apostle is talking about had never heard the outward gospel preached to them; so when he says “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith” that happened by the inward manifestation of the knowledge of God *in* them, which in fact is the Gospel preached in man. It reveals to the soul that which is just, good, and righteous, and when the soul receives it and believes,

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<sup>1</sup> As translators into Spanish, where the passive voice is rarely used, we have developed what we call the “theological passive” in which the agent of the action is clearly divine (God, Christ, the Spirit, etc.)

In this case the one who preaches “in every creature” must be the inward divine Preacher, which is highlighted in our Spanish translation by the unusual use of the passive voice, but which is hardly noticeable in English, where the passive voice is commonplace (“the Gospel is preached in every creature”). In this section, Barclay is making a distinction here between the divine Preacher within and the human preachers, much as Fox and others distinguished between the Word of God (Christ) and the words of God (the Bible).

<sup>2</sup> Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing or idea is represented by the name of a related thing. For example, “He ate two plates” when in reality he ate the contents of two plates.

righteousness is revealed more and more, from one degree of faith to the next....

Although some people might pretend that the outward creation, by itself, declares to the natural man that there is a God, without any supernatural or saving principal in the heart,<sup>1</sup> what good would such knowledge do if it did not also communicate to me what God's will is, and how I can do what is acceptable to him? Although the outward creation may engender an idea or conjecture\* that there is some outward power by which the world came into being, it doesn't tell me about what is just, holy, and righteous. It doesn't tell me how I can be delivered from my temptations and evil feelings and come into righteousness – that must come from some inward manifestation *in my heart*. By the *inward law* and the manifestation of the knowledge of God *in* them, those gentiles Paul is talking about knew how to distinguish between good and evil. This is covered in the next chapter, when we'll speak more about it.

Speaking about man in general, without specificity, the prophet Micah says this: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Micah does not say what God requires until after he has established that God has showed it to them. Now because this is showed to *all* men and manifest *in* them, therefore, the apostle says, "the wrath of God is revealed against them because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness" – that is to say, the measure of Truth, of Light, of Seed, of Grace in them. They "hide the talent in the earth,"<sup>2</sup> that is, in the earthly, worldly\*and unrighteous part of their hearts, and they don't let it produce fruits, but rather let it be choked with the sensual concerns of this life, the fear of reproach, and the deceitfulness of riches,<sup>3</sup> as is shown in these parables.

Sources: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition V & VI § xxiii (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 144-146; y Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 102-104.

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<sup>1</sup> Latin: *sine ulla interna, supernaturali & salutifera gratia, vel semine* "without any internal, supernatural, and saving grace or seed."

<sup>2</sup> See Matthew 25:25.

<sup>3</sup> See Matthew 13:22.