

§ vii. *Question:* The first question to consider about this matter concerns *the call of a minister*: how does a person come to be a minister, pastor, or teacher in the church of Christ?¹

Answer: We answer, *by the inward power and efficacy*² of the Spirit of God. As our thesis says, once a person has received the true knowledge of spiritual things through the Spirit of God (without which they cannot be known), once he has been purified and sanctified in some measure by that Spirit, then he comes to be called and moved by that Spirit to minister to others, since he is able to speak from a living experience of what he himself is a true* witness. Therefore, “since he knows the terror of the Lord, he is able to persuade men,” etc. (II Corinthians 5:11). His words and ministry proceed from that inward power and influence, reach to the hearts of those who hear him, and make them approve of him and be subject to him.³ Our adversaries

¹ Latin: *Quod primum hoc loco inquirendum videtur, est de vocatione Pastoris, seu Doctoris in ecclesia Christi*, “The first thing to be examined here is the vocation (calling) of a Pastor or Teacher in the church of Christ.”

² Barclay’s phrase is “power and virtue” but in modern English the word “virtue” has come to mean primarily “goodness” or “purity” which eclipses other meanings common in the seventeenth century usage and more appropriate in this context, such as power, authority, influence, and efficacy.

³ Latin: *verba atque ministerium ejus, procedentia ab interna vi y virtute, auditorum corda penetrant, & approbationem eorum & subjectionem obtinent*, “his words and ministry, proceeding from that inward power and virtue, penetrate the hearts of those who hear, and obtain their approval and submission.”

have to admit that this is desirable and best, but they refuse to say it is absolutely necessary. I will first prove that it *is* necessary, and then show how wrong they are when they say that something else is more necessary than this divine and heavenly call.⁴

Argument: First, what is necessary for a person to be a Christian (in other words, without it he cannot truly be a Christian) must be even more necessary for a person to be a minister of Christianity. Ministry is a degree above being a Christian, and includes being a Christian, just as when someone says he is a teacher it is assumed that he has first attained the knowledge and ability of a student. Those who are not Christians cannot be teachers and ministers among Christians.

This inward call, power, and virtue of the Spirit of God, is necessary to make a person a Christian, as we have abundantly proved before in the second proposition, according to these scriptures: “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him,” and “All who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.”⁵ Therefore this call and motion of the Spirit must be even more necessary to make a person a minister.

Second, all ministers of the New Testament ought to be ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, according to II Corinthians 3:6, as the old Latin translation says, “Not by the letter, but by the Spirit.”⁶ How can a person be a minister of the Spirit who is not inwardly called by the

⁴ Latin: *exinde errorem eorum qui, hoc prætermisso, alia necessaria constituunt, ostendam*, “then I will show the error of those who, disregarding this, set up other things as necessary.”

⁵ Romans 8:9 & 14

⁶ The phrase Barclay quotes in the Latin version of the *Apology* is “*non literâ, sed Spiritu*” (ablative singular, “by, by means of”). The Vulgate has *non litterae sed Spiritus* (genitive singular, “of”).

Spirit, and who does not consider the operation and testimony of the Spirit as essential to his call? . . .

Third, if this inward call or testimony of the Spirit were not essential and necessary for a minister, then the ministry of the New Testament would not be preferable to the ministry of the Law — in fact it would be worse in several respects. Under the Law there was a certain tribe allotted for the ministry, and certain families of that tribe were set apart for the priesthood and other offices⁷ by the direct command of God to Moses, so that the people were not left* in any doubt about who should be priests and ministers of holy things. And besides this, at various times God called forth, by the immediate testimony of his Spirit, several prophets to teach, instruct, and reprove his people, such as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Amos, and many more. Under the New Covenant, ministry ought to be more spiritual, the way more certain, and access to the Lord easier, but our adversaries make it completely the opposite by denying the necessity of this inward and spiritual vocation. Since now ministry is not limited to a certain family or tribe, that would leave us in uncertainty to choose pastors by chance without any certainty of the agreement of God's will, since we would have neither outward rule nor inward* certainty to go by. It has already been shown in the third proposition that the Scripture cannot give any certain rule in this matter.

Fourth, Christ calls “thieves and robbers” all those who “do not enter by him, the door, into the sheepfold, but climb up some other way.”⁸ The sheep should not listen to them. Those who come in without the call, the movings, and the leadings of the Spirit of Christ, by which he leads his children into all Truth, certainly do not come in by Christ,

⁷ The tribe of Levites and the family of Aaron.

⁸ John 10:1 RB

who is the *door*; but rather they come in some other way, and therefore they are not true shepherds.

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition X § vii (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 237-239; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 178-179.