

§ vi. We believe it is the duty of everyone to be diligent in meeting together for public worship. (Since they have tried in many ways to prevent us from meeting together to worship God, our enemies in Great Britain can bear witness of what we have been and what we are, in this matter.) When the group is assembled, the great work of one and all should be to wait on God, to come out of their own thoughts and imagination, to feel the Lord's presence and truly know a "gathering into his Name" where he is "in the midst" as he promised.¹ When everyone is gathered, and meet together inwardly in their spirits as well as outwardly in their bodies, they feel a secret² power and virtue of life refreshing the soul; they feel the pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit rising up, from which spring words of declaration, prayers, or praises, the acceptable worship which edifies the Church and is well-pleasing to God. No one limits the Spirit of God, nor brings forth stuff he has put together and memorized,³ but everyone brings forth what the Lord puts into their hearts, and it is not uttered in human will and wisdom but "in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit and of Power."⁴ Indeed, although not a word may be spoken, still the true spiritual worship is performed and the

¹ Matthew 18:20

² Intimate, mystic; pertaining to the direct communion of the soul with God.

³ Latin: *nec commentos suos & confictos sermones producit*, "nor does he produce his own comments and made-up sermons."

⁴ I Corinthians 2:4

body of Christ is edified; in fact it has often happened among us that several meetings have passed without one word, and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts have been wonderfully filled* with the secret sense of God's Power and Spirit, which has been ministered from one vessel to another without words. This is certainly strange and incredible to natural people of merely carnal mind, who are likely to consider it wasted time when nothing is spoken that is obvious to the outward senses. Therefore, since I can speak from real experience and not by mere hearsay, I will say some more about this wonderful and glorious dispensation which has so much more of the wisdom and glory of God in it, being contrary to the nature of the human spirit, will and wisdom.

§ vii. There can be nothing more opposite to the natural human will and wisdom than this silent waiting upon God. And it cannot be obtained nor understood correctly unless a person lays down his own wisdom and will, and is content to be completely subject to God. Therefore it is not preached or practiced⁵ except by those who feel that no outward ceremony, no observances, no words—not the best and purest words, not even the words of Scripture—can satisfy their weary and suffering souls, because even where all those things exist, the life, power and virtue which make such things effective may be lacking. Such people had to detach themselves* from everything outward and be silent before the Lord; they were guided to that inward principle of Life and Light in themselves as the most excellent teacher “which can never be hidden in a corner,”⁶ and they were taught to wait upon God in the measure of life and grace they had received from him, to stop their own

⁵ Latin: *ideoque nec illud adepti sunt, nec præstiterunt*, “and therefore they can neither obtain nor practice it”

⁶ Isaiah 30:20 RB

impulsive words and actions based on the natural will and understanding, and to feel after this inward Seed of Life, so that when it moves they move with it and are led by its power and influence, whether to pray, preach or sing.

And so from this principle⁷ in which man is silent and does not act on his own initiative in the things of God until he is led by God's Light and Grace in the heart, there naturally springs that custom of sitting together in silence and waiting together upon the Lord. Based on that principle many people, meeting together in the pure fear of the Lord, did not apply themselves immediately to speak, pray, or sing, etc., being reluctant to act presumptuously in their own will; instead each one made an effort to withdraw inwardly to the measure of Grace in themselves, not only being silent in words but also abstaining from all their own thoughts, imaginations and desires, waiting in holy dependence on the Lord, meeting together not only outwardly in one place but inwardly in one Spirit and in the one name of Jesus, which is his Power and Virtue. They come to enjoy and feel the arising of this Life, and as it prevails in each person it becomes a flood of refreshment and floods over all the meeting. What is human, the human part and human wisdom is denied and chained down in every individual, and God is exalted; his Grace rules in the heart, and his Name comes to be one in all, and his glory shines forth and covers all. There is such a holy awe and reverence in every soul that if the natural part rose up in anyone, or the wise part, or anything which is not one with the Life, it would soon be chained down, condemned,* and put out. When anyone is impelled by the upsurge of this power to utter words of exhortation or praise, or to breathe to the Lord in prayer, then everyone can feel it, because the same Life in them responds to it, "as in water face

⁷ Latin: *ex hoc dogmate*, "from this doctrine"

corresponds to face.”⁸ This is the divine and spiritual worship which the world does not know or understand, which the vulture’s eye does not see.⁹

My soul and many others have tasted many benefits through this worship, and everyone could experience the same if they would seriously apply themselves to it. When people are gathered together in this way, not merely to hear a human being speak nor to depend on human beings, but instead all have been inwardly trained to rely on the Lord¹⁰ and wait for his appearance in their hearts, then the over-hasty and anxious* human spirit is stopped and prevented from mixing itself in the worship of God. The form of this worship is so naked, so void of all outward worldly splendor, that all opportunity to exercise human wisdom is excluded¹¹ and there is no place for superstition and idolatry. There is also an inward quietness, a turning inward of the mind, so that the witness of God rises in the heart, and the Light of Christ shines, by which the soul comes to see its own condition. Since many of us are joined together in this same work,¹² there is inward wrestling and labor; and also, when we abide in the measure of Grace, there is victory over the power and spirit of darkness. In this way we are often greatly strengthened and renewed in the spirits of our minds¹³ without a word, and we enjoy and

⁸ Proverbs 27:19 RB

⁹ Job 28:7 Latin: *neque vidit eum impurus oculus*, “and the impure eye does not see it.”

¹⁰ Isaiah 10:20, 26:3 RB

¹¹ This word, omitted in Barclay’s English version, but present in the Latin original is needed to make sense of the sentence: *ut omnem occasionem abscindat, qua hominis sapientia exercetur*, “so that every opportunity in which human wisdom could be exercised is removed.”

¹² Latin: *multi hoc opere purgantur*, “many are cleansed by this same work”

¹³ Ephesians 4:23 RB; also see Romans 12:2

possess the holy fellowship and “communion of the body and blood of Christ,”¹⁴ which feeds and nourishes our inward man. This makes us avoid clinging foolishly to outward water and bread and wine in our spiritual things.

When many who gather together in this way grow mature in the strength, power, and virtue of Truth, when Truth is victorious and rules in their souls, then they receive words and speak steadily for the edification of their brethren, and the pure Life has free passage through them,¹⁵ and what is spoken in this way edifies the body indeed. The certainty of the divine strength that is imparted by meeting together in this way and waiting in silence upon God is so evident, that when it sometimes happens that someone comes in who has been unwatchful and wandering in his mind, or who comes directly out of the hurry of outward business and so is not inwardly gathered with the others — as soon as he turns inward* this Power, having been raised in the whole meeting in good measure, will suddenly lay hold on his spirit, and wonderfully help to raise up the good in him and create in him the sense of the same Power, which melts and warms his heart. It’s like warmth taking hold of someone who is cold when he comes into a warm room, or the way a flame can set on fire some combustible matter which lies nearby.

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition XI § vi, vii (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 296-299; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 226-228.

¹⁴ I Corinthians 10:16

¹⁵ Latin: & *pura vita inter illos aditum reperit*, “and the pure life finds entrance among them”