

§ vii. . . . Not a few people have come to be convinced of the Truth in this way; in part I myself am a true witness of this. I did not come to receive and bear witness of the Truth by the strength of arguments or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine which convinced my understanding; instead, I was convinced by being mystically touched by this Life. When I came into the silent assemblies of God's people I felt a secret¹ power among them which touched my heart, and as I yielded myself to it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up. And so I became united and interwoven with them² hungering more and more for the increase of this Power and Life by which I could feel that I was perfectly redeemed.

In fact, this is the surest way to become a Christian; and afterwards he will not lack the knowledge and understanding of principles which will grow up as much as is needed, as the natural fruit of this good root; such knowledge will not be barren or unfruitful in this way. Therefore we wish that all who come to us may become proselytes;³ we know that although thousands might be

¹ Because this sentence is very well known among Friends, we have retained the phrase "secret power" although a better translation into modern English would be "mystic power" since the word "secret" now generally carries the connotation of "clandestine." In the seventeenth century, the word also could mean "inward, intimate, mystical, beyond human intelligence or ordinary senses."

² See Colossians 2:2

³ Both the 1678 English first edition and the 1676 Latin first edition have this sentence. However, we have found the 1701 English edition

convinced in their intellect of all the truths we teach, yet they could contribute nothing to us if they were not aware of this inward Life, if their souls were not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness. This is the cement⁴ by which we are joined to the Lord and to one another,⁵ and without it no one is able to worship with us. Indeed, if someone like that comes among us, and speaks very true things based on that intellectual conviction of truth, and speaks eloquently, if it is without this life it would not edify us at all but would be like “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal” (I Corinthians 13:1).

Source: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition XI § vii, viii, ix (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 300-301; and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 229-230.

which has a small difference that greatly clarifies the sentence. The phrase “after this manner” (in this way) which in the 1678 edition was at the end of the preceding sentence, becomes the first phrase in the following sentence, which therefore reads: “After this manner, we desire therefore all that come among us to be proselyted . . .”

⁴ Instead of “cement” the Latin has *fermentum*, “yeast.”

⁵ I Corinthians 6:17 RB