

Fifteenth Thesis

Concerning Salutations and Recreations, &c.¹

The chief purpose of all religion is to redeem us from the spirit and vain society of this world² and to lead us into inward communion with God; if we fear before him we are considered happy. Therefore all the vain customs and habits of the world, both in word and deed, must be rejected and abandoned by those who come to this fear: taking off the hat to a man, bowing and cringing of the body, and other salutations of that kind, with all the foolish and superstitious formalities which accompany them;³ and all the things which man has invented in his degenerate state to feed his pride in the vain pomp and glory of this world; also the games and plays that have no benefit, frivolous recreations and nonsense,* and gambling. All these things are invented to pass away the precious time and divert the mind from the witness of God in the heart⁴ and from the living sense of the fear of God. They separate us from that evangelical Spirit with which Christians ought to be leavened,⁵ which leads into

¹ Latin: *idque genus aliis*, “and other things of this kind.”

² Latin: *à spiritu vano & hujus seculi consortio*, “from the vain spirit and society of this age.”

³ The Latin adds: *y que malo usu in nimis multis gentibus inveteratæ*, “and which are ingrained in many nations by bad customs.”

⁴ Latin: *teste Deo in corde*, “the witness of God in the heart.” Latin has two words which are translated in English as “witness” one is *testis* which means the person who sees and speaks, and the other is *testimonium* which is the testimony, what the witness says. The English word “witness” can mean both and so the phrase is ambiguous in English. The Latin text clarifies the ambiguity, since it can only mean “the witness of God (who sees and speaks) in the heart.”

⁵ Latin: *quo debent Christiani cæmentari*, “by which Christians should be strengthened.”

sobriety, gravity, and godly fear.⁶ When we dwell in this Spirit we feel that the blessing of the Lord is with us in those actions⁷ which we must engage in, in order to sustain the outward man.⁸

Sources: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 429-430 and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) p. 332.

⁶ Latin: *sincerum Dei timorem*, “sincere fear of God.”

⁷ Latin: *in quo dum ambulamus, benediction Dei adest nobiscum in actionibus istis*, “While we walk in this Spirit, the blessing of God is with us in those actions.”

⁸ Ephesians 5:11; 1 Peter 1:14; John 5:44; Jeremiah 10:3; Acts 10:26; Matthew 15:13; Colossians 2:8 RB.