

A Short Expostulation With, and Appeal to All Other Professors

by Robert Barclay

Robert Barclay critiques the Professors of Christianity for their ignorance of Scripture and the Power of God, and appeals to them to acknowledge the Glorious Gospel and Light.

Scripture: John 1:1, 1 Corinthians 10:12, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:3, Hebrews 2:9, 2 Peter 3:16, 1 John 4:1

Topics: "True Faith", "Heresy Warning"

Description

Robert Barclay challenges all professors of Christianity to reason together and examine their beliefs in light of the Scriptures and the power of God. He emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the Gospel and the principles of God's love, justice, and mercy as revealed in the Scriptures and through personal experience. Barclay highlights the necessity of true faith and watchfulness to avoid departing from the faith and falling into heresies. He critiques various sects, including Papists, Socinians, Arminians, and certain Protestants, for deviating from essential biblical truths and misinterpreting Scripture to support false doctrines.

Transcript

Come, let us reason with you, all ye Professors of Christianity, of what sort or kind soever; and bring forth your Catechisms and Confessions of Faith to that which by most of yourselves is accounted the Touchstone or Rule: And suffer yourselves no more to be blinded, and to Err through your Ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the Power of God; But freely acknowledge and confess to that Glorious Gospel and Light, which the Scriptures so clearly witness to, and your Experience must needs answer; as also to these other Doctrines, which consequentially depend upon the Behalf of that Noble and truly Catholick Principle, wherein the Love of God is so mercifully exhibited to all Men, and his Justice and Mercy do like Twins so Harmoniously concord; his Mercy in the oft tendering of his Love through the Strivings and Wrestlings of his Light, during the day of every man's Visitation; and his Justice, both in the destroying and cutting away of the Wicked Nature and Spirit in those that suffer themselves to be redeemed through his Judgments; and in the utter Overthrow of such, who rebelling against the Light, and doing Despight to the Spirit of Grace, hate to be reformed: Now, not only this Fundamental Principle is clearly held forth in this Treatise, but all these that depend upon it, as the real and inward Justification of the Saints, through the Power and Life of Jesus revealed in them, their full and perfect Redemption from the Body of Death and

Sin, as they grow up by the Workings and Prevalency of his Grace; and yet, lest Security should enter, there is great need of Watchfulness, in that they may even depart after they have really witnessed a good Condition, and make Ship-wrack of the Faith, and of a good Conscience, with all the parts of the Doctrine of Christ, as they lie linked together like a Golden Chain, which doth very much evidence the Certainty and Vertue of Truth above all Heresies, Error and Deceit, however so cunningly gilded with the specious Pretences thereof; for Truth is intire in all its parts, and consonant to it self, without the least jar, having a wonderful Coherence and notable Harmony, answering together like the Strings of a well-tuned Instrument; whereas the Principles of all other Professors, though in some things most of them come near, and divers acknowledge that which is Truth; yet in most things they stray from it; so that their Principles greatly contradict and jar one against another; and though they may alledge Scriptures for some of their Principles, yet they are put strangely to wrest it, and to deny it for others.

My Appeal then to, and Expostulation with all sorts of Professors, is not to prove some one or two Points by the Scriptures (for there be some general Notions of Truth, which most (if not all) agree to) but the whole Body of our Principles, as they stand in relation to each other, which none of them all is able to do, for, among the many Professors, their Catechisms and Confessions of Faith, I find none (save the Dispensation of Truth now again revealed) but such as in most of their substantial Principles differ greatly, and in many contradict grosly the plain Text and Tenour of the Scripture.

I confess there be certain Men in this Age, who with some plausible appearance of Reality undertake this Task: These are they that joyn with, and own not wholly any Imbodied People; but while they pretend a general Love to all, yet find fault with some part of every sort, while in the mean time they scarce can give any Account of their own Religion, and most of them prove at bottom to have none at all: These Men, I say, may perhaps acknowledge some general Truths, and also hold to the Letter of the Scripture in some other things, so as thereby to take Occasion largely to judge others, while themselves offer not to bring these good things to practise, they blame others for the Want or Neglect of: But such an Enterprize from these Men will not (when weighed) prove a fulfilling of this Matter, seeing it is not enough to acknowledge many Truths, but also to deny and witness against all Error; and likewise, not to fall short of any Truth which ought to be acknowledged: Whereas these sort of Men for the most part cannot give account of their Faith in many things needful to be believed; and whatever things they may acknowledge to be true, they err most grievously, and contradict a Truth most needful to be minded and answered, as is proved hereto, in that they stand not forth to appear for any of these Discoveries, they pretend they have; but make a shift to hide their Heads in Times of Tryal, so as not to suffer for, nor with any: And through these fine Pretences above mentioned, through their Scruples of joyning with any, they can cunningly shun the Difficulties of Persecutions, that attend the particular Sects of Christians; and yet by their general Charity and Love to all, claim a share in any Benefits or Advantages that accrew to one and all: Such then cannot honestly lay claim to justifie their Principles and Practices from the Scriptures: But I leave these Straglers in Religion, and come again to the divers Sects.

To begin with these, that are most numerous; I think I need not say much to the Papists in this Case; for they do not so much as pretend to prove all their Dogmaes by the Scriptures; sith it is one of their chief Doctrines, That Tradition may Authorize Doctrines, without any Authority of Scripture; Yea, the Council of Constance hath made bold to command things to be believed Non obstante Scriptura, i.e. Though the Scriptures say the contrary; and indeed it were their great folly, to pretend to prove their Doctrines by Scripture; seeing the Adoration of Saints and Images, Purgatory, and Prayer for the Dead, the Precedency of the Bishop of Rome, the Matter of Indulgencies, with much more Stuff of that kind, hath not the least

Shadow of Scripture for it.

Among Protestants I know the Socinians are great Pretenders to the Scriptures, and in Words as much exalt them as any other People; and yet its strange to see how that not only in many things they are not agreeable to them; but in some of their chief Principles quite contrary unto it, as in their Denying the Divinity of Christ, which is as expressly mentioned as any thing can be; And the Word was God, John 1. As also in Denying his Being from the Beginning, against the very Tenour of that of John 1. and divers others, as at large is shewn in the third Chapter of this Treatise. Divers other things, as to them, might be mentioned; but this may suffice, to stop their Boasting in this Matter.

The Arminians are not more successful in their denying the False Doctrine of Absolute Reprobation, and in Asserting the Universal Extent of Christ's Death for all, than they are short in not placing this Salvation in that Spiritual Light, where-with Man is enlightened by Christ; but wrongously ascribing a part of that to the Natural Will and Capacity, which is due alone to the Grace and Power of God, by which the Work is both begun, carried on and accomplished: And herein they, as well as both the Socinians and Pelagians, though they do well in Condemning their Errors, yet they miss, in setting up another, and not the Truth in place thereof, and in that respect are justly proved by such Scriptures as their Adversaries (who otherwise are as far wrong as they) bring against them, in shewing the Depravity of Man's Will by Nature, and his Incapacity to do any Good, but as assisted by the Grace of God so to do.

On the other hand, Its strange to observe how many Protestants (the first Article of whose Confession of Faith is, to assert the Scripture to be the Only Rule) should deny the Universal Extent of Christ's Death, contrary to the express words of Scripture, which saith, He tasted Death for every man; or the Universality of Grace, and a sufficient Principle, which the Scriptures assert in as many positive Words, as, except we may suppose the Pen-men intended another thing than they spoke, it was possible to do, viz. A Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; The Grace of God that brings Salvation hath appeared unto all men; and many more before-mentioned: The like may be said of their denying the Perfection of the Saints, and asserting the Impossibility of any falling away from real Beginnings of true and saving Grace, contrary to so many express Scriptures, as are heretofore adduced in their proper Place. But to give all that desire to be undeceived, a more full Opportunity to observe how the Devil has abused many, pretending to be wise, in making them cloak with a Pretence of Scripture, false and pernicious Doctrines; I shall take a few of many Instances out of the Confession of Faith and Catechism, made by the Divines at Westminster (so called) because the same is not only most universally received and believed by the People of Britain and Ireland, but also containeth upon the Matter the Faith of the French Churches, & of most others, both in the Nether-Lands, and else-where, that it may appear what wild Consequences these Men have sought, both contrary to the naked Import of the words, and to all common Sense and Reason, to cover some of their Erroneous Principles.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robert-barclay/a-short-expostulation-with-and-appeal-to-all-other-professors/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net