QUAKER STUDIES 5/2 (2001) [141-164]

TOUCHED AND KNIT IN THE LIFE: BARCLAY'S RELATIONAL THEOLOGY AND CARTESIAN DUALISM

R. Melvin Keiser

Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

ABSTRACT

I argue in this paper that Robert Barclay fundamentally uses a relational method in doing theology notwithstanding a growing scholarly consensus that his thought is shaped by Cartesian dualism. The claims of dualism in Barclay are assessed through a close textual interpretation of parts of his 1676 work, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, and his subsequent essay 'The Possibility and Necessity of the Inward and Immediate Revelation of the Spirit of God'. While he explicitly engages Cartesian dualism in this latter work, my conclusion is that when he is arguing apologetically with someone employing dualist categories, as in this essay, he uses Cartesian language in order to find common ground with his audience; but when he reflects on his own experience, he thinks relationally rather than dualistically. That he does not disjoin the self from God, other selves, or its own body, nor does he separate the inward and biblical Christ, has been obscured by his apologetic use of Cartesian dualism. In recognizing his relational approach, we can discover in Barclay's thought a resource for doing Quaker theology today that responds to George Fox's question, 'What canst thou say?'.

KEYWORDS

Barclay, Descartes, dualism, epistemology, Christology, inwardness

Robert Barclay's theology is a laboratory for discovering one's own Quaker way of doing theology. Controversy has swirled around him both in his lifetime and ever since. While alive he argued extensively with Puritans. After his death Friends have either claimed him for their side in fratricidal conflict or rejected him for distorting Quaker ways of thinking. Having wrestled with him since my youth, both to understand

him and to figure out my own Quaker approach to theology, I recommend him as a challenge to head and heart in exploring how to say 'what thou canst'.

Amid his arguments with Puritans, Barclay develops, I want to show, a Quaker way of doing theology—using a relational method which contrasts significantly with Puritans' use of a dualistic method and dogmatic thinking. Two-thirds of the way through his work *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (1908[1676]) Barclay speaks of his convincement as being touched in the heart by the life and power among people gathered in silent worship. This is the beginning of his relational theology—relating to selves open in their depths and to the divine presence moving in their midst. Theological thinking, like messages delivered in meeting, emerges from these non-rational depths of shared silence. Knowledge of Scripture and Christian principles does not precede such experience but rather emerges out of such experienced depths: 'afterwards the knowledge and understanding of principles will not be wanting, but will grow up so much as is needful, as the natural fruit of this good root' (Barclay 1908: 340).

While this non-dualistic way of thinking can be shown in the work of George Fox, Margaret Fell, and Isaac Penington (see Keiser 1984, 1986, 1991 a-c, 1997), Barclay draws upon Descartes implicitly in his *Apology* and explicitly in an essay entitled 'The Possibility and Necessity of the Inward and Immediate Revelation of the Spirit of God' (Barclay 1831 [1676]). Scholars have concluded that Barclay is, therefore, irretrievably dualistic. Barclay's explicit engagement with Cartesian dualism has obscured for them his relational way of doing theology and the meaning of this engagement within his apologetic context. To show that Barclay's way of doing theology is relational, it is necessary to confront this charge of dualism by exploring his use of Descartes.

Cartesian Dualism and Relational Thinking

Under the impact of the rise of modern science, René Descartes between 1619-1650 carefully crafted a mind/body dualism from the Greek spirit/matter hierarchy, in order to free the scientific exploration of the natural world from ecclesiastical and theological domination and to protect the realm of selves and its truth from science's encroachments. While English intellectuals, such as the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, were excited by Descartes' philosophy, danger was recognized in

his mechanistic view of body and world alien to the personal. Less recognized at the time, Descartes initiated for both rationalist and empiricist modern philosophy an insatiable search for absolute rational certainty through the method of doubt. The result, however, as Michael Polanyi so well has shown (see Polanyi: 1958, 1966), has been scepticism and totalitarianism, for the method attempts to uproot all commitments by which we dwell in the world.

Dualism means a separation of realms so there is no interaction between or participation in one another. Descartes' dualism isolates mind and body from each other totally (except for his dubious effort to connect them at the pineal gland). The theological implications are to separate self and God, self and world, and the experienced Christ from the biblical Christ. The mind severed from the body's participation in and interaction with the world looks out from its enclosure upon a world of objects—natural, human, and divine—to which it is unrelated and about which it is uncertain. The biblical Christ as external to the knowing self similarly becomes problematic: how can we know with certitude anything that happens in history?

Descartes thought he discovered a foundation of absolute certainty in the self, specifically in critical reason. In his realization of *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think therefore I am') he grounded reason in reason: he realized in doubting all things, he could not doubt that he was doubting. He did not apply his methodology of doubt to God's existence. Rather he found ideas of God within his reason that he believed only God could have caused since they were of perfection and we as imperfect creatures could not have made them. On the basis of trust in such a perfect creator Descartes decided he could depend sufficiently on his senses to convey a knowable world, but the point of certainty was in reason itself, not in sensuous relations to the world. Protestantism found certainty in the Scriptures; even though external to the self, its objective certainty was assured by God's self-validating revelation. The separation of God and Christ from our minds was thus bridged by this contact point with the divine through Scripture as the certain Word of God.

But the Quaker way, which will be seen in Barclay, was to look for certainty neither in reason nor in Scripture, but in personal experience. Through pairs of terms, Friends spoke of inward and outward, life and form, spirit and letter, silence and words in such a way that the first term was a dimension of depth in the latter term. While some recent Quaker scholars construe these pairs as dualistically separate in Barclay, I want to

show that they were in fact used by him as inter-related, with the former participating in the latter and the latter emerging from the former. Inwardness was the level of life and spirit that Barclay and his seventeenth-century Quaker contemporaries descended to over and over again in meeting for worship and daily living. From this spiritual dimension word and action emerged filled with vitality as outward forms. The outward was thus the inward made manifest; the inward was the outward in potentiality. Only when these split apart so the outward form was empty of life, or the inward vitality was prevented from coming to expression, was there a problem.

But the certainty embraced here in inwardness was a 'lived' certainty rather than a rational one—the assurance that comes in experience of things that are deep, that feel really real and ultimately significant, that transform lives and call forth the giving of one's life in commitment. As a lived certainty, it is better to speak of this as a trust and confidence since it does not eliminate, as rational certitude attempts to, the many ambiguities of living.

By this relational mode of religious knowing, Barclay and other early Friends held together interactively self and God, mind and body, self and world, and the experiential and biblical Christ. They did this by seeing God as a transcendent presence within the self, the mind as an embodied consciousness discerning truth through the spiritually enlivened physical senses, the self as inherently connected with all creatures within the original creation present in our depths, and Christ as the eternal divine presence dwelling in all people and in fullest measure in Jesus.

A Growing Scholarly Consensus on Dualism in Barclay

There is a growing consensus among Quaker scholars, however, that Barclay's involvement with Cartesian thought is a capitulation to it, setting the stage for the development of Quietism and its separations of mind from body, divine from human, and the inward Christ from the outward biblical Christ. Maurice Creasey says that

> at the hands of Robert Barclay, and largely in terms of a confused and illegitimate application of the originally clear and valid distinction between 'inward' and 'outward', Quakerism became wedded to a prevalent and quasi-Cartesian dualism and, as a consequence, set its feet upon paths which, for many a year, led it into the barren places of quietism and formalism (Creasey 1962: 20).

He argues that in Fox and Penington 'outward' and 'inward' were used to distinguish 'a formal or conventional or notional knowledge of Christianity as a body of "revealed truths" and religious and ethical practices' from 'a transforming and creative personal acquaintance with and relation to Christ in the Spirit' (1962: 5). But Barclay, according to Creasey, distinguishes these as

> a contrast between two modes of revelation, and...between two distinct organs whereby these modes of revelation are respectively received. There is no recognition of any possiblity [*sic*] of mutual interaction or communication or influence between these two modes, or these two organs (1962: 12).

Barclay has taken, Creasey explains, the earlier definition of inward and outward as two different ways to apprehend the same revelation given in history, and turned it into 'two kinds of Revelation', one of which is 'without any essential connection with History' and is known by an 'organ within man, which yet is no part of man's essential being, dependent in no way upon the constitution of man's mind' (1962: 22). The reason for this presumed separation is Barclay's imbibing Cartesian dualism. Thus 'Quakerism early took the form of a kind of spiritualized Cartesianism' leaving it as 'a religious movement lacking an adequate intellectual formulation and means of self-criticism' (1962: 23). Over against this 'religion of immanence', Creasey proposes 'a religion of incarnation' in which 'the "inward" made itself known in and through the "outward", and is still to be encountered only so' (1962: 23-24)—that is, through the Jesus of Scripture, the Johannine incarnate Word.

Mel Endy agrees with Creasey about Cartesian dualism in Barclay but sees this separation of inward and outward going back to Fox and the beginnings of Quakerism (Endy 1973: 76-77), stemming from Cartesian and Platonic thought (1973: 183). He sees in Barclay 'spiritual–corporeal' and 'divine–human' dualisms—the former because Barclay separates the physical and spiritual senses, and the latter because the human is made entirely passive, with no free will, as the old self, its will and personality, is annihilated and replaced by the Spirit and will of God (1973: 68-84, 183-89).

John Punshon suggests that 'Barclay unintentionally expressed the central ambiguity of Quakerism and posed a problem which the evangelical and liberal traditions were later to solve in characteristically different ways' (Punshon 1984: 122). The evangelical tradition, overlooking Barclay's relegation of Scripture to secondary authority, springs from

his theological development of redemption through Christ. And the liberal tradition, overlooking Barclay's holding the mystical light and historical Jesus in an 'indissoluble link', springs from his development of this inward spiritual reality. With Creasey, and in contrast to Endy, Punshon sees a significant difference between Barclay and Fox:

> Then there is a tantalising difference in atmosphere between the two men. Barclay is obviously a scholar, at home with the Fathers as well as the Bible, capable of taking nice points and making fine distinctions. Fox breathes the air of an Amos or Paul, and sees the whole sweep of God's covenant relationship with his Church in a far more dramatic and concrete way. Basically, Barclay has put Quakerism into a quietist kind of straitjacket by his philosophical dualism and distrust of the powers of the human mind. Fox's profoundly scriptural faith contains so many counterweights to enthusiasm in one direction that there is a diversity and comprehensiveness there that Barclay has not quite caught (Punshon 1984: 125 [see also pp. 120-25]).

In the most recent consideration of Barclay's dualism, Hugh Pyper similarly identifies Barclay as Cartesian in interpreting him as representing the self as an 'individual [who] is fundamentally a mental being' (Pyper 1998: 16). But he qualifies this by recognizing the experiential and communal dimension in Barclay's thought evident in his convincement. Yet he argues that Barclay's theological and philosophical commitments to dualism 'do not allow him to express them [i.e. 'these communal experiences'] in his systematic writings'. Moveover, this 'inherent dualism of Barclay's thought...ultimately pulls apart the divine and the human in the incarnation'. He thus has a 'deficient doctrine of the Holy Spirit' because he does not distinguish between 'the spirit already at work in the world' and 'the power of the son at work in the man Jesus' (1998: 17, 18).

Starting with Barclay's Starting Point

In the face of this growing scholarly consensus of Barclay's capitulation to Cartesian dualism, I would propose a different angle of approach in order to understand Barclay's use of Descartes' concepts and his way of thinking theologically. Rather than bringing the experiential in at the end of a study of Barclay as a contradiction to his assumed Cartesianism, as Pyper has done, I suggest we start from experience in community since that is the context of his convincement and hence the springboard for all his Quaker reflections. From this perspective we can follow him

developing a non-dualistic theology, though admittedly not into its fullness, and eventually return to the question of the meaning of the apologetic form of his thinking, which Pyper has so well discussed (1998: 6-8), for his engagement with Cartesian dualism. Before I turn to explore the relational nature of his convincement and subsequent reflection, it is important to assess Barclay's epistemological emphasis as he begins his *Apology*, for it is here that the unmistakable influence of Descartes can be seen.

Writing for university-trained readers in the common scholastic form of rational argumentative defence of propositions, making each chapter an elaboration of a stated proposition, Barclay starts his book by establishing the true foundation of knowledge. Within the latter half of the seventeenth century this suggests two particular influences—John Calvin and Descartes. Calvin in 1559 begins his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: 'Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves' (Calvin 1960: 35). Calvin here shifts the focus from mediaeval preoccupation with being to the modern question of knowing. A century later Descartes fixes epistemology as the central question and starting point for modern philosophy. But he intensifies the quality of what is sought, redefining 'true and sound wisdom' as certain knowledge: as that 'which I knew to be true and certain' (Descartes 1958: 119). The influence of both Calvin and Descartes is evident in the title of Barclay's first proposition: 'Concerning the True Foundation of Knowledge' (1908: 23). Furthermore, when he speaks of what he wants to find as 'quietness and peace in the certain knowledge of God' (1908: 24), he exhibits Descartes' preoccupation with certainty.

When Barclay speaks of his convincement, however, he uses an epistemological approach that shows no trace of Cartesianism:

> For not a few have come to be convinced of the truth after this manner, of which I myself, in part, am a true witness, who not by strength of arguments, or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and convincement of my understanding thereby, came to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by this life; for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed (1908: 340).

He speaks of being convinced by the truth as the divine life reached and touched his heart in the silence of meeting for worship. Not by rational argument and theological inquiry that would convince the understanding, but by the power of the divine life he felt among the assembly gathered in silence, did he receive the truth. The effect of being touched by and giving way to the life was to discover the evil within himself weakened and the good strengthened, himself to be knit and united with the worshippers, and a hunger to feel himself fully redeemed.

Mind and body are not split apart. In entering physically into this space where people are sitting in silent worship, he is touched in his mind, but it is the mind as heart, not as head merely (a distinction he uses from the beginning [see 1908: 9]). In the heart he feels and wants; it is the place of his passions, of affectional understanding. He is affected in his heart through perceiving the situation, through sensing the power in it, not by conceiving it. Just as his understanding is not separated from his body—they are working together as they are touched by the life—so also the self is not separated from God. The life of God is immediately present making its redeeming and uniting power felt in his whole bodily and ensouled being. While the agency is the divine life radiating from the gathering, so that he is acted on by this power, contrary to Endy's claim, Barclay is not entirely passive, for he speaks of giving way to that which has touched his heart. He presumably could have resisted it. While he will speak later of the Spirit's leading from within himself, here there is no annihilation of the self. Indeed, there is an enlargement of the self, as he not only feels the good being raised up in him (which presumably was already present, but not pervasive in him), but discovers himself, by the grace of this divine life, being brought into unity with these people.

There is no dualism here of mind/body or divine/human oppositions. Nor are there any Cartesian concepts at work. He is using concepts—convincement, truth, heart, life, good and evil, unity, redemption—but they are emerging directly from his experience as he attempts to give account of what he felt and the effects that followed as he entered this gathered meeting. Nor is there any reference to Christ outward or inward, except the metaphor of 'life' which is a Johannine term for both the inward and outward Christ.

In his larger discussion of the eleventh chapter, Proposition XI, 'Concerning Worship', within which this account of his convincement occurs, Barclay develops further his relational views of self and God,

mind and body. God is present 'in the midst', whose 'presence' is known through 'feeling' and being 'gathered' by it (1908: 335). Words in worship 'are felt to arise' from the 'pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit' (1908: 336). An intimacy is present in the divine–human relations in which the divine actuates the self from within it empowering it to 'words and actings'. Friends learn 'to wait upon God...and feel after this inward seed of life; that as it moveth, they may move with it, and be actuated by its power, and influenced, whether to pray, preach or sing' (1908: 337).

'Waiting' is not passivity; it is an activity in which the ego—what Barclay calls 'the natural will and wisdom' and the 'imagination' (1908: 335-36)—is to be laid down. Waiting thus involves 'denying self, both inwardly and outwardly, in a still and mere dependence upon God'. It involves 'being emptied as it were of himself', of all 'the workings, imaginations, and speculations of his own mind'. It is being 'thoroughly crucified to the natural products' of the self so as 'to receive the Lord', in which 'the little seed of righteousness which God hath planted in his soul...receives a place to arise' (1908: 350).

While this place of 'holy dependence' (1908: 337) and the growth of 'the little seed' is in inwardness, it is not separated from the outward but is the depth within it. 'God hath seen meet, so long as his children are in this world, to make use of the outward senses'. He uses them 'to convey spiritual life' by 'speaking, praying' which can only contribute to 'mutual edification...when we hear and see one another'. The 'seeing of the faces one of another, when both are inwardly gathered unto the life', Barclay says, 'causeth the inward life...the more to abound' (1908: 364). As 'many are gathered together into the same life, there is more of the glory of God' (1908: 365). So the meeting together of people 'outwardly in their persons', in their bodies, and 'outwardly in one place' (1903: 336, 337) is important to the nurture of their inward lives. Hence 'the name of Quakers, i.e., Tremblers': when selves engage in worship in 'inward travail', the inward struggle may result in an outward 'trembling and a motion of body'. The body may be shaken resulting in 'many groans, and sighs, and tears, even as the pangs of a woman in travail' (1908: 342). Literal birthing is used as a metaphor for the inward life struggling to come forth. The body, in its physical shaking, may show forth visibly the inward spiritual condition of giving up one's natural will and wisdom (see Mack 1992: 150-53). The outward expresses the inward. Mind and body are not separated.

The Senses Natural and Supernatural

But what of Barclay's distinction between the natural and supernatural senses: 'The senses are either outward or inward; and the inward senses are either natural or supernatural... [S]ome beings are natural, some supernatural; so some ideas are natural, some supernatural...' (Barclay 1831: 569). Many Quaker scholars see this as evidence of the mind/body split. The spiritual senses are, on the contrary, I would say, not only like the physical senses but work through them. What they sense is not light and sound as received by the outward senses but through the physical light and sound they sense the spiritual light and voice of God. Barclay says that, while voices in Scripture are usually not outward but inward voices, God has spoken outwardly to people through angels or through dreams and visions. The way in which they knew, however, that this was God speaking was through the spiritual sensing of the 'secret testimony of God's Spirit in their hearts, assuring them that the voices, dreams, and visions were of and from God'. The outward senses are fallible; even hearing an outward word spoken in a mystical audition cannot 'credit' (1908: 42) this experience as from God. This can only be known inwardly in the heart through the Spirit's assurance. When Abraham entertained angels, Barclay says, he did not recognize them as angels through his outward senses. Seeing men walk towards him—receiving light from them on the retina of his eyes, as we would say today—does not tell him their spiritual quality; it is the spiritual sense that does. 'And seeing the Spirit of God is within us, and not without us only, it speaks to our spiritual, and not to our bodily ear' (1908: 43). So also with all the other senses. Like Fox and Penington, Barclay speaks of the spiritual senses in terms of each of the physical senses: 'thou shalt feel the new man, or the spiritual birth and babe raised, which hath its spiritual senses, and can see, feel, taste, handle and smell the things of the Spirit' (1908: 71; for the same detailing of spiritual senses see 1831: 574).

The issue of the outward and inward senses is not whether there are two ways of knowing, or two modes of revelation, as Creasey has said, but how do we discern the full meaning of things? How do we catch the full meaning of what we perceive through our outward senses and are aware of occurring within us unconnected to any external perception? Barclay speaks of a blind man not knowing the full meaning of sunlight, while a mere child, who can see, grasps its meaning. And he

speaks of grasping the true meaning of words, heard or seen, only through an inward taste:

> neither can the natural man, of the largest capacity, by the best words, even scripture words, so well understand the mysteries of God's kingdom, as the least and weakest child who tasteth them, by having them revealed inwardly and objectively by the Spirit (1908: 71).

What is known inwardly through this spiritual or supernatural sense Barclay says is 'immediate' and 'objective'. 'Immediate' means 'no mention of any medium'. The meaning does not come from 'writings or books' but comes first hand in one's own experience. Barclay does not, however, recognize that any words, even those 'words put into the mouth' (1908: 55) by God, are a medium, as are the feelings one has of God's inward working. Nevertheless, his point is well taken, even if word and feeling are recognized, as they would be today, as media; God works immediately in the dimension of inwardness, without the medium of any form, which then arises into the forms of feeling and words.

Inward revelation by the Spirit is not merely immediate but 'objective'. The inward workings of the Spirit are real and are the object of our faith. He says: 'That which any one firmly believes, as the ground and foundation of his hope in God, and life eternal, is the formal object of his faith' (1908: 43). What this formal object is is inward revelation: 'And what was the object of their faith, but inward and immediate revelation' (1908: 45). The Protestant alternative, which Barclay is rejecting, is that Scripture is the object of faith:

> Such as deny this proposition now-a-days use here a distinction; granting that God is to be known by his Spirit, but again denying that it is immediate or inward, but in and by the scriptures; in which the mind of the Spirit (as they say) being fully and amply expressed, we are thereby to know God, and be led in all things (1908: 45-46).

This Protestant view makes the inward revelations of the Spirit merely subjective, that is subordinated to the outward words of Scripture, so the function of the Spirit is reduced to merely understanding the objective words. In this view, there is no reality and meaning apart from explicit external forms, that is apart from the words of Scripture. This Protestant view believes, says Barclay:

> That the Spirit doth now lead and influence the saints, but that he doth it only subjectively, or in a blind manner, by enlightening their understandings, to understand and believe the truth delivered in the scriptures; but

> not at all by presenting those truths to the mind by way of object...of whose working a man is not sensible (1908: 54).

But there are 'many truths' which 'are applicable to particulars and individuals', Barclay argues, which 'are in nowise to be found in the scripture' but which we yet learn—by the Spirit, who 'objectively present[s] those truths to our minds' (1908: 54).

In current philosophical language we can say Barclay is locating all true knowing in the inwardness of what Michael Polanyi calls the 'tacit dimension' (see Polanyi 1966). The reason we trust tradition (for Catholics) or Scripture (for Protestants) is finally that both have been revealed to the church 'doctors and fathers' or to the Bible writers by the Spirit in inwardness: 'all ends in the revelation of the Spirit' (1908: 69-70). And we, in our inwardness, discern through the motion of the Spirit in us the presence of the Spirit in them.

What is delivered immediately and objectively to us by the Spirit in our inwardness has a certainty about it: 'the divine revelation, and inward illumination, is that which is evident by itself, forcing the well-disposed understanding, and irresistibly moving it to assent by its own evidence and clearness, even as the common principles of natural truths do bend the mind to a natural assent' (1908: 67). Like the astronomer who rightly calculates an eclipse, or like the mathematician who knows 'that the three angles of a right triangle are equal to two right angles', the 'spiritual senses...can savour the things of the Spirit, as it were in prima instantia, i.e., at the first blush, can discern them without, or before they apply them either to scripture or reason' (1908: 68).

What Barclay finds as common in these examples between scientific and religious knowing of the spiritual senses is their instantaneity of discernment. Pyper understands Barclay as finding a different commonality: rational abstraction and geometrical demonstration. He rightly points out that 'Descartes' model of truth is geometry' which seeks truth by 'get[ting] behind the fallen world of matter and appearance' (Pyper 1998: 8, 9). Pyper then attributes this dualistic thinking to Barclay: 'Barclay makes geometrical demonstration his ideal form of truth' (1908: 10). He thus 'prioritises the mental over the physical. The prevailing model of Western anthropology has been centred on the head, on mental activity and on the higher sense; the eye, the ear, and the activity of speech. The rest of the body tends to be relegated...' (1908: 11-12). While Pyper draws a reasonable inference from someone using astronomical and geometrical analogies, Barclay is, I believe, more subtle

and more consistent with his Quaker perspective than this. What he in fact likens to the scientific in the religious is instantaneous discernment—'in prima instantia, i.e. at the first blush'. Moreover, the nature of this discerning is not grasping an idea through rational abstraction nor axiomatic argument separate from the senusous world; it is rather a 'savor[ing]'. As has been seen, Barclay does not privilege, as the Catholic and Protestant traditions do, the physical senses of sight and hearing, but rather speaks of the inward spritual sense working through all the five senses. The spiritual light, as well, works through, not separate from, reason: to 'be rightly and comfortably ordered in natural things [is] to have their reason enlightened by this divine and pure light'—and the same for conscience (Barclay 1908: 144-45).

Barclay's Christology

Similarly I would argue that there is no dualism either in Barclay's Christology when he is speaking from experience. The divine indwells both Jesus and us; the difference is in degree. Within a trinitarian context—without working out a trinitarian doctrine (that is, without working out the nature of the three persons and how they relate to one another)—Barclay says there is no knowing the Father except through the Son, and no knowing the Son except through the Spirit (1908: 34). Father, Son and Spirit dwell within the outward man Jesus and within all humans. The difference is that 'the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily' in Jesus. Each person has a measure of the divine within: 'God hath communicated and given unto every man a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace, or a measure of the Spirit' (1908: 132). But only Jesus has the fullest measure.

Barclay speaks here of Son 'or' Spirit. Like Fox and other early Friends, he does not separate Son and Spirit as metaphysically distinct as the classical Greek influenced tradition does. The divine present in Jesus is the Son; in us and in the world it is the Spirit. But since the divine presence is Spirit for Barclay, he speaks of the divine in Jesus not only as Son but as Spirit as well. Since the Spirit as divine presence is central to his theology, his doctrine of the Spirit only appears deficient, as Pyper insists, if measured by the abstract metaphysical categories of Greek Christian rationalism. But Barclay and early Friends offer an alternative to this mode of thinking with their experiential approach.

Barclay introduces a notion into his Christology that I do not know

of Fox or other Quakers using. He says that all people have the divine dwelling within through a '*vehiculum Dei*, or the spiritual body of Christ, the flesh and blood of Christ, which came down from heaven, of which all the saints do feed, and are thereby nourished unto eternal life' (1908: 137). This is a vehicle or a medium, or what he calls 'the organ or instrument of God' (1831: 577). It is 'a spiritual, heavenly, and invisible principle, in which God, as Father, Son and Spirit, dwells; a measure of which divine and glorious life is in all men as a seed, which of its own nature, draws, invites, and inclines to God'. God and Christ are present in this agency: 'God and Christ are wrapped up therein' and 'it is never separated from God nor Christ' (1908: 137). He also calls this vehicle the 'light', 'seed', and 'Christ' (1908: 141-42). The difference this makes between Jesus and other humans is that God dwells immediately in Jesus, but mediately (that is, through this instrumental medium) in all others: 'Christ dwells in us, yet not immediately, but mediately, as he is in that seed, which is in us; whereas he, to wit, the Eternal Word, which was with God, and was God, dwelt immediately in that holy man' (1908: 138). Christ dwells 'mediately' in us as a seed but Christ dwells 'immediately' in Jesus, not as a seed, but in its maturest measure.

The work of the divine in us through this instrument is to redeem us. Redemption is the transformation of the self by raising it to new life. This seed of God in us begins to grow so that 'Christ comes to be formed and brought forth' (1908: 141). This means that people are brought 'to a sense of their own misery' and become 'sharers in the sufferings of Christ inwardly' and 'partakers of his resurrection, in becoming holy, pure, and righteous, and recovered out of their sins' (1908: 132). Redemption is, therefore, a present event within the inwardness of a self. Whatever the connection between the past event of God working in the historic Jesus and someone's present redemption, redemption is the transformation of the self, the forming of Christ within the individual self—growing into a spiritual maturity of a God pervaded life.

What then is this connection? The atonement language Barclay uses shows the influence of the classic theory of atonement put forward by Abelard. Barclay says that Christ 'gave himself a ransom for all' as 'a reason of God's love to the world' (1908: 121). Like Abelard's God who woos us to turn to him, for Barclay 'God, in and by this Light and Seed, invites, calls, exhorts, and strives with every man in order to save him' (1908: 132). While he does sometimes use language of the Anselmian

transaction model of atonement—'sacrifice', 'transacted', 'satisfactory sacrifice', 'purchased' (1908: 140, 172)—he does not talk about a historical event in which God 'satisfies' his justice while managing to be merciful to humans. The death of Christ for Barclay is not a transaction but a revelation, a divine manifestation focused in love upon persons, not upon God's maintenance of his own rectitude. The biblical portrait of Christ reveals what is revealed within each person but it is only the inward revelation, the inward taste, within each person that saves, not the knowledge of Jesus as the historical revelation of God.

Salvation does only come, for Barclay, through 'the name JESUS indeed' (1908: 180). But this does not mean an outward knowing of the biblical Christ but an inward knowing of the divine presence within—even if one is ignorant of the biblical tradition:

> I confess there is no other name to be saved by: but salvation lieth not in the literal, but in the experimental knowledge; albeit, those that have the literal knowledge are not saved by it, without this real experimental knowledge: yet those that have the real knowledge may be saved without the external (1908: 180).

The light which saves 'could not be understood of Christ's person' but 'must be that inward spiritual light that shines in their [all people's] hearts' (1908: 161).

Just as people are inclined to evil after Adam's fall, though they may be ignorant of Adam, so also Christ can transform the self within even though the person never has heard of the historical Jesus: 'many may come to feel the influence of this holy and divine seed and light, and be turned from evil to good by it, though they knew nothing of Christ's coming in the flesh'. Barclay ends this sentence: 'through whose obedience and sufferings it is purchased unto them' (1908: 141). Yet the 'purchase' is not a transaction but revelation, since the seed and light have been at work throughout the history of the world transforming people, before as well as after the historical event of Jesus. Barclay explicitly redefines 'purchase' in terms of revelation: 'we witness this capacity brought into act, whereby receiving and not resisting the purchase of his death, to wit, the light, spirit, and grace of Christ revealed in us' (1908: 199).

Knowing the outward biblical Christ does make a difference. It 'humble[s]', 'strengthen[s]', 'encourage[s]', provides an 'excellent pattern' and 'example that we should follow his steps', 'edifie[s] and refreshe[s]'. 'The history then is profitable and comfortable with the mystery, and

never without it; but the mystery is and may be profitable without the explicit and outward knowledge of the history'. In fact, if you are aware of the biblical tradition, Barclay says, 'it is absolutely needful that those do believe the history of Christ's outward appearance, whom it pleased God to bring to the knowledge of it' (1908: 141).

Christ dwells in all. Any and all can respond to this light and seed, and have them fructify within to the raising up of new life in God, saved out of sin into purity of life. Yet Barclay qualifies 'Christ' here. He distinguishes between Christ as seed within the self and Christ as growing and formed up into new life. In the latter sense Christ is not present in everyone. Christ is only present in everyone as the divine seed that has the potential to grow into maturity and to illuminate the darkness of control over life by one's own will and wisdom. Only if the *vehiculum Dei* or seed or light 'is received and closed with in the heart, Christ comes to be formed and brought forth: but we are far from ever having said, that Christ is thus formed in all men, or in the wicked'. 'Neither is Christ in all men by way of union, or...inhabitation' but 'is in all men as in a seed'. In this sense, as a seed, Christ is within everyone (1908: 141-42).

The self is entirely passive to saving grace—in its initial workings. The self's nature is 'wholly corrupted' (1908: 147) so it cannot save itself. This corruption is not imputed from Adam, yet each person repeats Adam's sin when 'they actually join with it' (1908: 98). For this reason Barclay says Quakers speak of 'the old Adam, in which all sin is...and not that of original sin' (1908: 109). Righteousness through justification is not imputed but actual: 'by this justification by Christ...we understand the formation of Christ in us...this inward birth in us, bringing forth righteousness and holiness in us' (1908: 199). In justification we are 'being made really righteous, and not merely a being reputed such' (1908: 208). While the self cannot 'move one step out of the natural condition, until the grace lay hold upon him', it does have the nature to be 'capable to be wrought upon by the grace of God' and the capacity to resist or receive it: 'he that resists its striving, is the cause of his own condemnation; he that resists it not, it becomes his salvation'. So 'the first step is not by man's working, but by his not contrary working'. And after the initial step by grace, the self cooperates with grace: 'afterwards, as man is wrought upon, there is a will raised in him, by which he comes to be a co-worker with the grace' (1908: 147). Endy is right that grace is indispensable but the self is not annihilated. Rather it is reordered, as it was originally meant to be, so the divine, rather than

the natural will and wisdom, pervades and guides the self.

So here there is no dualism separating the biblical, historical Christ and the inward Christ. For those who assume redemption is a transaction, as Creasey does, such an emphasis on inward transformation would split the inward Christ from the objective Christ of the Bible. But Barclay's view of redemption is not transactional but revelatory: what was fully present in the historical Jesus and recorded in the Bible is what can be revealed in varying measures within every person from the beginning of time, as God, as seed or light, strives from within each person to get them to receive and not resist the growth of this seed.

If Barclay's view of redemption is not dualistic, is there, nevertheless, an influence of Descartes' subject/object split on his notion of the *vehiculum Dei* as it separates the historical Christ from other humans? Barclay does separate the divine and human here, but not because of Descartes. Rather he proposes this out of a commitment to the christological tradition, that maintains the impassibility of God: God the Father does not suffer because he is not divisible into parts. Barclay conceives a *vehiculum Dei* because 'the seed, grace, and word of God, and light' strive with the self and are 'crucified' by human response, but this is: 'not the proper essence, and nature of God precisely taken'. God 'is not divisible into parts and measures', because God is 'a most pure, simple being, void of all composition or division', who 'therefore can neither be resisted, hurt, wounded, [nor] crucified' (1908: 137). While this insistence that God in essence is simple and undivided whereas we are finite and partial is a curious mortgage to his past theological education at the Catholic Scots College of Paris, he qualifies this disjunction between God and self by conceiving of the entire trinity, and not merely the Son, as indwelling the seed or light, and thus indwelling everyone. While God and self are distinguishable ontologically, they interact intimately as the undivided God dwells mediately within us and engenders our growing up in Christ—just as whole and part are different yet interact.

Barclay's Apologetic Use of Cartesianism

What we have seen so far is that there is no dualism in Barclay when he is reflecting on his own religious experience. The supernatural sense works through the natural senses to discern the moving of the Spirit within the spirits of those gathered together bodily in silence. Evoked by grace, the self is actuated into being more fully itself, being united with others, and becoming an active co-worker with the divine. The divine

he discovers within as the inward Christ is the same Spirit manifest in fullness in the outward Christ of Scripture. Nevertheless, within a year of the publication of his *Apology*, in his 'The Possibility and Necessity of the Inward and Immediate Revelation of the Spirit of God', he employs Cartesian dualism in response to Adrian Paets, a Dutch diplomat and philosopher. Here Barclay separates mind and body, denies synaesthesia, denigrates the body as brutish, and affirms innate ideas. What can explain this apparent capitulation to Descartes' dualism?

Most of Barclay's published theology, as evident in the title of his *Apology*, is 'apologetic'. What this technical theological term means, as he says at the outset of his *magnum opus*, is 'to declare and defend the truth' (1908: ix). Apologetic theology addresses people of a different point of view and seeks to defend one's own views against their criticism and to persuade them at least of the reasonableness of one's own views if not their truth. The way in which this is done is by finding common ground with one's critics. The Bible and the Protestant theological tradition obviously provide common ground between Quakers, Puritans, and Anglicans. Hence his frequent references to Scripture, Protestant doctrines, and general reasonableness; yet when he presents common texts he invariably gives a Quaker interpretation. This often leaves his audience dissatisfied, yet they must admit that there is some basis in Scripture, tradition, and/or reason for his view—as Adrian Paets recognized, according to Barclay's report, that Quakers 'could make a reasonable plea for the foundation of their religion' (Barclay 1831: 562).

Why then does he use Descartes in responding to Paets? To write apologetics is to let your opponent set the agenda to which you respond. Descartes had become all the rage among erudite thinkers both on the continent and in England. Not that people necessarily agreed with him, but serious thinkers knew they had to deal with him. When the Dutch thinker wrote to Barclay making the Cartesian separation of outward senses from the mind, Barclay wrote back in kind, using the coin of the realm.

Paets works from the empiricist side of the outward senses of the Cartesian split, arguing, according to Barclay, that the Christian religion, based on Christ Jesus, is merely 'contingent truth' because it deals with the 'matter of fact' of history. Since matters of fact can only be known by the outward senses and since 'God cannot make a contingent truth to become a necessary truth', then faith only comes through the outward sense of hearing, as he understands Paul to have meant when he said:

'Faith cometh by hearing' (Rom. 10.17) (Barclay 1831: 565-66).

Barclay is wrestling with what will later be known as 'Lessing's ugly ditch'. In 1777 Gotthold Lessing wrote: 'accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason'. He calls this distinction between historical and rational truth 'the ugly, broad ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap' (Lessing 1967: 53, 55). Where Lessing desired a certainty on the other side of the ugly ditch, Paets has an answer which satisfies him on this side of the ditch that the truth comes by hearing the gospel preached.

Barclay, however, requires more certitude and intimacy than contingent history provides. Taking the rationalist side of Descartes' split, he looks for truth, as Descartes does, within rather than outside the self. And like Descartes, he insists on certainty—indeed, 'infallibility', since he approves of Catholics' desire for certainty, though not their locating it in the church tradition (1831: 562-63). He locates it, rather, in inward immediate divine revelation, by God speaking directly within the soul. He likens the certainty of such supernatural revelation to the certainty of a necessary truth of definition: 'that this proposition, every divine revelation is necessarily true, is as clear and evident, as that proposition, that every whole is greater than its part' (1831: 570). Using Descartes' criterion for truth (see Descartes 1951: 203-204), such truth is 'clear and evident' or 'clearly and distinctly known' (Barclay 1831: 575).

Pyper takes such talk as evidence of Barclay's capitulation to Descartes. He argues, further, that the belief that 'God can and does implant contingent truths in our minds, and by that act they become eternal truth' (Pyper 1998: 12) fits with Barclay's use of geometrical analogies that seemingly denigrate historical knowledge. As I have shown, however, the point of such geometrical analogies is not their disembodied rational conceptualizing but their instantaneity of understanding that is sensing and trusting. While Barclay does speak of God making contingent truths of history into eternal truths, this is not an assertion of reason's capacity to work separately from historical existence. Rather Barclay makes this claim through an appeal to experience. Those few occasions of God implanting historical truths in people's minds were when prophets were enabled to foretell various characteristics of the historical event of Jesus (Barclay 1831: 567). But the truth of Jesus is not that of outward facts, whether known in anticipation or looking back, but the inward truth of the eternal Christ. Since Christ

dwells within all of us, we can know this inward truth without knowing the historical facts of Jesus. When attending to Jesus, we only know the spiritual truth about him by grasping the inward truth in him that is already within us. This is not denigrating history but affirming that its important meaning is not outward but inward, which we only know by engaging our inwardness with it.

In answering Paets, Barclay does separate mind and body: 'the mind can move itself; and operate in itself; which a body cannot do: but a body can be moved by another' (1831: 577). He isolates the function of each sense from the others (denying what today is called 'synaesthia'): 'it is no less absurd...to require us to see sounds, and hear light and colours'. He denigrates the body: restricting knowing God to the outward senses, as Paets does, 'turn[s] men into brutes' since the outward senses 'the beasts have common with us' (1831: 571).

With Descartes, Barclay also affirms innate ideas: 'the ideas of all things are divinely planted in our souls' (1831: 575; cf. Copleston 1963: 93-95). Rejecting empiricism's belief that ideas are caused by things imprinting themselves through the physical senses on the mind, he says that external things 'stir up' ideas but cannot form them. These 'divinely planted' ideas:

> are not begotten in us by outward objects, or outward causes...but only are by these outward things excited or stirred up...for the outward object does nothing, but imprint in our sensible organs a corporal motion. Now there is nothing in a corporal motion, that can form in us the ideas of those things; for all ideas are of a spiritual nature? [*sic*] Now, nothing that is corporal, can produce that which is spiritual, because the less excellent cannot produce the more excellent, else the effect would exceed its cause... (Barclay 1831: 576).

Barclay explicitly accepts that there is a 'natural idea of God, which Cartesius and his followers so much talk of', that all persons have 'some sort of idea of God, as of a most perfect being' (1831: 575, 574) and says that our supernatural ideas are also 'stirred up' but by divine causality, which he calls 'the organ or instrument of God' (1831: 577), the same as the *vehiculum Dei* (1908: 137).

In separating mind and body and accepting innate ideas, Barclay is so intent on finding commonality with Paets's Cartesianism that he does not recognize the opposition between his own relational reflections and Cartesian dualism. He has obviously not raised to self-consciousness the implications of his relational method and its affirmation of embodiedness—of spiritual senses working through the outward senses and of

inward experience occurring through the physical gathering of Friends in silent meeting for worship. Nor does he distinguish his experiential approach from Descartes' rationalism but feels comfortable using Paets's Cartesian language because he knows in his own experience of meeting for worship the stirring up of words by the divine presence innate within the self, even though we can see with 350 years of hindsight that this is a far cry from Descartes' rationalistic understanding of inwardness.

The Usefulness of Barclay's Relational Approach

A commonality exists between Descartes and Quakerism, even though they are fundamentally opposed, and Barclay mined this similarity in his apologetic writing to Adrian Paets. Barclay, like Descartes, starts with the individual in its interiority and what it can know within with certainty. Authority for both is in nothing external but is found within inwardness. The nature of that inwardness is, however, very different. For Descartes it is explicit reason searching out its own rational foundation which becomes the basis for all further philosophical reflection. For Barclay it is a dimension of spiritual sensing, not reasoning, of being touched in the heart and the life. While Descartes' knower is isolated from its own body and community of knowers, Barclay speaks of being knit into the life of others and of the Spirit as they sit together in silence or go about their daily lives. Certainty is similarly important, but comes for Descartes through doubt that eats away at all relations in search of an absolute idea that can be held beyond trust. For Barclay it comes through the sensing and trusting of experience felt within the inwardness of the individual self in the world and in community.

Barclay has lifted the phrase 'clear and distinct' from Descartes and uses it to describe our grasp of truth. For Descartes, it means rational clarity; for Barclay, however, since the true is discerned through a sense not reason, it means spontaneity and immediacy of discernment—it tastes true at first blush. Certainty comes in relatedness for Barclay; for Descartes it comes in detachment. Only in his response to Paets does Barclay speak of 'stirring ideas'. This is an inadequate description of the process by which he knows, in his experience of the silence, the moving and actuating, the stirring, power of the Spirit, which can bring us to speech. While there is a commonality of being stirred to thoughts by an agency beyond self, the emergence of words from the tacit depths of silent meeting is not Cartesian.

When he is arguing apologetically with Paets, Barclay depends on Cartesian categories. But when he reflects on his own experience, he does not. When he is philosophically alert in his apologetic theology, he is confronted with two options: empiricism or rationalism—either truth comes by the outward senses or by the inward seeing of reason. While his non-dualistic reflections on religious experience had implications for a third philosophical method, he was unaware of this option. Today in the wake of twentieth-century existential, phenomenological, postcritical, and feminist thought, we can grasp a way of thinking that is neither objective nor subjective, but reflective on our being in the world. Barclay did not realize the philosophical potential of his religious reflections and so, faced with these two alternatives, chose the Cartesian inward side but redefined it, not as lucid consciousness, but as the place of spiritual experience and sensing that works through reason and the natural senses.

When he engaged apologetically with the empiricist Paets, he argued for inwardness using Cartesian categories. Whether we interpret Barclay as having generally capitulated to Cartesianism depends on whether we view him through his apologetic or his experiential approaches. Because he says explicitly that it was his experience of the life in a silent meeting that brought him into Quakerism and because he develops theological reflection, as we have seen, from such experience, I see the experiential approach as fundamental to Barclay's theology. From this perspective, I have argued, there is no dualism in his articulation of the nature of self, God, and Christ. I think, therefore, that his evident engagement with Cartesian dualism did not distort his theology, although it was seriously employed in answering a philosophically astute non-Quaker. While we might regret his preoccupation with apologetics and wish he had become more aware of the relational method implicit in his theological reflections, he did, in fact, use it as he reflected at length on his own experience and its background of silence, within the context of the Christian theological heritage.

If he had shifted from apologetics with dualists to theology as reflection upon experience, he could have restructured his *Apology* by beginning with his experience on first entering 'the silent assemblies of God's people' (1908: 340). It could still be apologetics, seeking common ground, however, not with dualistic reason but with holistic experience of being human—as we feel, know, and speak, as we relate to divinity and other selves in the world, informed by the biblical heritage. Within

the laboratory that is Barclay's thought as reflection upon experience, we can discover a way of doing Quaker theology that responds to George Fox's challenge, 'what canst thou say?'

References

Barclay, Robert

1831 'The Possibility and Necessity of the Inward and Immediate Revelation of the Spirit of God', in *Truth Triumphant*, III (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Benjamin C. Stanton [1692]): 561-85 [1676].

1908 *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Philadelphia: Friends' Books Store, stereotype edn [1676 Latin; ET 1678]).

Calvin, John

1960 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I (Library of Christian Classics, 20; ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster Press [1559]).

Copleston, Frederick, SJ

1963 *A History of Philosophy*, IV (9 vols.; New York: Doubleday).

Creasey, Maurice A.

1962 ' "Inward" and "Outward": A Study in Early Quaker Language' (Journal of the Friends' Historical Society Suppl. 30; London: Friends' Historical Society): 2-24.

Descartes, René

1951 'The Principles of Philosophy', in *A Discourse on Method and Selected Writings* (trans. John Veitch; New York: E.P. Dutton; London: J.M. Dent & Sons): 163-268 [1644].

1958 'Discourse on Method', in *Philosophical Writings* (selected and trans. Norman Kemp Smith; The Modern Library; New York: Random House): 91-144 [1637].

Endy, Melvin B., Jr,

1973 *William Penn and Early Quakerism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Keiser, R. Melvin

1984 'Two Lads in Front of a Fire: A Seventeenth-Century Tale', unpublished paper, Coolidge Research Colloquium of Associates for Religion and Intellectual Life, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.

1986 'From Dark Christian to Fullness of Life: Isaac Penington's Journey from Puritanism to Quakerism', *Guilford Review* 23: 42-63.

1991a *Inward Light and the New Creation: A Theological Meditation on the Center and Circumference of Quakerism* (Pendle Hill Pamphet 25; Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill).

1991b 'The New Creation: Living in Feminist Wisdom', unpublished paper, Conference on George Fox 1624–1691, Lancaster University, 25–28 March.

1991c 'Women Speaking in the New Creation: Margaret Fell's Theological Argument for Sexual Equality', unpublished paper.

1997 'The Quaker Vision and the Doing of Theology', *Quaker Religious Thought* 28.3: 21-37.

Lessing, Gotthold
1967 *Lessing's Theological Writings* (repr.; trans. Henry Chadwick; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press [1956]).
Mack, Phyllis
1992 *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Polanyi, Michael
1958 *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).
1966 *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
Punshon, John
1984 *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service).
Pyper, Hugh S.
1998 'Resisting the Inevitable: Universal and Particular Salvation in the Thought of Robert Barclay', *Quaker Religious Thought* 29.1: 5-18.

AUTHOR DETAILS

R. Melvin Keiser is Professor of Religious Studies at Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA; author of essays in Quaker theology, such as *Inward Light and the New Creation: A Theological Meditation on the Center and Circumference of Quakerism* (Pendle Hill 1991), ' "I Knew Him Not But By Revelation": A Hermeneutics of Inwardness and the Ethics of Same-Sex Love' (Pendle Hill 1996), ' "Gathered Inward to the Word": The Way of Word and Silence in Quaker Experience' (Woodbrooke 1998), and of books on H. Richard Niebuhr and Stanley Romaine Hopper; participant in the Quaker Theology Seminar (Woodbrooke) since 1993 and in the Quaker Theology Roundtable (Pendle Hill) 1995-96; member of Friendship Friends' Meeting, Greensboro; and is currently at work on books on Quaker philosophical theology and on the nature of the religious.

Mailing address:
815 Dolley Madison Road, Greensboro, NC 27410, USA. Email: mkeiser@guilford.edu