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SELECTED MYSTICAL WRITINGS OF WILLIAM LAW

Now Redemption of Lost, which is its capacity for
Divine Communications, or Operation of God by
Spirit upon it, consists in an inward sentiment of ye
Peccant Disorder of sin, & an inward sentiment of Hope
& conversion to Mercy of God. This may stir feed
of Life in ye Sent, where Adam was redeemd, & his
Husband of Life, or sensibility, ye Spirit of God acts
upon ye quickens & moves, & this it is call'd that
it said in ye Scripture, is addressd. Nothing shakes
sensibility, or state of ye heart, has eyes to see, or Ears to hear
ye things of ye Spirit of God.
Reason may see ye Some Doctrines, but may be
when we want ye Enjoyments, or prayer ye Divine Life.

SELECTED MYSTICAL WRITINGS OF

WILLIAM LAW

EDITED WITH NOTES AND TWENTY-FOUR STUDIES IN THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY OF WILLIAM LAW AND JACOB BOEHME

BY

STEPHEN HOBHOUSE, M.A.

1938

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TO THE MEMORY OF
LILY DOUGALL
AND
ALEXANDER WHYTE

"The outward world is but a glass or representation of the inward."

Christian Regeneration.

"The sun meets not the springing bud that stretches towards him with half that certainty as God, the source of all good, communicates Himself to the soul that longs to partake of Him."

Spirit of Prayer I.

"From eternity to eternity no spark of wrath ever was or ever will be in the holy triune God."

Spirit of Prayer I.

"Reason says that, because man was found disobedient, God cast His fierce anger on him. . . . Thou must not think such thoughts. For God is Love and goodness, and there is not one angry thought in Him. It was man, who should never have punished himself."

BOEHME, *Three Principles.*

"Every soul is its own judgment."

BOEHME, *Forty Questions.*

"Nothing burneth in hell but self-will."

Theologia Germanica.

"This is the whole of the matter between God and the creature. On one side, fire and wrath . . . and on the other side, the meekness of the Lamb of God, the patience of Divine Love coming down from Heaven to stop and overcome the fire and wrath that is broken out in nature and creature."

Spirit of Prayer II.

"A Christ not in us is the same thing as a Christ not ours."

Spirit of Prayer I.

"We must enter into the incarnation of Christ and go with Him into His death and with Him grow as a flower in the paradise world in the eternal essence of the divine freedom."

BOEHME, *Incarnation.*

"If life, in its first root, was not this depth of strife, this strength of hunger, and sensibility of want, the fullness of heavenly joy could not be manifested in it."

Spirit of Love I.

INTRODUCTION

For some fourteen years the mystical writings of William Law and of his teacher Jacob Boehme have been one of the chief fountains of inspiration and enjoyment in the life of the present writer. Their central doctrines, often presented with exceptional charm and vigour, have thrown a flood of light upon the reasonableness and the beauty of the Christian faith. It is therefore a source of great happiness to be able to introduce to the present-day reader this volume of selections from William Law's later works.

It was through much valued contact with Lily Dougall (gifted author of *Christus Futurus* and other books too little read to-day) that I first became interested in Law. She had herself come to know him about the year 1892 through sitting at the feet of Dr. Alexander Whyte, the eloquent and beloved minister of St. George's Free Church, Edinburgh. Whyte was an enthusiast for both Law and Boehme, and he wrote of the former that "the study of this quite incomparable writer has been nothing less than an epoch in my life."

In undertaking the present edition I have been helped by personal encouragement received from no less than four of our leading writers on mystical Christianity—Evelyn Underhill, Dr. W. R. Inge, and Professors Rufus M. Jones and Caroline Spurgeon; and further by the goodwill of numerous friends and supporters, whose gifts and subscriptions have made publication possible. Among these the authorities of the Woodbrooke Settlement of the Society of Friends, Birmingham, deserve a particular mention; for it was they who some twelve years ago first made it easy for me to undertake the studies which resulted in the publication of *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism* (1927)—studies which have been continued at frequent intervals since that date.

William's Law's high place among the writers of English prose has been maintained by a number of good judges, but

has not been sufficiently recognised in a wider circle. One contemporary and one living authority may be quoted here. John Wesley was a great reader and editor, and that not only of religious literature. In a publication full of biting criticism of Law's mystical doctrines, he notwithstanding wrote: "It will be easily allowed by impartial judges that there are few writers in the present age, who stand in competition with Mr. Law as to beauty and strength of language, readiness, liveliness, and copiousness of thought and (in many points) accuracy of sentiment," and he added that "several of his treatises must remain, as long as English stands, almost unequalled standards of the strength and purity of our language as well as of sound practical divinity" (*A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law*, 1756). Again, Professor Caroline Spurgeon, who, like Dr. W. R. Inge, regards Law as quite the greatest English prose mystic, classes him also among the greatest of English prose writers, as possessing a rare combination of sincerity, lucidity, and strength, associated, in his later works at least, with a delightful melody of rhythm and imaginative gift—"an unusual combination of reason and emotion, which makes appeal at once to the intellect and the heart of the reader" (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. IX, ch. XII).

Perhaps I may be also allowed to quote from a letter received from (Miss) Evelyn Underhill, who, after mentioning the high opinion which Baron von Hügel had of him, writes that "William Law, so far as I know, is the only spiritual thinker of the first rank among the English mystics of the post-Reformation Church. His religious and literary importance are very great."

Until comparatively recently there has been in the Christian Churches generally a widespread prejudice against mysticism (particularly of such a type as was represented by Law's mystical guide, Jacob Boehme). Moreover, except for the famous *Serious Call*, which cannot be described as a mystical work, Law's writings have long been out of print. Alexander Whyte made a good but short collection of mystical passages, which was published with other matter by Hodder and Stoughton in 1893 under the title of *Charac-*

ters and Characteristics of William Law, Non-Juror and Mystic. This attractive volume reached its fourth edition in 1907, owing doubtless in large part to the widespread influence of the Scottish editor. Quite a number of selections from Law's works have appeared since the date of his death in 1761. Among these I have been interested to discover quite recently that a well-produced volume of 600 pages (largely mystical) was published in 1806 under the title of *A Guide to Rest*, and that its publication was made possible by numerous subscriptions, in a way curiously similar to the case of the present venture.

In making my selections I have sought especially to emphasise Law's treatment of the indwelling Christ in the soul, of His "atoning" life and death, of the wrathless love of God, and the profound doctrine of His "wrath" as suggested to him by Jacob Boehme. I have also included a number of passages which throw light on the character of Boehme's difficult writings, in the hope that some may be encouraged to study them; and also (by special request of a friend) other passages which give Law's thoughts upon the two great sacraments of the Church.

Whyte in the introduction to his 1893 selections quotes F. Denison Maurice's judgment that William Law is "the most *continuous* writer in the English language" and adds that, in order to understand him properly, one needs the discipline of much "consecutive and cumulative reading of his peculiarly germinant and organic books." It was therefore with considerable hesitation that I made the experiment (e.g. in the *Appeal*) of cutting down some of his long-sustained pieces of exposition, in order to reduce them to manageable size and to free the main argument from a good deal that appears to be in some measure repetition and digression. Granted his premises, theological and mystical, Law is certainly a most logical writer; but "most continuous" hardly seems the right epithet. I hope that I have on the one hand given readers an intelligible conception of his main religious positions and on the other encouraged some of them to turn to his unabbreviated works.

In order to include a few specimens of Law's consecutive

writing and the development of his theme, one long chapter of the *Spirit of Prayer* has been printed in full (pages 76-104), while in the case of the *Appeal* and the *Spirit of Love* respectively a long section has been given with but inconsiderable omissions. I have printed some extracts from each of Law's works published after his contact with Boehme, with only two exceptions, namely *A Confutation of Dr. Warburton's Defence of Christianity* (1757) and *Of Justification by Faith and Works: a Dialogue* (1760). Of these two publications the latter hardly strays beyond the narrow lines suggested by its title, and we can only endorse the comparatively low opinion of it which its author is said to have had. The long treatise against Warburton is designed to prove that the New Testament faith in the immortality of the soul was known and accepted by the saints and writers of the Old Testament. Its background and much of its expression is indeed fully mystical, but it is definitely controversial and contains, I think, very little that is not better said by Law elsewhere.

Had the exigencies of time and space permitted, I would have gladly included also a few passages from writings published previous to 1735, the approximate year of the mystical turning-point of Law's career—this both for their own intrinsic truth and beauty and with a view to indicating how far features anticipatory of the future mystic can be found in his earlier works.

William Law himself would probably have much disliked an annotated edition of his writings. In order therefore that the selections which follow may be read as he would wish, and to avoid causing distraction to the reader, I have almost entirely refrained from introducing marginal notes or references (other than small figures) into the pages of his text. It is my hope that the book may be kept within reach for occasional, if not frequent use, especially for the purposes of private or family devotions.

The *Notes* are collected together in nine series at the end of the nine divisions of the text. Besides being explanatory of difficulties and of contemporary or literary allusions, they are designed to indicate how far noteworthy doctrines, ideas, and expressions found in the text are related on the one hand

to similar things in Jacob Boehme's works and on the other hand to the main line of Christian tradition as represented by the great Catholic mystics and theologians. A very brief introduction (together with the original titles in full) is given to each of the nine mystical works represented. Hitherto, I believe, no one has ventured to furnish in print explanations or commentary to particular passages of Law's writings (if one excepts the curious *rhymed* paraphrases of his friends John Byrom and Francis Okely!). I hope I have done right to make a beginning.

In the twenty-four *Studies* following the *Notes* a more ambitious task has been attempted—a somewhat rash enterprise indeed for a layman who has had no academic training as a theologian. By covering in brief essays or summaries most of the ground of the mystical theology of the great Catholic tradition and a good deal that extends beyond that tradition into the regions of ancient "theosophy," I have tried to make both the selections in this book and Law's doctrinal system generally coherent and intelligible to theologically untrained readers; and in some of these I hope that I may have awakened a desire for more continuous reading in his collected works or for a bolder venture into the pages of Jacob Boehme. A few of the *Studies* (as also the Biographical *Appendix*) have been primarily written for the student who has already some knowledge of William Law.

In the years 1892-3 all Law's published works were reprinted under the editorship of "G. Moreton." I have been unable to find out anything about this gentleman, except that he is believed to have been of American extraction and to have borne in private life the name of G. B. Morgan. In any case, we owe him a great debt. Hitherto it has not been as a rule difficult to obtain a copy of this nine volume edition at a very moderate price.

The Moreton edition is usually a trustworthy reprint; but I have discovered, by comparison with the eighteenth-century editions, about a score of errors, a few of which are of some importance. It follows the original editions in making a most copious and inconsequent use of italics, in an

equally copious and indeed irritating use of the comma, and in the employment of capitals for the initial letters of all nouns, but not, in many cases, for pronouns referring to God and Christ. In regard to these three respects the present selections have been modernised. Very few changes in the original spelling have been introduced; the old forms, *center*, *meer*, *gulph*, *angelick*, *attonement*, *Oh* (for *O*), are among the words altered.

In the preparation of this volume (in addition to the subscribers whom I have already mentioned) I am indebted to quite a number of friends. I would name in particular (the Rev.) Philip Hopkinson, M.A., of Cambridge, for long a fellow-student of my author; William E. Wilson, B.D., till recently lecturer in theology at the Woodbrooke Settlement; Canon A. L. Lilley of Hereford (author of *Prayer in Christian Theology*, *Religion and Revelation*, etc.), who in virtue of his rich store of knowledge of the medieval Catholic tradition has helped to reassure me that I have not been guilty of any serious error in my presentation of it; Eric W. Savage and Miss Agnes Fry who have kindly read the proofs; my wife, Rosa Hobhouse, in many ways; Mrs. Z. Denyer for typewriting assistance; the Trustees of Dr. Williams' Library for permission to photograph the manuscript shown in the frontispiece; Professor John W. Harvey who acted as treasurer for my publication fund; and, not least, my publisher, Charles W. Daniel, for his sympathetic co-operation in the work of preparing the book.

Of the deficiencies of the present volume I am very conscious. It has been indeed a task of love, but carried through in the face of considerable personal difficulties. Owing to these and to the desirability of publication before the end of the present year, some parts of the book are by no means as complete and well-considered as they should be. Nevertheless I trust that the reading of it will increase that faith in the reality of our unseen life in God, which alone can give meaning and permanence to our existence; will nourish a confident hope for the future of all mankind in spite of the dangers and disasters of the present time; and will enlarge the love, which, springing (perhaps unconsciously) from

such faith and such hope, wins its abundant reward in losing itself to find itself again in the fuller life of the many and in the unity of the all-embracing Good.

STEPHEN HOBHOUSE.

Failand,
Broxbourne, September, 1938.

CONTENTS

I. SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE MYSTICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM LAW

PAGE

1. A Demonstration . . . . . .
2. Christian Regeneration 11
3. Two Answers to Dr. Trapp 27
4. An Appeal 35
5. The Spirit of Prayer 67
6. The Way to Divine Knowledge 117
7. The Spirit of Love 139
8. A Collection of Letters 199
9. An Address to the Clergy 217

TABLE OF DATES AND PUBLISHED WORKS . . 231

KEY TO REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS . . 235

II. NOTES TO SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE MYSTICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM LAW

1. A Demonstration 239
2. Christian Regeneration 241
3. Two Answers to Dr. Trapp 245
4. An Appeal 249
5. The Spirit of Prayer 257
6. The Way to Divine Knowledge 267
7. The Spirit of Love 275
8. A Collection of Letters 285
9. An Address to the Clergy 289

III. TWENTY-FOUR SHORT STUDIES OF SUBJECTS TREATED IN WILLIAM LAW'S MYSTICAL WRITINGS

1. The Atonement of Christ and the Unity of All Men in Him 295
2. Boehme, How to Read his Works 303
3. Eternal Nature, Creation, and Emanation . . 307
4. The Fall of the Angels and the Corruption of Nature 310
5. The Fall of Man from the Divine Life . . 316

PAGE

6. The Fatherhood of Christ and of God . . 318
7. Fervour in Religion: Visions 320
8. Fire and Water Symbolism 322
9. God and Man as Trinity 324
10. God as Substance 326
11. God's Temple in the Soul 327
12. Mystical Analogy 328
13. Mystical Experience and Mystical Philosophy . 330
14. Natural and Spiritual 333
15. The New Birth of Christ in the Soul . . 335
16. Predestination: Cain and Abel 338
17. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper . . . 341
18. The Seed of Christ 343
19. The Seven Natural Properties 344
20. The Soul as Fire 348
21. Universal Redemption, Purgatory and Hell . 350
22. The Will, its Supreme Place 354
23. William Law, the Sources of his Mystical Theology 355
24. The Wrath of God: Hidden and Revealed . . 368

APPENDIX ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL

(i) The Book which introduced Jacob Boehme to William Law 381
(ii) William Law's Portrait 383
(iii) *Corrigenda et Addenda* 385

APPENDIX TWO: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL 391

INDEX

SELECTED PASSAGES
FROM THE
NINE PRINCIPAL MYSTICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM LAW

For KEY
to note references, abbreviations, etc.
see page 235

A DEMONSTRATION

WHEN you place the power of your salvation in your intellectual light or the strength of your own reason you place it in your weakest part, in the poorest, most trifling and insignificant thing that belongs to you and upon that which has the least effect in human life. The only good that reason can do to you is to remove the impediments of virtue and to give room to that inward instinct or attraction to God and goodness to display itself; that the inmost spirit of your mind may receive its strength and assistance from the Spirit of God, from which, as the needle from the loadstone, it has all its instinct of goodness and tendency towards God.[1]

For this inward instinct of goodness, or life of God in the soul, is all the real and living goodness that is in you and is as different and distinct from natural reason as the light and heat and power and virtue of the sun is different from a picture of it upon a piece of canvas, and has as different effects upon the mind. For this light of bare reason or the reasoning faculty of the mind has no contrariety to the vices of the heart; it neither kills them nor is killed by them. As pride, vanity, hypocrisy, envy or malice don't take away from the mind its geometrical skill, so a man may be most mathematical in his demonstrations of the religion of reason when he has extinguished every good sentiment of his heart, and be the most zealous for its excellency and sufficiency when he has his passions in the most disordered state.

But in that light of the heart or attraction to God which I have said is common to all mankind in and through Jesus Christ, all is contrary. As it is a gift and grace of God, so it is a real life, a living thing, a sentiment of the heart, and so far as it grows and increases in us, so far it destroys all that is

For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Demonstration* see pages 239-240.

bad and corrupt within us. It has the same contrariety to all vices of the heart that light has to darkness, and must either suppress or be suppressed by them.

Now when I speak of this light, or instinct of the heart, or attraction to God, I have not only the authority of Scripture but every man's own experience on my side; that distinction between the head and the heart which everyone knows how to make, plainly declares for all that I have said.[2] It shows that the state and manner and tendency of our heart is all that is good within us; and that the reasonings and speculations of the head are only an empty show and noise that is made in the outside of us. For that which we mean by the heart plainly speaks thus much; it is a kind of life and motion within us which every one knows contains all that is good or bad in us; that we are that which our hearts are, let us talk and reason and dispute what we will about goodness and virtue; and that this state of our heart is as distinct from and independent of all speculations of our reasoning faculties as it is distinct from and independent of all the languages in which a scholar can reason and speculate upon it. And if a man should say that the excellency and sufficiency of natural religion consisted in knowing all the languages in which virtue, goodness, and religion are expressed by different sounds and characters, he would have said as much truth and as well grounded as he who places the excellency and sufficiency of natural religion in the many arguments and demonstrations which reason can raise about it. For all reasoning and speculation stand on the outside of the heart in the same superficial manner as all languages do.[3]

For our heart is our manner of existence, or the state in which we feel ourselves to be; it is an inward life, a vital sensibility which contains our manner of feeling what and how we are; it is the state of our desires and tendencies, of inwardly seeing, hearing, tasting, relishing and feeling that which passes within us: it is that to us inwardly with regard to ourselves, which our senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., are with regard to things that are without or external to us. [91-3]

It is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what this world can communicate to it; it is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what God can communicate to it. Reason may follow after in either case and view through its own glass what is done, but it can do no more.

Now the sensibility of the soul, which is its capacity for divine communications or for the operation of God's Holy Spirit upon it, consists in an inward sentiment of the weight and disorder of sin, and in an inward sentiment of hope and conversion to the mercy of God. This is the first seed of Life, sown into the soul when Adam was redeemed; and it is this seed of life or sensibility, that the Holy Spirit of God acts upon, moves and quickens, and enlightens; and to this it is, that all that is said in the Scripture is addressed. Nothing but this sensibility or state of heart has eyes to see or ears to hear the things of the Spirit of God.

Reason may be here of the same service to us, as it may be when we want any of the enjoyments of this life. It may take away a cover from our eyes or open our window-shutters, when we want the light, but it can do no more towards seeing than to make way for the light to act upon our eyes. This is all its office and ability in the good things of religion, it may remove that which hinders the sensibility of the soul or prevents the divine Light's acting upon it, but it can do no more. [117-8]

Natural religion, if you understand it rightly, is a most excellent thing, it is a right sentiment of heart, it is so much goodness in the heart, it is its sensibility both of its separation from and its relation to God; and therefore it shows itself in nothing but in a penitential sentiment of the weight of its sins, and in an humble recourse by faith to the mercy of God. Call but this the religion of nature and then the more you esteem it, the better; for you cannot wish well to it without bringing it to the Gospel state of perfection.

For the religion of the Gospel is this religion of penitence and faith in the mercy of God, brought forth into its full perfection. For the Gospel calls you to nothing but to know and understand and practise a full and real penitence,

and to know by faith such heights and depths of the divine mercy towards you, as the religion of nature had only some little uncertain glimmerings of. Therefore there is the same agreement and the same difference between the true religion of nature and the religion of the Gospel that there is between the breaking of the day and the rising of the sun to its meridian height; the one is the beginning and the other is the perfection of the same thing. And as the light of the daybreak and the light of the noon-day are both the same light and from the same producer of light, so the light of the religion of nature and the light of the Gospel are the same light and from the same producer of light in the mind.

If you only stood for some time in the first break of day, sensible of the misery of darkness and only feeling some hope and expectation of the light, yet knowing nothing of that globe of fire that afterwards was to appear and bless you with so many unknown and unhoped for joys and comforts of the noon-day light, you would then resemble one standing for some time in the day-break of natural religion, sensible of the weight of his sins and only hoping in God for some kind of mercy towards him; yet knowing nothing of that globe of fire, that mystery of divine love that was by degrees to discover itself and bless him with so many unknown, unhoped-for joys and comforts of the divine mercy towards him.

The original instinct of goodness in the soul, which I have shown to be the only religion of nature, is the light of day-break in the soul and is that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The light of the Gospel is that noon-day light which discovers such joys and comforts as no one could have thought of, that had only stood in the break of day.

And as no one, when the day arises, can reject or dispute the coming or goodness of the rising sun, but because he has lost that sense which was to distinguish light from darkness, so no one can reject or dislike or dispute against the light of the Gospel, but he that has extinguished that instinct of goodness in his soul which alone can distinguish good from evil and make him love the one and reject the other. [98-9].

To eat the body and blood of Christ is neither more nor less than to put on Christ, to receive birth and life and nourishment and growth from Him; as the branch receives its being and life and nourishment and growth from the vine. And because Christ is that to us which the vine is to the branches, therefore there is a strict truth and reality in these expressions[4]; and the same truth and reality, whether it be expressed by saying that we eat the flesh and blood of Christ, or that we put on Christ, or that Christ is formed, manifested, or revealed in us. For if you could bid the branch to eat the substance and juice of the vine, the same must be intended as if you had said that the vine must be formed in the branch, or must manifest itself in the branch. So when it is said that we must eat the flesh and blood of Christ, it is the same thing as saying that Christ must be formed in us, or manifested in us. . . . There is the same literal, real, immutable, and eternal truth in these expressions as when it is said that 'in God we live and move and have our being,' or that God is our Father and we His children.

Now, to deny that Christ is thus our Life is as great a denial of Him as to deny Him to be the eternal Word, or the Son of God, or the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And to deny that we receive our life from Him or eat His flesh and blood, in the same reality as the branch eateth of the substance and juice of the vine and receiveth what it hath from it, is as great a denial of Him as if we deny that He came from Heaven and was in Heaven even when He was upon earth.

But if we own these great truths which are the very heart and substance of Christianity, if we know and acknowledge that we are thus of Him and by Him, that our inward man, which is all that is Christian within us, has all its birth, life, and growth from Christ, as its principle, eating, drinking, and drawing in life from Him, as the branch eats, drinks, and draws its life and substance from the vine, then we cannot be at a loss either to know what is meant by the sacrament and the benefits we receive thereby or to know what parts of Scripture explain those benefits to us. Since it must appear to us beyond all doubt that all that which the Scriptures

speak to us of Christ as the atonement for our sins and our peace with God, and all that they speak to us of our life in Christ, of His forming and manifesting Himself in the birth and growth of our inward new man, is that which it speaks to us of the meaning and benefits of this holy sacrament, which is solely appointed as the figure of all this, as the application of all this to us, and as an established means of exercising, increasing and strengthening our faith in Him, as He is all this to us.

Here therefore is full room for all our devotion, and at the same time a full security against all delusion. For whilst we believe nothing of the sacrament, seek nothing in it, nor plead anything by it, but such Scripture truths and benefits as we are obliged to believe, own, and plead, though the sacrament had not been appointed, all the devotion which the sacrament thus raises in us is as secure from delusion, has as much the stamp of truth upon it, and is as proper an exercise of solid piety as when any thing or occasion excites us to an act of loving God with all our mind, and heart, and strength. For as we cannot too much esteem, love, and adore our Saviour, both as He is the atonement for our sins and a principle of life to us, so, if the use of the sacrament quickens, nourishes, keeps up, and increases this esteem, love and adoration of Him, as such, it cannot do this too much. For as we do nothing in the sacrament but what is our natural duty, and good and right in itself; as we seek to Christ, trust in Christ, rely upon His merits, desire to have life in and from Him only in such a manner as we ought to do, though we were not assisted in it by the sacrament, so all this faith and hope, and love and desire, and devotion which we practise by means of the sacrament has everything in it that can prove it to be right and just and good. And the want of this faith, hope, love, desire, adoration, and devotion is more blamable in the use of the sacrament than anywhere else, because it is there more properly required and has the most proper object and occasion to excite it.

You must therefore consider the sacrament purely as an object of your devotion that is to exercise all your faith, that is to raise, exercise, and inflame every holy ardour of your

soul that tends to God. It is an abstract or sum of all the mysteries that have been revealed concerning our Saviour, from the first promise of a seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head to the day of Pentecost. As you can receive or believe nothing higher of our Saviour than that He is the atonement for our sins and a real principle of life to us, so every height and depth of devotion, faith, love, and adoration which is due to God as your Creator is due to God as your redeemer. Jacob's ladder that reached from earth to Heaven and was filled with angels ascending and descending between Heaven and earth is but a small signification of that communion between God and man which this holy sacrament is the means and instrument of.[5]

Now, here it may be proper for you to observe that whatever names or titles this institution is signified to you by, whether it be called a sacrifice propitiatory or commemorative; whether it be called an holy oblation, the eucharist, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the heavenly banquet, the food of immortality, or the holy communion, and the like, matters not much. For all these words or names are right and good, and there is nothing wrong in them but the striving and contention about them. For they all express something that is true of the sacrament, and therefore are every one of them, in a good sense, rightly applicable to it; but all of them are far short of expressing the whole nature of the sacrament, and therefore the help of all of them is wanted.

He therefore that contends for one name as the only proper one in exclusion of the rest is in the same mistake as he that should contend for one name and character of our Saviour as the only proper one in exclusion of all the rest. For as all the names and titles by which Christ is described, from the seed of the woman in Genesis to the Alpha and Omega in the last chapter of the Revelation, are only to help us to know, believe, and experience more of Him as our Saviour than can be expressed by all these different characters of Him, so all the various names and titles given to the sacrament are only to teach us to know, believe, and find more of our redemption and salvation in the sacrament

than can be pointed out to us by any or all these expressions.

If you have yet known Christ in any true degree, what must you think of him who should contend that the Lamb of God was the only proper character of our Saviour, and that therefore those other names, Seed of the Woman, Root of David, Bright and Morning Star, Bread of Life, Tree of Life, Son of Man, Firstborn of all the Creatures, Word of God, could not belong to Him as our Saviour, because of the disagreement there is between a lamb and the bread of life or a tree of life? . . . Now, the reason why our Saviour is described under this vast variety of characters is this, because no one phrase or particular form of expression can truly describe Him to us; therefore that is to be done as well as it can by different and seemingly contrary characters. . . .

Now that which is to be remembered in the sacrament is Christ, or the benefits and blessings of Christ as the Saviour of mankind; but neither Christ nor His benefits and blessings have the nature of things done, or gone, and past, but are always present, always in being, always doing, and never done. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' always was, now is, and ever will be present as the Saviour of the world. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, and therefore equally present in and through all from the beginning to the end. 'Behold,' saith He, 'I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him.' Thus He stood at the door of Adam's heart as near as He stood to the apostles'; and thus He stands, and will stand, knocking at the door of every man's heart till time shall be no more. Happy he that does not consider this Christ as absent and is only for such a supper of the Lord as will admit of His presence.

The benefits and blessings of Christ as the Saviour of mankind began with the first promise of a seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head[6]; they have continued with this promise, they are the benefits of every age, they will never be at an end till all that was implied in that promise shall have

its full completion in the utter destruction of the serpent. Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and the first sacrifice of the first man, and every sacrifice since that hath been accepted of God has been made solely acceptable through the benefits and blessings of Christ.

All the shadows and types, sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish religion were only so many ways of applying the benefits of Jesus Christ to that people. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' is the same in and through all ages; He was the Saviour of Adam, the patriarchs, and the Jews, just as He is our Saviour. His body and blood, offered in their sacrifices, was their atonement, as it is ours, offered upon the cross. His flesh and blood was meat and drink or a principle of life to them, as it is to us. [48-9, 52-5, 61-2]

CHRISTIAN REGENERATION

MAN was created by God after His own image and in His own likeness, a living mirror of the divine nature: where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost each brought forth their own nature in a creaturely manner. . . . Now by his transgression this image of the Holy Trinity was broken; the generation of the Son, or Word, and the proceeding of the Holy Ghost in him were at an end; in the day that he sinned, in that day he died this death. And, therefore, what was he as to his soul? What must be said of it? It was something that was deprived of that birth, which was the brightness of its glory, and which should be that to it which the Son of God is to the Father; it wanted that spirit which was its amiable life, and which was to be that to it which the Holy Ghost is to the Father and the Son.[1]

Yet the soul was still a life, an imperishable life, that could not be dissolved or cease to be. Now, seeing every life, whether spiritual or corporeal, consists in fire, or rather is fire;[2] therefore we may say of the soul in this state, that it is a spiritual dark fire-breath, an anger-fire, that must heat and torment itself with its own inward burning strife, and yet be unable to reach, touch, or obtain any spark of light and love, to make its fire-life sweet and amiable or such a flame of fire as angels are said to be. . . .

These great truths are evidently signified to us in the fullest manner by our baptism and the form of it. Our baptism is to signify our seeking and obtaining a new birth. And our being baptized in or into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, tells us in the plainest manner what birth it is that we seek, namely, such a new birth as may make us again what we were at first, a living, real image or offspring of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.[3]

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Regeneration* see pages 241-244.

It is owned on all hands that we are baptized into a renovation of some divine birth that we had lost. And that we may not be at a loss to know what that divine birth is, the form in baptism openly declares to us that it is to regain that first birth of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in our souls, which at the first made us to be truly and really images of the nature of the Holy Trinity in unity. The form in baptism is but very imperfectly apprehended, till it is understood to have this great meaning in it. And it must be owned that the Scriptures tend wholly to guide us to this understanding of it. For since they teach us a birth of God, a birth of the Spirit, that we must obtain, and that baptism, the appointed sacrament of this new birth, is to be done into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, can there be any doubt that this sacrament is to signify the renovation of the birth of the Holy Trinity in our souls? And that, therefore, this was the holy image born or created at first, when God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness,' that is, so make him that we may see ourselves, our own nature, in him in a creaturely manner.

What an harmonious agreement does there thus appear between our creation and redemption! and how finely, how surprisingly, do our first and our second birth answer to and illustrate one another! At our first birth it is said thus: 'Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness'; when the divine birth was lost, and man was to receive it again, it is said: 'Be thou baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost': which is saying: 'Let the divine birth be brought forth again in thee, or be thou born again such an image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as thou wast at first.' [137, 139-40, 148]

Here again I cannot help observing, by-the-by, the wondrous excellency and divine nature of the Gospel religion, which, knowing our fall to consist in this darkened fire of the soul dwelling in these elements of hell, has set before us such amazing representations of humility, meekness, and universal love as the imagination of man could never have thought of; namely, the humility, meekness, and lowliness of the Son

of God, who left His glory to take upon Him the form of a servant for our sakes; the great love of God towards us sinners, in giving His only begotten Son to redeem us and the love of God the Son, in laying His life down for us, that we might imitate this amazing humility, meekness, and divine love, and love one another as He has loved us. These are mysteries of love and mercy that are set before us, to quench the fiery wrath of our fallen nature and to compel us, if possible, to abhor our own dark passions and in humility and meekness become lovers of God and one another.

Now, so far as we, by true resignation to God, die to the element of selfishness and own will, so far as by universal love we die to the element of envy, so far as by humility we die to the element of pride, so far as by meekness we die to the element of wrath,[4] so far we get away from the devil, enter into another kingdom, and leave him to dwell without us in his own elements. . . . Now the greatest good that any man can do to himself is to give leave to this inward deformity to show itself, and not to strive by any art or management, either of negligence or amusement, to conceal it from him. First, because this root of a dark fire-life within us, which is of the nature of hell, with all its elements of selfishness, envy, pride, and wrath, must be in some sort discovered to us, and felt by us, before we can enough feel and enough groan under the weight of our disorder. Repentance is but a kind of table-talk, till we see so much of the deformity of our inward nature as to be in some degree frightened and terrified at the sight of it. There must be some kind of an earthquake within us, something that must rend and shake us to the bottom, before we can be enough sensible either of the state of death we are in or enough desirous of that Saviour, who alone can raise us from it. A plausible form of an outward life, that has only learned rules and modes of religion by use and custom, often keeps the soul for some time at ease, though all its inward root and ground of sin has never been shaken or molested, though it has never tasted of the bitter waters of repentance and has only known the want of a Saviour by hearsay. But things cannot pass thus: sooner or later repentance must have a

broken and a contrite heart; we must with our blessed Lord go over the brook Cedron, and with Him sweat great drops of sorrow before He can say for us, as He said for Himself: 'It is finished.'

Now, though this sensibility of the sinfulness of our inward ground is not to be expected to be the same in all, yet the truth and reality of it must and will be in all that do but give way to the discovery of it; and our sinfulness would ever be in our sight if we did not industriously turn our eyes from it. If we used but half the pains to find out the evil that is hidden in us, as we do to hide the appearance of it from others, we should soon find that in the midst of our most orderly life we are in death, and want a Saviour to make our most apparent virtues to be virtuous. It is, therefore, exceeding good and beneficial to us to discover this dark, disordered fire of our soul; because when rightly known and rightly dealt with, it can as well be made the foundation of Heaven as it is of hell.[5] For when the fire and strength of the soul is sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, then its fire becomes a fire of light, and its strength is changed into a strength of triumphing love, and will be fitted to have a place amongst those flames of love that wait about the throne of God.

The reason why we know so little of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, atonement, and justification, why we are so destitute of that faith in Him, which alone can change, rectify, and redeem our souls, why we live starving in the coldness and deadness of a formal, historical, hearsay-religion, is this: we are strangers to our own inward misery and wants, we know not that we lie in the jaws of death and hell;[6] we keep all things quiet within us, partly by outward forms and modes of religion and morality, and partly by the comforts, cares and delights of this world. Hence it is that we consent to receive a Saviour, as we consent to admit of the four Gospels, because only four are received by the Church. We believe in a Saviour, not because we feel an absolute want of one, but because we have been told there is one, and that it would be a rebellion against God to reject Him. We believe in Christ as our atonement, just as we believe that He cast

seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, and so are no more helped, delivered, and justified by believing that He is our atonement, than by believing that He cured Mary Magdalene. True faith is a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved and delivered from a sinful nature, as the Canaanitish woman came to Him and would not be denied. It is a faith of love, a faith of hunger, a faith of thirst, a faith of certainty and firm assurance, that in love and longing, and hunger, and thirst, and full assurance, will lay hold on Christ, as its loving, assured, certain and infallible Saviour and atonement.[7] It is this faith that breaks off all the bars and chains of death and hell in the soul; it is to this faith that Christ always says, what He said in the Gospel: 'Thy faith hath saved thee, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace.' Nothing can be denied to this faith; all things are possible to it; and he that thus seeks Christ must find Him to be his salvation. [151-4]

Some people have an idea or notion of the Christian religion as if God was thereby declared so full of wrath against fallen man, that nothing but the blood of His only begotten Son could satisfy His vengeance. Nay, some have gone such lengths of wickedness as to assert that God had, by immutable decrees, reprobated and rejected a great part of the race of Adam to an inevitable damnation, to show forth and magnify the glory of His justice. But these are miserable mistakers of the divine nature, and miserable reproachers of His great love and goodness in the Christian dispensation. For God is love, yea, all love; and so all love, that nothing but love can come from Him; and the Christian religion is nothing else but an open, full manifestation of His universal love towards all mankind. As the light of the sun has only one common nature towards all objects that can receive it, so God has only one common nature of goodness towards all created nature, breaking forth in infinite flames of love upon every part of the creation, and calling everything to the highest happiness it is capable of. God so loved man, when his fall was foreseen, that He chose him to salvation in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

When man was actually fallen, God was so without all wrath towards him, so full of love for him, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem him. Therefore, God has no nature towards man but love, and all that He does to man is love.

There is no wrath that stands between God and us, but what is awakened in the dark fire of our own fallen nature; and to quench this wrath, and not His own, God gave His only begotten Son to be made man. God has no more wrath in Himself now than He had before the creation, when He had only Himself to love. The precious blood of His Son was not poured out to pacify Himself (who in Himself had no nature towards man, but love), but it was poured out to quench the wrath and fire of the fallen soul, and kindle in it a birth of light and love. As man lives and moves and has his being in the divine nature, and is supported by it, whether his nature be good or bad, so the wrath of man, which was awakened in the dark fire of his fallen nature, may, in a certain sense, be called the wrath of God, as hell itself may be said to be in God, because nothing can be out of His immensity; yet this hell is not God, but the dark habitation of the devil. And this wrath which may be called the wrath of God is not God, but the fiery wrath of the fallen soul.[8] And it was solely to quench this wrath, awakened in the human soul, that the blood of the Son of God was necessary, because nothing but a life and birth, derived from Him into the human soul, could change this darkened root of a self-tormenting fire into an amiable image of the Holy Trinity as it was at first created. This was the wrath, vengeance and vindictive justice that wanted to be satisfied, in order to our salvation; it was the wrath and fire of nature and creature kindled only in itself by its departing from due resignation and obedience to God.

When Adam and Eve went trembling behind the trees through fear and dread of God, it was only this wrath of God awakened in them; it was a terror, and horror, and shivering of nature, that arose up in themselves, because the divine life, the birth of the Son of God, which is the brightness and joy of the soul, was departed from it and had left

it to feel its own poor miserable state without it. And this may well enough be called the wrath and justice of God upon them, because it was a punishment or painful state of the soul that necessarily followed their revolting from God. But still there was no wrath or painful sensation that wanted to be appeased or satisfied, but in nature and creature; it was only the wrath of fallen nature that wanted to be changed into its first state of peace and love. When God spoke to them He spoke only love; 'Adam, where art thou?' And He called him, only to comfort him with a promised redemption, through a seed of the woman, a spark of the Word of life which should reign in him and his posterity till all enemies were under their feet. God, therefore, is all love, and nothing but love and goodness can come from Him. He is as far from anger in Himself as from pain and darkness. But when the fallen soul of man had awakened in itself a wrathful, self-tormenting fire which could never be put out by itself, which could never be relieved by the natural power of any creature whatsoever, then the Son of God, by a love greater than that which created the world, became man and gave His own blood and life into the fallen soul, that it might, through His life in it, be raised, quickened, and born again into its first state of inward peace and delight, glory and perfection, never to be lost any more. O inestimable truths! precious mysteries of the love of God, enough to split the hardest rock of the most obdurate heart that is but able to receive one glimpse of them! Can the world resist such love as this? Or can any man doubt whether he should open all that is within him to receive such a salvation?

O unhappy unbelievers, this mystery of love compels me in love to call upon you, to beseech and entreat you to look upon the Christian redemption in this amiable light! All the ideas that your own minds can form of love and goodness must sink into nothing as soon as compared with God's love and goodness in the redemption of mankind. [156-8]

This mystery of an inward power of a salvation hidden in all men has had just such degrees of obscurity and manifesta-

tion as the nature and birth and person of the Messiah have had; that is, as the nature and person of Jesus Christ, as an atonement, Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, were for several ages of the world only obscurely pointed at and typified by the religion of the Jews; so this seed of a new birth or saving power of Christ hidden in the souls of all men was, through the same ages, under the same veil and obscurity. . . .

Therefore, when Jesus Christ came into the world, declaring the necessity of a new birth to be owned and sought by a baptism into the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; this was not a new kind or power of salvation, but only an open declaration of the same salvation that had been till then only typified and veiled under certain figures and shadows, as He Himself had been. And men were called, not to a new faith in Him, as then first become their inward life and light, but to a more open and plain acknowledgement of Him, who from the beginning had been the one Life and Light and only salvation of the first man and all that were to descend from him. . . .

St. Paul says, 'God hath chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.' Now, from this eternal, foreseeing goodness of God towards mankind it is that a root or remains of the first divine life, called a seed of the woman, the ingrafted Word, a Kingdom of God, a pearl of great price, a treasure hid in a field, was fore-ordained to be preserved and treasured up, though hidden under that death which Adam died in Paradise. And thence it was that the goodness of God could direct distressed Adam to this comfort, *viz.*, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent'; not a foreign seed to be sown into thee from without, but a remaining preserved seed of thy first life of Christ, which through the divine love for thee is hidden and securely treasured up under thy own fallen earthly nature as a pearl hidden in thy own field, a principle of holiness, a touch of love, the pledge of immortality and fund of everlasting happiness.[9] For this heavenly pearl, called by St. Peter 'the incorruptible seed of the Word,' shall surely come forth again out of its state of hiddenness and death; shall

quicken and revive into its first glory through Christ who is, and ever shall be, the resurrection and life of all that which was hid and lost in the death that Adam died. [164, 165-6]

Now, though the natural life in all men is one and the same, yet there are under it variety of complexions,[10] which makes men of the same nature almost infinitely different from one another. Now, the matter is just thus with the spiritual man or in the inward world. As many different complexions arise in the soul enlightened by the Son of God as in the soul enlightened by the outward light of this world. For the outward world is but a glass, or representation of the inward; and every thing and variety of things in temporal nature must have its root, or hidden cause, in something that is more inward.[11]

It is therefore a well-grounded and undeniable truth that the new spiritual man hath his particular complexion as sure as the outward and natural man hath. Hence it is that there has been so great a difference in the form and character of the most eminent and faithful servants of God; one could think of nothing but penitence and penitential austerities; another, all inflamed with the love of God, could think or speak of nothing else; some have been driven into a holy solitude living as John the Baptist; others have been wholly taken up in works of charity, loving their neighbour even more than themselves. A great variety of this kind has been always found amongst those who were most truly devoted to God, whose variety is not only not hurtful in itself nor displeasing to God, but is as much according to His will and the designs of His wisdom as the difference between Cherubim and Seraphim or the variety of the stars in the firmament.

Every complexion of the inward man, when sanctified by humility, and suffering itself to be tuned and struck and moved by the Holy Spirit of God, according to its particular frame and turn, helps mightily to increase that harmony of divine praise, thanksgiving and adoration which must arise from different instruments, sounds and voices. To condemn this variety in the servants of God or to be angry at those who

have not served Him in the way that we have chosen for ourselves is but too plain a sign that we have not enough renounced the elements of selfishness, pride and anger. [172-3]

When religion is in the hands of the mere natural man, he is always the worse for it; it adds a bad heat to his own dark fire and helps to inflame his four elements of selfishness, envy, pride, and wrath.[12] And hence it is that worse passions, or a worse degree of them, are to be found in persons of great religious zeal than in others that make no pretences to it. History also furnishes us with instances of persons of great piety and devotion who have fallen into great delusions and deceived both themselves and others. The occasion of their fall was this; it was because they made a saint of the natural man. My meaning is, they considered their whole nature as the subject of religion and divine graces; and therefore their religion was according to the workings of their whole nature, and the old man was as busy and as much delighted in it as the new. And hence it was that persons of this stamp, all inflamed as they seemed to be with piety, yet overlooked in their own lives such errors of moral behaviour as the first beginners in religion dare not allow themselves in.

Others again, perhaps truly awakened by the Spirit of God to devote themselves wholly to piety and the service of God, yet making too much haste to have the glory of saints, the elements of fallen nature—selfishness, envy, pride and wrath—could secretly go along with them. For to seek for eminence and significancy in grace is but like seeking for eminence and significancy in nature. And the old man can relish glory and distinction in religion as well as in common life, and will be content to undergo as many labours, pains, and self-denials for the sake of religious, as for the sake of secular glory. There is nothing safe in religion, but in such a course of behaviour as leaves nothing for corrupt nature to feed or live upon; which can only then be done when every degree of perfection we aim at is a degree of death to the passions of the natural man.

It may now perhaps be said, if regeneration is so great

a matter, if it signifies the restoring to the soul its first paradisaical light or the renewing of the birth of the son of God in it—surely so great a thing, and transacted within us, must not only be known and felt when it is brought about, but must be known and felt in some strange and extraordinary manner.

It may be answered, first, that all mankind may in a certain and good sense be said to be in some degree sharers of this regeneration, as having in them a seed of life that is contrary to their corrupt nature; which seed they partake of as heirs of the first grace, granted to Adam in the ingrafted Word. This first seed or light of life, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, is the first seed of the new birth; which birth stands in this life as a tree or plant in the soil, and is only in a state of growing during this life. For were the new birth, with regard both to soul and body, ever totally finished in anyone, he would be as certainly in Paradise as Adam was, and be as much above the power of the elements of this world as Adam was at his creation. Secondly, all Christians are in a higher and further state of regeneration, by the grace of baptism into the name of the Holy Trinity. By baptism they profess themselves disciples of Jesus Christ in His kingdom of grace, to seek for life, righteousness and sanctification in Him; to live by His spirit, in conformity to His doctrine, life, sufferings and death, in a continual resistance of the corruptions of their nature, the temptations of the world and the devil. This profession faithfully kept is their progress in the way of regeneration. Some only outwardly make this profession, and so only have the name of Christians. Some make it in a much better manner; yet, being very defective in their conformity to the life and doctrines of Jesus, live and die far short of that purification or renewal of the inward man which the religion of the Gospel proposes. Others renouncing all for Christ, and following His counsels as well as His precepts, arrive at high degrees of regeneration and experience such a life in Christ, or such a manifestation of Christ in them, as others less faithful to their master must be strangers to.

To ask therefore by what strange or extraordinary effects

the work of the new birth is to be known and felt to be done in the soul is a very improper and useless question. Because regeneration is not to be considered as a thing done, but as a state that is progressive or as a thing that is continually doing...

I hope it will here be observed that I no way depreciate, undervalue or reject any particular impressions, strong influences, delightful sensations or heavenly foretastes in the inward man which the holy Spirit of God may at times bestow upon good souls; I leave them their just worth, I acknowledge them to be the good gifts of God, as special calls and awakenings to forsake our sins, as great incitement to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Christ with greater courage and resolution.[13] They may be as beneficial and useful to us in our spiritual life as other blessings of God, such as prosperity, health, happy complexion and the like. But, then, as outward blessings, remarkable providences, religious complexion, and the like may be very serviceable to awaken us and excite our conversion to God and much assist the spiritual life; so they may very easily have a contrary effect, serve to fill us with pride and self-satisfaction and make us esteem ourselves as greater favourites of God than those that want them;—who may yet be led to a higher degree of goodness, be in a more purified state, and stand nearer to God in their poor, naked, and destitute condition, than we in the midst of great blessings.

It is just thus with regard to those inward blessings of the spiritual life. They are so many spurs, motives and incitements to live wholly unto God; yet they may, instead of that, fill us with self-satisfaction and self-esteem and prompt us to despise others that want them, as in a poor, mean and reprobate state; who yet may be higher advanced and stand in a nearer degree of union with God, by humility, faith, resignation and pure love, in their inward poverty and emptiness than we who live high upon spiritual satisfactions and can talk of nothing but our feasts of fat things.

All that I would here say of these inward delights and enjoyments is only this—they are not holiness, they are not

piety, they are not perfection, but they are God's gracious allurements and calls to seek after holiness and spiritual perfection. They are not to be sought for for their own sakes; they are not to be prayed for but with such a perfect indifference and resignation as we must pray for any earthly blessings; they are not to be rested in as the perfection of our souls, but to be received as cordials that suppose us to be sick, faint, and languishing, and ought rather to convince us that we are as yet but babes than that we are really men of God. But to demand them in others, to make them uneasy under the want of them, full of search and endeavour how to come at them and be satisfied in the enjoyment of them, is as great a mistake in itself and as prejudicial to true piety as to make outward blessings of providence, marks of salvation or worldly poverty, pains and distress, to be proofs that we are not born of God.

There are indeed impressions and communications from God which are more necessary and essential to the pious life of the soul than the impressions of the sun are to the comfortable life of our outward man. And he that prays for nothing else but these divine communications and impressions, who thinks of nothing else, trusts in nothing else, as able to comfort, strengthen, and enrich his soul, he that is thus all prayer, all love, all desire, and all faith in these communications and impressions from above is just in the same state of sobriety as he that only prays that God would not leave him to himself. For he that is without anything of these communications and impressions of God upon him is in the same state of death and separation from God as the devils are.

These impressions or operations of God upon our souls are of the essence of religion, which has no goodness in it but so far as it introduces the life, power, and presence of God into the soul. The praying therefore for impressions of this kind from God is only praying that we may not be left to ourselves; to pray always for these with faith, and hunger and thirst after them, is only praying earnestly that the Kingdom of God may come and His will be done in us.

For the soul is only so far cleansed from its corruption, so

far delivered from the power of sin, and so far purified, as it has renounced all own will and own desire to have nothing, receive nothing, and be nothing, but what the one will of God chooses for it and does to it. This and this alone is the true Kingdom of God opened in the soul when stripped of all selfishness, it has only one love and one will in it, when it has no motion or desire but what branches from the love of God and resigns itself wholly to the will of God. There is nothing evil or the cause of evil to either man or devil but his own will; there is nothing good in itself but the will of God: he, therefore, who wholly renounces his own will turns away from all evil; and he who gives himself up wholly to the will of God puts himself in the possession of all that is good.

It may freely be granted that conversion to God is often very sudden and instantaneous, unexpectedly raised from variety of occasions. Thus, one by seeing only a withered tree,[14] another by reading the lives and deaths of the antediluvian fathers, one by hearing of Heaven, another of hell, one by reading of the love or wrath of God, another of the sufferings of Christ, may find himself, as it were, melted into penitence all on a sudden. It may be granted also that the greatest sinner may in a moment be converted to God and feel himself wounded in such a degree as perhaps those never were who had been turning to God all their lives.

But then it is to be observed that this suddenness of change or flash of conviction is by no means of the essence of true conversion, and is no more to be demanded in ourselves or others than such a light from Heaven as shone round St. Paul and cast him to the ground. Secondly, that no one is to expect or require that another should receive his conversion or awakening from the same cause or in the same manner as he has done, that is, that Heaven or hell or the justice or love of God, or faith in Christ, either as our light or our atonement, must needs be the first awakening of the soul, because it has been so with him. Thirdly, that this stroke of conversion is not to be considered as signifying our high state of a new birth in Christ, or a proof that we are on a sudden made new creatures, but that we are thus suddenly

called and stirred up to look after a newness of nature. Fourthly, that this sensibility or manifest feeling of the operations of God upon our souls which we have experienced in these first awakenings is not to be expected or desired to go along with us through the course of our purification. Fifthly, that regeneration or the renewal of our first birth and state is something entirely distinct from this first sudden conversion or call to repentance; that it is not a thing done in an instant, but is a certain process, a gradual release from our captivity and disorder, consisting of several stages and degrees, both of death and life, which the soul must go through before it can have thoroughly put off the old man. I will not say that this must needs be in the same degree in all, or that there cannot be any exception to this. But thus much is true and certain, that Jesus Christ is our pattern, that what He did for us, that we are also to do for ourselves, or, in other words, we must follow Him in the regeneration. For what He did, He did both as our atonement and example—His process[15] or course of life, temptations, sufferings, denying His own will, death, and resurrection, all done and gone through on our account, because the human soul wanted such a process of regeneration and redemption; because only in such a gradual process all that was lost in Adam could be restored to us again. And therefore it is beyond all doubt that this process is to be looked upon as the stated method of our purification.

It is well worth observing that our Saviour's greatest trials were near the end of His process or life—that He then experienced the sharpest part of our redemption. This might sufficiently show us that our first awakenings have carried us but a little way; that we should not then begin to be self-assured of our own salvation, but remember that we stand at a great distance from and in great ignorance of our severest trials.

To sum up all in a word: nothing hath separated us from God but our own will, or rather our own will is our separation from God. All the disorder and corruption and malady of our nature lies in a certain fixedness of our own will, imagination, and desire, wherein we live to ourselves, are our own

centre and circumference,[16] act wholly from ourselves, according to our own will, imagination, and desires. There is not the smallest degree of evil in us but what arises from this selfishness, because we are thus all in all to ourselves. It is this self that our Saviour calls upon us to deny; it is this life of self that we are to hate and to lose, that the Kingdom of God may arise in us, that is, that God's will may be done in us. All other sacrifices that we make, whether of worldly goods, honours, or pleasures, are but small matters compared to that sacrifice and destruction of all selfishness, as well spiritual as natural, that must be made before our regeneration hath its perfect work. There is a denial of our own will and certain degrees even of self-denying virtues which yet give no disturbance to this selfishness. To be humble, mortified, devout, patient *in a certain degree*, and to be persecuted for our virtues is no hurt to this selfishness; nay, *spiritual-self* must have all these virtues to subsist upon and his life consists in seeing, knowing, and feeling the bulk, strength, and reality of them. But still in all this show and glitter of virtue there is an unpurified bottom on which they stand; there is a selfishness which can no more enter into the Kingdom of Heaven than the grossness of flesh and blood can enter into it.

What we are to feel and undergo in these last purifications, when the deepest root of all selfishness, as well spiritual as natural, is to be plucked up and torn from us, or how we shall be able to stand in that trial, are both of them equally impossible to be known by us beforehand. It is enough for us to know that we hunger and thirst after the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus; that by faith we desire and hope to be in Him new creatures; to know that the greatest humility, the most absolute resignation of our whole selves unto God is our greatest and highest fitness to receive our greatest and highest purification from the hands of God. [168-70, 177-81]

TWO ANSWERS TO DR. TRAPP

MIGHT I follow the bent of my own mind, my pen, such as it is, should be wholly employed in setting forth the infinite love of God to mankind in Christ Jesus, and in endeavouring to draw all men to the belief and acknowledgment of it. This one great mercy of God, which makes the one only happiness of all mankind, so justly deserves all our thoughts and meditations, so highly enlightens and improves every mind that is attentive to it, so removes all the evils of this present world, so sweetens every state of life, so inflames the heart with the love of every divine and human virtue that he is no small loser whose mind is, either by writing or reading, detained from the view and contemplation of it.

When this mystery of divine love was first manifested to the world it produced its proper effects, it put an end to all selfishness and division; for all that believed were of one heart, and one spirit, and had all things common.* And indeed, under the real influence and full belief of this great mystery of divine love there seems to be no room left for anything else amongst Christians but returns of love to God, and flowings out of love towards one another.

But now it is so difficult to enter into controversy without being, or at least seeming, in some degree unkind to the person that one opposes, that it is with great reluctance that I have entered upon my present undertaking; having nothing more deeply riveted in my heart than an universal love and kindness for all mankind, and more especially for those whom God has called to be my fellow-labourers in promoting the salvation of mankind. But however unwilling, yet I find myself obliged to consider and lay open many grievous faults in the doctor's discourse, and to show to all Christians that the dearest interests of their souls are much endangered by it.

And this I must do with great plainness and sincerity, in

*Acts 4.32.

the love of truth, and under the direction of charity, saying nothing in the spirit of an adversary, sparing nothing through respect of persons, sacrificing nothing to the taste or temper of the world, but setting forth everything in that naked light in which the Spirit of God represents it to my own mind. [3-4]

If we are to have the nature of Christ regenerated in us, as the life of Adam is born in us; if we are to be like Him in nature as we are like to Adam in nature; if we are to be the heavenly sons of the one as we are the earthly sons of the other, then there is an absolute necessity that that which was done and born in the Virgin Mary be also by the same power of the Holy Ghost done and born in us, by a seed of life derived into us from Christ our regenerator.[1] . . . Jesus Christ therefore stands as our regenerator, to help us by a second birth from Him to such a holy, pure, and undefiled nature, as He Himself received in the Blessed Virgin and which we should have received in paradise from our first father. . . .

Look now at yourselves, at the world, at religion, in this true light and surely you must enough see and feel the desirable nature of every virtue, and every degree of it, which the Gospel sets before you. . . . To renounce the poor interests of a worldly life, to be content with a pilgrim's fare in it, to live looking and longing after that which you have lost; to have no more of covetousness, of pride, of vanity, and ambition, than John the Baptist had; to live unto God in your shops, your employments and estates, with such thoughts and desires of going to your heavenly Father, as the lost son had when he saw his poor condition, eating husks among swine, is only a proof that you are, like him, come to yourselves, that you begin to see what and how and where you are. Surely you can need no exhortations to hasten and to run to your Redeemer, to ask and beseech Him in faith and love to do everything in you and for you, that your darkened, corrupted heart and polluted

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Answers to Trapp* see pages 245-7.

body stands in need of. He now stands as near you, as full of love over you, as He did to Lazarus when He raised him from the dead. He is no further from your call than He was from the call of blind Bartimæus, whose eyes He immediately opened. Surely it should now be more needless to exhort you to look earnestly and diligently after every means of recovering your first glorious state than to exhort the blind to receive their sight, the sick to accept of health, or the captive to suffer his chains to be taken off. . . .

So that to be called to the height of all virtue attainable in this life, however excessive it may seem to the reasonings of flesh and blood, is only being called away from every misery and evil that can be avoided by us. . . . No virtue therefore has any blamable extreme in it till it contradicts this general end of religion, till it hinders the restoration of the divine image in us, or makes us less fit to appear amongst the inhabitants of Heaven. Abstinence, temperance, mortification of the senses and passions can have no excess till they hinder the purification of the soul and make the body less useful and subservient to it. Charity can have no excess till it contradicts that love which we are to have in Heaven, till it is more than that which would lay down its life even for an enemy, till it exceeds that which the first Christians practised, when they had all things common; till it exceeds that of St. John, who requires him that has two coats to give to him that has none, and he that has meat to do likewise; till it is loving our poor brethren more than Christ has loved us; till it goes beyond the command of loving our neighbour as we love ourselves; till it forgets that our own life is to be preserved. [25-27]

The whole Christian world, from the time of our Saviour to this day, has been praying, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' Sacraments, divine worship, and the order of the clergy are appointed as ministerial helps for this end, to raise, set up and establish this kingdom of God on earth. The fall of man brought forth the kingdom of this world; sin in all shapes is nothing else but the will of man driving on in a state of self-motion

and self-government, following the workings of a nature broken off from its dependency upon, and union with, the divine will. All the evil and misery in the creation arises only and solely from this one cause. There is not the smallest degree of distraction, pain or punishment, either within us or without us, but what is owing to this, *viz.*, that man stands out of his place, is not in and under and united to God as he should be, as the nature of things require. God created everything to partake of His own nature, to have some degree and share of His own life and happiness. Nothing can be good or evil, happy or unhappy, but as it does or does not stand in the same degree of divine life in which it was created, receiving in God and from God all that good that it is capable of, and co-operating with and under Him, according to the nature of its powers and perfections. As soon as it turns to itself and would, as it were, have a sound of its own, it breaks off from the divine harmony and falls into the misery of its own discord[2]; and all its workings then are only so many sorts of torment or ways of feeling its own poverty. The redemption of mankind can then only be effected, the harmony of the creation can only then be restored, when the will of God is the will of every creature. For this reason our blessed Lord having taken upon Him a created nature, so continually declares against the doing anything of Himself and always appeals to the will of God, as the only motive and end of everything He did, saying that it was His meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent Him.

What now can be so desirable to a sober, sensible man as to have the vain, disorderly passions of his own corrupted heart removed from him, to be filled with such unity, love, and concord as flows from God, to stand united to and co-operating with the divine goodness, willing nothing but what God wills, loving nothing but what God loves, and doing all the good that he can to every creature, from a principle of love and conformity to God? Then the kingdom of God is come, and His will is done in that soul, as it is done in Heaven. Then Heaven itself is in the soul and the life and conversation of the soul is in Heaven. From such a man the curse of this world is removed; he walks upon consecrated

ground, and everything he meets, everything that happens to him, helps forward his union and communion with God. For it is the state of our will that makes the state of our life; when we receive everything from God and do everything for God, everything does us the same good and helps us to the same degree of happiness. Sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, bless and purify such a soul in the same degree; as it turns everything towards God, so everything becomes divine to it. For he that seeks God in everything is sure to find God in everything. When we thus live wholly unto God, God is wholly ours and we are then happy in all the happiness of God; for by uniting with Him in heart, and will, and spirit, we are united to all that He is and has in Himself. This is the purity and perfection of life that we pray for in the Lord's Prayer, that God's kingdom may come and His will be done in us, as it is in Heaven. And this we may be sure is not only necessary, but attainable by us, or our Saviour would not have made it a part of our daily prayer. [32-33]

In will, imagination, and desire consists the life or fiery driving of every intelligent creature. And as every intelligent creature is its own self-mover, so every intelligent creature has power of kindling and inflaming its will, imagination, and desire as it pleases, with shadows, fictions, or realities; with things carnal or spiritual, temporal or eternal. And this kindling of the will, imagination, and desire, when raised into a ruling degree of life, is properly that which is to be understood by *enthusiasm*. . . . Religious enthusiasm is not blamable, when it is a strong persuasion, a firm belief of a continual operation, impression and influence from above, when it is a total resignation to and dependence upon the immediate inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the whole course of our lives; this is as sober and rational a belief as to believe that we always live and move and have our being in God.[3] Both nature and Scripture demonstrate this to be the true spirit of a religious man. Nature tells everyone that we can only be heavenly by a spirit derived from Heaven, as plainly as it tells us that we can only be

earthly by having the spirit of this world breathing in us. The Gospel teaches no truth so constantly, so universally as this, that every good thought and good desire is the work of the Holy Spirit. And therefore both nature and Scripture demonstrate that the one only way to piety, virtue and holiness is to prepare, expect and resign ourselves up wholly to the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in everything that we think or say or do. The moment anyone departs from this faith, or loses this direction of his will and desire, so far and so long he goes out of the one only element o all holiness of life. There is nothing that so sanctifies the heart of man, that keeps us in such habitual love, prayer, and delight in God; nothing that so kills all the roots of evil in our nature, that so renews and perfects all our virtues, that fills us with so much love, goodness, and good wishes to every creature as this faith that God is always present in us with His light and Holy Spirit. When the heart has once learnt thus to find God, and knows how to live everywhere and in all things in this immediate intercourse with Him, seeing Him, loving Him, and adoring Him in everything, trusting in Him, depending upon Him for His continual light and Holy Spirit; when it knows that this faith is infallible; that by thus believing it thus possesses all that it believes of God; then it begins to have the nature of God in it, and can do nothing but flow forth in love, benevolence and good will towards every creature; it can have no wish towards any man but that he might thus know and love and find God in himself as the true beginning of Heaven and the heavenly life in the soul. [197,200]

Dr. Trapp has a fling at my want of taste for his *Virgils*, *Horaces*, and *Terences*: I own, when I was about eighteen, I was as fond of these books as the doctor can well be now, and should then have been glad to have translated the sublime Milton if I had found myself able; but this ardour soon went off, and I think it as good a proof of the sublime to desire the death of all that is diabolical and serpentine in my own nature as to be charmed with those speeches which the devils make in Milton. Had the doctor been more

conversant in the writings of a set of men called mystical divines than he appears to have been, he had been better able to have charged me with humble plagiary than he is at present, and might have done more service to what he calls the noble science of theology than by all that light which he has got from his poets, which he acknowledges to have somewhat of wantonness in them. Of these *mystical divines* I thank God I have been a diligent reader through all ages of the Church, from the apostolical Dionisius the Areopagite down to the great Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, the illuminated Guion, and M. Bertot. Had the doctor read St. Cassian, a recorder of the lives, spirit and doctrine of the holy fathers of the deserts, as often as he had read the story of Æneas and Dido, he had been less astonished at many things in my writings. But I apprehend the doctor to be as great a stranger to the writers of this kind, with which every age of the Church has been blessed, and to know no more of the divine Rusbrochius, Taulerus, Suso, Harphius, Johannes de Cruce, etc., than he does of J. B.[4] For had he known anything of them he had known that I am as chargeable with the sentiments of all of them as with those of J. Behmen. For though I never wrote upon any subject till I could call it my own, till I was so fully possessed of the truth of it that I could sufficiently prove it in my own way without borrowed arguments; yet doctrines of religion I have none but what the Scriptures and the first-rate saints of the Church are my vouchers for.

Writers like those I have mentioned there have been in all ages of the Church, but as they served not the ends of popular learning, as they helped no people to figure and preferment in the world and were useless to scholastic, controversial writers, so they dropped out of public use and were only known, or rather unknown, under the name of mystical writers, till at last some people have hardly heard of that very name. Though if a man was to be told what is meant by a mystical divine, he must be told of something as heavenly, as great, as desirable, as if he was told what is meant by a real, regenerate, living member of the mystical body of Christ. For they were thus called for no other reason than as

Moses and the prophets and the saints of the Old Testament may be called the spiritual Israel, or the true mystical Jews. These writers began their office of teaching, as John the Baptist did, after they had passed through every kind of mortification and self-denial, every kind of trial and purification, both inward and outward. They were deeply learned in all the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, not through the use of lexicons, or meditating upon critics, but because they had passed from death unto life. They highly reverence and excellently direct the true use of everything that is outward in religion, but like the Psalmist's king's daughter they are *all glorious within*: they are truly sons of thunder and sons of consolation; they break open the whited sepulchres; they awaken the heart and show it its filth and rottenness of death, but they leave it not till the Kingdom of Heaven is raised up within it. If a man have no desire but to be of the spirit of the Gospel, to obtain all that renovation of life and spirit which alone can make him to be in Christ a new creature, it is a great unhappiness to him to be unacquainted with these writers, or to pass a day without reading something of what they have written. For though the Scriptures are an inexhaustible source of spiritual instruction, leading the heart to the deepest knowledge of all the mysteries of the inward new life in God, with the greatest plainness and openness of expression, yet a worldly spirit, the schools, criticism and controversy have so dried and deadened everything into an outward letter and figurative expression that much of their use is lost till these holy writers, who interpret them by the same spirit which wrote them, guide us to the true use and understanding of them; for in these writers the Spirit of God speaks a second time, and everything that can awaken, convert, instruct and inflame the heart with the love of God, and all holiness and purity of life, is to be found in the most irresistible degree of conviction. You will perhaps say, do I then call all the world to these spiritual books? No, by no means. But I call all those whom our Saviour called to Himself in these words: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' [203-205]

AN APPEAL

THINKING and willing are eternal, they never began to be. Nothing can think or will now, in which there was not will and thought from all eternity. For it is as possible for thought in general to begin to be, as for that which thinks in a particular creature to begin to be of a thinking nature: therefore, the soul, which is a thinking, willing being, is come forth or created out of that which hath willed and thought in God from all eternity. The created soul is a creature of time and had its beginning on the sixth day of the creation; but the essences of the soul, which were then formed into a creature and into a state of distinction from God, had been in God from all eternity, or they could not have been breathed forth from God into the form of a living creature.

And herein lies the true ground and depth of the uncontrollable freedom of our will and thoughts: they must have a self-motion and self-direction, because they came out of the self-existent God. They are eternal, divine powers that never began to be, and therefore cannot begin to be in subjection to anything. That which thinks and wills in the soul is that very same unbeginning breath which thought and willed in God, before it was breathed into the form of a human soul; and therefore it is, that will and thought cannot be bounded or constrained.

Herein also appears the high dignity and never-ceasing perpetuity of our nature. The essences of our souls can never cease to be, because they never began to be: and nothing can live eternally, but that which hath lived from all eternity. The essences of our soul were a breath in God[1] before they became a living soul, they lived in God before they lived in the created soul, and therefore the soul is a partaker of the

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Appeal* see pages 249-255.

eternity of God and can never cease to be. Here, O man, behold the great original and the high state of thy birth; here let all that is within thee praise thy God, who has brought thee into so high a state of being, who has given thee powers as eternal and boundless as His own attributes, that there might be no end or limits of thy happiness in Him. Thou begannest as time began, but as time was in eternity before it became days and years, so thou wast in God before thou wast brought into the creation: and as time is neither a part of eternity, nor broken off from it, yet come out of it; so thou art not a part of God, nor broken off from Him, yet born out of Him. Thou shouldst only will that which God willeth, only love that which He loveth, co-operate and unite with Him in the whole form of thy life; because all that thou art, all that thou hast, is only a spark of His own life and spirit derived into thee. If thou desirest, inclinest, and turnest to God, as the flowers of the field desire and turn towards the sun, all the blessings of the Deity will spring up in thee; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will make their abode with thee. If thou turnest in towards thyself, to live to thyself, to be happy in the workings of an own will, to be rich in the sharpness and acuteness of thy own reason, thou choosest to be a weed, and canst only have such a life, spirit and blessing from God as a thistle has from the sun.[2] But to return.

To suppose a willing, understanding being, created out of nothing, is a great absurdity. For as thinking and willing must have always been from all eternity, or they could never have been either in eternity or time; so wherever they are found in any particular, finite beings, they must of all necessity be direct communications or propagations of that thinking and willing which never could begin to be.

The creation, therefore, of a soul is not the creation of thinking and willing, or the making that to be and to think, which before had nothing of being or thought; but it is the bringing the powers of thinking and willing out of their eternal state in the one God into a beginning state of a self-conscious life, distinct from God.[3] And this is God's omnipotent, creating ability, that He can make the powers of His own nature become creatural, living, personal images of

what He is in Himself, in a state of distinct personality from Him. . . .

Our bodily eyes are born out of the firmamental light of this world, and therefore they can look no further than the firmament[4]: but our thoughts know no bounds; therefore they are come out of that which is boundless. The eyes of our minds can look as easily backwards into that eternity which always hath been, as into that which ever shall be; and therefore it is plain that that which thinks and wills in us, which so easily, so delightfully, so naturally penetrates into all eternity, has always had an eternal existence, and is only a ray or spark of the divine nature,[5] brought out into the form of a creature, or a limited, personal existence, by the creating power of God. . . .

Let us rejoice that our soul is a thinking, willing being, full of thoughts, cares, longings and desires of eternity; for this is our full proof that our descent is from God Himself, that we are born out of Him, breathed forth from Him; that our soul is of an eternal nature, made a thinking, willing, understanding creature out of that which hath willed and thought in God from all eternity; and therefore must for ever and ever be a partaker of the eternity of God.

And here you may behold the sure ground of the absolute impossibility of the annihilation of the soul. Its essences never began to be, and therefore can never cease to be; they had an eternal reality before they were in or became a distinct soul, and therefore they must have the same eternal reality in it. It was the eternal breath of God before it came into man, and therefore the eternity of God must be inseparable from it. It is no more a property of the divine omnipotence to be able to annihilate a soul than to be able to make an eternal truth become a fiction of yesterday: and to think it a lessening of the power of God to say that He cannot annihilate the soul, is as absurd as to say that it is a lessening of the light of the sun, if it cannot destroy or darken its own rays of light.[6]

O dear reader, stay a while in this important place, and learn to know thyself! All thy senses make thee to know and feel that thou standest in the vanity of time; but every motion,

stirring, imagination, and thought of thy mind, whether in fancying, fearing, or loving everlasting life, is the same infallible proof that thou standest in the midst of eternity, art an offspring and inhabitant of it, and must be for ever inseparable from it. Ask when the first thought sprung up, find out the birth-day of truth, and then thou wilt have found out when the essences of thy soul first began to be. Were not the essences of thy soul as old, as unbeginning, as unchangeable, as everlasting as Truth itself, Truth would be at the same distance from thee, as absolutely unfit for thee, as utterly unable to have any communion with thee, as to be the food of a worm.

The ox could not feed upon the grass, or receive any delight or nourishment from it, unless grass and the ox had one and the same earthly nature and original; thy mind could receive no truth, feel no delight and satisfaction in the certainty, beauty and harmony of it, unless Truth and the mind stood both in the same place, had one and the same unchangeable nature, unbeginning original. If there will come a time when thought itself shall cease, when all the relations and connections of Truth shall be untied; then, but not till then, shall the knot or band of thy soul's life be unloosed. It is a spark of the Deity, and therefore has the unbeginning, unending life of God in it. It knows nothing of youth or age, because it is born eternal. It is a life that must burn for ever, either as a flame of light and love in the glory of the divine majesty, or as a miserable firebrand in that God which is a consuming fire. [61-65]

All the qualities of all beings are eternal; no real quality or power can appear in any creature, but what has its eternal root or generating cause in the Creator. . . . Thus thinking, willing, and desire can have no outward maker, their maker is in themselves, they are self-existent powers wherever they are, whether in God or in the creature and as they form themselves in God, so they form themselves in the creature. . . .

All qualities are not only good, but infinitely perfect, as they are in God; and it is absolutely impossible that they should have any evil or defect in them, as they are in the one God, who is the great and universal All. Because where all properties are, there must necessarily be an all possible perfection: and that

which must always have All in itself, must by an absolute necessity be always all perfect. But the same qualities, thus infinitely good and perfect in God, may become imperfect and evil in the creature; because in the creature, being limited and finite, they may be divided and separated from one another by the creature itself. Thus strength and fire in the divine nature are nothing else but the strength and flame of love, and never can be anything else; but in the creature strength and fire may be separated from love, and then they are become an evil, they are wrath and darkness and all mischief: and thus that same strength and quality, which in creatures making a right use of their own will or self-motion becomes their goodness and perfection, doth in creatures making a wrong use of their will become their evil and mischievous nature: and it is a truth that deserves well to be considered that there is no goodness in any creature, from the highest to the lowest, but in its continuing to be such a union of qualities and powers as God has brought together in its creation.

In the highest order of created beings this is their standing in their first perfection, this is their fulfilling the whole will or law of God, this is their piety, their song of praise, their eternal adoration of their great Creator. On the other hand, there is no evil, no guilt, no deformity in any creature, but in its dividing and separating itself from something which God had given to be in union with it. This, and this alone, is the whole nature of all good and all evil in the creature, both in the moral and natural world, in spiritual and material things. For instance, dark, fiery wrath in the soul is not only very like, but it is the very self-same thing in the soul which a wrathful poison is in the flesh. Now, the qualities of poison are in themselves all of them good qualities and necessary to every life; but they are become a poisonous evil, because they are separated from some other qualities. Thus also the qualities of fire and strength that constitute an evil wrath in the soul, are in themselves very good qualities and necessary to every good life; but they are become an evil wrath because separated from some other qualities with which they should be united.

The qualities of the devil and all fallen angels are good qualities; they are the very same which they received from

their infinitely perfect Creator, the very same which are and must be in all heavenly angels; but they are an hellish, abominable malignity in them now, because they have, by their own self-motion, separated them from the light and love which should have kept them glorious angels.[7]

And here may be seen at once, in the clearest light, the true origin of all evil in the creation, without the least imputation upon the Creator. God could not possibly create a creature to be an infinite All, like Himself: God could not bring any creature into existence, but by deriving into it the self-existent, self-generating, self-moving qualities of His own nature: for the qualities must be in the creature that which they were in the Creator, only in a state of limitation; and therefore every creature must be finite, and must have a self-motion, and so must be capable of moving right and wrong, of uniting or dividing from what it will, or of falling from that state in which it ought to stand: but as every quality in every creature, both within and without itself, is equally good and equally necessary to the perfection of the creature, since there is nothing that is evil in it, nor can become evil to the creature, but from itself, by its separating that from itself, with which it can and ought to be united, it plainly follows that evil can no more be charged upon God than darkness can be charged upon the sun; because every quality is equally good, every quality of fire is as good as every quality of light, and only becomes an evil to that creature who, by his own self-motion, has separated fire from the light in his own nature. . .

So the angels, when they had turned back into the first forms of their own life, and broken off from the heavenly light and love of God, they became their own hell. No hell was made for them, no new qualities came into them, no vengeance or pains from the God of love fell upon them; they only stood in that state of division and separation from the Son and holy spirit of God, which, by their own motion, they had made for themselves. They had nothing in them but what they had from God, the first forms of an heavenly life, nothing but what the most heavenly beings have, and must have, to all eternity; but they had them in a state of self-torment, because they had separated them from that birth of light and love, which alone

could make them glorious sons and blessed images of the Holy Trinity.[8] . . .

That which in a devil is an evil selfishness, a wrathful fire, a stinging motion, is in a holy angel the everlasting kindling of a divine life, the strong birth of a heavenly love, it is a real cause of an ever-springing, ever-triumphing joyfulness, an ever-increasing sensibility of bliss. Take away the working, contending nature of the first qualities, which in a devil are only a serpentine selfishness, wrath, fire, and stinging motion; take away these, I say, from holy angels, and you leave them neither light, nor love, nor heavenly glory, nothing for the birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God to rise up in. [67-70]

The first chapters of Genesis will be a knot that cannot be untied, the mysteries of the Gospel will only be called federal rites, and their inward ground reproached as enthusiastic dreams; but when it is known that the triune nature of God was brought forth in the creation of man, that it was lost in his fall, that it is restored in his redemption, a never-failing light arises in all Scripture, from Genesis to the Revelation. Everything that is said of God as Father, regenerator, or sanctifier of man; everything that is said of Jesus Christ, as redeeming, forming, dwelling in, and quickening; and of the Holy Spirit, as moving and sanctifying us: everything that is said of the holy sacraments, or promised in and by them, has its deep and inward ground fully discovered; and the whole Christian religion is built upon a rock, and that rock is Nature, and God will appear to be doing every good to us that the God of all nature can possibly do.[9] The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is wholly practical; it is revealed to us, to discover our high original and the greatness of our fall, to show us the deep and profound operation of the triune God in the recovery of the divine life in our souls; that by the means of this mystery thus discovered, our piety may be rightly directed, our faith and prayer have their proper objects, that the workings and aspiring of our own hearts may co-operate and correspond with that triune life in the Deity, which is always desiring to manifest itself in us; for as everything that is in us, whether it be Heaven or hell, rises up in us by a birth, and is generated in

us by the will-spirit of our souls, which kindles itself either in Heaven or hell; so this mystery of a triune Deity manifesting itself, as a Father creating, as a Son, or Word, regenerating, as a Holy Spirit sanctifying us, is not to entertain our speculation with dry, metaphysical distinctions of the Deity, but to show us from what a height and depth we are fallen, and to excite such a prayer and faith, such a hungering and thirsting after this triune fountain of all good, as may help to generate and bring forth in us that first image of the Holy Trinity in which we were created, and which must be born in us before we can enter into the state of the blessed: here we may see the reason why the learned world has had so many fruitless disputes about this mystery, and why it has been so often a stone of stumbling to philosophers and critics; it is because they began to reason about that which never was proposed to their reason, and which no more belongs to human learning and philosophy than light belongs to our ears, or sounds to our eyes. No person has any fitness, nor any pretence, nor any ground from Scripture to think or say anything of the Trinity till such time as he stands in the state of the penitent returning prodigal, weary of his own sinful, shameful nature[10]; and desiring to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and then is he first permitted to be baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is the first time the Gospel teaches or calls anyone to the acknowledgment of the Holy Trinity. Now, as this knowledge is first given in baptism, and there only as a signification of a triune life of the Deity, which must be regenerated in the soul, so the Scriptures say nothing afterwards to this baptised penitent concerning the Trinity, but only with regard to regeneration, everywhere only showing him how Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all equally divine, must draw, awaken, quicken, enlighten, move, guide, cleanse, and sanctify the new-born Christian. Is it not therefore undeniably plain that all abstract speculations of this mystery, how it is in itself, how it is to be ideally conceived or scholastically expressed by us, are a wandering from that true light in which the Trinity of God is set before us, which is only revealed as a key or direction to the true depths of that regeneration which is to be sought for from the triune Deity? [82-83]

How was the philosophy of the ancient sages perplexed with the state of nature! They knew God to be all goodness, love, and perfection, and so knew not what to do with the misery of human life and the disorders of outward nature because they knew not how this nature came into its present state, or from whence it was descended. But had they known that temporal nature, all that we see in this whole frame of things, was only the sickly, defiled state of eternal things put into a temporary state of recovery, that time and all transitory things were only in this war and strife to be finally delivered from all the evil that was brought into eternal nature, their hearts must have praised God for this creation of things as those morning stars did that shouted for joy when it was first brought forth.[11]

From this true knowledge of the state and nature and place of this creation, what a reasonableness, wisdom and necessity does there appear in the hardest sayings, precepts and doctrines of the Gospel? He that thus knows what this world is, has great reason to be glad that he is born into it, and yet still greater reason to rejoice in being called out of it, preserved from it, and shown how to escape with the preservation of his soul. The evils that are in this world are the evils of hell, that are tending to be nothing else but hell; they are the remains of the sin and poison of the fallen angels. The good that are in this world are the sparks of life that are to generate Heaven and gain the restoration of the first kingdom of Lucifer. Who therefore would think of anything, desire anything, endeavour anything but to resist evil in every kind, under every shape and colour? Who would have any views, desires, and prayers after anything but that the life and light of Heaven may rise up in himself, and that God's kingdom may come and His will be done in all nature and creature?

Darkness, light, fire and air, water and earth, stand in their temporary, created distinction and strife for no other end, with no other view, but that they may obtain the one thing needful, their first condition in Heaven: and shall man that is born into time for no other end, on no other errand but that he may be an angel in eternity, think it hard to live as if there were but one thing needful for him? What are the poor politics, the earthly wisdom, the ease, sensuality, and advancements of this

world for us but such fruits as must be eaten in hell? To be swelled with pride, to be fattened with sensuality, to grow great through craft, and load ourselves with earthly goods is only living the life of beasts, that we may die the death of devils. On the other hand, to go starved out of this world, rich in nothing but heavenly tempers and desires, is taking from time all that we came for, and all that can go with us into eternity.

But to return to the further consideration of nature. As all temporary nature is nothing else but eternal nature brought out of its kindled, disordered strife into a created or compacted distinction of its several parts, so it is plain that the whole of this world, in all its working powers, is nothing else but a mixture of Heaven and hell. There cannot be the smallest thing, or the smallest quality of anything in this world, but what is a quality of Heaven or hell, discovered under a temporal form. Everything that is disagreeable to the taste, to the sight, to our hearing, smelling or feeling, has its root and ground and cause in and from hell, and is as surely in its degree the working or manifestation of hell in this world, as the most diabolical malice and wickedness is. The stink of weeds, of mire, of all poisonous, corrupted things, shrieks, horrible sounds, wrathful fire, rage of tempests, and thick darkness, are all of them things that had no possibility of existence till the fallen angels disordered the state of their kingdom; therefore, everything that is disagreeable and horrible in this life, everything that can afflict and terrify our senses, all the kinds of natural and moral evil, are only so much of the nature, effects, and manifestation of hell. For hell and evil are only two words for one and the same thing: the extent of one is the extent of the other, and all that can be ascribed to the one must be ascribed to the other. On the other hand, all that is sweet, delightful, and amiable in this world, in the serenity of the air, the fineness of seasons, the joy of light, the melody of sounds, the beauty of colours, the fragrancy of smells, the splendour of precious stones, is nothing else but Heaven breaking through the veil of this world, manifesting itself in such a degree and darting forth in such variety so much of its own nature. . . .

O man! consider thyself, here thou standest in the earnest,

perpetual strife of good and evil, all nature is continually at work to bring about the great redemption; the whole creation is travailing in pain and laborious working, to be delivered from the vanity of time; and wilt thou be asleep? Everything thou hearest or seest says nothing, shows nothing to thee, but what either eternal light or eternal darkness hath brought forth; for as day and night divide the whole of our time, so Heaven and hell divide the whole of our thoughts, words and actions. Stir which way thou wilt, do or design what thou wilt, thou must be an agent with the one or with the other. Thou canst not stand still, because thou livest in the perpetual workings of temporal and eternal nature; if thou workest not with the good, the evil that is in nature carries thee along with it: thou hast the height and depth of eternity in thee, and therefore be doing what thou wilt, either in the closet, the field, the shop or the church, thou art sowing that which grows, and must be reaped in eternity. Nothing of thine can vanish away, but every thought, motion, and desire of thy heart has its effect either in the height of Heaven or the depth of hell: and as time is upon the wing, to put an end to the strife of good and evil, and bring about the last great separation of all things into their eternal state, with such speed art thou making haste either to be wholly an angel, or wholly a devil: O! therefore awake, watch and pray and join with all thy force with that goodness of God, which has created time and all things in it, to have a happy end in eternity. [115-117]

As temporary nature is nothing else but eternal nature separated, divided, compacted, made visible and changeable for a time, so Heaven is nothing else but the beatific visibility, the majestic presence of the abyssal, unsearchable, triune God: 'tis that light, with which the Scripture saith God is decked as with a garment, and by which He is manifested and made visible to heavenly eyes and beings; for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they are the triune God, deeper than the Kingdom of Heaven or eternal nature, are invisible to all created eyes; but that beatific visibility and outward glory which is called the Kingdom of Heaven, is the

manifestation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in and by and through the glorious union of eternal fire, and light, and spirit. . . .

The Kingdom of Heaven stands in this threefold life, where three are one, because it is a manifestation of the Deity, which is three and one; the Father has His distinct manifestation in the fire, which is always generating the light; the Son has His distinct manifestation in the light, which is always generated from the fire; the Holy Ghost has His manifestation in the spirit, that always proceeds from both, and is always united with them.

It is this eternal, unbeginning Trinity in unity of fire, light, and spirit, that constitutes eternal nature, the Kingdom of Heaven, the heavenly Jerusalem, the divine life, beatific visibility, the majestic glory and presence of God.[12] Through this Kingdom of Heaven, or eternal nature, is the invisible God, the incomprehensible Trinity eternally breaking forth, and manifesting itself in a boundless height and depth of blissful wonders, opening and displaying itself to all its creatures as in an infinite variation and endless multiplicity of its powers, beauties, joys and glories. So that all the inhabitants of Heaven are for ever knowing, seeing, hearing, feeling, and variously enjoying all that is great, amiable, infinite and glorious in the divine nature. Nothing ascends or comes into this Kingdom of Heaven but that which descended or came out of it, all its inhabitants must be innate guests, and born out of it.

God considered in Himself, as distinct from this eternal nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, is not the immediate Creator of any angels, spirits, or divine beings; but as He creates and governs all temporal beings in and by and out of temporal nature, so He creates and governs all spiritual and heavenly beings in, and by, and out of eternal nature. . . . And hence it is that all angels and the souls of men are said to be born of God, sons of God, and partakers of the divine nature,[13] because they are formed out of that eternal nature, which is the unbeginning majesty of God, the Kingdom of Heaven or visible glory of the Deity. . . . They are so many various mirrors of the Deity, penetrated with the

majesty of God, receiving and returning back communications of the life of God. Now, in this ground, that is, in this consideration of God, as manifesting His Holy Trinity through nature and creature, lieth the solid and true understanding of all that is so variously said of God, both in the Old and New Testament with relation to mankind, both as to their creation, fall, and redemption. . . . All intelligent, holy beings were by God formed and created out of and for the enjoyment of this kingdom of glory, and had fire, and light, and spirit, as the triune glory of their created being. And herein consisted the infinite love, goodness and bounty of God to all His creatures. It was their being made creatures of this fire, light, and spirit, partakers of that same nature in which the Holy Trinity had stood from all eternity gloriously manifested. And thus they were creatures, subjects, and objects of the divine love; they came into the nearest, highest relation to God; they stood in, and partook of His own manifested nature, so that the outward glory and majesty of the triune God was the very form, and beauty, and brightness of their own created nature. Every creature which thankfully, joyfully, and absolutely gave itself up to this blessed union with God, became absolutely fixed in its first created glory, and incapable of knowing anything but love, and joy, and happiness in God to all eternity. Thus in this state all angels and men came first out of the hands of God.[14] But seeing light proceeds from fire by a birth, and the spirit from both, and seeing the will must be the leader of the birth, Lucifer and Adam could both do as they did; Lucifer could will strong might and power, to be greater than the light of God made him, and so he brought forth a birth of might and power, that was only mighty wrath and darkness, a fire of nature broken off from its light. Adam could will the knowledge of temporal nature, and so he lost the light and spirit of Heaven for the light and spirit of this world. And had man been left in this state of temporary nature, without a Redeemer, he must, when the light of this world had left him, have found himself in the same absolute wrath and darkness of nature which the fallen angels are in.

Now, after these two falls of two orders of creatures, the

Deity itself came to have new and strange names, new and unheard-of tempers and inclinations of wrath, fury, and vengeance ascribed to it. I call them new, because they began at the fall; I call them strange, because they were foreign to the Deity, and could not belong to God in Himself: thus God is in the Scriptures said to be a consuming fire. But to whom? To the fallen angels and lost souls. But why and how is He so to them? It is because those creatures have lost all that they had from God but fire; and therefore God can only be found and manifested in them as a consuming fire. Now, is it not justly said that God, who is nothing but infinite love, is yet in such creatures only a consuming fire, and that though God be nothing but love, yet they are under the wrath and vengeance of God, because they have only that fire in them which is broken off from the light and love of God, and so can know or feel nothing of God but His fire in them? As creatures they can have no life but what they have in and from God; and therefore that wrathful life which they have is truly said to be a wrath of God upon them. And yet it is as strictly true that there is no wrath in God Himself, that He is not changed in His temper towards the creatures, that He does not cease to be one and the same infinite fountain of goodness, infinitely flowing forth in the riches of His love upon all and every life; but the creatures have changed their state in nature, and so the God of nature can only be manifested in and to them according to their own state in nature. And this is the true ground of rightly understanding all that is said of the wrath and vengeance of God in and upon the creatures. It is only in such a sense as the curse or unhappiness of God may be said to be upon them, not because anything cursed or unhappy can be in or come from God, but because they have made that life which they must have in God to be mere curse and unhappiness to them. For every creature that lives must have its life in and from God, and therefore God must be in every creature; this is as true of devils as of holy angels. But how is God in them? Why, only as He is manifested in nature. Holy angels have the triune life of God in them, therefore God is in them all love, goodness, majesty and glory, and theirs is the Kingdom of

Heaven. Devils have nothing of this triune life left in them but the fire of eternal nature broken off from all light and joy; and therefore the life that they can have in and from God is only a life of wrath and darkness, and theirs is the kingdom of hell. And because this life is a strength of life which they must have in and from God, and which they cannot take out of His hands; therefore is their cursed, miserable, wrathful life truly and justly said to be the curse, and wrath, and vengeance of God in and upon them, though God Himself can no more have wrath and vengeance than He can have mischief and malice in Him. For this is a glorious truth, that from God considered as in Himself nothing can come from eternity to eternity but infinite love, goodness, happiness and glory. . . . The same infinite love continues still in its first creating goodness, willing, desiring, working, and doing nothing with regard to all creatures but what it willed, did, and desired in the creation of them. This God over nature and creature darts no more anger at angels when fallen than He did in the creation of them. They are not in hell because Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are angry at them, and so cast them into a punishment which their wrath had contrived for them; but they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light which infinitely flows forth from God as that man does to the light of the sun who puts out his own eyes. He is in darkness, not because the sun is darkened towards him, has less light for him, or has lost all inclination to enlighten him, but because he has put out that birth of light in himself which alone made him capable of seeing in the light of the sun. It is thus with fallen angels, they have extinguished in themselves that birth of light and love which was their only capacity for that happiness, which infinitely and everywhere flows forth from God; and they no more have their punishment from God Himself than the man who puts out his eyes has his darkness from the sun itself. . . .

Hell and wrath could have no possibility of existence, but because the light and majesty and glory of Heaven must of all necessity have its birth in and from the fire of nature. An angel could not have become a devil, but because the

angelic light and glory had and must have its birth in and from the fire of life. And thus as a devil was found where angelic light and glory had its existence, so a hell was found where heavenly glory was before; and as the devil is nothing but a fire-spirit broken off from its angelical light and glory, so hell is nothing but the fire of heaven separated from its first light and majesty.

And here we have plainly found two worlds in eternity; not possible to be two, nor ever known to be two, but by such creatures as have in their own natures, by their own self-motion, separated the fire of eternal nature from its eternal light, spirit and majesty. And this is also the beginning or first opening of the wrath of God in the creature; which is, in other words, only the beginning or first opening of pain and misery in the creature, or the origin of a hellish, tormenting state of life. And here, in this dark, wrathful fire of the fallen creature do we truly find that wrath and anger and vengeance of God that cleaves to sin, that must be quenched, atoned, and satisfied before the sinner can be reconciled to God; that is, before it can have again that triune life of God in it, which is its union with the Holy Trinity of God or its regaining the Kingdom of Heaven in itself.

Some have objected that by thus considering the fallen soul as a dark, wrathful fire-spirit for this reason, because it has lost the birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God in it, that this casts reproach upon God the Father as having the nature of such a soul *in Him*. . . . But such a soul must be said to have a nature *from* the Father left in it, though a spoiled one, and this because the Father is the origin, fountain, and Creator of all kind of existence: hell and the devils have their nature *from Him*, because every kind of creature must have what it has of life and being from its Creator; but hell and the devils have not therefore the nature *of* the Father in them.[15] . . .

The reader ought not to wonder or be offended at the frequent mention of the word *fire*, which is here used to denote the true nature and state of the soul. For both nature and Scripture speak continually the same language. For wherever there is mention of life, light, or love in the Scriptures

there fire is necessarily supposed as being that in which all life, light, and love must necessarily arise; and therefore the Scriptures speak as often of fire as they do of life, and light, and love, because the one necessarily includes the other. For all life, whether it be vegetable, sensitive, animal, or intellectual, is only a kindled fire of life in such a variety of states; and every dead, insensitive thing is only so because its fire is quenched or shut up in a hard compaction. If, therefore, we will speak of the true ground of the fallen state of men and angels we are not at liberty to think of it under any other idea, or speak of it in any other manner than as the darkened fire of their life, or the fire of their life unable to kindle itself into light and love. . . .

No description is or can be given us either of Heaven or hell but where fire is necessarily signified to be the ground and foundation both of the one and of the other. Why do all languages, however distant and different from one another, all speak of the coldness of death, the coldness of insensibility? Why do they all agree in speaking of the warmth of life, the heat of passions, the burnings of wrath, the flames of love? It is because it is the voice or dictate of universal nature that fire is the root or seat of life, and that every variety of human tempers is only the various workings of the fire of life. It ought to be no reason why we should think grossly of fire because it is seen in so many gross things of this world. For how is it seen in them? Why, only as a destroyer, a consumer, and refiner of all grossness; as a kindler of life and light out of death and darkness. So that in all the appearances of fire, even in earthly things, we have reason to look upon it as something of a heavenly, exalting, and glorious nature; as that which disperses death, darkness, and grossness, and raises up the power and glory of every life.

If you ask what fire is in its first, true, and unbeginning state, not yet entered into any creature, it is the power and strength, the glory and majesty of eternal nature; it is that which generates, enriches, brightens, strengthens and displays the light of Heaven. It is that which makes the eternal light to be majestic, the eternal love to be flaming. For the strength and vivacity of fire must be both the majesty of

light and the ardour of love. It is the glorious out-birth, the true representative of God the Father eternally generating His only Son, Light and Word.

If you ask what fire is in its own spiritual nature, it is merely a desire and has no other nature than that of a working desire which is continually its own kindler. For every desire is nothing else but its own striking up or its own kindling itself into some kind and degree of fire. . . . And it is to be observed that fire could have no existence or operation in material things, but because all the matter of this world has in it more or less of spiritual and heavenly properties compacted in it, which continually desire to be delivered from their material imprisonment.[16] And the stirring up the desire of these spiritual properties is the kindling of that heat and glance and light in material things which we call fire, and is nothing else but their gloriously breaking and triumphantly dispersing that hard compaction in which they were imprisoned. And thus does every kindled fire, as a flash or transitory opening of heavenly glory, show us in little and daily, but true, instances the triumph of the last fire, when all that is spiritual and heavenly in this world shall kindle and separate itself from that which must be the death and darkness of hell.

Now the reason why there are spiritual properties in all the material things of this world is only this, it is because the matter of this world is the materiality of the Kingdom of Heaven, brought down into a created state of grossness, death, and imprisonment, by occasion of the sin of those angels who first inhabited the place or extent of this material world. Now these heavenly properties which were brought into this created compaction lie in a continual desire to return to their first state of glory; and this is the groaning of the whole creation to be delivered from vanity which the Apostle speaks of. . . .

But you will perhaps say, though this be a truth, yet it is more speculative than edifying, more fitted to entertain the curiosity than to assist the devotion of Christians. But stay awhile and you shall see it is a truth full of the most edifying instruction, and directly speaking to the heart.

For if every desire is in itself, in its own essence, the kindling of fire, then we are taught this great practical lesson, that our own desire is the kindler of our own fire, the former and raiser of that life which leads us. What our desire kindles, that becomes the fire of our life, and fits us either for the majestic glories of the Kingdom of God or the dark horrors of hell. So that our desire is all, it does all, and governs all, and all that we have and are must arise from it, and therefore it is that the Scripture saith, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.'

We are apt to think that our imaginations and desires may be played with, that they rise and fall away as nothing, because they do not always bring forth outward and visible effects. But, indeed, they are the greatest reality we have and are the true formers and raiser of all that is real and solid in us. All outward power that we exercise in the things about us is but as a shadow in comparison of that inward power that resides in our will, imagination, and desires[17]; these communicate with eternity and kindle a life which always reaches either Heaven or hell. This strength of the inward man makes all that is the angel and all that is the devil in us, and we are neither good nor bad, but according to the working of that which is spiritual and invisible in us. Now, our desire is not only thus powerful and productive of real effects, but it is always alive, always working and creating in us—I say creating, for it has no less power, it perpetually generates either life or death in us. And here lies the ground of the great efficacy of prayer, which when it is the prayer of the heart, the prayer of faith, has a kindling and creating power, and forms and transforms the soul into everything that its desires reach after: it has the key to the Kingdom of Heaven and unlocks all its treasures, it opens, extends and moves that in us which has its being and motion in and with the divine nature, and so brings us into real union and communion with God.

Long offices of prayer sounded only from the mouth or impure hearts may year after year be repeated to no advantage: they leave us to grow old in our own poor, weak state. These are only the poor prayers of heathens, who, as

our Lord said, 'think to be heard by their much speaking.' But when the eternal springs of the purified heart are stirred, when they stretch after that God from whence they came; then it is that what we ask we receive and what we seek we find. Hence it is that all those great things are by the Scriptures attributed to faith, that to it all things are possible; that it heals the sick, saves the sinner, can remove mountains, and that all things are possible to him that believeth; 'tis because the working of will and desire is the first eternal source of all power, that from which everything is kindled into that degree of life in which it standeth; 'tis because will and desire in us are creaturely offsprings of that first will and desire which formed and governed all things; and therefore when the creaturely power of our will, imagination, and desire leaves off its working in vanity and gives itself wholly unto God in a naked and implicit faith in the divine operation upon it, then it is that it does nothing in vain, it rises out of time into eternity, is in union and communion with God, and so all things are possible to it. [124-135]

We have now, worthy reader, so far cleared the way that we have nothing to do but to rejoice in the most open illustration and full proof of all the great doctrines of the Gospel. . . . For as soon as we but begin to know that the holy, triune Deity from eternity to eternity manifests itself in nature by the triune birth of fire, light and spirit, and that all angels and men must have been created out of this nature; there is not a doctrine in Scripture concerning the creation, fall and redemption of man but becomes the most plainly intelligible, and all the mysteries of our redemption are proved and confirmed to us by all that is visible and perceptible in all nature and creature. . . .

For in this ground appeareth the absolute necessity of the incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God. Here lieth the full proof that through all nature there could no redeemer of man be found, but only in the second person of the adorable Trinity become man. For as the light and spirit of eternal life is the light and spirit of the Son and Holy Ghost manifested in Heaven, so the light

of eternal life could never come again into the fallen soul but from Him alone, who is the light of Heaven. He must be again in the soul, as He was in it when it was first breathed forth from the Holy Trinity, He must be manifested in the soul, as He is in Heaven, or it can never have the life of Heaven in it. . . .

And here we see in the plainest light that there was no anger in God Himself towards the fallen creature, because it was purely and solely the infinite love of God towards him that did and alone could raise him out of his fallen state: all Scripture, as well as nature, obliges us to think thus of God. Thus it is the whole tenor of Scripture, that 'God so loved the world that He sent his only-begotten Son into it, that the world through Him might be saved.' Is not this saying more than if it had been said that there was no anger in God Himself towards fallen man? Is He not expressly declared to be infinitely flowing forth in love towards him? Could God be more infinite in love, or more infinitely distant from all possibility of anger towards man when He first created him than when He thus redeemed him? God out of pure and free love gave His Son to be the life of the world, first as an inspoken and ingrafted Word of life, as the bruiser of the serpent given to all mankind in their father Adam. This Word of life and bruiser of the serpent was the extinguisher of that wrath of God that lay upon fallen man. Now will the Scriptures, which tell us that the love of God sent His Son into the world to redeem man from that hellish wrath that had seized him, allow us to say that it was to extinguish a wrath that was got into God Himself, or that the bruiser of the serpent was to bruise, suppress, or remove something that sin had raised in the holy Deity itself? No, surely, but to bruise, alter, and overcome an evil in nature and the creature that was become man's separation from the enjoyment of the God of love, whose love still existed in its own state, and still followed him and gave His only Son to make him capable of it. Do not the holy Scriptures continually teach us that the holy Jesus became incarnate to destroy the works of the devil,[18] to overcome death and hell that had taken man captive? And is not this sufficiently

telling us what that wrath was and where it existed, which must be atoned, satisfied, and extinguished before man could again be alive unto God, or reconciled unto Him, so as to have the triune life of light and love in him? It was a wrath of death, a wrath of hell, a wrath of sin, and which only the precious, powerful blood of Christ could change into a life of joy and love: and when this wrath of death and hell are removed from human nature there neither is nor can be any other wrath of God abiding on it. Are not the devils and all lost souls justly said to be under the eternal wrath of God and yet in no wrath but that which exists in hell and in their own hellish nature?

They, therefore, who suppose the wrath and anger of God upon fallen man to be a state of mind in God Himself, to be a political kind of just indignation, a point of honourable resentment which the sovereign Deity, as governor of the world, ought not to recede from, but must have a sufficient satisfaction done to His offended authority before He can, consistently with His sovereign honour, receive the sinner into His favour, hold the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's atoning life and death in a mistaken sense.[19] That many good souls may hold this doctrine in this simplicity of belief, without any more hurt to themselves than others have held the reality of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament under the notion of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, I make no manner of doubt. But when books are written to impose and require this belief of others as the only saving faith in the life and death of Christ, it is then an error that ceases to be innocent. For neither reason nor Scripture will allow us to bring wrath into God Himself, as a temper of His mind, who is only infinite, unalterable, overflowing love, as unchangeable in love as He is in power and goodness. The wrath that was awakened at the fall of man, that then seized upon him as its captive, was only a plague or evil or curse that sin had brought forth in nature and creature: it was only the beginning of hell. It was such a wrath as God Himself pitied man's lying under it; it was such a wrath as God Himself furnished man with a power of overcoming and extinguishing, and therefore it was not a wrath that was

according to the mind, will, and liking or wisdom of God; . . . it was such a wrath as God Himself hated, as He hates sin and hell, a wrath that the God of all nature and creature so willed to be removed and extinguished, that, seeing nothing else could do it, He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that all mankind might be saved and delivered from it. For seeing the wrath that was awakened and brought forth by the fall, and which wanted to be appeased, atoned and quenched, was the wrath of eternal death and eternal hell, that had taken man captive; therefore God spared not the precious, powerful, efficacious blood of the holy Jesus, because that alone could extinguish this eternal wrath of death and hell, and re-kindle Heaven and eternal life again in the soul. And thus all that the Scriptures speak of the necessity and powerful atonement of the life and death of Christ, all that they say of the infinite love of God towards fallen man, and all that they say of the eternal wrath and vengeance to which man was become a prey, have the most solid foundation and are all of them proved to be consistent, harmonious truths of the greatest certainty according to the plain letter of Scripture. . . .

And here we find the true reason why man's own death, though a sacrifice necessary to be made, had yet nothing of atonement or satisfaction in it; it was because it left the eternal wrath of nature, and the hell that was therein, unquenched and unextinguished in the soul, and therefore made no reconcilement to God, no restoration to the creature of its first state and life in God, but left the soul in its dark, wrathful separation from the kingdom of light and love.

But here the amazing infinity of Divine love appeared, such a mystery of love as will be the universal song of praise to all eternity. Here God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, took human nature upon Him, became a suffering, dying man, that there might be found a man whose sufferings, blood, and death had power to extinguish the wrath and hell that sin had brought forth, and to be a fountain of the first heavenly life to the whole race of mankind. . . .

God, according to the riches of His love, raised a man out of the loins of Adam, in whose mysterious person the whole

humanity and the Word of God were personally united;[20] that same Word which had been inspoken into Adam at his fall, as a secret bruiser of the serpent and real beginning of his salvation; so that in this second Adam God and man was one person. And in this union of the divine and human nature lies the foundation and possibility of our recovery. For thus the holy Jesus became qualified to be the second Adam or universal regenerator of all that are born of Adam the first. For being Himself that Deity, which as a spark or seed of life was given to Adam, thus all that were born of Adam had also a birth from Him, and so stood under Him as their common father and regenerator of a heavenly life in them.[21] And it was this first inspoken Word of life which was given to Adam that makes all mankind to be the spiritual children of the second Adam, though He was not born into the world till so many years after the fall. For seeing the same Word that became their perfect redeemer in the fulness of time was in them from the beginning, as a beginning of their redemption, therefore He stood related to all mankind as a fountain and deriver of a heavenly life into them, in the same universal manner as Adam was the fountain and deriver of a miserable mortality into them.

And seeing also this great and glorious Redeemer had in Himself the whole humanity, both as it was before and after the fall, *viz.*, in His inward man the perfection of the first Adam, and in His outward the weakness and mortality of the fallen nature; and seeing He had all this, as the undoer of all that Adam had done, as the overcomer of death, as the former and raiser of our heavenly life, therefore it was that all His conquests over this world, sin, death, and hell were not the conquests of a single person that terminated in Himself, but had their real effect and efficacious merit through all human nature, because He was the appointed father and regenerator of the whole human nature, and as such had that same relation to it all as Adam had. And therefore as Adam's fall, sin and death did not, could not, terminate in himself, because he was our appointed father, from whom we must have such a state and condition of life as he had; so the righteousness, death, resurrection and

ascension of Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven did not terminate in Himself, but became ours because He is our appointed second Adam, from whom we are to derive such a state and condition of life as He had; and therefore all that are born again of Him are certainly born into His state of victory and triumph over the world, sin, death, and hell.

Now here is opened to us the true reason of the whole process of our Saviour's incarnation, passion, death, resurrection and ascension into Heaven. It was because fallen man was to go through all these stages as necessary parts of his return to God; and therefore, if man was to go out of his fallen state there must be a son of this fallen man, who, as a head and fountain of the whole race, could do all this, could go back through all these gates[22] and so make it possible for all the individuals of human nature, as being born of Him, to inherit His conquering nature and follow Him through all these passages to eternal life. And thus we see, in the strongest and clearest light, both why and how the holy Jesus is become our great Redeemer.

Had He failed in any of these things, had He not been all that He was and did all that He did, He could not have made one full, perfect, sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; that is, He could not have been and done that which in the nature of the thing was absolutely necessary and fully sufficient to take the whole human race out of the bondage and captivity of their fallen state. Thus, had He not really had the divine nature in His person, He could not have begun to be our second Adam from the time of the fall, nor could we have stood related to Him as children that had received a new birth from Him. Neither could He have made a beginning of a divine life in our fallen nature, but that He was that God who could make nature begin again where it had failed in our first father. Without this divinity in His person the perfection of His humanity would have been as helpless to us as the perfection of an angel. Again, had He not been man and in human nature overcome sin and temptation, He could have been no Saviour of fallen man, because nothing that He had done had been done in and to the fallen nature. Adam might as well

have derived sin into the angels by his fall, as Christ had derived righteousness into us by His life, if He had not stood both in our nature and as the common father and regenerator of it; therefore His incarnation was necessary to deliver us from our sins, and accordingly the Scripture saith, 'He was manifest in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil.' Again, if Christ had not renounced this life as heartily and thoroughly as Adam chose it, and declared absolutely for another kingdom in another world; if He had not sacrificed the life He took up in and from this world, He could not have been our Redeemer; and therefore the Scripture continually ascribes atonement, satisfaction, redemption, and remission of sins to His sufferings and death. Again, had not our Lord entered into that state of eternal death which fallen man was eternally to inherit, had He not broken from it as its conqueror and rose again from the dead, He could not have delivered us from the effects of our sins, and therefore the Apostle saith, 'If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins.' But I must enlarge a little upon the nature and merits of our Saviour's last sufferings. It is plain from Scripture that that death, which our blessed Lord died on the Cross, was absolutely necessary for our salvation; that He, as our Saviour, was to taste death for every man—that as the captain of our salvation, He was to be made perfect through sufferings—that there was no entrance for fallen man into paradise till Christ had overcome that death and hell, or that first and second death which stood between us and it.

Now the absolute necessity of our Saviour's doing and suffering all this plainly appears as soon as we consider Him as the second Adam, who, as such, is to undo all the evil that the first Adam had done in human nature; and therefore must enter into every state that belonged to this fallen nature, restoring in every state that which was lost, quickening that which was extinguished, and overcoming in every state that by which man was overcome. And therefore, as eternal death was as certainly brought forth in our souls as temporal death in our bodies, as his death was a state that belonged to fallen man, therefore our Lord was obliged to taste this dreadful death, to enter into the realities of i

that He might carry our nature victoriously through it. And as fallen man was to have entered into this eternal death at his giving up the ghost in this world, so the second Adam, as reversing all that the first had done, was to stand in this second death upon the Cross and die from it into that paradise out of which Adam the first died into this world.

Now when the time drew near that our blessed Lord was to enter upon His last great sufferings, *viz.*, the realities of that second death through which He was to pass, then it was that all the anguishing terrors of a lost soul began to open themselves in Him; then all that eternal death which Adam had brought into his soul, when it lost the light and spirit of Heaven, began to be awakened and stirring in the second Adam, who was come to stand in the last state of the fallen soul, to be encompassed with that eternal death and sensibility of hell which must have been the everlasting state of fallen man.

The beginning of our Lord's entrance into the terrible jaws of this second death may be justly dated from those affecting words, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here with me and watch.' See here the Lord of life reduced to such distress as to beg the prayers, watching, and assistance of His poor disciples! A plain proof that it was not the sufferings of this world, but a state of dreadful dereliction that was coming upon Him.[23] O holy Redeemer, that I knew how to describe the anguishing terrors of thy soul, when thou wast entering into eternal death, that no other son of man might fall into it!

The progress of these terrors are plainly shown us in our Lord's agony in the garden, when the reality of this eternal death so broke in upon Him, so awakened and stirred itself in Him, as to force great drops of blood to sweat from His body. This was that bitter cup which made Him withdraw himself, prostrate Himself, and thrice repeat an earnest prayer that if it were possible it might pass from Him, but at the same time He heartily prayed to drink it according to the divine will. This was that cup He was drinking from the sixth to the ninth hour on the Cross, nailed to the terrors of a two-

fold death, when He cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

We are not to suppose that our Lord's agony was the terrors of a person that was going to be murdered, or the fears of that death which men could inflict upon Him; for He had told His disciples not to fear them that could only kill the body, and therefore we may be sure He had no such fears Himself. No, His agony was His entrance into the last eternal terrors of the lost soul, into the real horrors of that dreadful eternal death which man unredeemed must have died into when he left this world. We are therefore not to consider our Lord's death upon the Cross as only the death of that mortal body which was nailed to it, but we are to look upon Him with wounded hearts, as fixed and fastened in the state of that two-fold death, which was due to the fallen nature, out of which He could not come till He could say 'It is finished; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' In that instant He gave up the ghost of this earthly life; and as a proof of His having overcome all the bars and chains of death and hell, He rent the rocks, opened the graves, and brought the dead to life, and triumphantly entered into that long-shut-up paradise, out of which Adam died, and in which He promised the thief he should that day be with Him.

When therefore thou beholdest the crucifix, which finely represents to thy senses the Saviour of the world hanging on the Cross, let not thy thoughts stay on any sufferings or death that the malice of men can cause; for He hung there in greater distress than any human power can inflict, forsaken of God, feeling, bearing, and overcoming the pains and darkness of that eternal death which the fallen soul of Adam had brought into it. For as Adam by his fall, or death in paradise, had nothing left in his soul but the nature, properties, and life of hell, all which must have awakened in him in their full strength as soon as he had lost the flesh and blood and light of this world, as this eternal death was a state that belonged to man by the fall; so there was an absolute necessity that the Saviour of man should enter into all these awakened realities of the last eternal death and come victoriously out of them, or man had never been redeemed from them. For the

fallen nature could no way possibly be saved but by its own coming victoriously out of every part of its fallen state; and therefore all this was to be done by that Son of Man, from whom we had a power of deriving into us His victorious nature. Lastly, if our blessed Lord was not ascended into Heaven and set on the right hand of God, He could not deliver us from our sins; and therefore the Scripture ascribes to Him, as ascended, a perpetual priesthood in Heaven: 'If any man sin,' saith St. John, 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.'

All these things, therefore, are so many equally essential parts of our Saviour's character, and He is the one atonement, the full satisfaction for sin, the Saviour and deliverer from the bondage, power, and effects of sin. And to ascribe our deliverance from sin, or the remission of our sins more to the life and actions than to the death of Christ, or to His death more than to His resurrection and ascension, is directly contrary to the plain letter and tenor of the Scripture, which speaks of all these things as jointly qualifying our Lord to be the all-sufficient Redeemer of mankind; and when speaking separately of any of them, ascribes the same power, efficacy, and redeeming virtue to one as to the other. [136-147]

By the fall of our first father we have lost our first glorious bodies, that eternal, celestial flesh and blood which had as truly the nature of paradise and Heaven in it as our present bodies have the nature, mortality and corruption of this world in them: if, therefore, we are to be redeemed there is an absolute necessity that our souls be clothed again with this first paradisaical or heavenly flesh and blood, or we can never enter into the Kingdom of God. Now this is the reason why the Scriptures speak so particularly, so frequently, and so emphatically of the powerful blood of Christ, of the great benefit it is to us, of its redeeming, quickening, life-giving virtue; it is because our first life or heavenly flesh and blood is born again in us, or derived again into us from this blood of Christ.

Our blessed Lord, who died for us, had not only that out-

ward flesh and blood, which He received from the Virgin Mary, and which died upon the Cross, but He had also a holy humanity of heavenly flesh and blood veiled under it, which was appointed by God to quicken, generate, and bring forth from itself such a holy offspring of immortal flesh and blood as Adam the first should have brought forth before his fall. . . .

Would you further know what blood this is that has this atoning, life-giving quality in it? It is that blood which is to be received in the holy sacrament. Would you know why it quickens, raises and restores the inward man that died in paradise? The answer is from Christ Himself, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him,' that is, 'he is born of my flesh and blood.' Would you know why the Apostle saith, 'That He hath purchased us by His blood' (Acts xx. 28), 'That we have redemption through His blood' (Ephes. i. 7); why he prays 'the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work to do His will' (Heb. xiii. 20); 'tis because the holy Jesus saith, 'except we drink His blood, we have no life in us,' and therefore the drinking His blood is the same thing as receiving a life of heavenly flesh and blood from Him. And all this is only saying that our Saviour, the second Adam, must do that for us and in us which the first Adam should have done; His blood must be that to us by way of descent or birth from Him, which the blood of our first father, if he had not fallen, would have been to us; and as this blood of an immortal life is lost by the fall, so He from whom we receive it again by a secondary way is justly and truly said to purchase, to redeem, and ransom us by His blood.

Now, there is but one redeeming, sanctifying, life-giving blood of Christ, and it is that which gave and shed itself under the veil of that outward flesh and blood that was sacrificed upon the Cross; it is that holy and heavenly flesh and blood which is to be received in the holy sacrament; it is that holy, immortal flesh and blood which Adam had before the fall, of which blood, if we had drank, that is, if we had been born of it, we had not wanted a Saviour, but had had

such flesh and blood as could have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven; had we received this holy, immortal flesh and blood from Adam before his fall, it had been called our being born of his flesh and blood; but because we receive that same flesh and blood from Jesus Christ, our second Adam, by our faith, our hunger and desire of it; therefore it is justly called our eating and drinking His flesh and blood. . . .

Here, therefore, is plainly discovered to us the true nature, necessity, and benefit of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper; both why, and how, and for what end, we must of all necessity eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ. No figurative meaning of the words is here to be sought for, we must eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood in the same reality as He took upon Him the real flesh and blood of the blessed Virgin. We can have no real relation to Christ, can be no true members of His mystical body, but by being real partakers of that same kind of flesh and blood which was truly His and was His for this very end, that through Him the same might be brought forth in us. All this is strictly true of the holy sacrament, according to the plain letter of the expression; which sacrament was thus instituted that the great service of the Church might continually show us that the whole of our redemption consisted in the receiving the birth, spirit, life and nature of Jesus Christ into us, in being born of Him, and clothed with a heavenly flesh and blood from Him, just as the whole of our fall consists in our being born of Adam's sinful nature and spirit, and in having a vile, corrupt, and impure flesh and blood from him. . . .

And thus we have the plain and full truth of the most mysterious part of this holy sacrament delivered from the tedious strife of words and that thickness of darkness which learned contenders on all sides have brought into it. The letter and spirit of Scripture are here both preserved and the mystery appears so amiable, so intelligible, and so beneficial, as must needs raise a true and earnest devotion in everyone that is capable of hungering and thirsting after eternal life. And this true and sound knowledge of the holy sacrament could never have been lost if this Scripture truth had not been overlooked; namely, that Christ is our second Adam,

that He is to do that for us which Adam should have done; that we are to have that life from Him, as a quickening spirit, which we should have had from Adam as a living soul; and that our redemption is only doing a second time, or in a second way, that which should have been done by the first order of our creation. This plain doctrine attended to, would sufficiently show us that the flesh and blood of eternal life, which we are to receive from Christ, must be that flesh and blood of eternal life which we lost in Adam. Now, if we had received this immortal flesh and blood by our descent from Adam we must in strictness of the expression have been said to partake of the flesh and blood of Adam; so seeing we now receive it from Christ, we must in the same strictness of the expression be said to be real partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ, because He hath the same heavenly flesh and blood which Adam had, and for the same end that Adam had it; namely, that it may come by and through Him into us. And thus is this great sacrament, which is a continual part of our Christian worship, a continual communication to us of all the benefits of our second Adam; for in and by the body and blood of Christ, to which the divine nature is united, we receive all that life, immortality, and redemption, which Christ, as living, suffering, dying, rising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven, brought to human nature; so that this great mystery is that in which all the blessings of our redemption and new life in Christ are centred. And they that hold a sacrament short of this reality of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ cannot be said to hold that sacrament of eternal life which was instituted by our blessed Lord and Saviour.[24] [149-155]

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

PART THE FIRST

Chapter I

THE greatest part of mankind—nay, of Christians—may be said to be asleep, and that particular way of life which takes up each man's mind, thoughts, and actions may be very well called his particular dream. This degree of vanity is equally visible in every form and order of life. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are all in the same state of slumber, only passing away a short life in a different kind of dream. But why so? It is because man has an eternity within him, is born into this world, not for the sake of living here, not for anything this world can give him, but only to have time and place to become either an eternal partaker of a divine life with God or to have an hellish eternity among fallen angels. And therefore, every man who has not his eye, his heart, and his hands continually governed by this twofold eternity may be justly said to be fast asleep—to have no awakened sensibility of himself. And a life devoted to the interests and enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, may be truly called a dream, as having all the shortness, vanity, and delusion of a dream; only with this great difference, that when a dream is over nothing is lost but fictions and fancies; but when the dream of life is ended only by death, all that eternity is lost, for which we were brought into being. Now, there is no misery in this world, nothing that makes either the life or death of man to be full of calamity, but this blindness and insensibility of his state, into which he so willingly—nay, obstinately—plunges himself. Everything that has the nature of evil and distress in it takes its rise from hence. Do but suppose a man to

know himself that he comes into this world on no other errand but to rise out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity; do but suppose him to govern his inward thoughts and outward actions by this view of himself, and then to him every day has lost all its evil; prosperity and adversity have no difference, because he receives and uses them both in the same spirit; life and death are equally welcome, because equally parts of his way to eternity. For poor and miserable as this life is, we have all of us free access to all that is great, and good, and happy, and carry within ourselves a key to all the treasures that heaven has to bestow upon us. We starve in the midst of plenty, groan under infirmities, with the remedy in our own hand; live and die without knowing and feeling anything of the One only Good, whilst we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality as we know and feel the power of this world over us; for Heaven is as near to our souls as this world is to our bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our conversation in it. God, the only good of all intelligent natures, is not an absent or distant god, but is more present in and to our souls than our own bodies; and we are strangers to Heaven and without God in the world for this only reason, because we are void of that spirit of prayer which alone can and never fails to unite us with the One only Good, and to open Heaven and the kingdom of God within us. A root set in the finest soil, in the best climate, and blessed with all that sun, and air, and rain can do for it, is not in so sure a way of its growth to perfection as every man may be whose spirit aspires after all that which God is ready and infinitely desirous to give him. For the sun meets not the springing bud that stretches towards him with half that certainty as God, the source of all good, communicates Himself to the soul that longs to partake of Him.

We are all of us by birth the offspring of God—more nearly related to Him than we are to one another, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. The first man that was brought forth from God had the breath and Spirit of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost breathed into him, and so he became

a living soul. Thus was our first father born of God, descended from Him, and stood in Paradise in the image and likeness of God. He was the image and likeness of God, not with any regard to his outward shape or form, for no shape has any likeness to God; but he was in the image and likeness of God because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always in Heaven and make Heaven to be everywhere, so this Spirit, breathed by them into man, brought Heaven into man along with it; and so man was in Heaven as well as on earth; that is, in Paradise, which signifies an heavenly state or birth of life. . . .

The misery, distress, and woeful condition which Adam, by his transgression, brought upon himself and all his posterity was not the effect of any severe vindictive wrath in God calling for justice to His offended sovereignty and inflicting pains and punishments suitable to the greatness of His just indignation and anger at the disobedient creature.

If Adam, contrary to the will of God and for the sake of some new-fancied knowledge, had broken both his own legs and put out both his eyes, could it with any show of truth and reason have been said that God, in the severity of His wrath at so heinous an offence, had punished Adam with lameness and blindness? And if it be further supposed that God, seeing Adam lying in this lame and blind condition, came and spoke kindly to him, informing him of a secret of love which He had in Heaven, which He promised to send him immediately by His highest Messenger of Love, assuring him that by the use of this heavenly secret or divine power his legs and eyes should in some course of time be infallibly restored to him, even in a better state than they were in at the first—must it not be still more unreasonable and absurd to charge anything of this lameness and blindness upon a wrath in God kindled against Adam? Nay, is it not clear in the highest degree that in all this matter Adam had nothing from God but the overflowings of mere love and goodness and that he had no lameness and blindness but from his own voluntary acts upon himself?

This is a simple but clear representation of the case, how

matters stood betwixt God and our first father, when by his own act and deed he extinguished that divine life in which God had created him. Adam had no more hurt, no more evil done to him at his fall than the very nature of his own action brought along with it upon himself. He lusted to have the sensibility of that good and evil which the beasts of this world have. He was told that it could not be had without the loss of his heavenly life, because such loss was as necessarily implied in the nature of the thing itself as blindness is implied in the extinction of eyes. However, he ventured to make the trial, and chose to eat of that which could and did open this sensibility of earthly good and evil in him. No sooner was this sensibility opened in him but he found it to be a subjection and slavery to all outward nature, to heat and cold, to pains and sickness, horror of mind, disturbed passions, misery, and fears of death. Which is, in other words, only saying that he found it to be an extinction of that divine, angelical nature which till then had kept him insensible and incapable of any hurtful impressions from any or all the powers of this world. Therefore, to charge his miserable state as a punishment inflicted upon him by the severe wrath of an incensed God is the same absurdity as in the former supposed lameness and blindness. Because the whole nature of all that miserable change, both as to body and soul, which then came upon him was neither more nor less than what was necessarily implied in that which he chose to do to himself. And therefore it had nothing of the nature of a punishment inflicted from without, but was only that which his own action had done in and to himself; just as the man that puts out his own eyes has only that darkness and blindness which his own action has brought forth in himself. . . .

But further, as it is thus evident from the nature of Adam's transgression that all his misery came from the nature of his own action, and that nothing was inflicted upon him from a wrath or anger in God at him, so is it still much more so from a consideration of the divine nature. For it is a glorious and joyful truth (however suppressed in various systems of divinity) that from eternity to eternity no spark of wrath

ever was or ever will be in the holy triune God. If a wrath of God was anywhere it must be everywhere; if it burned once it must burn to all eternity. For everything that is in God Himself is boundless, incapable of any increase or diminution, without beginning and without end. It is as good sense, as consistent with the divine nature, to say that God, moved by a wrath in and from Himself, began the creation as that a wrath in God ever punished any part of it. Nature and creature is the only source from whence and the seat in which wrath, pain, and vexation can dwell. Nor can they ever break forth either in nature or creature but so far as either this or that has lost its state in God. This is as certain as that storms and tempests, thunder and lightnings have no existence in Heaven. God, considered in Himself, is as infinitely separate from all possibility of doing hurt or willing pain to any creature as He is from a possibility of suffering pain or hurt from the hand of a man.[1] And this, for this plain reason, because He is in Himself, in His Holy Trinity, nothing else but the boundless abyss of all that is good, and sweet, and amiable, and therefore stands in the utmost contrariety to everything that is not a blessing —in an eternal impossibility of willing and intending a moment's pain or hurt to any creature. For from this unbounded source of goodness and perfection nothing but infinite streams of blessing are perpetually flowing forth upon all nature and creature in a more incessant plenty than rays of light stream from the sun. And as the sun has but one nature and can give forth nothing but the blessings of light, so the holy triune God has but one nature and intent towards all the creation, which is to pour forth the riches and sweetness of His divine perfections upon everything that is capable of them and according to its capacity to receive them.

The goodness of God breaking forth into a desire to communicate good was the cause and the beginning of the creation. Hence it follows that to all eternity God can have no thought or intent towards the creature but to communi-

[1] For the note to this and to other reference figures in *Spirit of Prayer*, see pages 257-265.

cate good; because He made the creature for this sole end, to receive good. The first motive towards the creature is unchangeable; it takes its rise from God's desire to communicate good, and it is an eternal impossibility that anything can ever come from God as His will and purpose towards the creature but that same love and goodness which first created it; He must always will that to it which He willed at the creation of it. This is the amiable nature of God. He is the Good, the unchangeable, overflowing fountain of good that sends forth nothing but good to all eternity. He is the Love itself, the unmixed, unmeasurable Love, doing nothing but from love, giving nothing but gifts of love to everything that He has made; requiring nothing of all his creatures but the spirit and fruits of that love which brought them into being. Oh, how sweet is this contemplation of the height and depth of the riches of Divine Love! With what attraction must it draw every thoughtful man to return love for love to this overflowing fountain of boundless goodness! What charms has that religion which discovers to us our existence in, relation to, and dependence upon this ocean of Divine Love! View every part of our redemption, from Adam's first sin to the resurrection of the dead, and you will find nothing but successive mysteries of that first love which created angels and men. All the mysteries of the Gospel are only so many marks and proofs of God's desiring to make His love triumph in the removal of sin and disorder from all nature and creature. . . .

See here the deep ground and absolute necessity of that new birth of Word, Son, and Spirit of God which the Scripture speaks so much of. It is because our soul, as fallen, is quite dead to and separate from the kingdom of Heaven by having lost the light and Spirit of God in itself; and therefore it is and must be incapable of entering into Heaven till by this new birth the soul gets again its first heavenly nature. . . .

How pitiable, therefore, or rather how hurtful is that learning which uses all its art of words to avoid and lose the true sense of our Saviour's doctrine concerning the new

birth which is necessary to fallen man by holding that the passages asserting the new birth are only a figurative, strong form of words concerning something that is not really a birth or growth of a new nature, but may, according to the best rules of criticism, signify either our entrance into the society of Christians by the rite of baptism or such a new relation as a scholar may have with his master, who by a conformity to terms of union or by copying his ways and manners may, by a figure of speech, be said to be born again of him.

Now, let it here be observed that no passage of Scripture is to be called or esteemed as a figurative expression but where the literal meaning cannot be allowed as implying something that is either bad in itself or impossible, or inconsistent with some plain and undeniable doctrines of Scripture.[2] Now, that this is not the case here is very evident. For who will presume to say that for the soul of fallen man to be born again of the Son, or light, and Holy Spirit of God is in the literal sense of the words a thing bad in itself, or impossible, or inconsistent with any plain and undeniable doctrines of Scripture? . . .

The Gospel tells us of a certain man who fell among thieves, who stripped him and wounded him and left him half dead; that first a priest, then a Levite coming that way, both of them avoided the poor man by passing on the other side.

Here it is plain that this priest and Levite left the poor man in the same helpless state in which they found him. Let it now be supposed that instead of going on the other side of the road they had come up to him and poured oil and wine into his wounds only in a figurative sense of the words; that is, that they had spoken such words to him, words so soft, so oily and reviving that, in a just figure of speech, they might be called a pouring of wine and oil into his wounds. Now, had they done this, must it not still be said that the poor man's wounds and nakedness were still left in their first helpless state? And all for this plain reason, because the poor man was naked and wounded, not in a figurative sense of the words, but really and truly, and

therefore could have no help or benefit but from real oil and wine really poured into his wounds. And for the same plain reason, the fallen soul, really dead to the kingdom of Heaven, can have no help but by a new birth of the light and Spirit of Heaven, really brought forth again in it. . . . For as Adam had extinguished the light and Spirit of God in himself, so no one could be the Good Samaritan to him or pour that wine and oil into his wounds which they wanted but He who was the author and source of light and life to every being that lives in Heaven. . . .

All the glad tidings of the Gospel, all the benefits of our Saviour, however variously expressed in Scripture, all centre in this one point, that He is become our Light, our Life, our resurrection, our holiness and salvation; that we are in Him new creatures, created again unto righteousness, born again of Him from above, of the Spirit of God. Everything in the Gospel is for the sake of this new creature, this new man in Christ Jesus, and nothing is regarded without it. What excuse, therefore, can be made for that learning which, robbing us of the true fruits of the Tree of Life, leaves us nothing to feed upon but the dry dust of words?

'I am the Vine, ye are the branches.' Here Christ, our second Adam, uses this similitude to teach us that the new birth that we are to have from Him is real in the most strict and literal sense of the words, and that there is the same nearness of religion betwixt Him and His true disciples that there is betwixt the vine and its branches; that He does all that in us and for us which the vine does to its branches. Now, the life of the vine must be really derived into the branches; they cannot be branches till the birth of the vine is brought forth in them. And therefore, as sure as the birth of the vine must be brought forth in the branches, so sure is it that we must be born again of our second Adam. And that unless the life of the holy Jesus be in us by a birth from Him we are as dead to Him and the Kingdom of God as the branch is dead to the vine from which it is broken off.

Again, our blessed Saviour says, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' The question is, when or how a man may be said to be without Christ. Consider again the vine and its

branches. A branch can then only be said to be without its vine when the vegetable life of the vine is no longer in it. This is the only sense in which we can be said to be without Christ; when He is no longer in us as a principle of a heavenly life we are then without Him, and so can do nothing; that is, nothing that is good or holy. A Christ not in us is the same thing as a Christ not ours. If we are only so far with Christ as to own and receive the history of His birth, person, and character, if this is all that we have of Him, we are as much without Him, as much left to ourselves, as little helped by Him as those evil spirits which cried out, 'We know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.' For those evil spirits and all the fallen angels are totally without Christ, have no benefit from Him, for this one and only reason, because Christ is not in them; nothing of the Son of God is generated or born in them. Therefore, every son of Adam that has not something of the Son of God generated or born with him is as much without Christ, as destitute of all help from Him, as those evil spirits who could only make an outward confession of Him.

It is the language of Scripture that Christ in us is our hope of glory; that Christ formed in us, living, growing, and raising His own life and Spirit in us, is our only salvation. And, indeed, all this is plain from the nature of the thing; for since the serpent, sin, death, and hell are all essentially within us, the very growth of our nature, must not our redemption be equally inward—an inward essential death to this state of our souls and an inward growth of a contrary life within us? If Adam was only an outward person, if his whole nature was not our nature, born in us and derived from him into us, it would be nonsense to say that his fall is our fall. So in like manner, if Christ, our second Adam, was only an outward person, if He entered not as deeply into our nature as the first Adam does, if we have not as really from Him a new inward, spiritual man as we have outward flesh and blood from Adam, what ground could there be to say that our righteousness is from Him, as our sin is from Adam?

Let no one here think to charge me with disregard to the

holy Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary, or with setting up an inward saviour in opposition to that outward Christ whose history is recorded in the Gospel. No, it is with the utmost fulness of faith and assurance that I ascribe all our redemption to that blessed and mysterious person that was then born of the Virgin Mary and will assert no inward redemption but what wholly proceeds from and is effected by that life-giving Redeemer who died on the Cross for our redemption. [3-4, 11-23]

Chapter II

THOU hast seen, dear Reader, the nature and necessity of regeneration; be persuaded therefore fully to believe and firmly to settle in thy mind this most certain truth, that all our salvation consists in the manifestation of the nature, life, and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward new man. This alone is Christian redemption, this alone delivers from the guilt and power of sin, this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first life of God in the soul of man. Everything besides this is self, is fiction, is propriety, is own will, and, however coloured, is only thy old man with all his deeds. Enter therefore with all thy heart into this truth; let thy eye be always upon it; do everything in view of it; try everything by the truth of it; love nothing but for the sake of it. Wherever thou goest, whatever thou dost, at home or abroad, in the field or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of His tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing but that which exercises and increases the Spirit and life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee changed into the Spirit and temper of the holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity, thy Church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed and continually desired will do everything that thou wantest

to have done in thee; it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature; it will bring all that is good into thee; it will open all the Gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart or proceed from it but what comes from God and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires; thy mouth will have a watch set upon it, thy ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy eyes be open but to see and find occasions of doing good. In a word, when this faith has got both thy head and thy heart it will then be with thee as it was with the merchant who found a pearl of great price; it will make thee gladly to sell all that thou hast and buy it. For all that had seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the merchant of this world had got together, whether of riches, power, honour, learning or reputation, loses all its value, is counted but as dung and willingly parted with as soon as this glorious pearl, the new birth in Christ Jesus, is discovered and found by him. This therefore may serve as a touchstone whereby every one may try the truth of his state; if the old man is still a merchant within thee, trading in all sorts of worldly honour, power, or learning, if the wisdom of this world is not foolishness to thee, if earthly interests and sensual pleasures are still the desire of thy heart and only covered under a form of godliness, a cloak of creeds, observances and institutions of religion, thou mayest be assured that the pearl of great price is not yet found by thee. For where Christ is born or His Spirit rises up in the soul, there all self is denied and obliged to turn out; there all carnal wisdom, arts of advancement, with every pride and glory of this life, are as so many heathen idols all willingly renounced, and the man is not only content, but rejoices to say that his kingdom is not of this world.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall this great work, the birth of Christ, be effected in me? It might rather be said,

since Christ has an infinite power and also an infinite desire to save mankind, how can anyone miss of this salvation but through his own unwillingness to be saved by Him? Consider how was it that the lame and blind, the lunatic and leper, the publican and sinner, found Christ to be their Saviour and to do all that for them which they wanted to be done to them? It was because they had a real desire of having that which they asked for, and therefore in true faith and prayer applied to Christ, that His Spirit and power might enter into them and heal that which they wanted and desired to be healed in them. Every one of these said in faith and desire, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole.' And the answer was always this, 'According to thy faith, so be it done unto thee.' This is Christ's answer now, and thus it is done to every one of us at this day, as our faith is, so is it done unto us. And here lies the whole reason of our falling short of the salvation of Christ; it is because we have no will to it.

But you will say, Do not all Christians desire to have Christ to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the deceit; all would have Christ to be their Saviour in the *next* world and to help them into Heaven when they die by His power and merits with God. But this is not willing Christ to be thy Saviour; for His salvation, if it is had, must be had in *this* world; if He saves thee it must be done in this life, by changing and altering all that is within thee, by helping thee to a new heart, as He helped the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. For to have salvation from Christ is nothing else but to be made like unto Him; it is to have His humility and meekness, His mortification and self-denial, His renunciation of the spirit, wisdom, and honours of this world, His love of God, His desire of doing God's will and seeking only His honour. To have these tempers formed and begotten in thy heart is to have salvation from Christ. But if thou willest not to have these tempers brought forth in thee, if thy faith and desire does not seek and cry to Christ for them in the same reality as the lame asked to walk and the blind to see, then thou must be said to be unwilling to have Christ to be thy Saviour.

Again, consider how was it that the carnal Jew, the deep-read scribe, the learned rabbi, the religious Pharisee not only did not receive, but crucified their Saviour? It was because they willed and desired no such Saviour as He was, no such inward salvation as He offered to them. They desired no change of their own nature, no inward destruction of their own natural tempers, no deliverance from the love of themselves and the enjoyments of their passions; they liked their state, the gratifications of their old man, their long robes, their broad phylacteries, and greetings in the markets. They wanted not to have their pride and self-love dethroned, their covetousness and sensuality to be subdued by a new nature from Heaven derived into them. Their only desire was the success of Judaism, to have an outward saviour, a temporal prince, that should establish their law and ceremonies over all the earth. And therefore they crucified their dear Redeemer, and would have none of His salvation, because it all consisted in a change of their nature, in a new birth from above and a kingdom of Heaven to be opened within them by the Spirit of God.

O Christendom, look not only at the old Jews, but see thyself in this glass! For at this day (O sad truth to be told!), at this day a Christ within us, an inward Saviour raising a birth of His own nature, life and Spirit within us, is rejected as *gross enthusiasm*; the learned rabbis take counsel against it. The propagation of Popery, the propagation of Protestantism, the success of some particular church is the salvation which priests and people are chiefly concerned about.

But to return. It is manifest that no one can fail of the benefit of Christ's salvation but through an unwillingness to have it, and from the same spirit and tempers which made the Jews unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldst still further know how this great work, the birth of Christ, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful truth be told thee, that this great work is already begun in every one of us. For this holy Jesus that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new life of thy soul, that is to raise thee out of the darkness of death into the light of life and give thee power to become a son of God, is already within thee,

living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart and wanting nothing but thy own faith and good will to have as real a birth and form in thee as He had in the Virgin Mary.[3] For the eternal Word or Son of God did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world when He was born in Bethlehem of Judea; but that Word which became man in the Virgin Mary did from the beginning of the world enter as a word of life, a seed of salvation, into the first father of mankind, was inspoken into him as an ingrafted word under the name and character of a Bruiser of the Serpent's head. Hence it is that Christ said to His disciples, 'The Kingdom of God is within you'; that is, the divine nature is within you, given unto your first father, into the light of his life, and from him rising up in the life of every son of Adam. Hence also the holy Jesus is said to be the 'Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Not as He was born at Bethlehem, not as He had a human form upon earth; in these respects He could not be said to have been the light of every man that cometh into the world; but as He was that eternal Word by which all things were created, which was the life and light of all things, and which had as a second Creator entered again into fallen man as a Bruiser of the Serpent; in this respect it was truly said of our Lord when on earth that He was that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. For He was really and truly all this, as He was the Immanuel, the God with us, given unto Adam and in him to all his offspring. See here the beginning and glorious extent of the Catholic Church of Christ; it takes in all the world. It is God's unlimited, universal mercy to all mankind; and every human creature, as sure as he is born of Adam, has a birth of the Bruiser of the Serpent within him, and so is infallibly in covenant with God through Jesus Christ. Hence also it is that the holy Jesus is appointed to be judge of all the world; it is because all mankind, all nations and languages have in Him and through Him been put into covenant with God and made capable of resisting the evil of their fallen nature.

When our blessed Lord conversed with the woman at

Jacob's well He said unto her, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that talketh with thee, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.' How happy (may anyone well say) was this woman of Samaria to stand so near this gift of God, from whom she might have had living water had she but vouchsafed to have asked for it! But, dear Christian, this happiness is thine, for this holy Jesus, the gift of God, first given unto Adam, and in him to all that are descended from him, is the gift of God to thee, as sure as thou art born of Adam; nay, hast thou never yet owned Him, art thou wandered from Him as far as the Prodigal Son from his father's house, yet is He still with thee, He is the gift of God to thee; and if thou wilt turn to Him and ask of Him, He has living water for thee.

Poor sinner! consider the treasure thou hast within thee; the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee, as a spark of the divine nature which is to overcome sin and death and hell within thee, and generate the life of Heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart, and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thy outward eyes, thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church, and outward exercises, but there thou wilt not find Him till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there He dwells, there is the seat of His Light and holy Spirit.

For this turning to the light and Spirit of God within thee is thy only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him but in that place where He dwelleth in thee. For though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will, and memory,[4] can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth in thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is called the centre, the *fund* or bottom of

the soul.[5] This depth is the unity, the eternity, I had almost said the infinity of thy soul; for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the infinity of God. In this depth of the soul the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living image in the first created man, bearing in himself a living representation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his dwelling in God and God in him. This was the kingdom of God within him, and made Paradise without him. But the day that Adam did eat of the forbidden earthly tree, in that day he absolutely died to this kingdom of God within him. This depth or centre of his soul having lost its God, was shut up in death and darkness and became a prisoner in an earthly animal that only excelled its brethren, the beasts, in an upright form and serpentine subtlety. Thus ended the fall of man. But from that moment that the God of mercy inspoke into Adam the Bruiser of the Serpent, from that moment all the riches and treasures of the divine nature came again into man, as a seed of salvation sown into the centre of the soul, and only lies hidden there in every man till he desires to rise from his fallen state and to be born again from above.

Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and Christ, who from all eternity has been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this pearl of eternity[6] that lies hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is *all*; and when thou has found it thou wilt know that all which thou hast sold or given away for it is as mere a nothing as a bubble upon the water.

But if thou turnest from this heavenly pearl or tramplest it under thy feet for the sake of being rich or great, either in Church or State; if death finds thee in this success, thou canst not then say that though the pearl is lost yet something has been gained instead of it. For in that parting moment the things and the sounds of this world will be exactly alike; to have had an estate or only to have heard of it, to have lived at Lambeth twenty years or only to have twenty times passed by the palace will be the same good or the same nothing to thee.

But I will now show a little more distinctly what this pearl of eternity is. First, it is the light and Spirit of God within thee, which has hitherto done thee but little good, because all the desire of thy heart has been after the light and spirit of this world. Thy reason and senses, thy heart and passions, have turned all their attention to the poor concerns of this life, and therefore thou art a stranger to this principle of Heaven, this riches of eternity within thee. For as God is not, cannot be, truly found by any worshippers but those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, so this light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be, found, felt, or enjoyed but by those whose whole spirit is turned to it.

When man first came into being and stood before God as His own image and likeness this light and Spirit of God was as natural to him, as truly the light of his nature, as the light and air of this world is natural to the creatures that have their birth in it. But when man, not content with the food of eternity, did eat of the earthly tree, this light and Spirit of Heaven was no more natural to him, no more rose up as a birth of his nature, but instead thereof he was left solely to the light and spirit of this world. And this is that death which God told Adam he should surely die in the day that he should eat of the forbidden tree.

But the goodness of God would not leave man in this condition. A redemption from it was immediately granted, and the Bruiser of the Serpent brought the light and Spirit of Heaven once more into the human nature, not as it was in its first state, when man was in Paradise, but as a treasure hidden in the centre of our souls which should discover and open itself by degrees in such proportion as the faith and desires of our hearts were turned to it. This light and Spirit of God thus freely restored again to the soul and lying in it as a secret source of Heaven, is called grace, free grace, or the supernatural gift or power of God in the soul, because it was something that the natural powers of the soul could no more obtain. Hence it is that in the greatest truth and highest reality every stirring of the soul, every tendency of the heart towards God and goodness, is justly and necessarily

ascribed to the Holy Spirit or the grace of God. It is because this first seed of life, which is sown into the soul as the gift or grace of God to fallen man, is itself the light and Spirit of God, and therefore every stirring or opening of this seed of life, every awakened thought or desire that arises from it must be called the moving or the quickening of the Spirit of God; and therefore that new man which arises from it must of all necessity be said to be solely the work and operation of God. Hence also we have an easy and plain declaration of the true meaning, solid sense and certain truth of all those Scriptures which speak of the inspiration of God, the operation of the Holy Spirit, the power of the divine light as the sole and necessary agents in the renewal and sanctification of our souls and also as being things common to all men. It is because this seed of life or Bruiser of the Serpent is common to all men and has in all men a degree of life which is in itself so much of the inspiration or life of God, the Spirit of God, the light of God which is in every soul and is its power of becoming born again of God. Hence also it is that all men are exhorted not to quench or resist or grieve the Spirit, that is, this seed of the Spirit and light of God that is in all men as the only source of good. Again, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. By the flesh and its lustings are meant the mere human nature or the natural man as he is by the Fall; by the Spirit is meant the Bruiser of the Serpent, that seed of the light and Spirit of God which lies as a treasure hidden in the soul in order to bring forth the life that was lost in Adam. Now, as the flesh has its life, its lustings, whence all sorts of evil are truly said to be inspired, quickened, and stirred up in us, so the Spirit being a living principle within us has its inspiration, its breathing, its moving, its quickening, from which alone the divine life, or the angel that died in Adam, can be born in us.

When this seed of the Spirit, common to all men, is not resisted, grieved, and quenched, but its inspirations and motions suffered to grow and increase in us, to unite with God and get power over all the lusts of the flesh, then we are born again, the nature, spirit and tempers of Jesus Christ

are opened in our souls, the Kingdom of God is come and is found within us. On the other hand, when the flesh, or the natural man, has resisted and quenched this spirit or seed of life within us, then the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, murders, lying, hatred, envy, wrath, pride, foolishness, worldly wisdom, carnal prudence, false religion, hypocritical holiness, and serpentine subtlety have set up their kingdom within us.

See here in short the state of man as redeemed. He has a spark of the light and Spirit of God as a supernatural gift of God given into the birth of his soul, to bring forth by degrees a new birth of that life which was lost in Paradise. This holy spark of the divine nature within him has a natural, strong, and almost infinite tendency or reaching after that eternal light and Spirit of God from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came out of God, it partaketh of the divine nature, and therefore it is always in a state of tendency and return to God. And all this is called the breathing, the moving, the quickening of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many operations of this spark of life tending towards God. On the other hand, the Deity as considered in itself and without the soul of man has an infinite, unchangeable tendency of love and desire towards the soul of man, to unite and communicate its own riches and glories to it, just as the spirit of air without man unites and communicates its riches and virtues to the spirit of the air that is within man. This love or desire of God towards the soul of man is so great that He gave His only begotten Son, the brightness of His glory, to take the human nature upon Him in its fallen state, that by this mysterious union of God and man all the enemies of the soul of man might be overcome and every human creature might have a power of being born again according to that image of God in which he was first created. The Gospel is the history of this love of God to man. Inwardly he has a seed of the divine life given into the birth of his soul, a seed that has all the riches of eternity in it and is always wanting to come to the birth in him and be alive in God. Outwardly he has Jesus Christ, who as a sun of righteousness is always casting forth His

enlivening beams on this inward seed, to kindle and call it forth to the birth, doing that to this seed of Heaven in man which the sun in the firmament is always doing to the vegetable seeds in the earth.

Consider this matter in the following similitude. A grain of wheat has the air and light of this world enclosed or incorporated in it. This is the mystery of its life, this is its power of growing, by this it has a strong continual tendency of uniting again with that ocean of light and air from whence it came forth, and so it helps to kindle its own vegetable life. On the other hand, that great ocean of light and air, having its own offspring hidden in the heart of the grain, has a perpetual strong tendency to unite and communicate with it again. From this desire of union on both sides the vegetable life arises and all the virtues and powers contained in it.

But here let it be well observed that this desire on both sides cannot have its effect till the husk and gross part of the grain falls into a state of corruption and death; till this begins, the mystery of life hidden in it cannot come forth. The application here may be left to the reader. I shall only observe that we may here see the true ground and absolute necessity of that dying to ourselves and to the world to which our blessed Lord so constantly calls all his followers. A universal self-denial, a perpetual mortification of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not a thing imposed upon us by the mere will of God, is not required as a punishment, is not an invention of dull and monkish spirits, but has its ground and reason in the nature of the thing, and is as absolutely necessary to make way for the new birth as the death of the husk and gross part of the grain is necessary to make way for its vegetable life.

But secondly, this pearl of eternity is the wisdom and love of God within thee. In this pearl of thy Serpent-Bruiser all the holy nature, spirit, tempers, and inclinations of Christ lie as in a seed in the centre of thy soul, and divine wisdom and heavenly love will grow up in thee if thou givest but true attention to God present in thy soul. On the other hand, there is hidden also in the depth of thy nature the

root or possibility of all the hellish nature, spirit, and tempers of the fallen angels. For Heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us; they come not into us from without, but spring up in us according as our will and heart is turned either to the light of God or the kingdom of darkness. But when this life, which is in the midst of these two eternities, is at an end, either an angel or a devil will be found to have a birth in us.

Thou needest not therefore run here or there saying, Where is Christ? Thou needest not say, Who shall ascend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above? Or who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead? For behold the Word, which is the wisdom of God, is in thy heart; it is there as a Bruiser of thy Serpent, as a light unto thy feet and lanthorn unto thy paths. It is there as an holy oil, to soften and overcome the wrathful fiery properties of thy nature and change them into the humble meekness of light and love. It is there as a speaking Word of God in thy soul; and, as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal, speaking Word will speak wisdom and love in thy inward parts and bring forth the birth of Christ, with all His holy nature, spirit, and tempers within thee. Hence it was (that is, from this principle of Heaven or Christ in the soul) hence I say it was that so many eminent spirits, partakers of a divine life, have appeared in so many parts of the heathen world; glorious names, sons of wisdom, that shone as lights hung out by God in the midst of idolatrous darkness.[7] These were the apostles of a Christ within, that were awakened and commissioned by the inward Bruiser of the Serpent to call mankind from the blind pursuits of flesh and blood, to know themselves, the dignity of their nature, the immortality of their souls, and the necessity of virtue to avoid eternal shame and misery. These apostles, though they had not the Law or written Gospel to urge upon their hearers, yet having turned to God, they found and preached the Gospel that was written in their hearts. Hence one of them could say this divine truth, viz., that such only are priests and prophets who have God in themselves. Hence also it is that in the Christian Church there have been

in all ages, amongst the most illiterate, both men and women who have attained to a deep understanding of the mysteries of the wisdom and love of God in Christ Jesus.[8] And what wonder, since it is not art or science or skill in grammar or logic, but the opening of the divine life in the soul that can give true understanding of the things of God? This life of God in the soul, which for its smallness at first and capacity for great growth is by our Lord compared to a grain of mustard seed, may be and too generally is suppressed and kept under, either by worldly cares, or pleasures, by vain learning, sensuality, or ambition. And all this while, whatever Church or profession any man is of, he is a mere natural man, unregenerate, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, because this seed of Heaven is choked and not suffered to grow up in him. And therefore his religion is no more from Heaven than his fine breeding; his cares have no more goodness in them than his pleasures; his love is worth no more than his hatred; his zeal for this or against that form of religion has only the nature of any other worldly contention in it. And thus it is and must be with every mere natural man; whatever appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleases, know himself to be the slave and machine of his own corrupt tempers and inclinations, to be enlightened, inspired, quickened and animated by self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, which is the only life and spirit of the mere natural man, whether he be heathen, Jew, or Christian.

On the other hand, wherever this seed of Heaven is suffered to take root, to get life and breath in the soul, whether it be in man or woman, young or old, there this new-born inward man is justly said to be inspired, enlightened, and moved by the Spirit of God because his whole birth and life is a birth from above of the light and Spirit of God; and therefore all that is in him has the nature, spirit, and tempers of Heaven in it. As this regenerate life grows up in any man so there grows up a true and real knowledge of the whole mystery of godliness in himself. All that the Gospel teaches of sin and grace, of life and death, of Heaven and hell, of the new and old man, of the light and Spirit of God, are things not got by hearsay, but inwardly

known, felt and experienced in the growth of his own new-born life. He has then an unction from above which teaches him all things—a spirit that knows what it ought to pray for, a spirit that prays without ceasing, that is risen with Christ from the dead and has all its conversation in Heaven, a spirit that has groans and sighs that cannot be uttered, that travaileth and groaneth with the whole creation to be delivered from vanity and have its glorious liberty in that God from whom it came forth.

Again, thirdly, this pearl of eternity is the Church or Temple of God within thee, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone thou canst worship God in spirit and in truth. In spirit, because thy spirit is that alone in thee, which can unite and cleave unto God and receive the workings of His divine Spirit upon thee. In truth, because this adoration in spirit is that truth and reality, of which all outward forms and rites, though instituted by God, are only the figure for a time; but this worship is eternal. Accustom thyself to the holy service of this inward temple. In the midst of it is the fountain of living water, of which thou mayest drink and live for ever. There the mysteries of thy redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in life and power. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept; the bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth life to the world, is thy true nourishment: all is done and known in real experience, in a living sensibility of the work of God on the soul. There the birth, the life, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ are not merely remembered, but inwardly found and enjoyed as the real states of thy soul, which has followed Christ in the regeneration. When once thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee.[9] For when God has all that He should have of thy heart, when renouncing the will, judgment, tempers and inclinations of thy old man, thou art wholly given up to the obedience of the light and Spirit of God within thee, to will only in His will, to love only in His love, to be wise only in

His wisdom, then it is that everything thou doest is as a song of praise and the common business of thy life is a conforming to God's will on earth as angels do in Heaven.

Fourthly and lastly, this pearl of eternity is the peace and joy of God within thee, but can only be found by the manifestation of the life and power of Jesus Christ in thy soul. But Christ cannot be thy power and thy life till, in obedience to His call, thou deniest thyself, takest up thy daily cross and followest Him in the regeneration. This is peremptory, it admits of no reserve or evasion, it is the one way to Christ and eternal life. But be where thou wilt, either here or at Rome or Geneva, if self is undenied, if thou livest to thine own will, to the pleasures of thy natural lust and appetites, senses, and passions, and in conformity to the vain customs and spirit of this world, thou art dead whilst thou livest; the seed of the woman is crucified within thee; Christ can profit thee nothing; thou art a stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within thee and utterly incapable of finding the peace and joy of God in thy soul. And thus thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and empty, and livest a miserable life in the vanity of time; whilst all the riches of eternity, the light and spirit, the wisdom and love, the peace and joy of God are within thee. And thus it will always be with thee; there is no remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt; all is shut up; there is no open door of salvation, no awakening out of the sleep of sin, no deliverance from the power of thy corrupt nature, no overcoming of the world, no revelation of Jesus Christ, no joy of the new birth from above, till, dying to thy self and the world, thou turnest to the light, and spirit, and power of God in thy soul. All is fruitless and insignificant, all the means of thy redemption are at a stand, all outward forms are but a dead formality till this fountain of living water is found within thee.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall I discover this riches of eternity, this light, and spirit, and wisdom, and peace of God treasured up within me? Thy first thought of repentance or desire of turning to God is thy first discovery of this light and Spirit of God within thee. It is the voice and language of the Word of God within thee, though thou

knowest it not. It is the Bruiser of thy Serpent's head, thy dear Immanuel, who is beginning to preach within thee that same which He first preached in public, saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' When therefore but the smallest instinct or desire of thy heart calls thee towards God and a newness of life, give it time and leave to speak; and take care thou refuse not Him that speaketh. For it is not an angel from Heaven that speaks to thee, but it is the eternal, speaking Word of God in thy heart; that Word, which at first created thee, is thus beginning to create thee a second time unto righteousness, that a new man may be formed again in thee in the image and likeness of God. But above all things beware of taking this desire of repentance to be the effect of thy own natural sense and reason, for in so doing thou losest the key of all the heavenly treasure that is in thee, thou shuttest the door against God, turnest away from Him, and thy repentance (if thou hast any) will be only a vain, unprofitable work of thy own hands, that will do thee no more good than a well that is without water. But if thou takest this awakened desire of turning to God to be, as in truth it is, the coming of Christ in thy soul, the working, redeeming power of the light and Spirit of the holy Jesus within thee, if thou dost reverence and adhere to it as such, this faith will save thee, will make thee whole; and by thus believing in Christ, though thou wert dead, yet shalt thou live.

Now, all depends upon thy right submission and obedience to this speaking of God in thy soul. Stop, therefore, all self-activity, listen not to the suggestions of thy own reason, run not on in thy own will, but be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen light within thee. Open thy heart, thy eyes, and ears to all its impressions. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn thee as it pleases, turn not away from it, hear all it says, seek for no relief out of it, consult not with flesh and blood, but with a heart full of faith and resignation to God pray only this prayer, that God's Kingdom may come and His will be done in thy soul. Stand faithfully in this state of preparation thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then

the work of thy repentance will be wrought in God and thou wilt soon find that He that is in thee is much greater than all that are against thee.

But that thou mayest do all this the better and be more firmly assured that this resignation to and dependence upon the working of God's spirit within thee is right and sound, I shall lay before thee two great and infallible and fundamental truths, which will be as a rock for thy faith to stand upon.

First, that through all the whole nature of things nothing can do or be a real good to thy soul but the operation of God upon it. Secondly, that all the dispensations of God to mankind, from the fall of Adam to the preaching of the Gospel, were only for this one end, to fit, prepare, and dispose the soul for the operation of the Spirit of God upon it. These two great truths, well and deeply apprehended, put the soul in its right state, in a continual dependence upon God, in a readiness to receive all good from Him, and will be a continual source of light in thy mind. They will keep thee safe from all errors, and false zeal in things, and forms of religion, from a sectarian spirit, from bigotry, and superstition; they will teach thee the true difference between the means and end of religion; and the regard thou showest to the shell will be only so far as the kernel is to be found in it.

Man, by his fall, had broken off from his true centre, his proper place in God, and therefore the life and operation of God was no more in him. He was fallen from a life in God into a life of self, into an animal life of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking in the poor perishing enjoyments of this world. This was the natural state of man by the Fall. He was an apostate from God, and his natural life was all idolatry, where self was the great idol that was worshipped instead of God. See here the whole truth in short. All sin, death, damnation, and hell is nothing else but this kingdom of self, or the various operations of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking which separate the soul from God and end in eternal death and hell.[10]

On the other hand, all that is grace, redemption, salva-

tion, sanctification, spiritual life, and the new birth is nothing else but so much of the life and operation of God found again in the soul. It is man come back again into his centre or place in God from whence he had broken off. The beginning again of the life of God in the soul was then first made when the mercy of God inspoke into Adam a seed of the divine life which should bruise the head of the serpent, which had wrought itself into the human nature. Here the kingdom of God was again within us, though only as a seed; yet small as it was, it was yet a degree of the divine life which, if rightly cultivated, would overcome all the evil that was in us and make of every fallen man a new-born son of God.

All the sacrifices and institutions of the ancient patriarchs, the Law of Moses, with all its types, and rites, and ceremonies, had this only end: they were the methods of divine wisdom for a time to keep the hearts of men from the wanderings of idolatry, in a state of holy expectation upon God; they were to keep the first seed of life in a state of growth and make way for the further operation of God upon the soul; or, as the Apostle speaks, to be as a schoolmaster unto Christ, that is, till the birth, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ should conquer death and hell, open a new dispensation of God and baptise mankind afresh with the Holy Ghost and fire of Heaven. Then, that is, on the day of Pentecost, a new dispensation of God came forth, which on God's part was the operation of the Holy Spirit in gifts and graces upon the whole Church; and on man's part it was the adoration of God in spirit and in truth. Thus all that was done by God, from the bruiser of the serpent given to Adam to Christ's sitting down on the right hand of God, was all for this end, to remove all that stood between God and man and to make way for the immediate and continual operation of God upon the soul; and that man, baptised with the Holy Spirit and born again from above, should absolutely renounce self and wholly give up his soul to the operation of God's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worship, to preach, to exhort, to use all the faculties of his mind and all the outward

things of this world as enlightened, inspired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghost, who by this last dispensation of God was given to be a comforter, a teacher, and guide to the Church, who should abide with it for ever.

This is Christianity, a spiritual society, not because it has no worldly concerns, but because all its members, as such, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated and governed by the Spirit of God. It is constantly called by our Lord the Kingdom of God, or Heaven, because all its ministry and service, all that is done in it, is done in obedience and subjection to that spirit by which angels live and are governed in Heaven. Hence our blessed Lord taught his disciples to pray that this kingdom might come, that so God's will might be done on earth as it is in Heaven; which could not be but by that same Spirit by which it is done in Heaven. The short is this: the kingdom of self is the fall of man, or the great apostasy from the life of God in the soul; and everyone, wherever he be, that lives unto self is still under the fall and great apostasy from God. The kingdom of Christ is the Spirit and power of God dwelling and manifesting itself in the birth of a new inward man; and no one is a member of this kingdom but so far as a true birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two kingdoms take in all mankind; he that is not of one is certainly in the other; dying to one is living to the other.

Hence we may gather these following truths: First, here is shown the true ground and reason of what was said above, namely, that when the call of God to repentance first arises in thy soul thou art to be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen light within thee by wholly stopping or disregarding the workings of thy own will, reason, and judgment.[11] It is because all these are false counsellors, the sworn servants, bribed slaves of thy fallen nature, they are all born and bred in the kingdom of self; and therefore if a new kingdom is to be set up in thee, if the operation of God is to have its effect in thee, all these natural powers of self are to be silenced and suppressed till they have learned obedience and subjection to the Spirit of God. Now, this is not requiring thee to become a fool or to give up thy

claim to sense and reason, but is the shortest way to have thy sense and reason delivered from folly and thy whole rational nature strengthened, enlightened, and guided by that light which is wisdom itself.

A child that obediently denies his own will and own reason to be guided by the will and reason of a truly wise and understanding tutor cannot be said to make himself a fool and give up the benefit of his rational nature, but to have taken the shortest way to have his own will and reason made truly a blessing to him.

Secondly, hence is to be seen the true ground and necessity of that universal mortification and self-denial with regard to all our senses, appetites, tempers, passions, and judgments. It is because our whole nature, as fallen from the life of God, is in a state of contrariety to the order and end of our creation, a continual source of disorderly appetites, corrupt tempers and false judgments. And therefore every motion of it is to be mortified, changed, and purified from its natural state before we can enter into the Kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord says, 'Except a man hateth his father and mother, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple,' it is because our best tempers are yet carnal and full of the imperfections of our fallen nature. The doctrine is just and good; not as if father and mother were to be hated, but that love, which an unregenerate person or natural man has towards them, is to be hated as being a blind self-love, full of all the weakness and partiality with which fallen man loves, honours, esteems, and cleaves to himself. This love, born from corrupt flesh and blood and polluted with self, is to be hated and parted with, that we may love them with a love born of God, with such a love and on such a motive as Christ has loved us. And then the disciple of Christ far exceeds all others in the love of parents. Again, our own life is to be hated, and the reason is plain: it is because there is nothing lovely in it.[12] It is a legion of evil, a monstrous birth of the serpent, the world, and the flesh; it is an apostasy from the life and power of God in the soul, a life that is death to Heaven, that is pure unmixed idolatry, that lives wholly to self and not to God; and therefore all this

own life is to be absolutely hated, all this self is to be denied and mortified, if the nature, spirit, tempers and inclinations of Christ are to be brought to life in us. For it is as impossible to live to both these lives at once as for a body to move two contrary ways at the same time. And therefore all these mortifications and self-denials have an absolute necessity in the nature of the thing itself.

Thus when our Lord further says, 'Unless a man forsaketh all that he hath he cannot be my disciple,' the reason is plain and the necessity is absolute. It is because all that the natural man has is in the possession of self-love, and therefore this possession is to be absolutely forsaken and parted with. All that he has is to be put into other hands, to be given to divine love, or this natural man cannot be changed into a disciple of Christ. For self-love in all that it has is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and therefore must have all taken away from it; and then to the natural man all is lost; he has nothing left; all is laid down at the feet of Jesus. And then all things are common as soon as self-love has lost the possession of them. And then the disciple of Christ, though having nothing, yet possesseth all things; all, that the natural man has forsaken, is restored to the disciple of Christ an hundredfold. For self-love, the greatest of all thieves, being now cast out, and all that he had stolen and hidden thus taken from him and put into the hands of divine love, every mite becomes a large treasure and mammon opens the door into everlasting habitations. This was the spirit of the first draught of a Christian Church at Jerusalem, a Church made truly after the pattern of Heaven, where the love that reigns in Heaven reigned in it, where divine love broke down all the selfish fences, the locks and bolts of me, mine, my own, etc., and laid all things common to the members of this new Kingdom of God on earth.[13]

Now, though many years did not pass after the age of the apostles before Satan and self got footing in the Church and set up merchandise in the house of God, yet this one heart and one spirit which then first appeared in the Jerusalem Church is that one heart and spirit of divine love to which all are called that would be true disciples of Christ. And

though the practice of it is lost as to the Church in general, yet it ought not to have been lost; and therefore every Christian ought to make it his great care and prayer to have it restored in himself. And then, though born in the dregs of time or living in Babylon, he will be as truly a member of the first heavenly Church at Jerusalem as if he had lived in it in the days of the apostles. This Spirit of Love, born of that celestial fire with which Christ baptises His true disciples, is alone that Spirit which can enter into Heaven, and therefore is that Spirit which is to be born in us whilst we are on earth. For no one can enter into Heaven till he is made heavenly, till the Spirit of Heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our Lord has said of denying and dying to self, and of his parting with all that he has, are practices absolutely necessary from the nature of the thing; because all turning to self is so far turning from God, and so much as we have of self-love, so much we have of a hellish, earthly weight that must be taken off, or there can be no ascension into Heaven. But thou wilt perhaps say, 'If all self-love is to be renounced, then all love of our neighbour is renounced along with it, because the commandment is only to love our neighbour as ourselves.' The answer here is easy, and yet no quarter given to self-love. There is but one only love in Heaven, and yet the angels of God love one another in the same manner as they love themselves. The matter is thus: the one supreme, unchangeable rule of love, which is a law to all intelligent beings of all worlds and will be a law to all eternity, is this, viz., that God alone is to be loved for Himself, and all other beings only in Him and for Him. Whatever intelligent creature lives not under this rule of love is so far fallen from the order of his creation, and is, till he returns to this eternal law of love, an apostate from God and incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now, if God alone is to be loved for Himself, then no creature is to be loved for itself; and so all self-love in every creature is absolutely condemned. And if all created beings are only to be loved in and for God, then my neighbour is to be loved as I love myself, and I am only to love myself as I love my neighbour or any other created being, that is,

only in and for God. And thus the command of loving our neighbour as ourselves stands firm and yet all self-love is plucked up by the roots. But what is loving any creature only in and for God? It is when we love it only as it is God's work, image, and delight; when we love it merely as it is God's and belongs to Him; this is loving it in God; and when all that we wish, intend, or do to it is done from a love of God, for the honour of God, and in conformity to the will of God, this is loving it for God. This is the one love that is and must be the spirit of all creatures that live united to God. Now, this is no speculative refinement or fine-spun fiction of the brain, but the simple truth; a first law of nature, and a necessary band of union between God and the creature. The creature is not in God, is a stranger to Him, has lost the life of God in itself whenever its love does not thus begin and end in God.

The loss of this love was the fall of man, as it opened in him a kingdom of self, in which Satan, the world, and the flesh could all of them bring forth their own works. If, therefore, man is to rise from his fall and return to his life in God there is an absolute necessity that self, with all its brood of gross affections, be deposed, that his first love in and for which he was created may be born again in him. Christ came into the world to save sinners, to destroy the works of the devil. Now, self is not only the seat and habitation, but the very life of sin. The works of the devil are all wrought in self—it is his peculiar workhouse—and therefore Christ is not come as a Saviour from sin, as a destroyer of the works of the devil in any of us, but so far as self is beaten down and overcome in us. If it is literally true what our Lord said, that His Kingdom was not of this world, then it is a truth of the same certainty, that no one is a member of this kingdom but he that, in the literal sense of the words, renounces the spirit of this world. Christians might as well part with half the Articles of their Creed, or but half believe them, as really to refuse or but by halves enter into these self-denials. For all that is in the Creed is only to bring forth this dying and death to all and every part of the old man, that the life and Spirit of Christ may be formed in us.

Our redemption is this new birth; doing in us we are still unredeemed. Saviour of the world is come, He is not cc received by us, is a stranger to us, is not o within us. His life is not, cannot be, wit the spirit of the world, self-love, self-este are renounced and driven out of us.

Thirdly, hence we may also learn t worth of all self-denials and mortific nature, considered in themselves, th goodness or holiness, nor are any real p tion; they are not the true food or divine life in our souls; they have no q power in them; their only worth con remove the impediments of holiness, b stands between God and us, and make ing, sanctifying Spirit of God to o Which operation of God is the one only t the divine life in the soul or help it to th real holiness or spiritual life. As in our cr that degree of a divine life which the p into us—as then all that we had and operation of God in the creation of us tion or regaining that first perfection v must be again the operation of God divine life restored in us, be it ever be nothing else but so much of the li found again in the soul. All the works of self-denial has no good in an entrance for the one only G operate upon us.

Hence also we may learn the not only lose the benefit, but are mortifications. It is because they mista and worth of them. They practise them for as things good in themselves, they think parts of holiness, and so rest in them an but grow full of self-esteem and self-ad own progress in them. This makes

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deep, full, and practical assurance, in such a manner as a man knows and believes that he did not create the stars or cause life to rise up in himself. And then it is a belief that puts the soul into a right state, that makes room for the operation of God upon it. His light then enters with full power into the soul and His Holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and so man lives again in God as a new creature.

For this truth, thus firmly believed, will have these two most excellent effects. First, it will keep the soul fixed and continually turned towards God in faith, prayer, desire, confidence, and resignation to Him, for all that it wants to have done in it and to it; which will be a continual source of all divine virtues and graces. The soul thus turned to God must be always receiving from Him. It stands at the true door of all divine communications, and the light of God as freely enters into it as the light of the sun enters into the air. Secondly, it will fix and ground the soul in a true and lasting self-denial. For by thus knowing and owning our own nothingness and inability, that we have no other capacity for good but that of receiving it from God alone, self is wholly denied, its kingdom is destroyed; no room is left for spiritual pride and self-esteem; we are saved from a pharisaical holiness, from wrong opinions of our own works and good deeds and from a multitude of errors, the most dangerous to our souls, all which arise from the something that we take ourselves to be either in nature or grace. But when we once apprehend but in some good degree the All of God and the nothingness of ourselves, we have got a truth, whose usefulness and benefit no words can express. It brings a kind of infallibility into the soul in which it dwells; all that is vain and false and deceitful is forced to vanish and fly before it. When our religion is founded on this rock, it has the firmness of a rock and its height reaches unto heaven. The world, the flesh, and the devil can do no hurt to it; all enemies are known and all disarmed by this great truth dwelling in our souls. It is the knowledge of the All of God that makes cherubim and seraphim to be flames of divine love. For where this All of God is truly known and felt in

any creature, there its whole breath and spirit is a fire of love, nothing but a pure disinterested love can arise up in it or come from it, a love that begins and ends in God. And where this love is born in any creature, there a seraphic life is born along with it. For this pure love introduces the creature into the All of God; all that is in God is opened in the creature, it is united with God and has the life of God manifested in it.

There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind and that is to introduce or generate His own life, light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many images, temples and habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's good will to all Christians, Jews, and heathens. They are all equally the desire of His heart, His light continually waits for an entrance into all of them; His wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice, not here or there but everywhere, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.

Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation or life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for the heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one; and that is, the desire of the soul turned to God. When this desire is alive and breaks forth in any creature under Heaven, then the lost sheep is found and the shepherd has it upon his shoulders. Through this desire the poor Prodigal Son leaves his husks and swine and hastes to his father: it is because of this desire that the father sees the son while yet afar off, that he runs out to meet him, falls on his neck and kisses him. See here how plainly we are taught that no sooner is this desire arisen and in motion towards God, but the operation of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its first beginnings—signified by the father's seeing and having compassion on his son whilst yet afar off, that is, in the first beginnings of his desire. Thus does this desire do all, it brings the soul to God and God into the soul, it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive,

not in motion, either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship either of the Law or the Gospel are but dead works that bring no life into the soul nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine life or operation of God enters into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those who never heard of His name. And these are they 'that shall come from the East, and from the West, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the Kingdom of God.'

O my God, just and good, how great is thy love and mercy to mankind, that Heaven is thus everywhere open, and Christ thus the common Saviour to all that turn the desire of their hearts to thee! O sweet power of the Bruiser of the Serpent, born in every son of man, that stirs and works in every man and gives every man a power and desire to find his happiness in God! O holy Jesus, heavenly light that lightest every man that cometh into the world, that redeemest every soul that follows thy light, which is always within him! O Holy Trinity, immense ocean of divine love in which all mankind live and move and have their being! None are separated from thee, none live out of thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of thy mercy, all are partakers of thy divine life, the operation of thy Holy Spirit, as soon as their heart is turned to thee! O plain and easy and simple way of salvation, wanting no subtleties of art or science, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reason, but all done by the simple natural motion of every heart that truly longs after God. For no sooner is the finite desire of the creature in motion towards God but the infinite desire of God is united with it, co-operates with it. And in this united desire of God and the creature is the salvation and life of the soul brought forth. For the soul is shut out of God and imprisoned in its own dark workings of flesh and blood, merely and solely because it desires to live to the vanity of this world. This desire is its darkness, its death, its imprisonment and separation from God.

When, therefore, the first spark of a desire after God arises

in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it, it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up, therefore, and follow it as gladly as the Wise Men of the East followed the star from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star did for them: it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem in Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thy own fallen soul.[15]

I shall conclude this first Part with the words of the heavenly, illuminated, and blessed Jacob Behmen: 'It is much to be lamented that we are so blindly led and the truth withheld from us through imaginary conceptions; for if the divine power in the inward ground of the soul was manifest and working with its lustre in us, then is the whole triune God present in the life and will of the soul; and the Heaven, wherein God dwells, is opened in the soul, and there in the soul is the place where the Father begets His Son and where the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Christ says, "I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me walketh not in darkness." He directs us only to Himself, He is the morning star and is generated and rises in us and shines in the darkness of our nature. O how great a triumph is there in the soul when He arises in it! Then a man knows, as he never knew before, that he is a stranger in a foreign land.'[16] [24-47]

Part the Second

In Three Dialogues

THEOPHILUS.[17] A spiritual book, Academicus, is a call to as real and total a death to the life of corrupt nature as that which Adam died in Paradise was to the life

of Heaven. He indeed died at once totally to the divine life in which he was created. But as our body of earth is to last to the end of our lives, so to the end of our earthly life every step we take, every inch of our road, is to be made up of denial and dying to ourselves; because all our redemption consists in our regaining that first life of Heaven in the soul to which Adam died in Paradise. And therefore the one single work of redemption is the one single work of regeneration, or the raising-up of a life, and spirit, and tempers, and inclinations contrary to that life and spirit which we derive from our earthly fallen parents. To think, therefore, of anything but the continual total denial of our earthly nature is to overlook the very one thing on which all depends. And to hope for anything, to trust or pray for anything but the life of God or a birth of Heaven in our souls is as useless to us as placing our hope and trust in a graven image. Thus saith the Christ of God, the one pattern and author of our salvation: 'If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, hate his own life, take up his daily cross, and follow me.' And again: 'Unless a man be born again from above, of water and the Spirit, he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.'

Now is your time, Academicus, to enter deeply into this great truth. You are just come out of the slumber of life and begin to see with new eyes the nature of your salvation. You are charmed with the discovery of a kingdom of Heaven hidden within you and long to be entertained more and more with the nature, progress, and perfection of the new birth, or the opening of the kingdom of God in your soul.

But, my friend, stop a little. It is, indeed, great joy that the pearl of great price is found; but take notice that it is not yours, you can have no possession of it till, as the merchant did, you sell all that you have and buy it. Now, self is all that you have, it is your sole possession; you have no goods of your own, nothing is yours but this self. The riches of self are your own riches; but all this self is to be parted with before the pearl is yours. Think of a lower price or be unwilling to give thus much for it, plead in your excuse that you keep the commandments, and then you are

that very rich young man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful from our Lord when He had said, 'If thou wilt be perfect,' that is, if thou wilt obtain the pearl, 'sell all that thou hast and give to the poor'; that is, die to all thy possession of self, and then thou hast given all that thou hast to the poor; all that thou hast is devoted and used for the love of God and thy neighbour. This selling all, Academicus, is the measure of your dying to self; all of it is to be given up; it is an apostate nature, a stolen life, brought forth in rebellion against God: it is a continual departure from him. It corrupts everything it touches; it defiles everything it receives; it turns all the gifts and blessings of God into covetousness, partiality, pride, hatred, and envy. All these tempers are born, and bred, and nourished, in self; they have no other place to live in, no possibility of existence but in that creature which is fallen from a life in God into a life in self. . . .

See here, Academicus, the twofold nature of every man. He has within him a redeeming power, the meekness of the heavenly life, called the Lamb of God. This seed is surrounded or encompassed with the beast of fleshly lusts, the serpent of guile and subtlety, and the dragon of fiery wrath. This is the great trial or strife of human life, whether a man will live to the lusts of the beast, the guile of the serpent, the pride and wrath of the fiery dragon, or give himself up to the meekness, the patience, the sweetness, the simplicity, the humility, of the Lamb of God.

This is the whole of the matter between God and the creature. On one side, fire and wrath, awakened first by the rebellious angels; and on the other side, the meekness of the Lamb of God, the patience of divine love coming down from Heaven to stop and overcome the fire and wrath that is broken out in nature and creature.[18] Your father Adam has introduced you into the fire and wrath of the fallen angels, into a world from whence Paradise is departed. Your flesh and blood is kindled in that sin which first brought forth a murdering Cain. But, dear soul, be of good comfort, for the meekness, the love, the heart, the Lamb of God is become man, has set Himself in the birth of thy own

life, that in Him and with Him and by a birth from Him Heaven and Paradise may be again opened both within thee and without thee, not for a time but to all eternity. [55-57]

Here we see the plain and true original of all evil, without any perplexity or imputation upon God: that evil is nothing else but the wrath, and fire, and darkness of nature broken off from God: that the punishment, the pain or the hell of sin is no designedly prepared or arbitrary penalty inflicted by God, but the natural and necessary state of the creature that leaves or turns from God. The will of the creature is the only opener of all evil or good in the creature; the will stands between God and nature and must in all its workings unite either with God or nature: [19] the will totally resigned and given up to God is one spirit with God and God dwelleth in it; the will turned from God is taken prisoner in the wrath, fire, and darkness of nature. [65]

Theophilus. And all this, Academicus, to make it known through all the regions of eternity that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. This, this is the great end of God's raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels; for this end it stands in its state of war, a war betwixt the fire and pride of fallen angels and the meekness and humility of the Lamb of God. It stands its thousands of years in this strife, that the last trumpet may sound this great truth, through all heights and depths of eternity, 'That evil can have no beginning, but from pride; nor any end, but from humility.'

O Academicus, what a blindness there is in the world! What a stir is there amongst mankind about religion, and yet almost all seem to be afraid of that in which alone is salvation!

Poor mortals! What is the one wish and desire of your hearts? What is it that you call happiness and matter of rejoicing? Is it not when everything about you helps you to stand upon higher ground, gives full nourish-

ment to self-esteem and gratifies every pride of life? And yet life itself is the loss of everything, unless pride be overcome. Oh, stop awhile in contemplation of this great truth! It is a truth as unchangeable as God; it is written and spoken through all nature; Heaven and earth, fallen angels and redeemed men, all bear witness to it. The truth is this: Pride must die in you, or nothing of Heaven can live in you. Under the banner of this truth, give up yourselves to the meek and humble Spirit of the holy Jesus, the overcomer of all fire, and pride, and wrath. This is the one way, the one truth, and the one life. There is no other open door into the sheepfold of God. Everything else is the working of the devil in the fallen nature of man. Humility must sow the seed, or there can be no reaping in Heaven. Look not at pride only as an unbecoming temper; not at humility only as a decent virtue; for the one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, and the other is all Heaven.[20]

So much as you have of pride, so much you have of the fallen angel alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see with your eyes what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of an hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, what an heavenly water of life it gives to the fiery breath of your soul, how it expels the poison of your fallen nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than to want the smallest degree of it. [73-74]

Theophilus. For Humanus, though hitherto without Christ, is still within the reach of divine love: he belongs to God; God created him for Himself, to be an habitation of His own life, light, and Holy Spirit; and God has brought him and us together, that the lost sheep may be found and brought back to its heavenly shepherd.

O Humanus, love is my bait; you must be caught by it;

it will put its hook into your heart and force you to know that of all strong things nothing is so strong, so irresistible, as divine love.[21]

It brought forth all the creation; it kindles all the life of Heaven; it is the song of all the angels of God. It has redeemed all the world; it seeks for every sinner upon earth; it embraces all the enemies of God; and from the beginning to the end of time the one work of Providence is the one work of love.

Moses and the prophets, Christ and His apostles, were all of them messengers of divine love. They came to kindle a fire on earth, and that fire was the love which burns in Heaven. Ask what God is? His name is love; He is the good, the perfection, the peace, the joy, the glory, and blessing of every life. Ask what Christ is? He is the universal remedy of all evil broken forth in nature and creature. He is the destruction of misery, sin, darkness, death, and hell. He is the resurrection and life of all fallen nature. He is the unwearied compassion, the long-suffering pity, the never-ceasing mercifulness of God to every want and infirmity of human nature.

He is the breathing forth of the heart, life, and Spirit of God into all the dead race of Adam. He is the seeker, the finder, the restorer of all that was lost and dead to the life of God. He is the love that, from Cain to the end of time, prays for all its murderers; the love that willingly suffers and dies among thieves, that thieves may have a life with Him in Paradise; the love that visits publicans, harlots, and sinners and wants and seeks to forgive where most is to be forgiven. O, my friends, let us surround and encompass Humanus with these flames of love till he cannot make his escape from them, but must become a willing victim to their power. For the universal God is universal love; all is love but that which is hellish and earthly. All religion is the spirit of love; all its gifts and graces are the gifts and graces of love; it has no breath, no life but the life of love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies but the fire of love; nothing changes death into life, earth into Heaven, men into angels but love alone. Love breathes the Spirit of God; its words and works are

the inspiration of God. It speaketh not of itself, but the Word, the eternal Word of God speaketh in it; for all that love speaketh, that God speaketh, because love is God. Love is Heaven revealed in the soul; it is light and truth; it is infallible; it has no errors, for all errors are the want of love. Love has no more of pride than light has of darkness; it stands and bears all its fruits from a depth and root of humility. Love is of no sect or party; it neither makes nor admits of any bounds; you may as easily enclose the light or shut up the air of the world into one place as confine love to a sect or party. It lives in the liberty, the universality, the impartiality of Heaven. It believes in one holy, catholic God, the God of all spirits; it unites and joins with the catholic Spirit of the one God, who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wishing, and long-suffering over all the evil that is in nature and creature. Love, like the Spirit of God, rideth upon the wings of the wind,[22] and is in union and communion with all the saints that are in Heaven and on earth. Love is quite pure; it has no by-ends; it seeks not its own; it has but one will, and that is to give itself into everything and overcome all evil with good. Lastly, love is the Christ of God; it comes down from Heaven; it regenerates the soul from above; it blots out all transgressions; it takes from death its sting, from the devil his power, and from the serpent his poison. It heals all the infirmities of our earthly birth; it gives eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and makes the dumb to speak; it cleanses the lepers and casts out devils, and puts man in Paradise before he dies. It lives wholly to the will of Him of whom it is born; its meat and drink is to do the will of God. It is the resurrection and life of every divine virtue, a fruitful mother of true humility, boundless benevolence, unwearied patience, and bowels of compassion. This, Rusticus, is the Christ, the salvation, the religion of divine love, the true Church of God, where the life of God is found and lived, and to which your friend Humanus is called by us. We direct him to nothing but the inward life of Christ, to the working of the Holy Spirit of God, which alone can deliver him from the evil that is in his own nature and give him a power to become a son of God. [107-109]

Theophilus. Hence you may see, Academicus, how it comes to pass that there is so much praying and yet so little of true piety amongst us. The bells are daily calling us to church, our closets abound with manuals of devotion, yet how little fruit! It is all for this reason, because our prayers are not our own; they are not the abundance of our own heart, are not found and felt within us as we feel our own hunger and thirst, but are only so many borrowed forms of speech, which we use at certain times and occasions. And therefore it is no wonder that little good comes of it. What benefit could it have been to the Pharisee, if, with a heart inwardly full of its own pride and self-exaltation, he had outwardly hung down his head, smote upon his breast, and borrowed the publican's words, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'? What greater good can be expected from our praying in the words of David or singing his Psalms seven times a day if our heart has no more of the spirit of David in it than the heart of the Pharisee had of the spirit of the humble publican? . . .

But be not discouraged, Academicus; take the following advice, and then you may go to church without any danger of a mere lip-labour or hypocrisy, although there should be an hymn or a psalm or a prayer whose language is higher than that of your own heart. Do this: Go to the church as the publican went into the temple; stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind, in that form which he outwardly expressed when he cast down his eyes, smote upon his breast and could only say, God be merciful to me a sinner! Stand unchangeably (at least in your desire) in this form and state of heart; it will sanctify every petition that comes out of your mouth; and when anything is read or sung or prayed that is more exalted and fervent than your heart is, if you make this an occasion of a further sinking down in the spirit of the publican, you will then be helped and highly blessed by those prayers and praises which seem only to fit and belong to a better heart than yours.

This, my friend, is a secret of secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual source of grace in your soul. This will not only help you to receive

good from those prayers which seem too good for the state of your heart, but will help you to find good from everything else. For everything that inwardly stirs in you or outwardly happens to you becomes a real good to you, if it either finds or excites in you this humble form of mind. For nothing is in vain or without profit to the humble soul; like the bee,[23] it takes its honey even from bitter herbs; it stands always in a state of divine growth, and everything that falls upon it is like a dew of Heaven to it. Shut up yourself, therefore, in this form of humility, all good is enclosed in it; it is a water of Heaven, that turns the fire of the fallen soul into the meekness of the divine life and creates that oil out of which the love to God and man gets its flame. Be enclosed, therefore, always in it; let it be as a garment wherewith you are always covered and the girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its spirit; see nothing but with its eyes; hear nothing but with its ears; and then, whether you are in the church or out of the church, hearing the praises of God or receiving wrongs from men and the world, all will be edification, and everything will help forward your growth in the life of God. [119-122]

People who have long dwelt in the fervours of devotion, in a high sensibility of divine affections, practising every virtue with a kind of greediness, are frightened when coldness seizes upon them, when their hymns give no transport and their hearts, instead of flaming with the love of every virtue, seem ready to be overcome by every vice. But here keep fast hold of the thread I mentioned before, and all is well. For this coldness is the divine offspring or genuine birth of the former fervour; it comes from it as a good fruit, and brings the soul nearer to God than the fervour did.[24] The fervour was good, and did a good work in the soul; it overcame the earthly nature, and made the soul delight in God and spiritual things; but its delight was too much an own delight, a fancied self-holiness, and occasioned rest and satisfaction in self; which if it had continued uninterrupted, undiscovered, an earthly self had only been changed into a

spiritual self. Therefore I called this coldness or loss of fervour its divine offspring, because it brings a divine effect or more fruitful progress in the divine life. For this coldness overcomes and delivers us from spiritual self, as fervour overcame the earthly nature. It does the work that fervour did, but in a higher degree, because it gives up more, sacrifices more, and brings forth more resignation to God than fervour did; and therefore it is more in God and receives more from Him. The devout soul, therefore, is always safe in every state if it makes everything an occasion either of rising up or falling down into the hands of God and exercising faith, and trust, and resignation to Him. Fervour is good and ought to be loved; but tribulation, distress, and coldness in their season are better, because they give means and power of exercising a higher faith, a purer love, and more perfect resignation to God, which are the best state of the soul. And therefore the pious soul that eyes only God, that means nothing but being His alone, can have no stop put to its progress; light and darkness equally assist him; in the light he looks up to God, in the darkness he lays hold on God; and so they both do him the same good. [129-130]

Theophilus. God is unwearied patience, a meekness that cannot be provoked; He is an ever-enduring mercifulness; He is unmixed goodness, impartial, universal love; His delight is in the communication of Himself, His own happiness to everything according to its capacity. He does everything that is good, righteous, and lovely for its own sake, because it is good, righteous, and lovely. He is the good from which nothing but good comes, and resisteth all evil only with goodness. This, Sir, is the nature and Spirit of God, and here you have your infallible proof whether you are moved and led by the Spirit of God. Here is a proof that never can fail you; is always at hand; and is liable to no mistake or delusion. If it be the earnest desire and longing of your heart to be merciful as He is merciful; to be full of His unwearied patience, to dwell in His unalterable meekness; if you long to be like Him in universal, impartial love; if you desire to communicate every good to every

creature that you are able; if you love and practise everything that is good, righteous and lovely for its own sake, because it is good, righteous, and lovely; and resist no evil but with goodness; then you have the utmost certainty that the Spirit of God lives, dwells, and governs in you. Now all these tempers are as capable of being known to every man as his own love and hatred; and therefore no man can be deceived as to the possession of them but he that chooses to deceive himself. Now, if you want any of these tempers, if the whole bent of your heart and mind is not set upon them, all pretences to an immediate inspiration and continual operation of the Spirit of God in your soul are vain and groundless. For the Spirit of God is that which I have here described; and where His Spirit dwells and governs, there all these tempers are brought forth or springing up as the certain fruits of it. . . . Keep but within the bounds here set you; call nothing a proof of the Spirit or work of God in your soul but these tempers and the works which they produce; and then, but not till then, you may safely and infallibly say with St. John, 'Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.'

Academicus. . . . I now perceive that, as a spiritual man or one devoted to the Spirit of God, I am not to look after any extraordinaries, any new openings, illuminations, visions, or voices, inward or outward, from God as proofs of the Spirit of God dwelling and working in me; but that all my proof and security of being governed by the Spirit of God is to be grounded on other matters: that the boundless humility and resignation of the holy Jesus, the unwearied patience, the unalterable meekness, the impartial, universal love of God manifested in my soul are its only proofs that God is in me of a truth. Thus far all is right and good.

But yet, Sir, surely it must be said with truth that the Spirit of God often discovers itself and operates in good souls in very extraordinary ways, in uncommon illuminations and openings of divine light and knowledge, in the revelation of mysteries, in strong impulses and sallies of a wonderful zeal, full of the highest gifts and graces of God:

and that these have frequently been God's gracious methods of awakening a sinful world.

Theophilus. What you say, Academicus, is very true; and almost every age of the Church is a sufficient proof of it. By the goodness of God, the Church has always had its extraordinary persons, highly gifted from above, made burning and shining lights and carried into as uncommon ways of life by the same Spirit and for the same ends as John the Baptist was, and as different from common Christians as he was from the common Jews. But, my friend, these extraordinary operations of God's Holy Spirit and the wonders of His gifts and graces showing themselves at certain times and upon certain persons, through all the ages of the Church, are not matters of common instruction; they belong not to our subject; it would be ignorance and vanity in me to pretend to let you into the secret of them; it would be the same thing in you to think yourself ready for it.[25]

Would you know the sublime, the exalted, the angelic in the Christian life, see what the Son of God saith: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself. On these two (saith He) hang all the Law and the Prophets.' And without these two things no good light ever can arise or enter into your soul. Take all the sciences, shine in all the accomplishments of the lettered world, they will only lead you from one vain passion to another; everything you send out from within you is selfish, vain, and bad, everything you see or receive from without will be received with a bad spirit, till these two heavenly tempers have overcome the natural perverseness of fallen nature. Till then nothing pure can proceed from within, nor anything be received in purity from without.

Think yourself therefore unfit, incapable of judging rightly or acting virtuously, till these two tempers have the government of your heart. Then every truth will meet you; no hurtful error can get entrance into your heart; you will neither deceive nor be deceived, but will have a better knowledge of all divine matters than all the human learning in the world can help you to. [140-142]

THE WAY TO DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

In Three Dialogues

Humanus. The Gospel is no history of any absent, distant, or foreign thing, but is a manifestation of an essential, inherent, real life and death in every son of Adam; grounded on the certainty of his first angelical nature, on the certainty of his real Fall from that into an animal, earthly life of impure, bestial flesh and blood, and on the certainty of an inward redemption from it by the divine nature given again into him. These three great points, with all the doctrines, duties, and consequences that are essentially contained in or flow from them, are the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to which, by your means, I am become a convert. I am now, dear Theophilus, strongly drawn two different ways. First, I am all hunger and thirst after this new light, a glimpse of which has already raised me, as it were, from the dead: and I am in the utmost impatience to hear more and more of this divine philosophy, which, I so plainly see, opens all the mysteries both of nature and grace from the beginning to the end of time. What I have heard from you when I was obliged to be silent, and what I have since found and felt by much reading the *Appeal* and that *Dialogue* obliges me to speak in this ardent manner. They have awakened something in me which I never felt before, something much deeper than my reason and over which I have no power; it glows in my soul, like a fire or hunger, which nothing can satisfy but a further view of those great truths which I this day expect from your opening to us the mysteries of Heaven revealed to that wonderful man, Jacob Behmen.

On the other hand, I find in myself a vehement impulse to turn preacher amongst my former infidel brethren; which impulse I know not how to resist. For being just converted

myself, I seem to know and feel the true place from whence conversion is to arise in others; and by the reluctance which I have felt in my passage from one side to the other, I seem also to know the true ground on which infidelity supports itself. And he only is able to declare with spirit and power any truths or bear a faithful testimony of the reality of them who preaches nothing but what he has first seen and felt and found to be true by a living sensibility and true experience of their reality and power in his own soul. All other preaching, whether from art, hearsay, books, or education, is, at best, but playing with words and mere trifling with sacred things. Being thus divided in myself, I hope to have your direction.

Theophilus. Dear Humanus, my heart embraces you with great joy, and I am much pleased with what you say of yourself. This hunger of your soul is all that I wish for; it is the fire of God, the opening of eternity, the beginning of your redemption, the awakener of the angelic life, the root of an omnipotent faith, and the true seeker of all that is lost. For all these things, and much more, are the blessed powers which will soon break forth and show themselves to be the true workings of this celestial fire that has begun to glow within you.

Your business is now to give way to this heavenly working of the Spirit of God in your soul and turn from everything either within you or without you that may hinder the further awakening of all that is holy and heavenly within you. For within you is that heavenly angel that died in Paradise, and died no other death than that of being hid awhile from your sight and sensibility.

For be assured of this, as a certain truth, that corrupt, fallen, and earthly as human nature is, there is nevertheless in the soul of every man the fire, and light, and love of God, though lodged in a state of hiddenness, inactivity, and death, till something or other, human or divine, Moses and the prophets, Christ or His apostles, discover its life within us.

For the soul of every man is the breath and life of the triune God, and as such, a partaker of the divine nature; but

all this divinity is unfelt, because overpowered by the workings of flesh and blood, till such time as distress, or grace, or both, give flesh and blood a shock, open the long shut-up eyes, and force a man to find something in himself that sense and reason whilst at quiet were not aware of. Wonder not, therefore, at this conflict in your soul, that you are eager after more light, and impatient to communicate that which you have. For you must be thus driven; and both these desires are only two witnesses to this truth, that a heaven-born spirit is come to life in you. [147-149]

Academicus. I must take the liberty, gentlemen, of speaking first this afternoon; for though I have been much pleased with what passed betwixt Humanus and Theophilus in the morning, yet I must own to you all that I was quite disappointed; for I came in full expectation of hearing everything that I wish and want to know concerning Jacob Behmen and his works. For though I have been reading for more than two years some one or other of his books with the utmost attention, and I everywhere find the greatest truths of the Gospel most fundamentally asserted, yet presently I am led into such depths as I know not where I am and talked to in such new, intricate, and unintelligible language as seems quite impossible to be comprehended. Sometimes I almost suspect that the author understood not himself. . . .

All my acquaintance have the same complaint that I here make, but some hope and others say that, if you live to publish any of his books, you will remove most of his strange and unintelligible words, and give us notes and explications of such as you do not alter. Surely a kind of commentary upon him would reconcile many to the reading of him who, in the state he is in, cannot have patience to puzzle their heads about him?

Rusticus. O this impatient scholar! How many troubles do I escape through the want of his learning! How much better does my old neighbour John the shepherd proceed![1]

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, see pages 267-274.

In winter evenings, when he comes out of the field, his own eyes being bad, the old woman his wife puts on her spectacles and reads about an hour to him, sometimes out of the Scriptures and sometimes out of Jacob Behmen; for he has had two or three of his books some years. I sat by one evening, when my old dame, reading Jacob, had much ado to get on. John, said I, do you understand all this? Ah, says he, God bless the heart of the dear man, I sometimes understand but little of him; and mayhap Betty does not always read right; but that little which I often do understand does me so much good that I love him where I do not understand him.

John, said I, shall I bring a man to you that knows the meaning of all Jacob's hard words and can make all his high matters as plain to you as the plainest things in the world? No, no, replied John, I do not want such a man to make a talking about Jacob's words; I had rather have but a little of his own, as it comes from him, than twenty times as much at second-hand. Madam, the Squire's wife of our town, hearing how Betty and I loved the Scriptures, brought us one day a huge expounding book upon the New Testament, and told us that we should understand the Scripture a deal better by reading it in that book than the Testament alone. The next Lord's Day, when two or three neighbours, according to custom, came to sit with us in the evening: Betty, said I, bring out Madam's great book and read the fifth chapter of St. Matthew. When she had done that I bid her read the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The next morning said I to Betty, Carry this expounding book again to my mistress and tell her that the words of Christ and His apostles are best by themselves and just as they left them.

And, as I was that morning going to my sheep, thought I to myself, This great expounding book seems to have done just as much good to this little book of the Testament by being added to it and mixed with it, as a gallon of water would do to a little cup of true wine by being added to it or mixed with it. The wine, indeed, would be all there, but its fine taste and cordial spirit which it had, when drank

by itself, would be all lost and drowned in the coldness and deadness of the water.

When my Betty used to read this or some such words of Christ, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,' she used to stop a little, that my heart might have time to be affected with them, to love the blessed thing there spoken of, and lift up itself to God in desire of it. But this great book takes this good work from my heart, and only calls upon my mind to behold the many parts which the text may be split into, and the many meanings, some better and some worse, some higher and some lower, that every part has, and may be taken in by some doctor of some Church or other. Therefore, Rusticus, I sent the great book to Madam again; and am, for the same reason, utterly against hearing your expounder of Jacob Behmen. If Jacob has more truths than other folks, he is the best able to tell me what they are; and if he has some matters too high for me, I do not desire any lesser man to make them lower.

When he, like an Elijah in his fiery chariot, is caught up into such heights and sees and relates such things as I cannot yet comprehend, I love and reverence him for having been where I never was and seeing such things as he cannot make me see; just as I love and reverence St. Paul for having been caught up into the third Heaven and hearing and seeing things not possible to be uttered in human words.

As I have but one end in hearing the Scriptures read to me, to fill me with the love of God and every kind of goodness, so every part of Scripture, whether plain or mysterious, does me the same good, is alike good to me, and kindles the same heavenly flame in my soul. Thus these plain words, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls,' give me, without any expounder of their meaning, such an aversion and dislike of all vanity and pride, fill me with such sweet contentment in every lowliness of life, that I long to be the servant of every human creature. On the other hand, these lofty words of Scripture: 'Behold, a throne was set in Heaven; and He that sat thereon was, to look upon, like a jasper-stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne

and four-and-twenty seats, and upon the seats four-and-twenty elders in white raiment and crowns of gold upon their heads. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices. And before the throne were seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.[2] And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal. And in the midst of the throne and round about it were four beasts full of eyes before and behind: and the first beast was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle: and the four beasts had each of them six wings and were full of eyes, and they rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when these beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, the four-and-twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, for thou hast created all things,' etc.

Now these lofty and mysterious words, instead of puzzling my head, lay hold of my heart, which, all inflamed with them, rises up with the eyes and wings of the beasts in their song of praise and honour, and bows down with the elders that worship the high and mighty Lord of Heaven and earth. And thus I want no Hebrew or Greek scholar to tell me this or that: what are the seven spirits of God, why four kinds of beasts, why neither more nor less than six wings, who were the elders, and why twenty-four; but the whole matter, as if a glance of the majesty of Heaven had just passed by me, strikes my heart with such good transports of wonder and joy as make me all longing and desire to be one of those who are always singing the praises and wonders of the majesty of God. And thus, Rusticus, all that the Scriptures give me to drink, whether high or low, is equally a cup of blessing to me, and equally helps forward the growth of Heaven in my soul.

Bring not therefore your cunning man that has skill in words to me; for words are but words; and though they be spoken even by the messengers of God, as angels, or

prophets, or apostles, when they do their best, they can only do as John the Baptist did, bear witness to the light: but the light itself, which can only give light to the soul, is God Himself. And therefore not he that can best speak with the tongues of men and angels, but he that most loves God, that is, that most loves the goodness of the divine nature, he has most of God and the light of God within him.

Thus ended honest old John the shepherd. And now, Academicus, if your learned curiosity could be as much affected with what he has said as my ignorant simplicity is, you would drop all that you had said, as the effect of such impatience as is much fitter to bring darkness than light into your soul. You own that in the works of Behmen the greatest points of Christianity are most fundamentally opened. And how can you be more self-condemned than by desiring more?

But the truth is, you have only *heard* these fundamental matters; you have only received them as good notions; are content with the hearsay of them; and are therefore impatient to have more of this hearsay knowledge that you may become more learned in high matters, and more able to talk about the ground and depth of Christian doctrines. You know, as well as I can tell you, that this is your joy in Jacob Behmen; and thence it is, that you have no patience when you cannot come at his meaning so as to add it to your number of notions. And thus you forget how often he tells you, and how fundamentally he proves to you, that this notional knowledge, the treasure of human reason, is the very builder of Babel.[3] Whilst you are under the guidance of our own Babylonian reason, you can have no good either from the Scriptures or the writings of Jacob Behmen, but will be hunting after *notes* and *commentaries* to help you to notions which only delude your mind with the empty shadows of knowledge. Would you know the truths of Jacob Behmen, you must see that you stand where he stood; you must begin where he began and seek only, as he tells you he did, the 'heart of God, that he might be saved from the wrath of sin and Satan'; and then it was that the light of God broke in upon him.[4] But you, full of power of your

own reason, want to stand upon the top of his ladder, without the trouble of beginning at the bottom and going up step by step. But I believe you had rather have Theophilus speak than me, and therefore I shall now leave you to him.

Theophilus. Truly, Academicus, I am much of the same mind with honest Rusticus, though perhaps I might not have spoken it so bluntly as he has done. You seem to be in the same error that most of my learned friends are in with regard to Jacob Behmen, who, though they greatly admire him, yet of all people receive the least true benefit from him. They have been trained up in dispute and controversy, accustomed to determine everything by the light of their own reason, and know no other guide to truth. And therefore, till, sooner or later, they come to know the falseness of this guide, they can have no entrance into the region of divine light; but must be forced to take their part, not of truth, but of some such system of opinions as their birth and education has placed them in. Thus, a learned Papist has one creed and the learned Protestant has another; not because truth and light have helped him to it, but because birth and education have given to the one Popish, to the other Protestant eyes. For reason, which is the eye or light of both, finds as much to its purpose, and as many good tools to work with in Popish as in Protestant opinions. Learning and criticism are an open field to both, and he only has the greatest harvest who is best skilled in reaping.

Academicus. I perceive, then, that I must renounce all my learning and reason if I am to understand Jacob Behmen. I cannot say that I am resolved to purchase it at so great a price. I hope the knowledge to be had from the Scriptures will be sufficient for me, without his deep matters. I did not expect to find you so great an enemy to learning.

Theophilus. Dear Academicus, be not so uneasy. I am no more an enemy to learning than I am to that art which builds mills to grind our corn and houses for ourselves to dwell in. I esteem the liberal arts and sciences as the noblest of human things; I desire no man to dislike or renounce his

skill in ancient or modern languages; his knowledge of medals, pictures, paintings, history, geography or chronology; I have no more dislike of these things in themselves than of the art of throwing silk or making lace. But then, all these things are to stand in their proper places and every one kept within its own sphere.[5]

Now all this circle of science and arts, whether liberal or mechanic, belongs solely to the natural man; they are the work of his natural powers and faculties; and the most wicked, sensual, unjust person, who regards neither God nor man, may yet be one of the ablest proficients in any or all of them. But now Christian redemption is quite of another nature; it has no affinity to any of these arts or sciences; it belongs not to the outward natural man, but is purely for the sake of an inward, heavenly nature that was lost or put to death in Paradise and buried under the flesh and blood of the earthly, natural man. It breathes a spark of life into this inward, hidden, or lost man; by which it feels and finds itself and rises up in new awakened desires after its lost Father and native country.

This is Christian redemption; on the one side, it is the heavenly divine life offering itself again to the inward man that had lost it. On the other side, it is the hope, the faith, and desire of this inward man, hungering and thirsting, stretching after and calling upon this divine and heavenly life. . . .

Theophilus. Jacob Behmen may be considered (1) as a teacher of the true ground of the Christian religion; (2) as a discoverer of the false antichristian Church, from its first rise in Cain, through every age of the world, to its present state in all and every sect of the present divided Christendom; (3) as a guide to the truth of all the mysteries of the kingdom of God. In these three respects, which contain all that anyone can possibly want to know or learn from any teacher, he is the strongest, the plainest, the most open, intelligible, awakening, convincing writer that ever was. As to all these three matters, he speaks to everyone, as himself saith, in the sound of a trumpet. And here to pretend to be an

explainer of him or make him fitter for our apprehension in these great matters is as vain as if a man should pipe through a straw, to make the sound of a trumpet better heard by us.

Further, he may be considered (4) as a relater of depths opened in himself of wonders which his spirit had seen and felt in his *ternario sancto*.[6] Now in this respect he is no teacher, nor his reader a learner; but all that he saith is only for the same end, as St. Paul spoke of his having been in the third Heaven and hearing things not possible to be spoken in human words. . . .

There are two sorts of people to whom he forbids the use of his books as incapable of any benefit from them and who will rather receive hurt than any good from them. The first sort he shows in these words: 'Loving reader, if thou lovest the vanity of the flesh still, and art not in earnest purpose on the way to the new birth, intending to be a new man, then leave the above-written words in these prayers unnamed, or else they will turn to a judgment of God in thee.' Again, 'Reader, I admonish you sincerely, if you be not in the way of the Prodigal or lost son returning to his father again, that you leave my book and read it not; it will do you harm. But if you will not take warning, I will be guiltless; blame nobody but yourself.'[7]

In this advice, so different from that of other writers, he shows the truth and reality of his own regenerated state, and that the very same spirit speaks in him as formerly said, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'—'Unless a man deny himself and forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.'—'No man can come unto me except the Father draweth him.'—'Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'—'He that is of God heareth God's Word.'—'Come unto me, all ye that labour, are weary and heavy-laden.' For all these texts of Scripture say that very self-same thing that Jacob Behmen doth, when he absolutely requires his reader to be in the way of the returning Prodigal. It is not rules of morality observed or an outward blameless form of life that will do: for pride, vanity, envy, self-love, and love of the world can

be and often are the heart of such a morality of life. But the state of the lost son is quite another thing, and must be the state of every man. As soon as he comes to himself and has seeing eyes, he will then, like him, see himself far from home; that he has lost his first Paradise, his heavenly Father, and and the dignity of his first birth; that he is a poor, beggarly slave in a foreign land, hungry, ragged, and starving amongst the lowest kind of beasts, not so well fed and clothed as they are. When thus finding himself, he saith, 'I will arise, and go to my father,' etc., then has he his first fitness for the mysteries opened in Jacob Behmen's writings; for they are addressed to man only in this supposed state; they have no fitness to him but in this state; and therefore no one, whether Jew, Christian, or Deist, who does not find and feel himself to be the very lost son described in the parable, has any capacity to receive benefit from them, but they will be a continual stumbling-block to him. And it is just thus with the Gospel itself; wherever it is received and professed without something of this preparation of heart, without this sensibility of the lost son, there it can only be a stone of stumbling, and help the earthly man to form a religion of notions and opinions from the unfelt meaning of the letter of the Gospel.

Secondly, the other sort of people whom he excludes from his books, and for whom he has writ nothing, are the men of reason, who give themselves up to the light of reason as the true touchstone of divine truths. To these he declares over and over that he has not his light from reason; and that he writes nothing to reason. 'The rational man,' saith he, 'understands nothing in reference to God; for it is without and not in God.' Again, 'The true understanding must flow from the inward ground, out of the living Word of God. In which inward ground all my knowledge concerning the divine and natural ground hath taken its rise, beginning, and understanding. I am not born of the school of this world and am a plain simple man; but by God's Spirit and will am brought, without my own purpose and desire, into divine knowledge in high natural searchings.' . . . Again: 'If my writings,' says he, 'come into your hands, I would

that you should look upon them as of a child's in whom the Highest has driven his work; for there is that couched therein which no reason may understand or comprehend.' . . . Again: 'Speaking of the mystery,' he saith, 'pray to God, the most High, that He would be pleased to open the door of knowledge, without which no man will understand my writings; for they surpass the astral reason; they apprehend and comprehend the divine birth; and therefore only the like spirit can understand them aright. No reasoning or speculating reacheth them unless the mind be illuminated from God, to the finding of whom the way is faithfully shown to the seeking reader.'[8]

And now, Academicus, you may see how needless it is to ask me or anyone else to help you to understand his works: he himself has given you all the assistance that can be given; he has laid open before you, in the utmost plainness, both the nature of the mystery and the one only possible way that you can partake of it. . . .

If you have but two or three of Jacob Behmen's books, it is enough, for every one of them has all in it that you need be taught and sufficiently opens the grounds of the whole mystery of the Christian redemption. He himself thought his books to be too numerous, and expressed his wish that they were all reduced into one.[9] As he wrote without any art and had no knowledge of regularity of composition, so whatever particular matter he occasionally entered upon, he always began again afresh from the same first ground and full opening of the mystery of nature, from whence he explained and determined the matter he was upon. And it was this frequent and almost constant repetition of one and the same ground that swelled his writings into so many volumes, though it may be said that there is nothing separately in any of his books but what is to be found in almost every other, though not so largely set forth. You have no need, therefore, to run with eagerness through all his books; but the thing that you are to intend and look for is the ground and foundation on which all his doctrines are built, which contains the true philosophy or fundamental opening of all the powers that work both in nature and grace; and

that by this knowledge you may become a true workman yourself and know how to conform to and concur with all that the working powers, either of nature or grace, require of you. Now this ground[10] and foundation of all is (as far as words can do it) opened to you in every one of his books; and you have been already also sufficiently brought into the knowledge of it by what has been said of the birth of nature; what it is, how it works, how it came into being, how it is distinct from God, how it wants God, how God is manifested in it, how every after-thing is from and out of it, is all that it is and hath all that it hath in it and by it, and must have all its happiness or misery according as it works with or contrary to nature. . . . So that nothing is done arbitrarily or by mere will, but everything in conformity to the unchangeable workings and powers of nature; only directed, assisted, and helped by the mercy of God's redeeming *fiat*,[11] so far as nature was capable of being helped.

This, sir, is the true and fundamental ground of all his doctrines; and, standing upon this ground, you stand in the centre of truth, whence everything that you need to know of God, of nature, of Heaven, of hell, of the Fall of man, of his redemption only and solely in and by the Word or Son of God, is known in such self-evident certainty as you find and know the workings of your own life: and also, that happiness or misery, life or death, can only be had or not had, lost or found, solely as a birth in nature, brought forth by the faith or magic power of the will of man, working either with or contrary to the redeeming *fiat* of God.

To make, therefore, a right use of his writings, you should, for a sufficient time, keep solely to that part of them which opens the ground and foundation of the powers that work in grace and nature, till by a self-evident sensibility it is opened in you and your heart stands in a conformity to it and true working with it. For it is your own heart, as finding the working powers of nature and grace in itself and simply given up in faith to work with them, that is to be your key and guide to that knowledge you are to have of them; whether it be from the Holy Scripture or the writings of this author. For to this end, he tells you, he has written all, viz.,

to help man to seek and find himself; what is his birth, his state and place in nature; what he is in body, soul, and spirit; from what worlds all these three parts of him are come; how they came to be as they are at present; what his Fall is, and how he must rise out of it. And therefore if, in order to seek and find this ground in yourself, you were, for some sufficient time, to read only to the tenth or twelfth chapter of his *Three Principles* or to the sixth or eighth chapter of his *Threefold Life*, and proceed no further, till this ground had made itself manifest in you and your heart stood in a strict conformity to it and working with it, you would then be in a true fitness to read further and reap the full benefit from any other of his books that should fall into your hands; whether it was the *Way to Christ* or the book upon the *Incarnation.*[12] But, above all things, remember this advice as of the last moment to you, 'Be no reasoner upon the mystery'; seek for no commentaries,[13] or rational explications of it, to entertain your reason with: for as soon as you do this, then, however true and good this mystery may be in itself, it is with regard to you of no better use than that very vain philosophy and science, falsely so called, condemned by the Apostle. It will only be the same snare and delusion to you that other learning and philosophy is to other people. For if there is nothing good or divine in you but the faith, and hope, and love, and desire of your heart turned to God; if nothing can do any good, be any blessing or happiness to this faith, and love, and desire turned to God, but only God Himself in His holy being; and if nothing can communicate God to you but God Himself; and if God cannot communicate Himself to you under a notion or idea of reason, but by a degree of life, good, and blessing born or brought to life in your soul; then you see that to give yourself up to reasoning and notional conceptions is to turn from God and wander out of the way of all divine communication. . . .

What thanks, therefore, are due to the goodness of God for opening this great mystery of all things in our author, wherein the right and wrong, the true and false in religion,

is as manifest as anything can be to our senses! Let no one therefore take offence at the opening of this mystery as if it brought anything new into religion; for it has nothing new in it; it alters no point of Gospel doctrine, nor adds anything to it, but only sets every article of the old Christian faith upon its true ground and in such a degree of light as, when seen, is irresistible. It disturbs no one who is in possession of the truth, because it points at nothing, drives to nothing but to the opening of the heavenly life in the soul. It calls no man from any outward form of religion, as such, but only shows that no outward form can have any good in it but so far as it only means, and seeks, and helps the renewed life of Heaven in the soul. 'A Christian,' says he, 'is of no sect and yet in every sect,'[14] a truth which all sects as such will dislike, and therefore a truth equally wanted to be known and equally beneficial to all sects. For the chief hurt of a sect lies in this, that it takes itself to be necessary to the truth, whereas the truth is only then found when it is known to be of no sect but as free and universal as the goodness of God and as common to all names and nations as the air and light of this world. [185-190, 195-198, 254-256, 261-262]

Theophilus. This world, with all its stars, elements, and creatures, is come out of the invisible world; it has not the smallest thing or the smallest quality of anything but what is come forth from thence, and therefore every quality of everything is what it is and worketh that which worketh by a secret power and nature in and from the invisible world. Bitter, sweet, sour, hard, soft, hot, cold, etc., have all of them their first seed and birth in the invisible world, called eternal nature. The irrational animals of this world feel all these things: the rational man goes further, he can reason and dispute about their outward causes and effects. But the mystery of eternal nature must first be opened in man before he can give the divine philosophy of them. For as they all come from thence, have their nature, birth and growth from thence, so no philosophy but that which comes from thence can give the true ground of them.

If man himself was not all these three things, *viz.*, (1) a birth of the holy Deity; (2) a birth of eternal nature; and (3) also a microcosm[15] of all this great outward world, that is, of everything in it, its stars and elements; and if the properties of every creaturely life were not in a hidden birth in him, no omnipotence of God could open the knowledge of divine and natural things in him.

For God can only manifest that which there is to be manifested, and therefore only open that which before lay unopened and as in a state of hiddenness or death. Nothing can come forth from man or any creature but that which first had its seed in him, and to think that any knowledge can be put into him but that which is a birth of his own life is as absurd as to think that the tree and its branches may first grow and then be brought to the root. . . .

Would you, therefore, be a divine philosopher you must be a true Christian, for darkness is everywhere but in the kingdom of God, and truth nowhere to be found by man but in a new birth from above. Man was created in and for the truth, that is, he was created in the truth of the divine light, to see and hear, to taste and feel, to find and enjoy all things in the truth of the divine life brought forth in him. And therefore it is that for fallen man there is but one remedy; it is only the truth that can make him free. Truth is the only resting-place of the soul; it is its atonement and peace with God; all is and must be disquiet, a succession of lying vanities, till the soul is again in the truth in which God at first created it. And therefore, said the Truth, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

Academicus. Pray, Theophilus, stop awhile: surely your zeal carries you too far. All ages of the world have seemed to agree in this, that the Gospel teaches purely the simplicity of a godly life, calls no man to be a philosopher nor gives the smallest instruction in matters that relate to philosophy.

Theophilus. All this, Academicus, is very true; but then, this very simplicity and plainness of the Gospel, turning man only from this world to a faith and hope and desire of God, is the one reason and full proof that it alone is a true

guide into the highest school of divine wisdom and philosophy, not only because goodness is our greatest wisdom, but because the mysteries of God, of grace, of nature, of time and eternity can no other possible way be opened in man but by this simplicity of a godly life taught in the Gospel, because only the godly life hath knowledge of God, just as the creaturely life hath only knowledge of the creature and the painful life hath knowledge of pain. The Scripture saith that only the Spirit of God knoweth the things of God. And, indeed, how can it possibly be otherwise? For since the Spirit of God is the spirit and life that goeth through all nature and creature and only openeth its own hidden powers therein, since it is that which is the former of everything, that which makes everything to have the life that it hath and to work as it worketh, nothing but the Spirit of God can possibly know the things of God. And therefore, of necessity, this Spirit of God must be in man and work in man, as it is in nature and worketh in nature, before man can enter into the knowledge and working of God in nature. And therefore here you have two immutable and fundamental truths: (1) that all our ignorance of God and nature is and must be purely and solely the want of the Spirit and life of God in us; and (2) that therefore the one only way to divine knowledge is the way of the Gospel, which calls and leads us to a new birth of the divine nature brought forth in us. . . .

Now, the way to the new birth lies wholly in your will to it, and every step that you can take consists in a continual dying to the selfish, corrupt will which you have from flesh and blood. Nothing can make any change in you but the change of your will. For everything, be it what it will, is a birth of that will which worketh in you. You have nothing, therefore, to inquire after nor anything that you can judge of yourself by, but the state of your mind, the working of your will and desire. These will give you more light than all the men or books in the world can give you. Where these are, there are you, and what these are, that are you. There you live and to that you belong, and there you must have all the good or evil that can be called yours.

For nothing leads or carries you anywhere, nothing generates either life or death in you but the working of your mind, will, and desire. If your will is angelic,[16] you are an angel and angelic happiness must be yours. If your will is with God you work with God; God is then the life of your soul, and you will have your life with God to all eternity. If you follow an earthly will, every step you take is a departure from God, till you become as incapable of God and the life of God as the animals of this world. If your will worketh in pride and self-exaltation, in envy and wrath, in hatred and ill-will, in deceit, hypocrisy, and falseness, you work with the devil, you are generating his nature within you and making yourself ready for the kingdom of hell. And thus it is that our works follow us, and that everyone will be rewarded according to his works, and none can reap anything else but that which he hath sown. And the seed of everything that can grow in us is our will. The will maketh the beginning, the middle, and the end of everything; it is the only workman in nature, and everything is its work. It has all power, its works cannot be hindered, it carries all before it, it creates as it goes and all things are possible to it. It enters wherever it wills and finds everything that it seeks, for its seeking is its finding. The will overrules all nature, because nature is its offspring and born of it; for all the properties of nature, whether they be good or evil, in darkness or in light, in love or in hatred, in wrath or in meekness, in pride or humility, in trouble or joy, are all of them the offspring or birth of the will; as that liveth, so they live, and as that changeth, so they change. So that whatever you are, or whatever you feel, is all owing to the working and creating power of your own will. This is your God or your Devil, your Heaven or your hell, and you have only so much of one or the other as your will, which is the first mover, is either given up to the one or to the other.

For where the will of man is not there, he hath nothing, and where his will is, there is all that something which he hath, be it of what kind it will, and it is inseparable from him till his will worketh contrary to it.

Academicus. Whence hath the will of man this mighty

power that it can have nothing but that which itself hath willed?

Theophilus. You might as well ask why a circle must be perfectly round, or a straight line free from every degree of crookedness. For as it is not a circle till it is perfectly round, nor a straight line till it is free from crookedness, so the will is not in being but so far as it is free, is its own mover, and can have nothing but that which it willeth. Secondly, the will is not a made thing, which is made out of something or that came out of some different state into the state of a will. But the free will of man is a true and real birth from the free, eternal, uncreated will of God, which willed to have a creaturely offspring of itself or to see itself in a creaturely state. And therefore the will of man hath the nature of divine freedom, hath the nature of eternity and the nature of omnipotence in it, because it is what it is and hath what it hath as a spark, a ray, a genuine birth of the eternal, free, omnipotent will of God.[17] And therefore, as the will of God is superior to and ruleth over all nature, so the will of man, derived from the will of God, is superior to and ruleth over all his own nature. And thence it is that, as to itself and so far as its own nature reacheth, it hath the freedom and omnipotence of that will from which it is descended, and can have or receive nothing but what itself doth and worketh in and to itself.

And herein consisteth the infinite goodness of God, in the birth of all intelligent creatures, and also the exceeding height, perfection, and happiness of their created state: they are descended from God, full of divine power; they can will and work with God and partake of the divine happiness. They can receive no injustice, hurt, or violence either from nature or creature, but must be only that which they generate, and have no evil or hurt but that which they do in and to themselves. All things stand in the will, and everything, animate or inanimate, is the effect and produce of that will, which worketh in it and formeth it to be that which it is. And every will, wherever found, is the birth and effect of some antecedent will, for will can only proceed from will, till you come to the first working will, which is God Himself.[18] [202-203, 207-208, 210-212]

Stay awhile, Sir, in view of these truths. Here you see the seat and ground, the birth and growth of all sin and evil; it lies in these dark, selfish, self-willed, wrathful, hellish properties of the fallen soul. This is the dark centre of nature, in which the devils have all their own power in themselves, and all their power in you; and till you resist this hell within you, till you live in contrariety to it, the devils will not flee from you.

Here also you see, in a self-evident light, the deep ground and absolute necessity of that one redemption which is called and is the meekness of the heavenly blood of the Lamb of God. For these words in their true ground mean only the changing of the first dark, wrathful properties of fallen nature into the last properties of the heavenly life, light and love, which is the life of God restored to the soul or the light and Spirit or Word of God born again in it.

Let me only add this one word: turn from wrath of every kind as you would flee from the most horrid devil, for it is his, it is he and his strength in you. Whether you look at rage and anger in a tempest, a beast, or a man, it is but one and the same thing, from one and the same cause; and therefore your own wrath is to be turned from, as the same with that of hell, and which has its birth and strength from that hell or centre of nature which the fall of angels hath made known, and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be in a man, a beast, or the elements of this world. And this must be, till the centre of nature is again in its place of hiddenness by being wholly overcome by Heaven.[19] Embrace, therefore, every meekness of love and humility with the same eagerness as you would fall down at the feet of Jesus Christ; for if it is His, it is He and His power of salvation in you. Enter into no strife or self-defence against anyone that either reproaches you or your doctrine; but remember that, if you are to join with Christ in doing good, your sword of natural wrath must be locked up in its own sheath; no weapons of flesh are to be used[20]; but you must work only in the meekness, the sweetness, the humility, the love and patience of the Lamb of God, who, as such, is the only doer of good, the only overcomer of

wrath, and the one redemption of fallen nature. If you are reproached as an enthusiast, do not take comfort in thinking that it is the truth of your own piety or the want of it in others that gives occasion to the charge, for though both of these should happen to be the case, yet they are not proper reflections for you, and if you take your peace from them it is not the peace of God in you. But as in good report, you are to be as though you heard it not, ascribe nothing to yourself from it; so in evil report, self is just as much to be forgotten; and both of them are to be used only as an occasion to generate humility, meekness, love, and the Spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourself and all that speak either well or ill of you. For this is the will and working of Heaven; it has but one will and one work, and that is to change all the wrath, evil, and disorder of nature into a Kingdom of God. And therefore he that would be a servant of God and work with Heaven must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth in that one spirit and one will with which Heaven ruleth over all the earth. [250-251]

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

Part the First

NOW the Spirit of Love has this original. God, as considered in Himself, in His holy being before anything is brought forth by Him or out of Him, is only an eternal will to all goodness. This is the one eternal, immutable God that from eternity to eternity changes not, that can be neither more nor less nor anything else but an eternal will to all the goodness that is in Himself and can come from Him. The creation of ever so many worlds or systems of creatures adds nothing to nor takes anything from this immutable God: He always was and always will be the same immutable will to all goodness. So that as certainly as He is the Creator, so certainly He is the blesser of every created thing and can give nothing but blessing, goodness, and happiness from Himself, because He has in Himself nothing else to give. It is much more possible for the sun to give forth darkness than for God to do, or be, or give forth anything but blessing and goodness. Now this is the ground and original of the Spirit of Love in the creature, it is and must be a will to all goodness; and you have not the Spirit of Love till you have this will to all goodness at all times and on all occasions. You may indeed do many works of love and delight in them, especially at such times as they are not inconvenient to you or contradictory to your state or temper or occurrences in life. But the Spirit of Love is not in you till it is the spirit of your life, till you live freely, willingly, and universally according to it. For every spirit acts with freedom and universality according to what it is. It needs no command to live its own life or be what it is, no more than you need bid wrath be wrathful.

And therefore when love is the spirit of your life, it will have the freedom and universality of a spirit; it will always live and work in love, not because of this or that, here or there, but because the Spirit of Love can only love, wherever it is or goes or whatever is done to it. As the sparks know no motion but that of flying upwards, whether it be in the darkness of the night or in the light of the day, so the Spirit of Love is always in the same course; it knows no difference of time, place, or persons; but whether it gives or forgives, bears or forbears, it is equally doing its own delightful work equally blessed from itself. For the Spirit of Love, wherever it is, is its own blessing and happiness because it is the truth and reality of God in the soul, and therefore is in the same joy of life and is the same good to itself everywhere and on every occasion.

Oh! sir, would you know the blessing of all blessings, it is this God of love dwelling in your soul and killing every root of bitterness which is the pain and torment of every earthly selfish love. For all wants are satisfied, all disorders of nature are removed, no life is any longer a burden, every day is a day of peace, everything you meet becomes a help to you because everything you see or do is all done in the sweet, gentle element of love. For as love has no by-ends, wills nothing but its own increase, so everything is as oil to its flame; it must have that which it wills and cannot be disappointed, because everything naturally helps it to live in its own way and to bring forth its own work. The Spirit of Love does not want to be rewarded, honoured, or esteemed; its only desire is to propagate itself and become the blessing and happiness of everything that wants it. And therefore it meets wrath and evil and hatred and opposition with the same one will as the light meets the darkness, only to overcome it with all its blessings. Did you want to avoid the wrath and ill-will or to gain the favour of any persons, you might easily miss of your ends; but if you have no will but to all goodness, everything you meet, be it what it will, must be forced to be assistant to you. For the wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, and every other evil, only helps the Spirit of Love to be more triumphant to live its own life and

find all its own blessings in an higher degree. Whether therefore you consider perfection or happiness, it is all included in the Spirit of Love and must be so, for this reason, because the infinitely perfect and happy God is mere love, an unchangeable will to all goodness; and therefore every creature must be corrupt and unhappy so far as it is led by any other will than the one will to all goodness. Thus you see the ground, the nature, and perfection of the Spirit of Love.

Let me now in a word or two show you the necessity of it: now the necessity is absolute and unchangeable. No creature can be a child of God but because the goodness of God is in it; nor can it have any union or communion with the goodness of the Deity till its life is a Spirit of Love. This is the one only band of union betwixt God and the creature. All besides this, or that is not this, call it by what name you will, is only so much error, fiction, impurity, and corruption got into the creature and must of all necessity be entirely separated from it before it can have that purity and holiness which alone can see God or find the divine life. For as God is an immutable will to all goodness, so the divine will can unite or work with no creaturely will but that which wills with Him only that which is good. Here the necessity is absolute: nothing will do instead of this will; all contrivances of holiness, all forms of religious piety signify nothing without this will to all goodness. For as the will to all goodness is the whole nature of God, so it must be the whole nature of every service or religion that can be acceptable to Him. For nothing serves God or worships and adores Him but that which wills and works with Him. For God can delight in nothing but His own will and His own spirit, because all goodness is included in it and can be nowhere else. And therefore everything that follows an own will or an own spirit, forsakes the one will to all goodness and, whilst it does so, has no capacity for the light and Spirit of God. The necessity therefore of the Spirit of Love is what God Himself cannot dispense with in the creature any more than He can deny Himself or act contrary to His own holy being. But as it was His will to all goodness that brought forth angels and the spirits of men, so He can will nothing in their existence but

that they should live and work and manifest that same Spirit of Love and goodness which brought them into being. Everything therefore but the will and life of goodness is an apostasy in the creature and is rebellion against the whole nature of God.

There is no peace, nor ever can be, for the soul of man but in the purity and perfection of its first-created nature; nor can it have its purity and perfection in any other way than in and by the Spirit of Love. For as love is the God that created all things, so love is the purity, the perfection, and blessing of all created things; and nothing can live in God but as it lives in love. Look at every vice, pain, and disorder in human nature, it is in itself nothing else but the spirit of the creature turned from the universality of love to some self-seeking or own will in created things. So that love alone is, and only can be, the cure of every evil; and he that lives in the purity of love is risen out of the power of evil into the freedom of the one Spirit of Heaven. The Schools have given us very accurate definitions of every vice, whether it be covetousness, pride, wrath, envy, etc., and shown us how to conceive them as notionally distinguished from one another.[1] But the Christian has a much shorter way of knowing their nature and power and what they all are and do in and to himself. For call them by what names you will or distinguish them with ever so much exactness, they are all, separately and jointly, just that same one thing and do all that same one work, as the scribes, the Pharisees, hypocrites and rabble of the Jews who crucified Christ were all but one and the same thing and all did one and the same work, however different they were in outward names. If you would therefore have a true sense of the nature and power of pride, wrath, covetousness, envy, etc., they are in their whole nature nothing else but the murderers and crucifiers of the true Christ of God; not as the High-Priests did many hundred years ago, nailing His outward humanity to an outward cross, but crucifying afresh the Son of God, the holy Immanuel, who is the Christ that every man crucifies as often as he gives way

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Spirit of Love*, see pages 275-283.

to wrath, pride, envy, or covetousness, etc. For every temper or passion that is contrary to the new birth of Christ and keeps the holy Immanuel from coming to life in the soul is in the strictest truth of the words a murderer and killer of the Lord of life. And where pride, and envy, and hatred, etc., are suffered to live, there the same thing is done as when Christ was killed and Barabbas was saved alive.

The Christ of God was not then first crucified when the Jews brought Him to the cross; but Adam and Eve were His first real murderers; for the death which happened to them in the day that they did eat of the earthly tree was the death of the Christ of God or the divine life in their souls. For Christ had never come into the world as a second Adam to redeem it, had He not been originally the life and perfection and glory of the first Adam. And He is our atonement and reconciliation with God, because by and through Him brought to life in us we are set again in that first state of holiness and have Christ again in us as our first father had at his creation. For had not Christ been in our first father as a birth of life in him, Adam had been created a mere child of wrath in the same impurity of nature, in the same enmity with God, and in the same want of an atoning Saviour as we are at this day. For God can have no delight or union with any creature but because His well-beloved Son the express image of His person is found in it. This is as true of all unfallen as of all fallen creatures; the one are redeemed and the other want no redemption, only through the life of Christ dwelling in them. For as the Word, or Son of God, is the Creator of all things and by Him every thing is made that was made, so every thing that is good and holy in unfallen Angels is as much through His living and dwelling in them as every thing that is good and holy in redeemed man is through Him. And He is just as much the preserver, the strength, and glory, and life of all the thrones and principalities of Heaven as He is the righteousness, the peace, and redemption of fallen man.

This Christ of God has many names in Scripture; but they all mean only this, that He is, and alone can be, the light and life and holiness of every creature that is holy, whether in

Heaven or on earth. Wherever Christ is not, there is the wrath of nature, or nature left to itself and its own tormenting strength of life to feel nothing in itself but the vain restless contrariety of its own working properties. This is the one only origin of hell and every kind of curse and misery in the creature. It is nature without the Christ of God or the Spirit of Love ruling over it. And here you may observe that wrath has in itself the nature of hell; and that it can have no beginning or power in any creature but so far as it has lost the Christ of God. And when Christ is everywhere, wrath and hatred will be nowhere. Whenever therefore you willingly indulge wrath, or let your mind work in hatred, you not only work without Christ but you resist Him and withstand His redeeming power over you; you do in reality what those Jews did when they said, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' For Christ never was, nor can be, in any creature but purely as a Spirit of Love.

In all the universe of nature, nothing but Heaven and heavenly creatures ever had or could have been known, had every created will continued in that state in which it came forth out of and from God. For God can will nothing in the life of the creature but a creaturely manifestation of His own goodness, happiness, and perfection. And therefore where this is wanted, the fact is certain that the creature has changed and lost its first state that it had from God. Every thing therefore which is the vanity, the wrath, the torment, and evil of man or any intelligent creature is solely the effect of his will turned from God and can come from nothing else. Misery and wickedness can have no other ground or root; for whatever wills and works with God must of all necessity partake of the happiness and perfection of God.

This therefore is a certain truth that hell and death, curse and misery can never cease or be removed from the creation till the will of the creature is again as it came from God and is only a Spirit of Love that wills nothing but goodness. All the whole fallen creation, stand it never so long, must groan and travail in pain, this must be its purgatory till every contrariety to the divine will is entirely taken from every creature.[2] Which is only saying, that all the powers and

properties of nature are a misery to themselves, can only work in disquiet and wrath till the birth of the Son of God brings them under the dominion and power of the Spirit of Love. . . .

Nature or the first properties of life are in a state of the highest contrariety and the highest want of something which they have not. This is their whole nature and they have nothing else in them. And this is their true ground and fitness to become a life of triumphing joy and happiness, *viz.*, when united in the possession of that which they seek for in their contrariety. And if life, in its first root, was not this depth of strife, this strength of hunger, and sensibility of want, the fullness of heavenly joy could not be manifested in it. [3-8, 17]

The perfection of every life is no way possibly to be had, but as every flower comes to its perfection, *viz.*, from its own seed and root, and the various degrees of transmutation which must be gone through before the flower is found. It is strictly thus with the perfection of the soul: all its properties of life must have their true natural birth and growth from one another. The first, as its seed and root, must have their natural change into an higher state; must like the seed of the flower pass through death into life and be blessed with the fire, and light, and Spirit of Heaven, in their passage to it; just as the seed passes through death into life, blessed by the fire, and light, and air of this world, till it reaches its last perfection and becomes a beautiful sweet-smelling flower. And to think that the soul can attain its perfection any other way than by the change and exaltation of its first properties of life, just as the seed has its first properties changed and exalted till it comes to have its flower, is a total ignorance of the nature of things. For as whatever dies cannot have a death particular to itself, but the same death in the same way and for the same reasons that any other creature, whether animal or vegetable, ever did or can die; so every life and degree of life must come into its state and condition of life in the same way and for the same reasons as life and the perfection of life come into every other living creature, whether in Heaven or on earth. . . .

Hold it therefore for a certain truth that you can have no good come into your soul, but only by the one way of a birth from above, from the entrance of the Deity into the properties of your own soulish life. Nature must be set right, its properties must enter into the process of a new birth, it must work to the production of light before the Spirit of Love can have a birth in it. For love is delight, and delight cannot arise in any creature till its nature is in a delightful state or is possessed of that in which it must rejoice. And this is the reason why God must become man; it is because a birth of the Deity must be found in the soul, giving to nature all that it wants, or the soul can never find itself in a delightful state and only working with the Spirit of Love. For whilst the soul has only its natural life it can only be in such a state as nature without God is in, *viz.*, a mere hunger, want, contrariety, and strife for it knows not what. Hence is all that variety of blind, restless, contrary passions, which govern and torment the life of fallen man. It is because all the properties of nature must work in blindness, and be doing they know not what, till the light of God is found in them. . . .

In a word, there are in all the possibility of things but two states or forms of life; the one is nature and the other is God manifested in nature; and as God and nature are both within you, so you have it in your power to live and work with which you will; but are under a necessity of doing either the one or the other. There is no standing still, life goes on and is always bringing forth its realities, which way soever it goes. You have seen that the properties of nature are, and can be, nothing else in their own life but a restless hunger, disquiet, and blind strife for they know not what, till the properties of light and love have got possession of them. Now when you see this you see the true state of every natural man, whether he be Cæsar or Cato, whether he gloriously murders others or only stabs himself;[3] blind nature does all the work and must be the doer of it till the Christ of God is born in him. For the life of man can be nothing else but an hunger of covetousness, a rising up of pride, envy, and wrath, a medley of contrary passions, doing and undoing it knows not what, because these workings are essential to the properties of

nature; they must be always hungering and working one against another, striving to be above one another, and all this in blindness till the light of God has helped them to one common good, in which they all willingly unite, rest, and rejoice. In a word, goodness is only a sound and virtue a mere strife of natural passions, till the Spirit of Love is the breath of every thing that lives and moves in the heart. For love is the one only blessing, and goodness, and God of nature; and you have no true religion, are no worshipper of the one true God, but in and by that Spirit of Love, which is God Himself living and working in you. [28-31]

Part the Second

The First Dialogue

Theogenes. Dear *Theophilus*, this gentleman is *Eusebius*, a very valuable and worthy curate in my neighbourhood; he would not let me wait any longer for your second letter on the Spirit of Love, nor be content till I consented to our making you this visit. And indeed, we are both on the same errand and in equal impatience to have your full answer to that part of my objection which you reserved for a second letter.

Theophilus. My heart embraces you both with the greatest affection and I am much pleased at the occasion of your coming, which calls me to the most delightful subject in the world, to help both you and myself to rejoice in that adorable Deity whose infinite being is an infinity of mere love, an unbeginning, never-ceasing, and for ever overflowing ocean of meekness, sweetness, delight, blessing, goodness, patience, and mercy; and all this, as so many blessed streams breaking out of the abyss of universal love, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a triune infinity of love and goodness, for ever and

ever giving forth nothing but the same gifts of light and love, of blessing and joy, whether before or after the fall, either of angels or men. . . .

God can no more begin to have any wrath, rage, or anger in Himself after nature and creature are in a fallen state, than He could have been infinite wrath and boundless rage everywhere and from all eternity. For nothing can begin to be in God or to be in a new state in Him; every thing that is in Him is essential to Him, as inseparable from Him, as unalterable in Him, as the triune nature of His Deity.

Theogenes. Pray, Theophilus, let me ask you, does not patience, and pity, and mercy begin to be in God and only then begin, when the creature has brought itself into misery? They could have no existence in the Deity before. Why then may not a wrath and anger begin to be in God when the creature has rebelled against Him, though it neither had nor could have any existence in God before?

Theophilus. It is true, Theogenes, that God can only then begin to make known His mercy and patience when the creature has lost its rectitude and happiness, yet nothing then begins to be in God, or to be found in Him, but that which was always in Him in the same infinite state, *viz.*, a will to all goodness and which can will nothing else. And His patience and mercy, which could not show forth themselves till nature and creature had brought forth misery, were not new tempers, or the beginning of some new disposition that was not in God before, but only new and occasional manifestations of that boundless eternal will to all goodness which always was in God in the same height and depth. The will to all goodness, which is God Himself, began to display itself in a new way, when it first gave birth to creatures. The same will to all goodness began to manifest itself in another new way, when it became patience and compassion towards fallen creatures. But neither of these ways are the beginning of any new tempers or qualities in God, but only new and occasional manifestations of that true eternal will to all goodness which always was and always will be in the same fulness of infinity in God.

But to suppose that when the creature has abused its power,

lost its happiness and plunged itself into a misery, out of which it cannot deliver itself, to suppose that then there begins to be something in the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is not of the nature and essence of God, and which was not there before, *viz.*, a wrath and fury and vindictive vengeance, breaking out in storms of rage and resentment because the poor creature has brought misery upon itself, is an impiety and absurdity that cannot be enough abhorred. For nothing can be in God but that which He is and has from Himself, and therefore no wrath can be in the Deity itself unless God was in Himself, before all nature and from all eternity, an infinity of wrath. . . . Have you any thing to object to this?

Theogenes. Indeed, Theophilus, both Eusebius and myself have been from the first fully satisfied with what has been said of this matter in the book of *Regeneration*, the *Appeal*, and the *Spirit of Prayer*, etc. We find it impossible to think of God as subject to wrath, or capable of being inflamed by the weakness and folly and irregularity of the creature. We find ourselves incapable of thinking any otherwise of God than as the one only good or, as you express it, an eternal, immutable will to all goodness which can will nothing else to all eternity, but to communicate good, and blessing, and happiness, and perfection to every life according to its capacity to receive it. . . .

I consent also to every thing that you have said of the nature and origin of wrath. That it can have no place nor possibility of beginning, but solely in the creaturely nature, nor even any possibility of beginning there till the creature has died to or lost its proper state of existence in God; that is, till it has lost that life, and blessing, and happiness, which it had in and from God at its first creation. But I still ask, what must I do with all those Scriptures which not only make God capable of being provoked to wrath and resentment, but frequently inflamed with the highest degrees of rage, fury, and vengeance that can be expressed by words?

Theophilus. I promised, you know, to remove this difficulty, and will be as good as my word. But I must first tell you that you are in much more distress about it than you need to be.

For in the little book of *Regeneration*, etc., which you have read with such entire approbation, the whole matter is cleared up from its true ground, how wrath in the Scriptures is ascribed to God, and yet cannot belong to the nature of the Deity. . . .

[Here is quoted verbatim from the *Appeal* the greater part of the long paragraph beginning "Now after these two falls . . ." as printed above on pages 47-49]

For here in the above-cited words, which you have been several years acquainted with, the true ground and reason is plainly shown you how and why all the wrath, rage and curse that is anywhere stirring in nature, or breaking forth in any creature, is and must be in all truth called by the Scriptures the wrath, and rage, and vengeance of God, though it be the greatest of all impossibilities for rage and wrath to be in the holy Deity itself.

The Scriptures therefore are literally true in all that they affirm of the wrath, etc., of God. For is it not as literally true of God, that hell and devils are His, as that Heaven and holy angels are His? Must not therefore all the wrath and rage of the one be as truly His wrath and rage burning in them, as the light and joy and glory of the other is only His goodness opened and manifested in them according to their state in nature?

Take notice of this fundamental truth. Every thing that works in nature and creature, except sin, is the working of God in nature and creature. The creature has nothing else in its power but the free use of its will; and its free will has no other power but that of concurring with or resisting the working of God in nature. The creature with its free will can bring nothing into being nor make any alteration in the working of nature, it can only change its own state or place in the working of nature, and so feel and find something in its state that it did not feel or find before.

Thus God, in the manifestation of Himself in and by nature, sets before every man fire and water, life and death;[4] and man has no other power but that of entering into and uniting with either of these states, but not the least power of adding to, or taking any thing from them, or of making them

to be otherwise than he finds them. For this fire and water, this life and death, are nature and have their unchangeable state in the uniform working of God in nature. And therefore whatever is done by this fire and water, this life and death in any creature, may, nay, must in the strictest truth be affirmed of God as done by Him. And consequently every breathing forth of fire, or death, or rage, or curse, wherever it is or in whatever creature, must be said in the language of Scripture to be a provoked wrath, or fiery vengeance of God, poured forth upon the creature. And yet every thing that has been said in proof of this wrath of God, shows and proves to you at the same time that it is not a wrath in the holy Deity itself.

For you see, as was said above, that God sets before man fire and water, life and death; now these things are not God, nor existence in the Deity itself; but they are that which is and is called nature, and as they are the only things set before man, so man can go no further, reach no further, nor find, nor feel, or be sensible of any thing else, but that which is to be felt or found in this nature, or fire and water, life and death which are set before Him. And therefore all that man can find or feel of the wrath and vengeance of God can only be in this fire and this death and not in the Deity itself.

Theogenes. Oh, Theophilus, you have given me the utmost satisfaction on this point, and in a much better way than I imagined. I expected to have seen you glossing and criticising away the literal expression of Scriptures that affirm the wrath of God, in order to make good your point that the Deity is mere love. But you have done the utmost justice to the letter of Scripture, you have established it upon a firm and solid foundation, and shown that the truth of things requires it to be so and that there can be no wrath anywhere, but what is and must be called the wrath and vengeance of God, and yet is only in nature.

What you have here said seems as if it would clear up many passages of Scripture that have raised much perplexity. Methinks I begin to see how the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, how eyes that see not and ears that hear not, may, in the strictest truth, be said to be *of* or *from* God, though the Deity, in itself, stands in the utmost contrariety to all these

things, and in the utmost impossibility of willing or causing them to be. . . .

Theophilus. I shall now only add this one word more, to strengthen and confirm your right understanding of all that is said of the wrath or rage of God in the Scriptures.[5]

The psalmist, you know, says thus of God, 'He giveth forth His ice like morsels, and who is able to abide His frosts?' Now, sir, if you know how to explain this Scripture, and can show how ice and frost can truly be ascribed to God, as His, though absolutely impossible to have any existence in Him, then you have an easy and unerring key, how the wrath, and fury, and vengeance, that anywhere falls upon any creature, is and may be truly ascribed to God as His, though fury and vengeance are as inconsistent with and as impossible to have any existence in the Deity, as lumps of ice or the hardness of intolerable frosts. . . . Now every working of the wrath of God described in Scripture is strictly of a piece with this, it relates to a wrath solely confined to the powers and working properties of nature, that lives and moves only in the elements of the fallen world and no more reaches the Deity than ice or frost do.

The Apostle says, 'Avenge not yourselves, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' This is another full proof that wrath or vengeance is not in the holy Deity itself as a quality of the divine mind; for if it was, then vengeance would belong to every child of God that was truly born of Him, or he could not have the Spirit of his Father or be perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect.[6]

But if vengeance only belongs to God, and can only be so affirmed of Him, as ice and frost are His and belong to Him; if it has no other manner of working, than as when it is said, 'He sent out His arrows and scattered them, He cast forth lightnings and destroyed them'; then it is certain that the divine vengeance is only in fallen nature and its disordered properties, and is no more in the Deity itself than hailstones and coals of fire. And here you have the true reason why revenge or vengeance is not allowed to man; it is because vengeance can only work in the evil or disordered properties of fallen nature. But man, being himself a part of fallen

nature and subject to its disordered properties is not allowed to work with them, because it would be stirring up evil in himself, and that is his sin of wrath or revenge. God therefore reserves all vengeance to Himself, not because wrathful revenge is a temper or quality that can have any place in the holy Deity, but because the holy supernatural Deity, being free from all the properties of nature, whence partial love and hatred spring, and being in Himself nothing but an infinity of love, wisdom, and goodness, He alone knows how to over-rule the disorders of nature and so to repay evil with evil, that the highest good may be promoted by it.[7]

To say therefore that vengeance is to be reserved to God is only saying in other words that all the evils in nature are to be reserved and turned over to the love of God, to be healed by His goodness. [35-38, 55-58, 65-66]

Theophilus. The ten Commandments, when written by God on tables of stone and given to man, did not then first begin to belong to man; they had their existence in man, were born with him, they lay as a seed and power of goodness, hidden in the form and make of his soul and altogether inseparable from it, before they were shown to man on tables of stone.[8] And when they were shown to man on tables of stone, they were only an outward imitation of that which was inwardly in man, though not legible because of that impurity of flesh and blood in which they were drowned and swallowed up. For the earthly nature having overcome the divinity that was in man, it gave Commandments of its own to man and required obedience to all the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Hence it became necessary that God should give an outward knowledge of such Commandments as were become inwardly unknown, unfelt, and as it were shut up in death in the soul.

But now, had not all that is in these Commandments been really and antecedently in the soul, as its own birth and nature, had they not still lain therein, and, although totally suppressed, yet in such a seed or remains as could be called forth into their first living state, in vain had the tables of

stone been given to man; and all outward writing or teaching of the Commandments had been as useless as so many instructions given to beasts or stones. If therefore you can conceive how all that is good and holy in the Commandments laid hid as an unfelt, unactive power, or seed of goodness, till called into sensibility and stirring by laws written on tables of stone, this may help your manner of conceiving and believing how Christ as a seed of life, or power of salvation, lies in the soul as its unknown, hidden treasure, till awakened and called forth into life by the mediatorial office and process of the holy Jesus.

Again, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Now these two precepts given by the written word of God are an absolute demonstration of the first original perfection of man, and also a full and invincible proof that the same original perfection is not quite annihilated, but lies in him as an hidden, suppressed seed of goodness capable of being raised up to its first perfection. For had not this divine unity, purity, and perfection of love towards God and man been man's first natural state of life, it could have nothing to do with his present state. For had any other nature or measure or kind of love begun in the first birth of his life, he could only have been called to that. For no creature has or can have a call to be above or act above its own nature. Therefore, as sure as man is called to this unity, purity, and perfection of love, so sure is it that it was at first his natural heavenly state and still has its seed or remains within him, as his only power and possibility of rising up to it again. And therefore all that man is called to, every degree of a new and perfect life, every future exaltation and glory he is to have from the mediation of Christ, is a full proof that the same perfection was originally his natural state and is still in him in such a seed or remains of existence as to admit of a perfect renewal.

And thus it is that you are to conceive of the holy Jesus or the Word of God as the hidden treasure of every human soul, born as a seed of the Word in the birth of the soul, immured under flesh and blood till as a day-star it arises in our hearts

and changes the son of an earthly Adam into a son of God. And was not the Word and Spirit of God in us all, antecedent to any dispensation or written word of God, as a real seed of life in the birth of our own life, we could have no more fitness for the gospel-redemption than the animals of this world which have nothing of Heaven in them. And to call us to love God with all our hearts, to put on Christ, to walk according to the Spirit, if these things had not their real nature and root within us, would be as vain and useless as to make rules and orders how our eyes should smell and taste or our ears should see.

Now this mystery of an inward life hidden in man as his most precious treasure, as the ground[9] of all that can be great or good in him, and hidden only since his fall, and which only can be opened and brought forth in its first glory by Him to whom all power in Heaven and on earth is given, is a truth to which almost every thing in nature bears full witness. Look where you will, nothing appears or works outwardly in any creature or in any effect of nature, but what is all done from its own inward invisible spirit, not a spirit brought into it but its own inward spirit, which is an inward invisible mystery, till made known or brought forth by outward appearances....

What a miserable mistake is it therefore to place religious goodness in outward observances, in notions and opinions which good and bad men can equally receive and practise, and to treat the ready, real power and operation of an inward life of God in the birth of our souls as fanaticism and enthusiasm! when not only the whole letter and spirit of Scripture but every operation in nature and creature demonstrates that the Kingdom of Heaven must be all within us, or it never can possibly belong to us. Goodness, piety, and holiness can only be ours as thinking, willing, and desiring are ours, by being in us as a power of Heaven in the birth and growth of our own life.

And now how is the great controversy about religion and salvation shortened! For since the one only work of Christ as your Redeemer is only this, to take from the earthly life of flesh and blood its usurped power and to raise the smothered

spark of Heaven out of its state of death into a powerful, governing life of the whole man, your one only work also under your Redeemer is fully known. And you have the utmost certainty what you are to do, where you are to seek, and in what you are to find your salvation. All that you have to do or can do is to oppose, resist, and as far as you can to renounce the evil tempers and workings of your own earthly nature. You are under the power of no other enemy, are held in no other captivity and want no other deliverance but from the power of your own earthly self. This is the one murderer of the divine life within you. It is your own Cain that murders your own Abel.[10] Now every thing that your earthly nature does is under the influence of self-will, self-love, and self-seeking, whether it carries you to laudable or blamable practices; all is done in the nature and spirit of Cain and only helps you to such goodness as when Cain slew his brother. For every action and motion of self has the spirit of Antichrist and murders the divine life within you.

Judge not therefore of your self by considering how many of those things you do which divines and moralists call virtue and goodness, nor how much you abstain from those things which they call sin and vice. But daily and hourly in every step that you take, see to the spirit that is within you whether it be Heaven or earth that guides you. And judge every thing to be sin and Satan in which your earthly nature, own love, or self-seeking has any share of life in you; nor think that any goodness is brought to life in you, but so far as it is an actual death to the pride, the vanity, the wrath and selfish tempers of your fallen earthly life.

Again here you see where and how you are to seek your salvation, not in taking up your travelling staff or crossing the seas to find out a new Luther or a new Calvin, to clothe yourself with their opinions. No! The oracle is at home that always and only speaks the truth to you, because nothing is your truth but that good and that evil which is yours within you. For salvation or damnation is no outward thing that is brought into you from without but is only that which springs up within you as the birth and state of your own life. What you are in yourself, what is doing in yourself, is all that can be either your salvation or damnation. [49-54]

The Second Dialogue

Eusebius. There is no occasion to resume any thing of our yesterday's discourse. The following propositions are sufficiently proved.

First, That God is an abyssal infinity of love, wisdom, and goodness; that He ever was and ever will be one and the same unchangeable will to all goodness and works of love, as incapable of any sensibility of wrath, or acting under it, as of falling into pain or darkness and acting under their direction.

Secondly, That all wrath, strife, discord, hatred, envy, or pride, etc., all heat and cold, all enmity in the elements, all thickness, grossness, and darkness, are things that have no existence but in and from the sphere of fallen nature.

Thirdly, That all the evils of contrariety and disorder in fallen nature are only as so many materials in the hands of infinite love and wisdom, all made to work in their different ways as far as is possible to one and the same end, *viz.*, to turn temporal evil into eternal good.

So that whether you look at light or darkness, at night or day, at fire or water, at heaven or earth, at life or death, at prosperity or adversity, at blasting winds or heavenly dews, at sickness or health, you see nothing but such a state of things in and through which the supernatural Deity wills and seeks the restoration of fallen nature and creature to their first perfection.

It now only remains that the doctrine of Scripture concerning the atonement necessary to be made by the life, sufferings and death of Christ be explained, or in other words the true meaning of that righteousness or justice of God that must have satisfaction done to it, before man can be reconciled to God. For this doctrine is thought by some to favour the opinion of a wrath and resentment in the Deity itself.

Theophilus. This doctrine, Eusebius, of the atonement made by Christ and the absolute necessity and real efficacy of it to satisfy the righteousness or justice of God is the very ground and foundation of Christian redemption and the life and strength of every part of it. But then this very doctrine is so

far from favouring the opinion of a wrath in the Deity itself that it is an absolute full denial of it and the strongest of demonstrations that the wrath or resentment that is to be pacified or atoned cannot possibly be in the Deity itself.

For this wrath that is to be atoned[11] and pacified is in its whole nature nothing else but sin or disorder in the creature. And when sin is extinguished in the creature all the wrath that is between God and the creature is fully atoned. Search all the Bible from one end to the other and you will find that the atonement of that which is called the divine wrath or justice and the extinguishing of sin in the creature are only different expressions for one and the same individual thing. And therefore unless you will place sin in God, that wrath that is to be atoned or pacified cannot be placed in Him.

The whole nature of our redemption has no other end but to remove or extinguish the wrath that is between God and man. When this is removed, man is reconciled to God. Therefore where the wrath is or where that is which wants to be atoned, there is that which is the blamable cause of the separation between God and man; there is that which Christ came into the world to extinguish, to quench, or atone. If therefore this wrath which is the blamable cause of the separation between God and man is in God Himself; if Christ died to atone or extinguish a wrath, that was got into the holy Deity itself; then it must be said that Christ made an atonement for God and not for man; that He died for the good and benefit of God and not of man; and that which is called our redemption ought rather to be called the redemption of God as saving and delivering Him and not man from His own wrath. This blasphemy is unavoidable, if you suppose that wrath for which Christ died to be a wrath in God Himself.

Again, the very nature of atonement absolutely shows that that which is to be atoned cannot possibly be in God nor even in any good being. For atonement implies the alteration or removal of something that is not as it ought to be. And therefore every creature, so long as it is good and has its proper state of goodness, neither wants, nor can admit of any

atonement, because it has nothing in it that wants to be altered or taken out of it. And therefore atonement cannot possibly have any place in God because nothing in God either wants or can receive alteration; neither can it have place in any creature, but so far as it has lost or altered that which it had from God and is fallen into disorder; and then that which brings this creature back to its first state, which alters that which is wrong in it and takes its evil out of it, is its true and proper atonement. Water is the proper atonement of the rage of fire; and that which changes a tempest into a calm is its true atonement. And therefore as sure as Christ is a propitiation and an atonement, so sure is it that that which He does as a propitiation and atonement can have no place but in altering that evil and disorder which in the state and life of the fallen creature wants to be altered. Suppose the creature not fallen, and then there is no room nor possibility for atonement; a plain and full proof that the work of atonement is nothing else but the altering or quenching that which is evil in the fallen creature.

Hell, wrath, darkness, misery, and eternal death, mean the same thing through all Scripture, and these are the only things from which we want to be redeemed; and where there is nothing of hell, there there is nothing of wrath, nor any thing that wants or can admit of the benefits of the atonement made by Christ. Either, therefore, all hell is in the essence of the holy Deity, or nothing that wants to be atoned by the merits and death of Christ can possibly be in the Deity itself.

The Apostle says that 'we are by nature children of wrath'; the same thing as when the Psalmist says, 'I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.' And therefore that wrath which wants the atonement of the sufferings, blood, and death of Christ, is no other than that sin, or sinful state, in which we are naturally born. But now, if this wrath could be supposed to be in the Deity itself, then it would follow that by being by nature children of wrath we should thereby be the true children of God, we should not want any atonement, or new birth from above, to make us partakers of the divine nature, because that

wrath that was in us would be our dwelling in God and He in us.

Again, all Scripture teaches us that God wills and desires the removal or extinction of that wrath which is betwixt God and the creature; and therefore all Scripture teaches that the wrath is not in God; for God cannot will the removal or alteration of any thing that is in Himself; this is as impossible as for Him to will the extinction of His own omnipotence. Nor can there be any thing in God contrary to or against His own will; and yet if God wills the extinction of a wrath that is in Himself, it must be in Him contrary to or against His own will. This I presume is enough to show you that the atonement made by Christ is itself the greatest of all proofs that it was not to atone or extinguish any wrath in the Deity itself, nor indeed any way to affect or alter any quality or temper in the divine mind, but purely and solely to overcome and remove all that death and hell and wrath and darkness, that had opened itself in the nature, birth, and life of fallen man.

Eusebius. The truth of all this is not to be denied. And yet it is as true that all our systems of divinity give quite another account of this most important matter. The satisfaction of Christ is represented as a satisfaction made to a wrathful Deity; and the merit of the sufferings and death of Christ as that which could only avail with God to give up His own wrath and think of mercy towards man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the ground and nature and efficacy of this great transaction between God and man is often explained by debtor and creditor: man as having contracted a debt with God that he could not pay, and God as having a right to insist upon the payment of it; and therefore only to be satisfied by receiving the death and sacrifice of Christ as a valuable consideration, instead of the debt that was due to Him from man.

Theophilus. Hence you may see, Eusebius, how unreasonably complaint has been sometimes made against the *Appeal*, the *Spirit of Prayer*, etc., as introducing a philosophy into the doctrines of the Gospel not enough supported by the letter of Scripture; though every thing there asserted has been over

and over shown to be well grounded on the letter of Scripture, and necessarily included in the most fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. Yet they, who make this complaint, blindly swallow a vanity of philosophy in the most important part of Gospel religion which not only has less Scripture for it than the infallibility of the Pope, but is directly contrary to the plain letter of every single text of Scripture that relates to this matter: as I will now show you.

First, the Apostle says, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' What becomes now of the philosophy of debtor and creditor,[12] of a satisfaction made by Christ to a wrath in God? Is it not the grossest of all fictions and in full contrariety to the plain written word of God? 'God so loved the world'; behold the degree of it. But when did He so love it? Why, before it was redeemed, before He sent or gave His only Son to be the Redeemer of it. Here you see that all wrath in God, antecedent to our redemption or the sacrifice of Christ for us, is utterly excluded; there is no possibility for the supposition of it, it is as absolutely denied as words can do it. And therefore the infinite love, mercy and compassion of God towards fallen man are not purchased or procured for us by the death of Christ, but the incarnation and sufferings of Christ come from and are given to us by the infinite antecedent love of God for us and are the gracious effects of His own love and goodness towards us.

It is needless to show you how constantly this same doctrine is asserted and repeated by all the apostles. Thus says St. John again, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.' Again, 'This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.' Again, 'God,' says St. Paul, 'was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' Which is repeated and further opened in these words, 'Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and

hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.' And again, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.'

How great therefore, Eusebius, is the error, how total the disregard of Scripture, and how vain the philosophy which talks of a wrath in God antecedent to our redemption, or of a debt which He could not forgive us till He had received a valuable consideration for it; when all Scripture from page to page tells us that all the mercy and blessing and benefits of Christ as our Saviour are the free, antecedent gift of God Himself to us, and bestowed upon us for no other reason, from no other motive, but the infinity of His own love towards us, agreeable to what the evangelical prophet says of God, 'I am He that blotteth out transgressions for my own sake,' that is, 'not for any reason or motive that can be laid before me, but because I am Love itself and my own nature is my immutable reason why nothing but works of love, blessing, and goodness can come from me.'

Look we now at the Scripture account of the nature of the atonement and satisfaction of Christ, and this will further show us that it is not to atone or alter any quality or temper in the divine mind nor for the sake of God, but purely and solely to atone, to quench, and overcome that death, and wrath, and hell, under the power of which man was fallen. 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' This is the whole work, the whole nature, and the sole end of Christ's sacrifice of Himself; and there is not a syllable in Scripture that gives you any other account of it: it all consists from beginning to end in carrying on the one work of regeneration; and therefore the Apostle says, 'The first Adam was made a living soul, but the last or second Adam was made a quickening Spirit,' because sent into the world by God to quicken and revive that life from above which we lost in Adam. And He is called our ransom, our atonement, etc., for no other reason but because that which He did and suffered in our fallen nature was as truly an efficacious means of our being born again to a new heavenly life of Him and from Him, as that which Adam did was the true and natural

cause of our being born in sin and the impurity of bestial flesh and blood. And as Adam by what he did may be truly said to have purchased our misery and corruption, to have brought death for us, and to have sold us into a slavery under the world, the flesh, and the devil, though all that we have from him, or suffer by him, is only the inward working of his own nature and life within us; so, according to the plain meaning of the words, Christ may be said to be our price, our ransom, and atonement, though all that He does for us, as buying, ransoming, and redeeming us, is done wholly and solely by a birth of His own nature and Spirit brought to life in us.

The Apostle says, 'Christ died for our sins.' Thence it is that He is the great sacrifice for sin and its true atonement. But how and why is He so? the Apostle tells you in these words, 'The sting of death is sin—but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And therefore Christ is the atonement of our sins, when by and from Him living in us we have victory over our sinful nature. The Scriptures frequently say Christ gave Himself for us. But what is the full meaning, effect, and benefit of His thus giving Himself for us? The Apostle puts this out of all doubt when he says, 'Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a peculiar people—that He might deliver us from this present evil world—from the curse of the law—from the power of Satan —from the wrath to come:' or, as the Apostle says in other words, 'that He might be made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification.'

The whole truth therefore of the matter is plainly this, Christ given *for us* is neither more nor less than Christ given *into us*. And He is in no other sense our full, perfect, and sufficient atonement than as His nature and Spirit are born and formed in us, which so purge us from our sins that we are thereby, in Him and by Him dwelling in us, become new creatures having our conversation in Heaven. As Adam is truly our defilement and impurity by his birth in us, so Christ is our atonement and purification by our being born again of Him, and having thereby quickened and revived in

us that first divine life, which was extinguished in Adam. And therefore as Adam purchased death for us, just so in the same manner, in the same degree, and in the same sense, Christ purchases life for us. And each of them solely by their own inward life within us.

This is the one Scripture account of the whole nature, the sole end and full efficacy of all that Christ did and suffered for us. It is all comprehended in these two texts of Scripture: (1) 'That Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil,' (2) 'That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' From the beginning to the end of Christ's atoning work no other power is ascribed to it, nothing else is intended by it as an appeaser of wrath, but the destroying of all that in man which comes from the Devil; no other merits, or value, or infinite worth than that of its infinite ability and sufficiency to quicken again in all human nature that heavenly life that died in Adam.

Eusebius. Though all that is here said seems to have both the letter and spirit of Scripture on its side, yet I am afraid it will be thought not enough to assert the infinite value and merits of our Saviour's sufferings. For it is the common opinion of doctors that the righteousness or justice of God must have satisfaction done to it; and that nothing could avail with God as a satisfaction but the infinite worth and value of the sufferings of Christ.

Theophilus. It is true, Eusebius, that this is often and almost always thus asserted in human writers, but it is neither the language nor the doctrine of Scripture. Not a word is there said of a righteousness or justice as an attribute in God that must be satisfied; or that the sacrifice of Christ is that which satisfies the righteousness that is in God Himself.

It has been sufficiently proved to you that God needed not to be reconciled to fallen man; that He never was anything else towards him but love; and that His love brought forth the whole scheme of his redemption. Thence it is, that the Scriptures do not say that Christ came into the world to procure us the divine favour and good-will, in order to put a stop to an antecedent righteous wrath in God towards us. No, the reverse of all this is the truth, *viz.*, that Christ and His

whole mediatorial office came purely and solely from God, already so reconciled to us as to bestow an infinity of love upon us. 'The God of all grace,' says the Apostle, 'who hath called us to His eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' Here you see Christ is not the cause or motive of God's mercy towards fallen man but God's own love for us, His own desire of our eternal glory and happiness, has for that end given us Christ that we may be made partakers of it. The same as when it is again said, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself;' that is, calling, and raising it out of its ungodly and miserable state.

Thus, all the mystery of our redemption proclaims nothing but a God of love towards fallen man. It was the love of God that could not behold the misery of fallen man without demanding and calling for his salvation. It was love alone that wanted to have full satisfaction done to it and such a love as could not be satisfied, till all that glory and happiness that was lost by the death of Adam was fully restored and regained again by the death of Christ.

Eusebius. But is there not some good sense in which righteousness or justice may be said to be satisfied by the atonement and sacrifice of Christ?

Theophilus. Yes, most certainly there is. But then it is only that righteousness or justice that belongs to man and ought to be in him. Now righteousness, wherever it is to be, has no mercy in itself; it makes no condescensions; it is inflexibly rigid; its demands are inexorable; prayers, offerings, and entreaties have no effect upon it; it will have nothing but itself; nor will it ever cease its demands or take anything in lieu of them as a satisfaction instead of itself. Thus, 'without holiness,' says the Apostle, 'no man shall see the Lord.' And again, 'Nothing that is defiled or impure can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' And this is meant by righteousness being rigid and having no mercy; it cannot spare or have pity or hear entreaty, because all its demands are righteous and good, and therefore must be satisfied or fulfilled.

Now righteousness has its absolute demands upon man, because man was created righteous and has lost that original righteousness which he ought to have kept in its first purity.

And this is the one, only righteousness or justice which Christ came into the world to satisfy, not by giving some highly valuable thing as a satisfaction to it but by bringing back or raising up again in all human nature that holiness or righteousness which originally belonged to it. For to satisfy righteousness means neither more nor less than to fulfil it. Nor can righteousness want to have satisfaction in any being but in that being which has fallen from it; nor can it be satisfied but by restoring or fulfilling righteousness in that being which had departed from it. And therefore the Apostle says that 'we are created again unto righteousness in Christ Jesus.' And this is the one and only way of Christ's expiating or taking away the sins of the world, namely by restoring to man his lost righteousness. For this end, says the Scripture, 'Christ gave Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

This is the one righteousness which Christ came into the world to satisfy by fulfilling it Himself and enabling man by a new birth from Him to fulfil it. And when all unrighteousness is removed by Christ from the whole human nature, then all that righteousness is satisfied, for the doing of which Christ poured out His most precious, availing, and meritorious blood.[13]

Eusebius. O Theophilus, the ground on which you stand must certainly be true. It so easily, so fully solves all difficulties and objections and enables you to give so plain and solid an account of every part of our redemption. This great point is so fully cleared up to me that I do not desire another word about it.

Theophilus. However, Eusebius, I will add a word or two more upon it, that there may be no room left either for misunderstanding or denying what has been just now said of the nature of that righteousness which must have full satisfaction done to it by the atoning and redeeming work of Christ. And then you will be fully possessed of these two great truths: first, that there is no righteous wrath in the Deity itself and therefore none to be atoned there: secondly, that though God

is in Himself a mere infinity of love from whom nothing else but works of love and blessing and goodness can proceed, yet sinful men are hereby not at all delivered from that which the Apostle calls the terrors of the Lord, but that all the threatenings of woe, misery, and punishment denounced in Scripture against sin and sinners both in this world and that which is to come stand all of them in their full force and are not in the least degree weakened or less to be dreaded, because God is all Love.

Everything that God has created is right and just and good in its kind and has its own righteousness within itself. The rectitude of its nature is its only law; and it has no other righteousness but that of continuing in its first state. No creature is subject to any pain, or punishment, or guilt of sin, but because it has departed from its first right state and only does and can feel the painful loss of its own first perfection.[14] And every intelligent creature that departs from the state of its creation is unrighteous, evil, and full of its own misery. And there is no possibility for any disordered, fallen creature to be free from its own misery and pain till it is again in its first state of perfection. This is the certain and infallible ground of the absolute necessity either of a perfect holiness in this life or of a further purification after death, before man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now this pain and misery, which is inseparable from the creature that is not in that state in which it ought to be and in which it was created, is nothing else but the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper righteousness, as sickness is the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper health. No other righteousness or other justice, no other severe vengeance demands satisfaction or torments the sinner but that very righteousness which once was in him, which still belongs to him and therefore will not suffer him to have any rest or peace till it is again in him as it was at the first. All therefore that Christ does as an atonement of sin or as a satisfaction to righteousness is all done in and to and for man, and has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man and raising it up into its first state of original righteousness. And if this righteousness which

belongs solely to man and wants no satisfaction but that of being restored and fulfilled in the human nature is sometimes called the righteousness of God, it is only so called because it is a righteousness which man had originally from God in and by his creation; and therefore, as it comes from God and has its whole nature and power of working as it does from God, it may very justly be called God's righteousness. Agreeably to this way of ascribing that to God which is only in the state and condition of man, the Psalmist says of God, 'Thine arrows stick fast in me and thy hand presseth me sore.' And yet nothing else or more is meant by it than when he says, 'My sins have taken such hold of me that I am not able to look up.—My iniquities are gone over my head and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear.'

Now whether you call this state of man the burden of his sins and wickedness or the arrows of the Almighty and the weight of God's hand, they mean but one and the same thing, which can only be called by these different names for no other reason but this, because man's own original righteousness, which he had from God, makes his sinful state a pain and torment to him and lies heavy upon him in every commission of sin. And when the Psalmist again says, 'Take thy plague away from me, I am even consumed by means of thy heavy hand;' it is only praying to be delivered from his own plague, and praying for the same thing as when he says in other words, 'make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'

Now this language of Scripture which teaches us to call the pains and torments of our sins, the arrows, darts, and strokes of God's hand upon us, which calls us to own the power, presence, and operation of God in all that we feel and find in our own inward state, is the language of the most exalted piety and highly suitable to that Scripture which tells us that 'In God we live, and move, and have our being.' For by teaching us to find and own the power and operation of God in everything that passes within us, it keeps us continually turned to God for all that we want and by all that we feel within ourselves, and brings us to this best of all confessions, that pain as well as peace of mind is the effect and mani-

festation of God's infinite love and goodness towards us. For we could not have this pain and sensibility of the burden of sin, but because the love and goodness of God made us originally righteous and happy; and, therefore all the pains and torments of sin come from God's first goodness towards us and are in themselves merely and truly the arrows of His love and His blessed means of drawing us back to that first righteous state in and for which His first and never ceasing love created us.

Eusebius. The matter therefore plainly stands thus. There is no righteous wrath or vindictive justice in the Deity itself, which as a quality or attribute of resentment in the divine mind wants to be contented, atoned, or satisfied; but man's original righteousness, which was once his peace and happiness and rest in God, is by the fall of Adam become his tormentor, his plague, that continually exercises its good vengeance upon him till it truly regains its first state in him. Secondly, man must be under this pain, punishment, and vengeance to all eternity; there is no possibility in the nature, of the thing for it to be otherwise, though God be all Love, unless man's lost righteousness be fully again possessed by him. And therefore the doctrine of God's being all Love, of having no wrath in Himself, has nothing in it to abate the force of those Scriptures which threaten punishment to sinners or to make them less fearful of living and dying in their sins.

Theophilus. What you say, Eusebius, is very true; but then it is but half the truth of this matter. You should have added that this doctrine is the one ground and only reason why the Scriptures abound with so many declarations of woe, misery and judgments, sometimes executed and sometimes only threatened by God; and why all sinners to the end of the world must know and feel 'that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and that indignation and wrath, tribulation, and anguish, must be upon every soul of man that doth evil.' For all these things which the Apostle elsewhere calls 'the terrors of the Lord,' have no ground, nothing that calls for them, nothing that vindicates the fitness and justice of them, either with

regard to God or man, but this one truth, *viz.*, that God is in Himself a mere infinity of love from whom nothing but outflowings of love and goodness can come forth from eternity to eternity. For if God is all love, if He wills nothing towards fallen man but his full deliverance from the blind slavery and captivity of his earthly, bestial nature, then every kind of punishment, distress, and affliction that can extinguish the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of this life, may and ought to be expected from God merely because He is all love and good will towards fallen man.

To say, therefore, as some have said, If God is all love towards fallen man, how can He threaten or chastise sinners? is no better than saying, If God is all goodness in Himself and towards man, how can He do that in and to man which is for his good? As absurd as to say, If the able physician is all love, goodness, and good-will towards his patients, how can he blister, purge, or scarify them, how can he order one to be trepanned and another to have a limb cut off?[15] Nay, so absurd is this reasoning, that if it could be proved that God had no chastisement for sinners, the very want of this chastisement would be the greatest of all proofs that God was not all love and goodness towards man.

The meek, merciful, and compassionate Jesus who had no errand in this world but to bless and save mankind said, If thy right eye or thy right hand offend thee, pluck out the one, cut off the other and cast them from thee. And that He said all this from mere love, He adds, It is better for thee to do this than that thy whole body should be cast into hell. Therefore, if the holy Jesus had been wanting in this severity He had been wanting in true love towards man.

And therefore the pure, mere love of God is that alone from which sinners are justly to expect from God that no sin will pass unpunished, but that His love will visit them with every calamity and distress that can help to break and purify the bestial heart of man and awaken in him true repentance and conversion to God. It is love alone in the holy Deity that will allow no peace to the wicked, nor ever cease its judgments till every sinner is forced to confess that it is good for him that he has been in trouble, and thankfully own that not

the wrath but the love of God has plucked out that right eye, cut off that right hand, which he ought to have done but would not do for himself and his own salvation.

Again, this doctrine that allows of no wrath in the divine mind but places it all in the evil state of fallen nature and creature, has everything in it that can prove to man the dreadful nature of sin and the absolute necessity of totally departing from it. It leaves no room for self-delusion, but puts an end to every false hope or vain seeking for relief in anything else but the total extinction of sin. And this it effectually does by showing that damnation is no foreign, separate, or imposed state that is brought in upon us, or adjudged to us by the will of God, but is the inborn, natural, essential state of our own disordered nature, which is absolutely impossible in the nature of the thing to be anything else but our own hell both here and hereafter, unless all sin be separated from us and righteousness be again made our natural state by a birth of itself in us. And all this, not because God will have it so by an arbitrary act of His sovereign will but because He cannot change His own nature or make anything to be happy and blessed, but only that which has its proper righteousness and is of one will and spirit with Himself.

If then every creature that has lost or is without the true rectitude of its nature must as such, of all necessity, be absolutely separated from God and necessarily under the pain and misery of a life that has lost all its own natural good; if no omnipotence, or mercy, or goodness of God can make it to be otherwise, or give any relief to the sinner, but by a total extinction of sin by a birth of righteousness in the soul, then it fully appears that according to this doctrine everything in God, and nature, and creature, calls the sinner to an absolute renunciation of all sin, as the one only possible means of salvation and leaves no room for him to deceive himself with the hopes that anything else will do instead of it. Vainly therefore is it said that, if God be all Love, the sinner is let loose from the dreadful apprehensions of living and dying in his sins.

On the other hand, deny this doctrine and say with the

current of scholastic divines that sin must be doomed to eternal pain and death, unless a supposed wrath in the mind of the Deity be first atoned and satisfied; and that Christ's death was that valuable gift or offering made to God by which alone He could be moved to lay aside or extinguish His own wrath towards fallen man; say this, and then you open a wide door for licentiousness and infidelity in some and superstitious fears in others. For if the evil, the misery, and sad effects of sin are placed in a wrath in the divine mind, what can this beget in the minds of the pious but superstitious fears about a supposed wrath in God which they can never know when it is, or is not atoned? Every kind of superstition has its birth from this belief and cannot well be otherwise. And as to the licentious, who want to stifle all fears of gratifying all their passions, this doctrine has a natural tendency to do this for them. For if they are taught that the hurt and misery of sin is not its own natural state, not owing to its own wrath and disorder but to a wrath in the Deity, how easy is it for them to believe either that God may not be so full of wrath as is given out, or that He may overcome it Himself and not keep the sinner eternally in a misery that is not his own, but wholly brought upon him from without by a resentment in the divine mind.

Again, this account which the schools give of the sacrifice of Christ made to atone a wrath in the Deity by the infinite value of Christ's death is that alone which helps Socinians, deists, and infidels of all kinds to such cavils and objections to the mystery of our redemption, as neither have nor can be silenced by the most able defenders of that scholastic fiction.[16] The learning of a Grotius or Stillingfleet when defending such an account of the atonement and satisfaction, rather increases than lessens the objections to this mystery. But if you take this matter as it truly is in itself, *viz.*, that God is in Himself all love and goodness, therefore can be nothing else but all love and goodness towards fallen man, and that fallen man is subject to no pain or misery either present or to come, but what is the natural, unavoidable, essential effect of his own evil and disordered nature, impossible to be altered by himself; and that the infinite, never-ceasing love of God has

given Jesus Christ in all His process as the highest and only possible means that Heaven and earth can afford to save man from himself, from his own evil, misery, and death, and restore to him his original divine life; when you look at this matter in this true light, then a God, all love, and an atonement for sin by Christ, not made to pacify a wrath in God, but to bring forth, fulfil and restore righteousness in the creature that had lost it, have everything in them that can make the providence of God adorable, and the state of man comfortable.

Here all superstition and superstitious fears are at once totally cut off, and every work of piety is turned into a work of love. Here every false hope of every kind is taken from the licentious, they have no ground left to stand upon: nothing to trust to as a deliverance from misery but the one total abolition of sin.

The Socinian and the infidel are here also robbed of all their philosophy against this mystery; for as it is not founded upon, does not teach an infinite resentment that could only be satisfied by an infinite atonement, as it stands not upon the ground of debtor and creditor, all their arguments which suppose it to be such are quite beside the matter and touch nothing of the truth of this blessed mystery. For it is the very reverse of all this, it declares a God that is all love; and the atonement of Christ to be nothing else in itself but the highest, most natural, and efficacious means through all the possibility of things, that the infinite love and wisdom of God could use to put an end to sin, and death, and hell, and restore to man his first divine state or life. I say, the most natural, efficacious means through all the possibilities of nature; for there is nothing that is supernatural, however mysterious, in the whole system of our redemption; every part of it has its ground in the workings and powers of nature and all our redemption is only nature set right, or made to be that which it ought to be. . . .

For look where you will, no other cause or reason of the death of Christ can be found but in the love of God towards fallen man. Nor could the love of God will or accept of the

death of Christ, but because of its absolute necessity and availing efficacy to do all that for fallen man which the love of God would have to be done for him. God did not, could not love, or like, or desire the sufferings and death of Christ for what they were in themselves, or as sufferings of the highest kind. No, the higher and greater such sufferings had been, were they only considered in themselves, the less pleasing they had been to a God that wills nothing but blessing and happiness to everything capable of it. But all that Christ was and did and suffered was infinitely prized and highly acceptable to the love of God, because all that Christ was and did and suffered in His own person was that which gave Him full power to be a common Father of life to all that died in Adam.

Had Christ wanted[17] anything that He was or did or suffered in His own person, He could not have stood in that relation to all mankind as Adam had done. Had He not been given to the first fallen man as a seed of the woman, as a light of life enlightening every man that comes into the world, He could not have had His seed in every man as Adam had, nor been as universal a father of life as Adam was of death. Had He not in the fitness or fulness of time become a man born of a pure virgin, the first seed of life in every man must have lain only as a seed and could not have come to the fulness of the birth of a new man in Christ Jesus. For the children can have no other state of life but that which their father first had. And therefore Christ as the father of a regenerated human race must first stand in the fulness of that human state which was to be derived from Him into all His children. This is the absolute necessity of Christ's being all that He was before He became man; a necessity arising from the nature of the thing. Because He could not possibly have had the relation of a father to all mankind, nor any power to be a quickener of a life of Heaven in them, but because He was both God in Himself and a seed of God in all of them.

Now all that Christ was and did and suffered after He became man is from the same necessity founded in the nature of the thing. He suffered on no other account but because

that which He came to do in and for the human nature was and could be nothing else in itself but a work of sufferings and death. A crooked line cannot become straight but by having all its crookedness given up or taken from it. And there is but one way possible in nature for a crooked line to lose its crookedness. Now the sufferings and death of Christ stand in this kind of necessity. He was made man for our salvation, that is, He took upon Him our fallen nature to bring it out of its evil, crooked state and set it again in that rectitude in which it was created. Now there were no more two ways of doing this than there are two ways of making a crooked line to become straight. If the life of fallen nature which Christ had taken upon Him was to be overcome by Him, then every kind of suffering and dying that was a giving up or departing from the life of fallen nature was just as necessary in the nature of the thing, as that the line to be made straight must give up and part with every kind and degree of its own crookedness. And therefore the sufferings and death of Christ were in the nature of the thing the only possible way of His acting contrary to and overcoming all the evil that was in the fallen state of man.

The Apostle says, 'the captain of our salvation was to be made perfect through sufferings.' This was the ground and reason of His sufferings: had He been without them, He could not have been perfect in Himself as a son of man, nor the restorer of perfection in all mankind. But why so? Because His perfection as a son of man or the captain of human salvation could only consist in His acting in and with a spirit suitable to the first created state of perfect man; that is, He must in His Spirit be as much above all the good and evil of this fallen world as the first man was.

But now He could not show that He was of this Spirit, that He was above the world, that He was under no power of fallen nature but lived in the perfection of the first created man; He could not do this, but by showing that all the good of the earthly life was renounced by Him and that all the evil which the world, the malice of men, and devils could bring upon Him could not hinder His living wholly and solely to God and doing His will on earth with the same fulness as

angels do it in Heaven.

But had there been any evil in all fallen nature, whether in life, death, or hell, that had not attacked Him with all its force, He could not have been said to have overcome it. And therefore so sure as Christ as the Son of man was to overcome the world, death, hell and Satan, so sure is it that all the evils which they could possibly bring upon Him were to be felt and suffered by Him as absolutely necessary in the nature of the thing to declare His perfection and prove His superiority over them. Surely, my friend, it is now enough proved to you how a God all love towards fallen man must love, like, desire, and delight in all the sufferings of Christ which alone could enable Him as a Son of man to undo and reverse all that evil which the first man had done to all his posterity.

Eusebius. Oh, sir, in what an adorable light is this mystery now placed! And yet in no other light than that in which the plain letter of all Scripture sets it. No wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor, no suffering in Christ for sufferings' sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as His same victory over death and hell as when He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

Theophilus. Sure now, Eusebius, you plainly enough see wherein the infinite merits or the availing efficacy and glorious power of the sufferings and death of Christ consist; since they were that in and through which Christ Himself came out of the state of fallen nature and got power to give the same victory to all His brethren of the human race. Wonder not, therefore, that the Scriptures so frequently ascribe all our salvation to the sufferings and death of Christ, that we are continually referred to them as the wounds and stripes by which we are healed, as the blood by which we are washed from our sins, as the price (much above gold and precious stones) by which we are bought.

Wonder not also that in the Old Testament its service, sacrifices, and ceremonies were instituted to typify and point at the great sacrifice of Christ and to keep up a continual hope, strong expectation, and belief of it. And that in the New Testament, the reality, the benefits, and glorious effects

of Christ our Passover being actually sacrificed for us are so joyfully repeated by every apostle. It is because Christ as suffering and dying was nothing else but Christ conquering and overcoming all the false good and the hellish evil of the fallen state of man.

His resurrection from the grave and ascension into Heaven, though great in themselves and necessary parts of our deliverance, were yet but the consequences and genuine effects of His sufferings and death. These were in themselves the reality of His conquest; all His great work was done and effected in them and by them, and His resurrection and ascension were only His entering into the possession of that which His sufferings and death had gained for Him.

Wonder not then that all the true followers of Christ, the saints of every age, have so gloried in the cross of Christ, have imputed such great things to it, have desired nothing so much as to be partakers of it, to live in constant union with it. It is because His sufferings, His death and cross were the fulness of His victory over all the works of the devil. Not an evil in flesh and blood, not a misery of life, not a chain of death, not a power of hell and darkness, but were all baffled, broken, and overcome by the process of a suffering and dying Christ. Well therefore may the cross of Christ be the glory of Christians!

Eusebius. This matter is so solidly and fully cleared up that I am almost ashamed to ask you anything further about it. Yet explain a little more, if you please, how it is that the sufferings and death of Christ gave Him power to become a common father of life to all that died in Adam. Or how it is that we by virtue of them have victory over all the evil of our fallen state.

Theophilus. You are to know, Eusebius, that the Christian religion is no arbitrary system of divine worship but is the one true, real, and only religion of nature; that is, it is wholly founded in the nature of things, has nothing in it supernatural or contrary to the powers and demands of nature; but all that it does is only in, and by, and according to the workings and possibilities of nature. . . .[18]

The fall of all mankind in Adam is no supernatural event

or effect but the natural and necessary consequence of our relation to him. Could Adam at his fall into this earthly life have absolutely overcome every power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the same spirit as Christ did, he had been his own Redeemer, had risen out of his fall and ascended into paradise and been the father of a paradisaical offspring, just as Christ, when He had overcome them all, rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven. But Adam did not do this, because it was as impossible in the nature of the thing as for a beast to raise itself into an angel. If therefore man is to come out of his fallen state there must be something found out that according to the nature of things has power to effect it. For it can no more be done supernaturally by anything else than it could by Adam.

Now the matter stood thus: the seed of all mankind was in the loins of fallen Adam.[19] This was unalterable in the nature of the thing and therefore all mankind must come forth in his fallen state. Neither can they ever be in any state whatever, whether earthly or heavenly, but by having an earthly man or a heavenly man for their father. For mankind as such must of all necessity be born of and have that nature which it has from a man. And this is the true ground and absolute necessity of the one mediator, the man Christ Jesus. For seeing mankind as such must have that birth and nature which they have from man; seeing they never could have had any relation to paradise or any possibility of partaking of it but because they had a paradisaical man for their father, nor could have had any relation to this earthly world or any possibility of being born earthly, but because they had an earthly man for their father; and seeing all this must be unalterably so for ever; it plainly follows that there was an utter impossibility for the seed of Adam ever to come out of its fallen state, or ever have another or better life than they had from Adam, unless such a son of man could be brought into existence as had the same relation to all mankind as Adam had, was as much in them all as Adam was, and had as full power according to the nature of things to give a heavenly life to all the seed in Adam's loins as Adam had to bring them forth in earthly flesh and blood.

And now, sir, that Christ was this very son of man, standing in the same fulness of relation to all mankind as Adam did, having His seed as really in them all as Adam had, and as truly and fully qualified according to the nature of things to be a common and universal father of life as Adam was of death to all the human race, shall in a word or two be made as plain and undeniable as that two and two are four. The doctrine of our redemption absolutely asserts that the seed of Christ was sown into the first fallen father of mankind, called the seed of the woman, the bruiser of the serpent, the ingrafted Word of life, called again in the Gospel that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Therefore Christ was in all men in that same fulness of the relation of a father to all mankind as the first Adam was. Secondly, Christ was born of Adam's flesh and blood, took the human nature upon him and therefore stood as an human creature in the same relation to mankind as Adam did. Nothing therefore was further wanting in Christ to make Him as truly a natural father of life to all mankind as Adam was at first, but God's appointment of Him to that end. For as Adam could not have been the natural father of mankind but because God created and appointed him for that end, so Christ could not have been the natural regenerator or Redeemer of an heavenly life that was lost in all mankind, but because God had appointed and brought Him into the world for that end. Now that God did this, that Christ came into the world by divine appointment to be the Saviour, the resurrection and life of all mankind is a truth as evident from Scripture as that Adam was the first man.

And thus it appears in the utmost degree of plainness and certainty that Christ in His single person was, according to the nature of things, as fully qualified to be a common Redeemer, as Adam was in his single person to be a common father of all mankind. He had His seed in all mankind, as Adam had. He had the human nature as Adam had. And He had the same divine appointment as Adam had. But Christ, however qualified to be our Redeemer, could not be actually such till He had gone through and done all that by which our redemption was to be effected. Adam, however

qualified, could not be the father of a paradisaical offspring till he had stood out his trial and fixed himself victorious over everything that could make trial of him. In like manner Christ, however qualified, could not be the Redeemer of all mankind till He had also stood out His trial, had overcome all that by which Adam was overcome and had fixed Himself triumphantly in that paradise which Adam had lost.

Now as Adam's trial was whether he would keep himself in his paradisaical state, above and free from all that was good and evil in this earthly world, so Christ's trial was whether as a son of man and loaded with the infirmities of fallen Adam, sacrificed to all that which the rage and malice of the world, hell, and devils could possibly do to Him; whether He in the midst of all these evils could live and die with His Spirit as contrary to them, as much above them, as unhurt by them as Adam should have lived in paradise.

And then it was that everything which had overcome Adam was overcome by Christ; and Christ's victory did, in the nature of the thing, as certainly and fully open an entrance for Him and all His seed into paradise, as Adam's fall cast him and all his seed into the prison and captivity of this earthly, bestial world. Nothing supernatural came to pass in either case, but paradise lost and paradise regained according to the nature of things or the real efficacy of cause to produce its effects.

Thus is your question fully answered; *viz.*, how and why the sufferings and death of Christ enabled Him to be the author of life to all that died in Adam? Just as the fall of Adam into this world under the power of sin, death, hell, and the devil, enabled him to be the common father of death, or was the natural, unavoidable cause of our being born under the same captivity; just so that life, and sufferings, and death of Christ, which declared His breaking out from them and superiority over them, must in the nature of the thing as much enable Him to be the common author of life, that is, must as certainly be the full, natural, efficacious cause of our inheriting life from Him. Because by what Christ was in Himself, by what He was in us, by His whole state, character and the divine appointment, we all had that

natural union with Him and dependence upon Him as our head in the way of redemption as we had with Adam as our head in the way of our natural birth. So that, as it must be said that because Adam fell we must of all necessity be heirs of his fallen state, so with the same truth and from the same necessity of the thing it must be said that because Christ our head is risen victorious out of our fallen state, we as His members and having His Seed within us must be and are made heirs of all His glory. Because in all respects we are as strictly, as intimately connected with and related to Him as the one Redeemer as we are to Adam as the one father of all mankind. So that Christ, by His sufferings and death become in all of us our wisdom, our righteousness, our justification and redemption, is the same sober and solid truth, as Adam by his fall become in all of us our foolishness, our impurity, our corruption, and death.

And now, my friends, look back upon all that has been said, and then tell me, is it possible more to exalt or magnify the infinite merits and availing efficacy of the sufferings and death of Christ than is done by this doctrine? Or whether everything that is said of them in Scripture is not here proved from the very nature of the thing to be absolutely true? And again, whether it is not sufficiently proved to you that the sufferings and death of Christ are not only consistent with the doctrine of a God all love, but are the fullest and most absolute proof of it?

Eusebius. Indeed, Theophilus, you have so fully done for us all that we wanted to have done, that we are now ready to take leave of you. As for my part, I want to return home, to enjoy my Bible and delight myself with reading it in this comfortable light in which you have set the whole ground and nature of our redemption. I am now in full possession of this glorious truth, that God is mere love, the most glorious truth that can possess and edify the heart of man. It drives every evil out of the soul, and gives life to every spark of goodness that can possibly be kindled in it. Everything in religion is made amiable by being a service of love to the God of love.

No sacrifices, sufferings, and death have any place in

religion, but to satisfy and fulfil that love of God which could not be satisfied without our salvation. If the Son of God is not spared, if He is delivered up to the rage and malice of men, devils, and hell, it is because, had we not had such a captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings, it never could have been sung, 'O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?' It never could have been true, that 'as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so by one man came the resurrection of the dead.' It never could have been said that 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

Therefore, dear Theophilus, adieu: God is love, and he that has learnt to live in the Spirit of love has learnt to live and dwell in God. Love was the beginner of all the works of God, and from eternity to eternity nothing can come from God but a variety of wonders and works of love over all nature and creature.

Theophilus. God prosper, Eusebius, this spark of Heaven in your soul. May it, like the seraphim's coal taken from the altar, purify your heart from all its uncleanness! But before you leave me, I beg one more conversation to be on the practical part of the Spirit of Love, that so doctrine and practice, hearing and doing, may go hand in hand. [69-83, 87-90, 94-98]

The Third Dialogue

THEOPHILUS. You are to know, my friends, that every kind of virtue and goodness may be brought into us by two different ways. They may be taught us outwardly by men, by rules and precepts; and they may be inwardly born in us, as the genuine birth of our own renewed spirit. In the former way, as we learn them only from men, by rules and documents of instruction, they at best only change our outward behaviour and leave our heart in its natural state and only put our passions under a forced restraint, which will occasionally break forth in spite of the dead letter of precept

and doctrine. Now this way of learning and attaining goodness, though thus imperfect, is yet absolutely necessary in the nature of the thing and must first have its time, and place, and work in us; yet it is only for a time, as the law was a schoolmaster to the Gospel. We must first be babes in doctrine as well as in strength before we can be men. But of all this outward instruction whether from good men or the letter of Scripture it must be said, as the Apostle says of the law, that it maketh nothing perfect; and yet it is highly necessary in order to perfection.

The true perfection and profitableness of the holy written word of God is fully set forth by St. Paul to Timothy: 'From a child,' says he, 'thou hast known the Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, which is by faith in Christ Jesus.' Now these Scriptures were the law and the prophets, for Timothy had known no other from his youth. And as they, so all other Scriptures since, have no other good or benefit in them but as they lead and direct us to a salvation, that is not to be had in themselves but from faith in Christ Jesus. Their teaching is only to teach us where to seek and to find the fountain and source of all light and knowledge.

Of the law, says the Apostle, it was a schoolmaster to Christ. Of the prophets, he says the same. 'Ye have,' says he, 'a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star ariseth in your hearts.' The same thing is to be affirmed of the letter of the New Testament; it is but our schoolmaster unto Christ, a light like that of prophecy to which we are to take great heed until Christ, as the dawning of the day or the day-star, arises in our hearts. Nor can the thing possibly be otherwise; no instruction that comes under the form of words can do more for us than sounds and words can do; they can only direct us to something that is better than themselves, that can be the true light, life, spirit, and power of holiness in us.

Eusebius. I cannot deny what you say; and yet it seems to me to derogate from Scripture.

Theophilus. Would you then have me to say that the written word of God is that Word of God which liveth and

abideth for ever; that Word which is the wisdom and power of God; that Word which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made; that Word of God which was made flesh for the redemption of the world; that Word of God of which we must be born again; that Word, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; that Word which in Christ Jesus is become wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification in us; would you have me say that all this is to be understood of the written word of God? But if this cannot possibly be, then all that I have said is granted, namely that Jesus is alone that Word of God that can be the light, life, and salvation of fallen man. Or how is it possible more to exalt the letter of Scripture than by owning it to be a true, outward, verbal direction to the one only true light and salvation of man?[20]

Suppose you had been a true disciple of John the Baptist, whose only office was to prepare the way to Christ, how could you have more magnified his office, or declared your fidelity to him than by going from his teaching to be taught by that Christ to whom he directed you? The Baptist was indeed a burning and a shining light, and so are the holy Scriptures; 'but he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' What a folly would it be to say that you had undervalued the office and character of John the Baptist because he was not allowed to be the Light itself but only a true witness of it and guide to it? Now if you can show that the written word in the Bible can have any other or higher office or power than such a ministerial one as the Baptist had, I am ready to hear you.

Eusebius. There is no possibility of doing that. [104-6]

Theophilus. And now we are fairly brought to the one great practical point on which all our proficiency in the Spirit of love entirely depends, namely, that all that we are and all that we have from Adam as fallen must be given up, absolutely denied and resisted if the birth of divine love is to be brought forth in us. For all that we are by nature is in full contrariety to this divine love, nor can it be otherwise; a

death to itself is its only cure and nothing else can make it subservient to good; just as darkness cannot be altered or made better in itself or transmuted into light, it can only be subservient to the light by being lost in it and swallowed up by it.

Now this was the first state of man; all natural properties of his creaturely life were hid in God, united in God, and glorified by the life of God manifested in them, just as the nature and qualities of darkness are lost and hid when enlightened and glorified by the light. But when man fell from or died to the divine life, all the natural properties of his creaturely life having lost their union in and with God broke forth in their own natural division, contrariety, and war against one another, just as the darkness when it has lost the light must show forth its own coldness, horror and other uncomfortable qualities. And as darkness though in the utmost contrariety to light is yet absolutely necessary to it, and without which no manifestation or visibility of light could possibly be, so it is with the natural properties of the creaturely life; they are in themselves all contrariety to the divine life, and yet the divine life cannot be communicated but in them and by them.

Eusebius. I never read, or heard of the darkness being necessary to light. It has been generally considered as a negative thing that was nothing in itself and only signified an absence of light. But your doctrine not only supposes darkness to be something positive that has a strength and substantiality in itself, but also to be antecedent to the light because necessary to bring it into manifestation. I am almost afraid to hear more of this doctrine: it sounds harsh to my ears.

Theophilus. Do not be frightened, Eusebius. I will lead you into no doctrine but what is strictly conformable to the letter of Scripture and the most orthodox piety. The Scripture says, 'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all'; therefore the Scripture affirms light to be superior, absolutely separate from and eternally antecedent to darkness; and so do I. In this Scripture you have a noble and true account of light, what it is, where it is and was and always must be. It can

never change its state or place, be altered in itself, be anywhere or in another manner than as it was and will be from eternity to eternity. When God said, 'Let there be light and there was light,' no change happened to eternal light itself, nor did any light then begin to be; but the darkness of this world then only began to receive a power or operation of the eternal light upon it which it had not before; or eternity then began to open some resemblance of its own glory in the dark elements and shadows of time, and thus it is that I assert the priority and glory of light and put all darkness under its feet, as impossible to be anything else but its footstool.

Eusebius. I am quite delighted with this. But tell me now, how it is that light can only be manifested in and by darkness,

Theophilus. The Scripture says that 'God dwelleth in the light to which no man can approach.' Therefore the Scripture teaches that light in itself is and must be invisible to man; that it cannot be approached or made manifest to him but in and by something that is not light. And this is all that I said and the very same thing that I said, when I affirmed that light cannot be manifested or have any visibility to created eyes but in and through and by the darkness.

Light as it is in itself is only in the supernatural Deity; and that is the reason why no man or any created being can approach to it or have any sensibility of it as it is in itself. And yet no light can come into this world but that in which God dwelt before any world was created. No light can be in time but that which was the light of eternity. If therefore the supernatural light is to manifest something of its incomprehensible glory and make itself in some degree sensible and visible to the creature, this supernatural light must enter into nature, it must put on materiality. Now darkness is the one only materiality of light, in and through which it can become the object of creaturely eyes; and till there is darkness, there is no possible medium or power through which the supernatural light can manifest something of itself or have any of its glory visible to created eyes. And the reason why darkness can only be the materiality of light is this, it is because darkness is the one only ground of all nature and of all materiality whether in Heaven or on earth. And therefore

everything that is creaturely in nature, that has any form, figure or substance, from the highest angel in Heaven to the lowest thing upon earth, has all that it has of figure, form or substantiality, only and solely from darkness.[21] Look at the glittering glory of the diamond and then you see the one medium through which the glory of the incomprehensible light can make some discovery or manifestation of itself. It matters not whether you consider Heaven or earth, eternal or temporal nature, nothing in either state can be capable of visible glory, brightness, or illumination, but that which stands in the state of the diamond and has its own thickness of darkness. And if the universe of eternal and temporal nature is everywhere light, it is because it has darkness everywhere for its dwelling-place. Light, you know, is by variety of modern experiments declared to be material; the experiments are not to be disputed.[22] And yet all these experiments are only so many proofs, not of the materiality of light but of our doctrine, *viz.*, that materiality is always along with visible light, and also that light can only open and display something of itself in and by darkness as its body of manifestation and visibility . . .

All light then that is natural and visible to the creature whether in Heaven or on earth is nothing else but so much darkness illuminated; and that which is called the materiality of light is only the materiality of darkness in which the light incorporates itself. For light can be only that same visible, unapproachable thing which it always was in God from all eternity. And that which is called the difference of light is only the difference of that darkness through which the light gives forth different manifestations of itself. It is the same whether it illuminates the air, water, a diamond, or any other materiality of darkness. It has no more materiality in itself when it enlightens the earth than when it enlightens the mind of an angel, when it gives colour to bodies than when it gives understanding to spirits.

Sight and visibility is but one power of light, but light is all power, it is life; and every joyful sensibility of life is from it. 'In Him,' says the Apostle, 'was light and the light was the life of men.' Light is all things, and no thing. It is

no thing because it is supernatural; it is all things because every good power and perfection of everything is from it. No joy or rejoicing in any creature but from the power and joy of light. No meekness, benevolence, or goodness, in angel, man, or any creature, but where light is the lord of its life. Life itself begins no sooner, rises no higher, has no other glory than as the light begins it and leads it on. Sounds have no softness, flowers and gums have no sweetness, plants and fruits have no growth but as the mystery of light opens itself in them. Whatever is delightful and ravishing, sublime and glorious, in spirits, minds, or bodies, either in Heaven or on earth, is from the power of the supernatural light opening its endless wonders in them. Hell has no misery, horror, or distraction, but because it has no communication with the supernatural light. And did not the supernatural light stream forth its blessings into this world through the materiality of the sun, all outward nature would be full of the horror of hell.

And hence are all the mysteries and wonders of light in this material system so astonishingly great and unsearchable; it is because the natural light of this world is nothing else but the power and mystery of the supernatural light breaking forth and opening itself according to its omnipotence in all the various forms of elementary darkness which constitute this temporary world.[23]

Theogenes. I could willingly hear you, Theophilus, on this subject till midnight, though it seems to lead us away from our proposed subject.

Theophilus. Not so far out of the way, Theogenes, as you may imagine; for darkness and light are the two natures that are in every man and do all that is done in him. The Scriptures, you know, make only this division, the works of darkness are sin and they who walk in the light are the children of God. Therefore light and darkness do everything whether good or evil that is done in man.

Theogenes. What is this darkness in itself, or where is it?

Theophilus. It is everywhere where there is nature and creature. For all nature and all that is natural in the creature is in itself nothing else but darkness, whether it be in

soul or body, in Heaven or on earth. And therefore when the angels (though in Heaven) had lost the supernatural light they became imprisoned in the chains of their own natural darkness. If you ask, why nature must be darkness, it is because nature is not God and therefore can have no light as it is nature. For God and light are as inseparable, as God and unity are inseparable. Everything therefore that is not God, is and can be nothing else in itself but darkness, and can do nothing but in and under and according to the nature and powers of darkness.

Theogenes. What are the powers of darkness?

Theophilus. The powers of darkness are the workings of nature or self: for nature, darkness, and self are but three different expressions for one and the same thing. Now every evil, wicked, wrathful, impure, unjust thought, temper, passion, or imagination that ever stirred or moved in any creature, every misery, discontent, distress, rage, horror, and torment that ever plagued the life of fallen man or angel are the very things that you are to understand by the powers or workings of darkness, nature, or self. For nothing is evil, wicked, or tormenting but that which nature or self does.

Theogenes. But if nature is thus the seat and source of all evil, if everything that is bad is in it and from it, how can such a nature be brought forth by a God who is all goodness?

Theophilus. Nature has all evil and no evil in itself. Nature, as it comes forth from God, is darkness without any evil of darkness in it; for it is not darkness without or separate from light, nor could it ever have been known to have any quality of darkness in it, had it not lost that state of light in which it came forth from God only as a manifestation of the goodness, virtues, and glories of light. Again it is nature, *viz.*, a strife and contrariety of properties, for this only end that the supernatural good might thereby come into sensibility, be known, found and felt by its taking all the evil of strife and contrariety from them and becoming the union, peace, and joy of them all. Nor could the evil of strife and contrariety of will ever have had a name in all the universe of nature and creature, had it all continued in that state in which it came forth from God. Lastly it is self, *viz.*, an own life, that so through such an

own life the universal, incomprehensible goodness, happiness, and perfections of the Deity might be possessed as properties and qualities of an own life in creaturely finite beings. And thus, all that is called nature, darkness, or self, has not only no evil in it, but is the only true ground of all possible good.

But when the intelligent creature turns from God to self or nature, he acts unnaturally, he turns from all that which makes nature to be good; he finds nature only as it is in itself and without God. And then it is that nature or self has all evil in it. Nothing is to be had from it or found in it but the work and working of every kind of evil, baseness, misery, and torment and the utmost contrariety to God and all goodness. And thus also you see the plainness and certainty of our assertion that nature or self has all evil and no evil in it.

Theogenes. I plainly enough perceive that nature or self, without God manifested in it, is all evil and misery. But I would, if I could, more perfectly understand the precise nature of self, or what it is that makes it to be so full of evil and misery.

Theophilus. Covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath, are the four elements of self, or nature, or hell, all of them inseparable from it. . . . All the evil that was in the first chaos of darkness or that still is in hell and devils, all the evil that is in material nature and material creatures, whether animate or inanimate, is nothing else, works in and with nothing else but those first properties of nature which drive on the life of fallen man in covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath. . . .

But the one true way of dying to self is most simple and plain, it wants no arts or methods, no cells, monasteries, or pilgrimages, it is equally practicable by every body, it is always at hand; it meets you in every thing, it is free from all deceit, and is never without success.

If you ask, what is this one true, simple, plain, immediate, and unerring way, it is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God.[24] This is the truth and perfection of dying to self; it is nowhere else, nor possible to be in anything else but in this state of heart. . . . You can as

easily and immediately without art or method, by the mere turning and faith of your mind, have all the benefit of these virtues, as publicans and sinners by their turning to Christ could be helped and saved by Him.

Theogenes. But, good Sir, would you have me then believe that my turning and giving up myself to these virtues is as certain and immediate a way of my being directly possessed and blessed by their good power, as when sinners turned to Christ to be helped and saved by Him? Surely this is too short a way and has too much of miracle in it to be now expected.

Theophilus. I would have you strictly to believe all this in the fullest sense of the words and also to believe that the reasons why you or any others are for a long time vainly endeavouring after and hardly ever attaining these first-rate virtues is because you seek them in the way they are not to be found, in a multiplicity of human rules, methods, and contrivances, and not in that simplicity of faith in which those who applied to Christ immediately obtained that which they asked of Him.

'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you.' How short and simple and certain a way to peace and comfort from the misery and burden of sin! What becomes now of your length of time and exercise, your rules and methods and round-about ways to be delivered from self, the power of sin, and find the redeeming power and virtue of Christ? Will you say that turning to Christ in faith was once indeed the way for Jews and heathen to enter into life and be delivered from the power of their sins, but that all this happiness was at an end as soon as Pontius Pilate had nailed this good Redeemer to the cross and so broken off all immediate union and communion between faith and Christ? What a folly would it be to suppose that Christ, after His having finished His great work, overcome death, ascended into Heaven with all power in Heaven and on earth, was become less a Saviour and gave less certain and immediate helps to those that by faith turn to Him now than when He was clothed with the infirmity of our flesh and blood upon earth? Has He less power after He has conquered than

whilst He was only resisting and fighting with our enemies? Or has He less good will to assist His Church, His own body, now He is in Heaven, than He had to assist publicans, sinners, and heathen, before He was glorified as the Redeemer of the world? And yet this must be the case, if our simply turning to Him in faith and hope is not as sure a way of obtaining immediate assistance from Him now as when He was upon earth.

Theogenes. You seem, Sir, to me to have stepped aside from the point in question, which was not whether my turning or giving myself up to Christ in faith in Him would not do me as much good as it did to them who turned to Him when He was upon earth, but whether my turning in faith and desire to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God would do all that as fully for me now as faith in Christ did for those who became His disciples?

Theophilus. I have stuck closely, my friend, to the point before us. Let it be supposed that I had given you a form of prayer in these words: 'O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world'; or, 'O thou bread that camest down from Heaven'; or, 'Thou that art the resurrection and the life, the light and peace of all holy souls, help me to a living faith in thee.' Would you say that this was not a prayer of faith in and to Christ, because it did not call Him Jesus or the Son of God? Answer me plainly.

Theogenes. What can I answer you, but that this is a most true and good prayer to Jesus the Son of the living God? For who else but He was the Lamb of God and the bread that came down?

Theophilus. Well answered, my friend. When therefore I exhort you to give up yourself in faith and hope to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, what else do I do but turn you directly to so much faith and hope in the true Lamb of God? For if I ask you what the Lamb of God is and means, must you not tell me that it is and means the perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God? Can you say it is either more or less than this? Must you not therefore say that a faith of hunger and thirst and desire of these virtues is in spirit and truth the one very same thing as a

faith of hunger, and thirst, and desire of salvation through the Lamb of God; and consequently that every sincere wish and desire, every inward inclination of your heart that presses after these virtues and longs to be governed by them, is an immediate direct application to Christ, is worshipping and falling down before Him, is giving up yourself unto Him and the very perfection of faith in Him?

If you distrust my words, hear the words of Christ Himself; 'Learn of me,' says He, 'for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Here you have the plain truth of our two points fully asserted, first, that to be given up to, or stand in a desire of patience, meekness, humility and resignation to God is strictly the same thing as to learn of Christ or to have faith in Him. Secondly, that this is the one simple, short, and infallible way to overcome or be delivered from all the malignity and burden of self, expressed in these words, 'and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

And all this, because this simple tendency or inward inclination of your heart to sink down into patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God is truly giving up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam, it is perfectly leaving all that you have, to follow and be with Christ, it is your highest act of faith in Him, and love of Him, the most ardent and earnest declaration of your cleaving to Him with all your heart, and seeking for no salvation but in Him and from Him. And therefore all the good, and blessing, pardon, and deliverance from sin that ever happened to anyone from any kind or degree of faith and hope and application to Christ, is sure to be had from this state of heart which stands continually turned to Him in a hunger and desire of being led and governed by His Spirit of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. O Theogenes, could I help you to perceive or feel what a good there is in this state of heart, you would desire it with more eagerness than the thirsty hart desires the water-brooks, you would think of nothing, desire nothing but constantly to live in it. It is a security from all evil and all delusion; no difficulty or trial either of body or mind, no temptation either within you or without you, but what has

its full remedy in this state of heart. You have no questions to ask of any body, no new way that you need inquire after; no oracle that you need to consult; for whilst you shut up yourself in patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, you are in the very arms of Christ, your whole heart is His dwelling-place and He lives and works in you as certainly as He lived in and governed that body and soul which He took from the Virgin Mary.

Learn whatever else you will from men and books or even from Christ Himself besides or without these virtues, and you are only a poor wanderer in a barren wilderness where no water of life is to be found. For Christ is nowhere but in these virtues, and where they are, there is He in His own kingdom. From morning to night let this be the Christ that you follow, and then you will fully escape all the religious delusions that are in the world and, what is more, all the delusions of your own selfish heart.

For to seek to be saved by patience, meekness, humility of heart, and resignation to God is truly coming to God through Christ; and when these tempers live and abide in you as the spirit and aim of your life, then Christ is in you of a truth and the life that you then lead is not yours, but it is Christ that liveth in you. For this is following Christ with all your power. You cannot possibly make more haste after Him, you have no other way of walking as He walked, no other way of being like Him, of truly believing in Him, of showing your trust in Him and dependence upon Him, but by wholly giving up yourself to that which He was, *viz.*, to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God.

Tell me now—have I enough proved to you the short, simple, and certain way of destroying that body of self which lives and works in the four elements of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath? . . .

And now, my dear friends, I have brought you to the very place for which I desired this day's conversation; which was to set your feet upon sure ground with regard to the Spirit of Love. For all that variety of matters through which we have passed has been only a variety of proofs that the Spirit of

Divine Love can have no place or possibility of birth in any fallen creature, till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self in a patient, meek, humble resignation to the good power and mercy of God.

And from this state of heart also it is that the Spirit of Prayer is born, which is the desire of the soul turned to God. Stand therefore steadfastly in this will, let nothing else enter into your mind, have no other contrivance but everywhere and in everything to nourish and keep up this state of heart, and then your house is built upon a rock; you are safe from all danger; the light of Heaven and the love of God will begin their work in you, will bless and sanctify every power of your fallen soul; you will be in a readiness for every kind of virtue and good work and will know what it is to be led by the Spirit of God. . . .

For die you must to all and everything that you have worked or done under any other spirit but that of meekness, humility, and true resignation to God. Everything else, be it what it will, has its rise from the fire of nature, it belongs to nothing else and must of all necessity be given up, lost, and taken from you again by fire, either here or hereafter.

For these virtues are the only wedding garment; they are the lamps and vessels well furnished with oil.

There is nothing that will do in the stead of them; they must have their own full and perfect work in you, if not before, yet certainly after the death of the body, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen wrathful state. And all this is no more than is implied in this Scripture doctrine, *viz.*, that there is no possibility of salvation but in and by a birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our souls. And when this Lamb of God has brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed and our virgin-hearts made ready for the marriage feast.

This marriage feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union that can be between God and the soul in this life.[25] Or in other words it is the birth-day of the Spirit of love in our souls, which, whenever we attain it, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as will blot out the

remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before. . . .

The will is the leader of the creaturely life and it can have nothing but that to which its will is turned. And therefore it cannot be saved from or raised out of the wrath of nature, till its will turns from nature and wills to be no longer driven by it. But it cannot turn from nature or show a will to come from under its power, any other way than by turning and giving up itself to that meekness, humility, patience, and resignation to God which so far as it goes is a leaving, rejecting and dying to all the guidance of nature.

And thus you see that this one simple way is, according to the immutable nature of things, the one only possible and absolutely necessary way to God. It is as possible to go two contrary ways at once as to go to God any other way than this. But what is best of all, this way is absolutely infallible; nothing can defeat it. And all this infallibility is fully grounded in the twofold character of our Saviour; (1) as He is the Lamb of God, a principle and source of all meekness and humility in the soul: and (2) as He is the Light of Eternity that blesses eternal nature and turns it into a Kingdom of Heaven.

For in this twofold respect He has a power of redeeming us which nothing can hinder; but sooner or later He must see all His and our enemies under His feet and all that is fallen in Adam into death must rise and return into a unity of an eternal life in God.[26]

For as the Lamb of God, He has all power to bring forth in us a sensibility and a weariness of our own wrathful state and a willingness to fall from it into meekness, humility, patience, and resignation to that mercy of God which alone can help us. And when we are thus weary and heavy laden and willing to get rest to our souls in meek, humble, patient resignation to God, then it is that He, as the light of God and Heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us, turns our darkness into light, our sorrow into joy, and begins that Kingdom of God and divine love within us which will never have an end.

Need I say any more, Theogenes, to show you how to come out of the wrath of your evil earthly nature into the sweet

peace and joy of the Spirit of love? Neither notions, nor speculations, nor heat, nor fervour, nor rules, nor methods, can bring it forth. It is the child of light and cannot possibly have any birth in you but only and solely from the light of God rising in your own soul, as it rises in heavenly beings. But the light of God cannot arise or be found in you by any art or contrivance of your own, but only and solely in the way of that meekness, humility, and patience which waits, trusts, resigns to and expects all from the inward, living, life-giving operation of the triune God within you, creating, quickening, and reviving in your fallen soul that birth and image and likeness of the Holy Trinity in which the first father of mankind was created.

Theogenes. You need say no more, Theophilus; you have not only removed that difficulty which brought us hither, but have by a variety of things fixed and confirmed us in a full belief of that great truth elsewhere asserted, namely, 'That there is but one salvation for all mankind and that is the life of God in the soul. And also, that there is but one possible way for man to attain this life of God, not one for a Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for a heathen. No, God is one and the way to it is one, and that is the desire of the soul turned to God.'

Therefore, dear Theophilus, adieu! If we see you no more in this life, you have sufficiently taught us how to seek and find every kind of goodness, blessing, and happiness in God alone. [109-115, 121-127, 130-133]

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS

Letter I

I AM conscious that in my later writings I have raised a prejudice against me by espousing the writings of Jacob Behmen. It was very easy for the world to find fault with me on that account. Matter of censure lies very open to the critical reader of his books, though the true ground of every doctrine and article of Christian faith and practice is there opened in such a ravishing, amazing depth and clearness of truth and conviction as had never been seen or heard of in any age of the Church. To regard him as a divinely-inspired writer will with many be proof enough of my being an enthusiast. But I am fully assured that if the most sober and just enemy to enthusiasm had but patience to read him till he in some degree understood his ground and principles, be he who he will, Christian or deist, he will find himself forced to think of him as I do, and that without adding either him to the number of the apostles or his writings to the sacred canon. [2 (1769)]

Letter IV

Again, though Christ's death was thus absolutely necessary in the very nature of the thing, thus great in its merits and effects, yet unless His resurrection had followed, we had been yet in our sins, nor could He, till risen from the grave, have purchased a resurrection for us. Lastly, had He not ascended into Heaven He could not have had the power of drawing, as He said, all men to Himself. Every part, therefore, of our Saviour's character or process has its full and equal share in all that which is said of Him, as our peace with God, our

righteousness, our justification, our ransom, our atonement, our satisfaction, our life and new birth; for all these different expressions have no difference in doctrine, but whether separately or jointly taken, signify nothing else but this one thing, that He was the true and full destroyer of all the works of the Devil in man and the true raiser of a divine life in all that died in Adam. . . .[1]

Unreasonably, therefore, have our scholastic systems of the Gospel separated the sacrifice of Christ's death from the other parts of His process and considered it as something chiefly done with regard to God, to alter or atone an infinite wrath that was raised in God against fallen man, which infinity of just vengeance or vindictive justice must have devoured the sinner, unless an infinite satisfaction had been made to it by the death of Christ.

All this is in the grossest ignorance of God, of the reason and ground and effects of Christ's death, and in full contradiction to the express letter of Scripture. For there we are told that God is love, and that the infinity of His love was that alone which showed itself towards fallen man and wanted to have satisfaction done to it; which love-desire could not be fulfilled, could not be satisfied with anything less than man's full deliverance from all the evil of his fallen state. That love which has the infinity of God, nay, which is God Himself, was so immutably great towards man, though fallen from Him, 'that He spared not His only begotten Son.' And why did He not spare Him? It was because nothing but the incarnate life of His eternal Son, passing through all the miserable states of lost man, could regenerate his first divine life in him. Can you possibly be told this in stronger words than these, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son'? How did He give Him? Why, in His whole process. And to what end did He give Him? Why, 'that all who believe in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' Away, then, with the superstitious dream of an infinite wrath in God towards poor fallen man which could never cease till an infinite satisfaction

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in the *Letters*, see pages 285-7.

was made to it! All Scripture denies it and the light of nature abhors it. The birth, the life, the death of Christ, though so different things, have but one and the same operation, and that operation is solely in man, to drive all evil out of his fallen nature and delight the heart of God that desires his salvation. . . .

What a paltry logic to say, God is righteousness and justice as well as love, and therefore His love cannot help or forgive the sinner till His justice or righteous wrath has satisfaction! Every word here is in full ignorance of the things spoken of. For what is love in God but His will to all goodness? What is righteousness in God but His unchangeable love of His own goodness, His impossibility of loving anything else but it, His impossibility of suffering anything that is unrighteous to have any communion with Him?

What is God's forgiving sinful man? It is nothing else in its whole nature but God's making him righteous again. There is no other forgiveness of sin but being made free from it. Therefore, the compassionate love of God that forgives sin, is no other than God's love of His own righteousness, for the sake of which and through the love of which He makes man righteous again. This is the one righteousness of God that is rigorous, that makes no abatements, that must be satisfied, must be fulfilled in every creature that is to have communion with Him. And this righteousness that is thus rigorous is nothing else but the unalterable purity and perfection of the divine love which, from eternity to eternity, can love nothing but its own righteouness, can will nothing but its own goodness, and therefore can will nothing towards fallen man but the return of his lost goodness by a new birth of the divine life in him, which is the true forgiveness of sins. For what is the sinful state of man? It is nothing else but the loss of that divine nature which cannot commit sin; therefore, the forgiving man's sin is, in the truth and reality of it, nothing else but the revival of that nature in man which, being born of God, sinneth not.

Lastly, let me ask these dividers of the divine nature what different shares or different work had the righteousness and the love of God in the creation of man? Was there then

something done by the love of God which ought not to be ascribed to the righteousness of God? Who can be so weak as to say this? But if the love and the righteousness of God is one, as God is one, and had but one work in the creation of man, it must be the highest absurdity to say that in the redemption of man the love and the righteousness of God must have not only different but contrary works, that the love of God cannot act till the righteousness of God, as something different from it, is first satisfied.

All that which we call the attributes of God are only so many human ways of our conceiving that abyssal All which can neither be spoken nor conceived by us.[2] And this way of thinking and speaking of God is suitable to our capacities, has its good use, and helps to express our adoration of Him and His perfections. But to conclude and contend that there must therefore be different qualities in God, answerable to or according to our different ways of thinking and speaking of His perfections, is rather blaspheming than truly glorifying His name and nature. For omnipotent love, inconceivable goodness, is that unity of God which we can neither conceive, as it is in itself, nor divide into this or that. [138-140, 144-145]

Letter V

Now there is no being saved or preserved from this body of chains and darkness,[3] but by the one hunger and thirst after righteousness that is in Christ Jesus and by eating that which begets heavenly spiritual flesh and blood to the soul. The two trees of Paradise, with their two fruits, *viz.*, of death to the eater of the one and life to the eater of the other, were infallible signs and full proofs that from the beginning to the end of the world death and life, happiness and misery, can proceed from nothing else but that which the lust and hunger of the soul chooseth for its food. Now, spiritual eating is by the mouth of desire, and desire is nothing else but will and hunger; therefore, that which you will and hunger after, that you are continually eating, whether it be

good or bad, and that, be it which it will, forms the strength of your life or, which is the same thing, forms the body of your soul. If you have many wills and many hungers, all that you eat is only the food of so many spiritual diseases, and burdens your soul with a complication of inward distempers. And under this working of so many wills it is that religious people have no more good or health and strength from the true religion than a man who has a complication of bodily distempers has from the most healthful food. For no will or hunger, be it turned which way it will or seem ever so small or trifling, is without its effect. For as we can have nothing but as our will works, so we must have always some effect from it. It cannot be insignificant, because nothing is significant but that which it does.

Do not now say, that you have this one will and one hunger and yet find not the food of life by it. For as sure as you are forced to complain, so sure is it that you have it not. 'Not my will, but thine be done'; when this is the one will of the soul, all complaints are over, then it is that patience drinks water of life out of every cup; and to every craving of the old man this one hunger continually says, 'I have meat to eat that ye know nothing of.'

'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done' is the one will and one hunger that feeds the soul with the life-giving bread of Heaven. This will is always fulfilled, it cannot possibly be sent empty away, for God's kingdom must manifest itself with all its riches in that soul which wills nothing else; it never was nor can be lost but by the will that seeks something else. Hence you may know with the utmost certainty that if you have no inward peace, if religious comfort is still wanting, it is because you have more wills than one. For the multiplicity of wills is the very essence of fallen nature, and all its evil, misery, and separation from God lies in it; and as soon as you return to and allow only this one will, you are returned to God, and must find the blessedness of His kingdom within you.

Give yourself up to ever so many good works, read, preach, pray, visit the sick, build hospitals, clothe the naked, etc., yet if anything goes along with these or in the doing of

them you have anything else that you will and hunger after, but that God's kingdom may come and His will be done, they are not the works of the new-born from above and so cannot be his life-giving food. For the new creature in Christ is that one will and one hunger that was in Christ; and therefore, where that is wanting, there is wanting that new creature which alone can have His conversation, which alone can daily eat and drink at God's table, receiving in all that it does continual life from 'every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' . . .

Hence it is that nothing can put an end to this multiplicity of wills in fallen man which is his death to God, nothing can be the resurrection of the divine nature within him, which is his only salvation, but the Cross of Christ, not that wooden cross on which He was crucified, but that Cross on which He was crucified through the whole course of His life in the flesh. It is our fellowship with Him on this Cross, through the whole course of our lives, that is our union with Him; it alone gives power to the divine nature within us to arise out of its death and breathe again in us, in one will and one hunger after nothing but God.

To be like-minded with Christ is to live in every contrariety to self, the world, the flesh, and the devil, as He did; this is our belonging to Him, our being one with Him, having life from Him and washing our robes in the blood of the Lamb. For then and then only are we washed and cleansed by His blood when we drink His blood, and we drink His blood when we willingly drink of the cup that He drank of. . . .

Tell me, then, no more of your new skill in Hebrew words, of your Paris editions of all the ancient fathers, your complete collection of the councils, commentators, and Church historians, etc., etc. Did Christ mean anything like this when He said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'? Did the Apostle mean anything like this when he said, 'No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost'? Great, good, and divine teachers, you say, were many of the Fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and divine is He who is always teaching within you, ever standing

and knocking at the door of your heart with the words of eternal life.

You perhaps may ask why I go on writing books myself if there is but one true and divine teacher? I answer, though there is but one bridegroom that can furnish the blessing of the marriage feast, yet His servants are sent out to invite the guests.[4] This is the unalterable difference between Christ's teaching and the teaching of those who only publish the glad tidings of Him. They are not the bridegroom and therefore have not the bridegroom's voice. They are not the light, but only sent to bear witness of it. And as the Baptist said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease'; so every faithful teacher saith of his doctrine, it must decrease and end as soon as it has led to the true Teacher.

All that I have written for near thirty years has been only to show that we have no master but Christ, nor can have any living divine knowledge but from His holy nature born and revealed in us. Not a word in favour of Jacob Behmen but because, above every writer in the world, he has made all that is found in the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of nature to be one continual demonstration that dying to self, to be born again of Christ, is the one only possible salvation of the sons of fallen Adam. [149-153]

Letter VI

God is all good, the only good, and there is nothing good besides Him; therefore, to love God with all your heart, etc. is to love all goodness and to love nothing else but goodness, and then, and only then, do you love God with all your heart, and soul, and strength. But now, to what purpose could this precept of such a love be given to man, unless he essentially partook of the divine nature? For to be in heart, and soul, and spirit all love of God and yet have nothing of the nature of God within you, is surely too absurd for anyone to believe. So sure, therefore, as this precept came from

Truth itself, so sure is it that every man (however loath to hear of anything but pleasures and enjoyments in this vain shadow of a life) has yet a divine nature concealed within him, which, when suffered to hear the calls of God, will know the voice of its heavenly Father and long to do His will on earth as it is done in Heaven.

The conclusion, then, is this: if to love God with your whole heart and soul is to love all goodness and nothing else but goodness; and if all that is done without this love, whether in religious duties or common life, is but mere separation from God, then it must be the grossest blindness to believe you can have any love of God or goodness in any duties you perform, any further or in any other degree than as the eternal, holy Spirit of God lives and loves in you.

Again, to see the divinity of man's original you need only read these words: 'Be ye perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.' For what could man have to do with the perfection of God as the rule of his life, unless the truth and reality of the divine nature was in him? Could there be any reasonableness in this precept or any fitness to call us to be good, as God is good, unless there was that in us which is in God? Or to call us to the perfection of a heavenly Father if we were not the real children of His heavenly nature? Might it not be as well to bid the heavy stone to fly as its flying father, the eagle, doth?

But this precept from the lip of Truth is another full proof that, by the Fall, a death or suppression is brought upon our first divine life, and also that it is yet in a state capable of being revived again in us. For if it was not in a state of death or suppressed in us there could be no need of calling us to live according to it; for every being naturally acts according to the life that is manifested in it. Nor could we be called to be heavenly but because the heavenly nature has its seed in our soul in a readiness to come to life in us.

Lastly, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is another full proof that God is in us of a truth and that the Holy Spirit hath as certainly an essential birth within us as the spirit of this world hath. For this precept might as well be given to a fox as to a man, if man had not something

quite supernatural in him. For mere nature and natural creature is nothing else but mere self, and can work nothing but to and for itself. And this not through any corruption or depravity of nature, but because it is nature's best state and it can be nothing else either in man or beast.

'I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you,' etc. Every word here is demonstration that nothing but the new birth from above can be a Christian. There is no other nature or spirit that can breathe forth this universal love and benevolence but that same which, laying aside its own glory, came down from Heaven to forgive, to love, to save, and die for a whole world of enemies and sinners.

This is the Spirit of Christ, that must as essentially live and breathe in you as it did in Him, or all exhortations to do as He did, to walk as He walked, are but in vain. The natural man is in full separation from this holiness of life, and though he had more wisdom of words, more depth of literature than was in Cicero or Aristotle, yet would he have as much to die to as the grossest publican or vainest Pharisee before he could be in Christ a new creature. For the highest improved natural abilities can as well ascend into Heaven or clothe flesh and blood with immortality as make a man like-minded with Christ in any one divine virtue. And that for this one reason, because God and divine goodness are inseparable. . . .

To speak of the operation of the Holy Spirit as only an assistance or an occasional assistance,[5] is as short of the truth as to say that Christ shall only assist the resurrection of our bodies. For not a spark of any divine virtue can arise up in us but what must wholly and solely be called forth by that same power which alone can call our dead bodies out of the dust and darkness of the grave. . . .

And be assured also that, when the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit that ruleth in you, there will be no hard sayings in the Gospel; but all that the heavenly Christ taught in the flesh will be as meat and drink to you, and you will have no joy but in walking as He walked, in saying, loving, and doing that which He said, loved, and did. . . . Ask then,

my friend, no more where you shall go or what you shall do to be in the truth; for you can have the truth nowhere but in Jesus, nor in Him any further than as His whole nature and Spirit is born within you. Farewell. [162-164]

Letter X

My dear worthy Friend, whom I much love and esteem, your letter, though full of complaints about the state of your heart, was very much according to my mind, and gives me great hopes that God will carry on the good work He has begun in you, and lead you by His Holy Spirit through all those difficulties under which you at present labour. . . . You seem to yourself to be all infatuation and stupidity, because your head and your heart are so contrary, the one delighting in heavenly notions, the other governed by earthly passions and pursuits. It is happy for you that you know and acknowledge this. For only through this truth, through the full and deep perception of it, can you have any entrance or so much as the beginning of an entrance into the liberty of the children of God. God is in this respect dealing with you as He does with those whose darkness is to be changed into light. Which can never be done till you fully know (1) the real badness of your own heart, and (2) your utter inability to deliver yourself from it by any sense, power, or activity of your own mind. . . .

All that you complain of in your heart is common to man as man. There is no heart that is without it. And this is the one ground why every man, as such, however different in temper, complexion, or natural endowments from others, has one and the same full reason and absolute necessity of being born again from above. Flesh and blood and the spirit of this world govern every spring in the heart of the natural man. And therefore you can never enough adore that ray of divine light which, breaking in upon your darkness, has discovered this to be the state of your heart and raised only those faint wishes that you feel to be delivered from it. For

faint as they are, they have their degree of goodness in them and as certainly proceed solely from the goodness of God working in your soul, as the first dawning of the morning is solely from and wrought by the same sun which helps us to the noon-day light. Firmly, therefore, believe this as a certain truth, that the present sensibility of your incapacity for goodness is to be cherished as a heavenly seed of life, as the blessed work of God in your soul. . . .

But you will perhaps say it is your very heart that keeps you a stranger to Christ and Him to you, because your heart is all bad, as unholy as a den of thieves.

I answer that the finding this to be the state of your heart is the real finding of Christ in it. For nothing else but Christ can reveal and make manifest the sin and evil in you. And He that discovers is the same Christ that takes away sin. So that as soon as complaining guilt sets itself before you and will be seen, you may be assured that Christ is in you of a truth. For Christ must first come as a discoverer and reprover of sin. It is the infallible proof of His holy presence within you. Hear Him, reverence Him, submit to Him as a discoverer and reprover of sin. Own His power and presence in the feeling of your guilt and then He that wounded will heal, He that found out the sin will take it away, and He who showed you your den of thieves will turn it into a holy temple of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.[6] . . .

Be courageous, then, and full of hope, not by looking at any strength of your own or fancying that you now know how to be wiser in yourself than you have hitherto been; no, this will only help you to find more and more defects of weakness in yourself; but be courageous in faith, and hope, and dependence upon God. And be assured that the one infallible way to all that is good is never to be weary in waiting, trusting, and depending upon God manifested in Christ Jesus. [170-76]

Letter XI

What life is so much to be dreaded as a life of worldly ease and prosperity? What a misery, nay, what a curse is there in everything that gratifies and nourishes our self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking! On the other hand, what happiness is there in all inward and outward troubles and vexations when they force us to feel and know the hell that is hidden within us and the vanity of everything without us, when they turn all our self-love into self-abhorrence and force us to call upon God to save us from ourselves, to give us a new life, new light, and new spirit in Christ Jesus.

'O happy famine,' might the poor Prodigal have well said, 'which, by reducing me to the necessity of asking to eat husks with swine, brought me to myself and caused my return to my first happiness in my father's house.'

Now, I will suppose your distressed state to be as you represent it: inwardly, darkness, heaviness, and confusion of thoughts and passions; outwardly, ill usage from friends, relations, and all the world, unable to strike up the least spark of light or comfort by any thought or reasoning of your own.

O happy famine, which leaves you not so much as the husk of one human comfort to feed upon! For this is the time and place for all that good and life and salvation to happen to you which happened to the Prodigal Son. Your way is as short and your success as certain as his was. You have no more to do than he had; you need not call out for books or methods of devotion; for in your present state much reading and borrowed prayers are not your best method. All that you are to offer to God, all that is to help you to find Him to be your Saviour and Redeemer, is best taught and expressed by the distressed state of your heart.

Only let your present and past distress make you feel and acknowledge this twofold great truth: first, that in and of yourself you are nothing but darkness, vanity, and misery; secondly, that of yourself you can no more help

yourself to light and comfort than you can create an angel. People at all times can seem to assent to these two truths, but then it is an assent that has no depth or reality and so is of little or no use. But your condition has opened your heart for a deep and full conviction of these truths. Now, give way, I beseech you, to this conviction, and hold these two truths in the same degree of certainty as you know two and two to be four, and then you are, with the Prodigal, come to yourself, and above half your work is done.

Being now in full possession of these two truths, feeling them in the same degree of certainty as you feel your own existence, you are under this sensibility to give up yourself absolutely and entirely to God in Christ Jesus as into the hands of infinite Love, firmly believing this great and infallible truth, that God has no will towards you but that of infinite Love and infinite desire to make you a partaker of His divine nature; and that it is as absolutely impossible for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to refuse all that good and life and salvation which you want, as it is for you to take it by your own power.

O drink deep of this cup, for the precious water of eternal life is in it! Turn unto God with this faith, cast yourself into this Abyss of Love, and then you will be in that state the Prodigal was in when he said, 'I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son'; and all that will be fulfilled in you which is related of him.

Make this, therefore, the twofold exercise of your heart: now, bowing yourself down before God in the deepest sense and acknowledgment of your own nothingness and vileness; then, looking up unto God in faith and love, consider Him as always extending the arms of His mercy towards you and full of an infinite desire to dwell in you as He dwells in angels in Heaven. Content yourself with this inward and simple exercise of your heart for a while, and seek or like nothing in any book but that which nourishes and strengthens this state of your heart.

'Come unto me,' says the holy Jesus, 'all ye that labour

and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' Here is more for you to live upon, more light for your mind, more of unction for your heart than in volumes of human instruction. Pick up the words of the holy Jesus and beg of Him to be the light and life of your soul. Love the sound of His name; for Jesus is the love, the sweetness, the compassionate goodness of the Deity itself which became man, that so men might have power to become the sons of God. Love and pity and wish well to every soul in the world; dwell in love, and then you dwell in God; hate nothing but the evil that stirs in your own heart.

Teach your heart this prayer till your heart continually saith, though not with outward words: 'O holy Jesus, meek Lamb of God! Bread that came down from Heaven! Light and life of all holy souls! Help me to a true and living faith in thee. O do thou open thyself within me with all thy holy nature, spirit, tempers, and inclinations, that I may be born again of thee, in thee a new creature, quickened and revived, led and governed by thy Holy Spirit.' Prayer so practised becomes the life of the soul and the true food of eternity. Keep in this state of application to God, and then you will infallibly find it to be the true way of rising out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity.

Do not expect or look for the same degrees of sensible fervour. The matter lies not there. Nature will have its share, but the ups and downs of that are to be overlooked. Whilst your will-spirit is good and set right, the changes of creaturely fervour lessen not your union with God. It is the abyss of the heart, an unfathomable depth of eternity within us, as much above sensible fervour as Heaven is above earth; it is this that works our way to God and unites with Heaven. This abyss of the heart[7] is the divine nature and power within us, which never calls upon God in vain, but, whether helped or deserted by bodily fervour, penetrates through all outward nature as easily and effectually as our thoughts can leave our bodies and reach into the regions of eternity.

The poverty of our fallen nature, the depraved workings of flesh and blood, the corrupt tempers of our polluted birth in this world do us no hurt so long as the spirit of prayer

works contrary to them and longs for the first birth of the light and spirit of Heaven. All our natural evil ceases to be our own evil as soon as our will-spirit turns from it; it then changes its nature, loses all its poison and death, and only becomes our holy cross on which we happily die from self and this world into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Would you have done with error, scruple and delusion? Consider the Deity to be the greatest love, the greatest meekness, the greatest sweetness, the eternal, unchangeable will to be a good and blessing to every creature; and that all the misery, darkness, and death of fallen angels and fallen men consist in their having lost their likeness to this divine nature. Consider yourself and all the fallen world as having nothing to seek or wish for, but by the spirit of prayer to draw into the life of your soul rays and sparks of this divine, meek, loving, tender nature of God. Consider the holy Jesus as the gift of God to your soul, to begin and finish the birth of God and Heaven within you, in spite of every inward or outward enemy. These three infallible truths, heartily embraced and made the nourishment of your soul, shorten and secure the way to Heaven and leave no room for error, scruple, or delusion. . . .

Reading is good, hearing is good, conversation and meditation are good; but then, they are only good at times and occasions, in a certain degree, and must be used and governed with such caution as we eat and drink and refresh ourselves, or they will bring forth in us the fruits of intemperance. But the spirit of prayer is for all times and all occasions; it is a lamp that is to be always burning, a light to be ever shining; everything calls for it, everything is to be done in it and governed by it, because it is and means and wills nothing else but the whole totality of the soul, not doing this or that, but wholly, incessantly given up to God to be where and what and how He pleases. [178-183]

Letter XXV

When man, created in the image and likeness of God to be an habitation and manifestation of the triune God of goodness, had by the perverseness of a false will, turned from his holy state of life in God, and so was dead to the blessed union and essential operation of God in his soul, yet the goodness of God towards man altered not, but stood in the same good will towards man as at the first, and willed and could will nothing else towards the whole human nature but that every individual of it might be saved from that state of death and misery in an earthly nature into which they were fallen.

Hence, that is, from this unchangeable love of God towards man, which could no more cease than God could cease, came forth that wonderful scene of Providence, of such a variety of means, and dispensations, of visions, voices and messages from Heaven, of law, of prophecies, of promises and threatenings, all adapted to the different states, conditions, and ages of the fallen world, for no other end but by every art of divine wisdom and contrivance of love to break off man from his earthly delusion and beget in him a sense of his lost glory, and so make him capable of finding again that blessed essential operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in his soul, which was the essential glory of his first creation.

Now, as in this scene of a divine and redeeming Providence God had to do with a poor, blind, earthly creature that had lost all sense of heavenly things as they are in themselves, so the Wisdom of God must often, as it were, humanise itself and condescend to speak of Himself after the manner of men. He must speak of His eyes, His ears, His hands, His nose, etc., because the earthly creature, the mere natural man, could no otherwise be brought into any sense of that which God was to him.

But now, all this process of divine providence was only for the sake of something higher; the mystery of God in man and man in God still lay hid and was no more opened than

the mystery of a redeeming Christ was opened in the type of a paschal Lamb.

Pentecost alone was that which took away all veils and showed the kingdom of God as it was in itself, and set man again under the immediate, essential operation of God, which first gave birth to a holy Adam in Paradise. Types and shadows ended because the substance of them was found. The cloven tongues of fire had put an end to them by opening the divine eyes, which Adam had closed up, unstopping the spiritual ears, that he had filled with clay, and making his dumb sons to speak with new tongues.

And what did they say? They said all old things were gone, that a new Heaven and a new earth were coming forth, that God Himself was manifested in the flesh of men, who were now all taught of God. And what were they taught? That same which Adam was taught by his first created life in God, namely, that the immediate, essential operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was henceforth the birthright of all that were become true disciples of Christ. Thus ended the old creation and the fall of man, in a God manifested in the flesh, dying in and for the world, and coming again in spirit to be the life and light of all the sons of Adam.

Look now at all God's dispensations to the day of Pentecost in this true point of view, as so many schools of different discipline and education of the natural man, till by a birth from above he could bear the language of Heaven and be taught of God, and then you will sufficiently see the childish folly of those gray-headed doctors who, forgetting that the last times are come when God will be known only as a spirit, worshipped only in spirit, because everything else is but shadow and not the truth, yet set up themselves as masters or rabbis of new schools of their own, which can only keep up that doting learning and wisdom of words which compelled the learned Jews, for the sake of God and goodness, for the sake of law and prophecy, to crucify the Christ of God as a Beelzebub and blasphemer.

This old logic and criticism of scribes and Pharisees is that which robs disputing Christians of the truth as it is in

Jesus, and instead of the true bread that came down from Heaven, feeds their unregenerate hearts with the dry husks of that which can be got from text set against text in the outward letter. Nay, so wise are these verbal proficients as to think the Gospel must be false and the Bible itself only fit to be burned, if all that is not to be ascribed to God, as true of Him as He is in Himself, which in condescension to the poor, ignorant, fallen, earthly creature, He speaks of His eyes, His ears, His hands, His turning His back and turning His face, His coming down and going up, His fiery wrath, His destroying fury, everlasting vengeance, etc., etc. Whereas all these things are said not because of that which God is in Himself, in His holy, supernatural being, but because of that which man is, in the blindness of his fallen state, so ignorant of God, so averse to godliness as only capable for a time to be instructed by the impressions of such language: that is, till the threatenings of the law and the word of prophecy have done their work and that Day-star ariseth in the heart which knoweth and teacheth that Creator, Redeemer, and Love, are the one true, unchangeable, triune God, that Father, that Son and Holy Spirit, who from everlasting to everlasting have only one will and one work of heavenly life, light, and love in and towards the creature.[8] [209-211]

AN ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY

I WOULD not turn my own thoughts or call the attention of Christians to anything but the one thing needful, the one thing essential and only available to our rising out of our fallen state and becoming, as we were at our creation, an holy offspring of God and real partakers of the divine nature.

If it be asked what this one thing is, it is the Spirit of God brought again to His first power of life in us. Nothing else is wanted by us, nothing else intended for us by the law, the prophets, and the Gospel. Nothing else is or can be effectual to the making sinful man become again a godly creature.

Everything else, be it what it will, however glorious and divine in outward appearance, everything that angels, men, Churches, or reformations can do for us is dead and helpless, but so far as it is the immediate work of the Spirit of God breathing and living in it.

All Scripture bears full witness to this truth, and the end and design of all that is written is only to call us back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh, and the world, to be again under full dependence upon and obedience to the Spirit of God, who out of free love and thirst after our souls seeks to have His first power of life in us. When this is done, all is done that the Scripture can do for us. . . . For if it be an immutable truth, that 'no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,' it must be a truth equally immutable that no one can have any one Christ-like temper or power of goodness but so far and in such degree as he is *immediately* led and governed by the Holy Spirit . . .

'Ye are not in the flesh,' says the Apostle, 'but in the spirit'; but then he adds, as the only ground of this, 'if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you'; surely he means, if so be ye are moved, guided, and governed by that which the Spirit wills, works, and inspires within you. And then,

to show the absolute necessity of this life of God in the soul, he adds, 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' And that this is the state to which God has appointed and called all Christians, he thus declares, 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' The same thing, most surely, as if he had said, Nothing in you can cry or pray to God as its Father but the Spirit of His Son Christ come to life in you. Which is also as true of every tendency in the soul towards God or goodness; so much as there is of it, so much there is of the seed of the woman striving to bring forth a full birth of Christ in the soul.

'Lo, I am always with you,' says the holy Jesus, 'even to the end of the world.' How is He with us? Not outwardly, every illiterate man knows; not inwardly, says many a learned doctor, because a Christ within us is as gross enthusiasm or Quakerism as the light within us.[1] How, then, shall the faith of the common Christian find any comfort in these words of Christ's promise, unless the Spirit brings him into a remembrance and belief that Christ is in him and with him, as the vine is with and in the branch. Christ says, 'Without me ye can do nothing'; and also, 'If any man loves me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.' Now, if without Him we can do nothing, then all the love that a man can possibly have for Christ must be from the power and life of Christ in him, and from such a love, so begotten, man has the Father and the Son dwelling and making their abode in him. What higher proof or fuller certainty can there be that the whole work of redemption in the soul of man is and can be nothing else but the inward, continual, immediate operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, raising up again their own first life in the soul, to which our first father died?

Again, Christ, after His glorification in Heaven, says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' He does not say, 'Behold, ye have me in the Scriptures.' Now, what is the 'door' at which Christ, at the right hand of God in Heaven,

[1]For the note to this and to other reference figures in this *Address*, see pages 289-291.

'knocks'? Surely it is the heart, to which Christ is always present. He goes on, 'If any man hears my voice'; how 'hears,' but by the hearing of the heart, or what 'voice,' but that which is the speaking or sounding of Christ within him? He adds, 'and opens the door,' that is, opens his heart for me, 'I will come in to him,' that is, will be a living holy nature and Spirit born within him, 'and sup with him and he with me.'

Behold the last finishing work of a redeeming Jesus entered into the heart that opens to Him, bringing forth the joy, the blessing, and perfection of that first life of God in the soul which was lost by the Fall, set forth as a supper or feast of the heavenly Jesus with the soul and the soul with Him. Can anyone justly call it enthusiasm to say that this supping of the soul with this glorified Christ within it must mean something more heavenly transacted in the soul than that last supper which He celebrated with His disciples whilst He was with them in flesh? For that supper of bread and wine was such as a Judas could partake of, and could only be an outward type or signification of that inward and blessed nourishment with which the believing soul should be feasted when the glorified Son of God should, as a creating spirit, enter into us, quickening and raising up His own heavenly nature and life within us. Now, this continual knocking of Christ at the door of the heart sets forth the case or nature of a continual, immediate divine inspiration within us; it is always with us, but there must be an opening of the heart to it; and though it is always there, yet it is only felt and found by those who are attentive to it, depend upon, and humbly wait for it. [5-6, 24-6]

Self is the root, the tree, and the branches of all the evils of our fallen state. We are without God, because we are in the life of self. Self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are the very essence and life of pride; and the devil, the first father of pride, is never absent from them nor without power in them. To die to these essential properties of self is to make the devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have self-abilities have a share in our good works, the satanic spirit

of pride is in union with us, and we are working for the maintenance of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking.

All the vices of fallen angels and men have their birth and power in the pride of self, or I may better say, in the atheism and idolatry of self; for self is both atheist and idolater. It is atheist because it has rejected God; it is an idolater because it is its own idol. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. Not a joy, or glory, or praise in Heaven but is what it is through humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between Heaven and hell. No angels in Heaven but because humility is in all their breath; no devils in hell but because the fire of pride is their whole fire of life.

What is, then, or in what lies the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility: all other things, be they what they will, are but as under-workmen. Pride and humility are the two master-powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. . . . Would you see the deepest root and iron strength of pride and self-adoration, you must enter into the dark chamber of man's fiery soul, where the light of God (which alone gives humility and meek submission to all created spirits) being extinguished by the death which Adam died, Satan, or which is the same thing, self-exaltation,[2] became the strong man that kept possession of the house till a stronger than he should come upon him. . . . This is that full-born natural self that must be pulled out of the heart and totally denied, or there can be no disciple of Christ; which is only saying this plain truth, that the apostate, self-idolatrous nature of the old man must be put off, or there can be no new creature in Christ.

Now, what is it in the human soul that most of all hinders the death of this old man? What is it that above all other things strengthens and exalts the life of self and makes it the master and governor of all the powers of the heart and soul? It is the fancied riches of parts, the glitter of genius, the flights of imagination, the glory of learning, and the self-conceited strength of natural reason: these are the strong-

holds of fallen nature, the master-builders of pride's temple in the heart of man, and which, as so many priests, keep up the daily worship of idol-self. . . .

When the holy Church of Christ, the kingdom of God come among men, was first set up, it was the Apostle's boast that all other wisdom or learning was sunk into nothing. 'Where,' says he, 'is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world? Hath not God made them foolishness?' But now it is the boast of all Churches that they are full of the wise, the scribes, the disputers of this world, who sit with learned pomp in the Apostles' chair and have the mysteries of the kingdom of God committed to them. Hence it is that from a religion of heavenly love, built upon the redeeming life and doctrines of a Son of God dying to save the whole world, division, bitterness, envy, pride, strife, hatred, and persecution, nay, every outrage of war and bloodshed, breathe and break forth with more strength in learned Christendom than ever they did from a religion of pagan idolatry set up by Satan.

It may perhaps be here said: Must there, then, be no learning or scholarship, no recondite erudition in the Christian Church? Must there be nothing thought of or got by the Gospel but mere salvation? Must its ministers know nothing, teach nothing but such salvation-doctrines as Christ and His Apostles taught; nothing but the full denial of self, poverty of spirit, meekness and humility and unwearied patience, a never-ceasing love, an absolute renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, a full dependence upon our heavenly Father; no joy or rejoicing but in the Holy Ghost; no wisdom but that which God gives; no walking but as Christ walked; no reward or glory for their labours of love but that of being found in Christ, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones, spirit of His Spirit, and clothed with the wedding-garment when the bridegroom comes? . . .

To this the first answer is: Happy, thrice happy are they who are only the thus-learned preachers of the Gospel, who through all their ministry seek nothing for themselves or

others but to be taught of God; hunger after nothing but the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven, owning no master but Christ, no teacher but His Holy Spirit; as unable to join with the diggers in pagan pits of learning as with those that 'labour for the wind and give their money for that which is not bread.'

Secondly, with regard to the demand of learned knowledge in the Christian Church, it may be answered that all that has been said above is only for the increase and promotion of it.

The law, the prophets, and the Gospel are the only treasures of all that can be called the knowledge either of God or man; and he in whom the law, the prophets, and the Gospel are fulfilled is the only well-educated man and one of the first-rate scholars in the world. But now, who is he that has this wisdom from these rich treasures? Who is he in whom all is known and fulfilled which they teach? The lip of truth has told us that it is he, and he alone, 'who loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbour as himself.' This is the man that is all wisdom, all light, and let into full possession of all that is meant by all the mysteries contained in the law, the prophets, and the Gospel.

Would you divinely know the mysteries of nature, the ground and reason of good and evil in this world, the relation and connection between the visible and invisible world, how the things of time proceed from, are influenced by, and depend upon the things and powers of eternity, there is but one only key of entrance; nothing can open the vision but seeing with the eyes of that same love which begun and carries on all that is and works in visible and invisible nature.[3] Would you divinely know the mysteries of grace and salvation, would you go forth as a faithful witness of Gospel truths, stay till this fire of divine love has had its perfect work within you. For till your heart is an altar on which this heavenly fire never goes out, you are dead in yourself and can only be a speaker of dead words about things that never had any life within you. For without a real birth of this divine love in the essence of your

soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your heart is but the dark heart of fallen Adam, and your knowledge of the kingdom of God will be only like that which murdering Cain had. . . . For as His Holy Spirit must first be a gift to us or born in us, and then we have that which can worship God in spirit, so His love must of all necessity be a gift to us or born in us, and then we have that of God in us which alone can love Him with His own love. A truth absolutely asserted in these words: 'Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God.' [54-56, 65-67]

Look at that which the private Christian is to do to his neighbour or his enemy, and you see that very thing which one Christian kingdom is to do to another. Look at that which proves a man to be not led and governed by the Spirit of Christ, and you see that which proves a kingdom to be under the dominion and power of Satan. Wherever pride is, there the devil is riding in his first fiery chariot; and wherever wrath is, there he has his first murdering sword at work. What is it that fallen man wants to be redeemed from, but pride and wrath, envy and covetousness? He can have no higher separation or apostasy from God, no fuller union with Satan and his angels than he has of the spirit of these tempers: they constitute that which, whether you call it self or Satan in him, the meaning is the same. Now, suppose man not fallen into this self or Satan, and then there could be no more war or fighting in him than there was in the Word made man in our flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen nature by a new birth of the Lamb of God born in his soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill men gloriously in the field than to carry a dark lanthorn by night to a Powder-plot.

Love, goodness, and communication of good is the immutable glory and perfection of the divine nature, and nothing can have union with God but that which partakes of this goodness. The Love that brought forth the existence of all things changes not through the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work to bring back all fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. All that passes

for a time between God and His fallen creature is but one and the same thing, working for one and the same end; and though this is called wrath, that called punishment, curse, and death, it is all, from the beginning to the end, nothing but the work of the first creating love, and means nothing else, does nothing else but those works of purifying fire which must and alone can burn away all that dark evil which separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's Providence, from the Fall to the restitution of all things, is doing the same thing as when He said to the dark chaos[4] of fallen nature, 'Let there be light'; He still says and will continue saying the same thing, till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, God forgiving and redeeming, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never-ceasing working of the divine nature. . . .

Now, from this view of God's infinite love and mercy in Christ Jesus, willing nothing, seeking nothing through all the regions of His providence, but that sinners of all kinds, the boldest rebels against all His goodness, may have their proper remedy, their necessary means of being fully delivered from all that hurt, mischief, and destruction which, in full opposition to their God and Creator, they had brought upon themselves; from this view, I say, of God and Christ, using every miracle of love and wisdom to give recovery of life, health, and salvation to all that have rebelled against them, look at the murdering monster of WAR. And what can its name or nature be but a fiery great dragon, a full figure of Satan broke loose and fighting against every redeeming virtue of the Lamb of God? . . .

That God's providence over His fallen creatures is nothing else but a providence of love and salvation, turning through ways of infinite wisdom, sooner or later, all kinds of evil into a new good, making that which was lost to be found, that which was dead to be alive again, not willing that one single sinner should want that which can save him from eternal death, is a truth as certain as that God's name is I AM that I AM.

Among unfallen creatures in Heaven, God's name and nature is love, light, and glory. To the fallen sons of Adam that which was love, light, and glory in Heaven becomes infinite pity and compassion on earth in a God clothed with the nature of His fallen creature, bearing all its infirmities, entering into all its troubles and, in the meek innocence of a Lamb of God, living a life and dying a death of all the sufferings due to sin. Hence it was that, when this divine pity suffered its own life-giving blood to be poured on the ground, all outward nature made full declaration of its atoning and redeeming power; the strength of the earth did quake, the hardness of rocks was forced to split, and long-covered graves to give up their dead. A certain presage, that all that came by the curse into nature and creature must give up its power; that all kinds of hellish wrath, hardened malice, fiery pride, selfish wills, tormenting envy and earthly passions, which kept men under the power of Satan, must have their fullness of death and fullness of a new life from that all-powerful, all-purifying blood of the Lamb, which will never cease washing red into white, till the earth is washed into the crystal purity of that glassy sea which is before the throne of God, and all the sons of Adam clothed in such white as fits them for their several mansions in their heavenly Father's house.[5]

Sing, O ye Heavens, and shout, all ye lower parts of the earth, this is our God, that varies not, whose first creating love knows no change but into a redeeming pity towards all His fallen creatures.

Look now at warring Christendom. What smallest drop of pity towards sinners is to be found in it? Or how could a spirit all-hellish more fully contrive and hasten their destruction? It stirs up and kindles every passion of fallen nature that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-saving Spirit of Christ. . . .

Again, would you further see the fall of the universal Church from being led by the Spirit of Christ, to be guided by the inspiration of the great fiery dragon, look at all European Christendom sailing round the globe with fire and sword and every murdering art of war to seize the possessions

and kill the inhabitants of both the Indies.[6] What natural right of man, what supernatural virtue, which Christ brought down from Heaven, was not here trodden underfoot? All that you ever read or heard of heathen barbarity was here outdone by Christian conquerors. And to this day, what wars of Christians against Christians, blended with scalping heathen, still keep staining the earth and the seas with human blood for a miserable share in the spoils of a plundered heathen world! A world which should have heard or seen or felt nothing from the followers of Christ but a divine love that had forced them from distant lands and through the perils of long seas to visit strangers with those glad tidings of peace and salvation to all the world, which angels from Heaven and shepherds on earth proclaimed at the birth of Christ. . . .

As to the present fallen state of universal Christendom, working under the spirit and power of the great fiery dragon, it is not my intention, in anything I am here upon, to show how any part of it can subsist or preserve itself from being devoured by every other part, but by its own dragon weapons.

But the Christendom which I mean, that neither wants nor allows of war, is only that where Christ is King, and His Holy Spirit the only governor of the wills, affections, and designs of all that belongs to it. It is my complaint against and charge upon all the nations of Christendom that this necessity of murdering arms is the dragon's monster, that is equally brought forth by all and every part of fallen Christendom, and that therefore all and every part, as well Popish as Protestant, are at one and the same distance from the Spirit of their Lord and Saviour, the Lamb of God, and therefore all want one and the same entire reformation. . . .

St. Paul speaks of a natural man that cannot know the things of God, but to whom they are mere foolishness. . . . This is the natural man who, having got into the Church and Church power, has turned the things of God into things of this world. Had this man been kept out of the Church,

the Church had kept its first purity to this day, for its fallen state is nothing else but its fall into the hands of the natural man of this world. And when this is the state of the Church, the wisdom of this world (which always loves its own) will be in love with it, will spare no cost to maintain it, will make laws, fight battles in defence of it, and condemn every man as heretical who dares speak a word against this glorious image of a Church which the wisdom of this world has set up.

This is the great Antichrist, which is neither better nor worse nor anything else but the spirit of Satan working against Christ in the strength and subtlety of earthly wisdom.

If, therefore, you take anything to be Church-reformation but a full departure from the wisdom of this world, or anything to be your entrance into a salvation-Church but the nature, spirit, and works of Christ become living in you, then, whether Papist or Protestant, reformation or no reformation, all will be just as much good to you as when a Sadducee turns publican, or from a publican becomes a Pharisee. For the Church of Christ, as it is the door of salvation, is nothing else but Christ himself. Christ in us, or we in His Church, is the same thing. When that is alive, wills and works in you, which was alive in Christ, then you are in His Church; for that which He was, that must they be who are His. [85-94]

Truth, to the eternal praise and glory of God, will eternally say that His love is as universal and unchangeable as His being, that His mercy over all His works can no more cease than His omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God's mark of an universal salvation set upon all mankind was first given in these words, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the Serpent.' Therefore, wherever the Serpent is, there his head is to be bruised. This was God's infallible assurance or omnipotent promise, that all that died in Adam should have its first birth of glory again. The eternal Son of God came into the world only for the sake of this new birth, to give God the glory of restoring it to all the dead sons of fallen Adam. All the mysteries of this incarnate,

suffering, dying Son of God, all the price that He paid for our redemption, all the washings that we have from His all-cleansing blood poured out for us, all the life that we receive from eating His flesh and drinking His blood, have their infinite value, their high glory and amazing greatness in this, because nothing less than these supernatural mysteries of a God-man could raise that new creature out of Adam's death which could be again a living temple and deified habitation of the Spirit of God.

That this new birth of the Spirit or the divine life in man was the truth, the substance, and sole end of His miraculous mysteries is plainly told us by Christ Himself, who at the end of all His process on earth tells His disciples what was to be the blessed and full effect of it, namely, that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (being now fully purchased for them) should after His ascension come in the stead of a Christ in the flesh. 'If I go not away,' says He, 'the Comforter will not come; but if I go away I will send Him unto you, and He shall guide you into all truth.' Therefore, all that Christ was, did, suffered, dying in the flesh and ascending into Heaven, was for this sole end to purchase for all His followers a new birth, new life, and new light in and by the Spirit of God, restored to them and living in them as their support, comforter, and guide into all truth. And this was His 'LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.'[7] [102-103]

TABLE OF DATES AND PUBLISHED WORKS

A.D.	
1686	William Law born at King's Cliffe, Northants. (Baptised on Feb. 3rd.)
1703	John Wesley born.
1705	Law enters Emmanuel College, Cambridge.
1711	Law becomes Fellow of Emmanuel and is ordained Deacon.
1713	*Sermon on the Peace of 1713* at Haslingfield, where it appears likely that Law was curate from 1711 to 1713.
1716	Law, as a Nonjuror, loses his Fellowship and leaves Cambridge.
1717-19	*Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor* (I).
1723	*Remarks upon The Fable of the Bees* (Mandeville) (II).
c. 1723	Law becomes tutor to Edward Gibbon and lives at Putney and Cambridge.
1726	*The Unlawfulness of Stage Entertainment* (II).
1726	*A Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (III).
1727	Law is ordained Priest by the Nonjuror Bishop Gandy.
1727	Law founds a Girls' School at King's Cliffe.
1729	*A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (IV).
1729	John Byrom's first visit to Law (at Putney).
1731	*The Case of Reason* (II).
1731-32	*Letters to a Lady on the Church of Rome* (IX).
1732	John Wesley's first visit to Law.
1734	E. Gibbon leaves Cambridge. Law remains at Putney.
c. 1735	Law begins to read Jacob Behmen (i.e. Boehme).

1736	Law takes E. Gibbon's wedding service.
1736	*Letters to Fanny Henshaw.* Controversy with the Quakers.
1737	Edward Gibbon (the historian) born. Mr. Gibbon *sen.* dies.
1737	*A Demonstration of the Errors of A Plain Account, etc.* (Bishop Hoadly) (V).
1738	John Wesley's final conversion; his breach with Law.
1738-39	Law leaves Putney for London lodgings.
1739	*The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration* (V).
1740	*An Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse* (VI).
1740	*An Appeal to all that Doubt the Truths of the Gospel* (VI).
1740	*Some Animadversions on Dr. Trapp's Reply* (VI).
1740	Law removes to King's Cliffe for the rest of his life.
1743	Byrom visits Law at King's Cliffe.
1743-4	Hester Gibbon and Mrs. Hutcheson come to live with Law.
1745	Boys' School founded at King's Cliffe.
1749	*The Spirit of Prayer* (VII).
1750	*The Second Part of the Spirit of Prayer* (VII).
1752	*The Way to Divine Knowledge* (VII).
1752	King's Cliffe Library founded.
1752	*The Spirit of Love* (VIII).
1754	*The Second Part of the Spirit of Love* (VIII).
1755	Wesley's *Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law* (in criticism of his 1752-4 works).
1756	Law builds School, School-house, and alms-houses.
1757	*A Confutation of Dr. Warburton's Divine Legation* (VIII).
1760	*A Dialogue on Justification* (VIII).
1760	*A Collection of Letters* (IX).
1761	*An Address to the Clergy* (IX).
1761	April 9th. William Law dies.

1764-81 Memorial edition of Jacob Behmen's writings published.

1768 Wesley's *Extracts from the Rev. Mr. Law's later Works.*

1934 Tercentenary Celebration of Jacob Boehme's death at Görlitz in German Silesia.

1961 Bicentenary of William Law's death.

NOTE.—The Roman numerals following the titles of the various works refer to the nine volumes of G. Moreton's 1893 edition. The *Letters to Fanny Henshaw*, etc., are printed in S. Hobhouse's *William Law and 18th Century Quakerism* (1927).

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

Trapp . *Answer to* and *Animadversions on Dr. Trapp.*

SP . . *Spirit of Prayer* (Two Parts)*:* Volume VII.

WDK . *Way to Divine Knowledge:* Volume VII.

SL . . *Spirit of Love* (Two Parts)*:* Volume VIII.

Address . *Address to the Clergy:* Volume IX.

The other works of William Law (*Demonstration*, etc.) do not require any special abbreviation.

A number following any of the titles of his works (whether abbreviated or not) refers to the page of the volume of the 1893 G. Moreton's edition in which the work in question is printed. Thus *SP* 73-4 means that the passage or the subject referred to will be found on pages 73 and 74 of the *Spirit of Prayer* (Part II) in Volume VII of that edition.

For a complete list of Law's works, showing the volume of the 1893 edition in which each work occurs, see the Chronological Table preceding this list.

Overton . *Life of William Law* by J. H. Overton (1881).

Martensen . *Jacob Boehme* by H. L. Martensen (1885).

In references to Boehme's works, the figures usually refer to the Parts (if any), the chapters, and the sections, as given in the *English* editions. (Unfortunately there is no complete uniformity here.) The usual abbreviations are given for books of the Bible, followed by chapter and verse.

Boehme's name is always written Behmen in Law's works.

References to "page" (or "pages"), "note," "Study," followed by a number, always refer to the contents of the *present* volume. Thus "*SP*, note 22" refers to page 264 below. It will be noticed that the Studies are arranged in alphabetical order.

NOTES
TO
SELECTED PASSAGES
FROM
NINE MYSTICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM LAW

A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late Book called *A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, etc. (1737 : Vol. V)

Besides being primarily an eloquent reply to Bishop Hoadly's contentions that the Sacrament was intended only as a commemorative rite (see Study 17 : *The Sacrament*), this work deals at length with the inner light of the soul by which God and the things of the Spirit are seen, in contrast with the false religion of reason. The Presbyterian Alexander Whyte has described it as "one of the two best books by far" that he had ever read on the Lord's Supper. It is the first work of William Law's bearing signs, though not as yet very marked ones, of the influence of Jacob Boehme's writings, which Law probably began to read not more than two years previous to its publication.

The frontispiece to the present volume is taken from a photographic reproduction of a first draft in Law's handwriting of part of my second extract (page 3). A comparison of the printed text with the illustration shows the care with which our author revised his manuscript.

Page 1, note 1. The image of the loadstone, a favourite one with Law, had been used by Jeremy Taylor in his *Ductor Dubitantium* (1660), II, 440. "Liberty of will is like the motion of a magnetic needle towards the North, full of trembling and uncertainty till it be fixed in the beloved point. It wavers as long as it is free, and is at rest when it can choose no more." (For Law's admiration of J. Taylor's books see *Trapp* 51.)

John Byrom wrote in his *Journal* on June 25, 1737, "I was at home in the afternoon and turning Mr. Law's *Needle and*

Loadstone into rhyme"; but in this case his efforts to make a poem of a passage of his friend's works have not survived. (Cp. *Trapp*, note 3.)

Page 2, note 2. We are reminded here of St. Jerome's saying, which Law had possibly read, "Plato located the soul of man in the head: Christ located it in the heart." (Quoted by Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 15.) This and the next paragraph contain Law's clearest definition of what he means by the metaphorical word "heart," that is, in effect, an intuitive moral and spiritual sense. The heart is also very closely connected with the will. See Study 22.

Page 2, note 3. For William Law's views on reasoning and on reason see further page 124 and *WDK*, note (5). For the bold appropriation to his own Catholic and mystical Christianity of the "natural religion" of the Deists, see *Appeal*, note (9) and page 41.

Page 5, note 4. As to why these expressions are literally true and not figurative, see pages 73 and 74 and *SP*, note 2.

Page 7, note 5. From the still preserved manuscript draft of an additional passage it appears that at this point the writer had intended to insert a piece of polemic against the Quakers for their disuse of the outward sacraments. He omitted it probably because in the interval he had learnt a higher esteem for that body and their doctrine of the inner light (see my *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism*, especially pp. 227 ff. and also *Trapp* 182-4). In any case, after so lovely a sentence as this it was wisdom not to introduce a controversial note.

Page 8, note 6. For this reference to Genesis 3.15 and the so-called *Protevangelium* see Study 18 : *The Seed of Christ.* Other Bible references here are to Heb. 13.8, Rev. 1.8, 3.20, and 13.8.

The Grounds and Reasons

of

Christian Regeneration, or the New-Birth (1759 : Vol. V.)

This "little book," though it contains no developed statement of Boehme's mystical philosophy, was in later years regarded by William Law as a satisfactory statement of the essentials of his faith, and he expressed a wish to "send it gratis into all parts of the kingdom" (see *Trapp* 27 and cp. page 150).

W. R. Inge writes of there being "no better summary of the theology and ethics of Christian mysticism than this short treatise." In regard to its style it has been truly said that "to his already accomplished prose period Law is adding a power of imagery which is clearly the fruit of mystical experiences, and sometimes too suggesting a power of psychological insight which goes deeper than anything even in his *Serious Call*" (G. Whiting). In its first forty-four years the book went into seven editions.

Page 11, note 1. In this short paragraph we are set down in the very centre of William Law's mystical theology. I can only refer the reader who wants any commentary to Studies 5: *The Fall of Man*, 9: *God and man as Trinity*, and 15: *The new Birth of Christ.*

Page 11, note 2. See Study 20: *The Soul as Fire* and also pages 50-51, where fire is described as equivalent to essential life.

Page 11, note 3. The fullest treatment by our author of the first great sacrament of the Church is to be found in manuscript drafts, occasioned by his controversy with the Quakers in or about the year 1736-7. They will be found printed in my *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism*, pp. 219-226, "The Baptism of Water and the Baptism of

the Spirit." I quote the most striking part of his more general apologia against the mistaken spirituality of the Quaker as he conceived it (*op. cit.* pp. 215-6).

"He that thinks or holds that outward exercises of religion hurt or are too low for his degree of spirituality, shows plainly that his spirituality is only in idea; that it is something that is in him only as a speculation, or as something that is in his head and not in his heart.

"The truly spiritual man is he that sees God in all things, that sees all things in God, that receives all things as from Him, that ascribes all things to Him, that loves and adores Him in and for all things, in all things absolutely resigned unto Him, doing them for Him from a principle of pure and perfect love of Him. There is no spiritual person but this. Every outward thing has the nature of a sacrament to him; as to the pure all things are pure, so to the spiritual man every thing is spiritual. . .

"There is no spiritual person but this, and to such a one the outward institutions of religion are ten times more dear and valuable than to those that are less spiritual. As the truly charitable man loves to meet outward objects of charity, the truly humble man loves to meet outward occasions of being abased, so the truly spiritual man loves all outward objects and institutions that can exercise the religion of his heart.

"And to think that the spirituality of religion is hurt by the observance of outward institutions of religion is as absurd as to think that the inward spirit of charity is hurt by the observance of outward acts of charity, or the spiritual joy of the heart destroyed by singing an outward hymn, as our Saviour and His Apostles did. . .

"And I defy any man, though he has never so much assistance from the Jesuits, to show that the outward word or outward prayers and outward psalmody and outward teaching is consistent with a religion that is too spiritual to admit of outward institutions."

Incidentally we seem to find in this passage reminiscences of Malebranche's "We see all things in God" (see *Overton*, p. 65) and Suso's aphorism, "He who finds the inward in the outward goes deeper than he who only finds the inward in the inward" (Quoted by W. R. Inge, in *Light, Life, and Love*).

Page 13, note 4. These four vices, "the four elements of the dark, fiery soul" (*Regeneration* 150), appear to represent a shortened form of the traditional deadly (or capital, i.e. foundation) sins, selfishness (elsewhere covetousness) standing for the four vices of avarice, gluttony, lust, and sloth. They occur often in Boehme (e.g. *Twelve Points* (1820 *trans.*), p. 83). See also *SL*, note 1 and *SL*, Part II, the latter part of *Dialogue* 3, *passim*. The three virtues, together with patience, named here, are of great importance in the same *Dialogue*, see *SL*, note 24.

Page 14, note 5. This bold statement goes to the heart of Boehme's metaphysic. See Study 24: *The Wrath of God*. It is important in reading Law to remember that fire, which usually stands for the wrathful fire of darkness, sometimes signifies the love-fire of light.

Page 14, note 6. Apparently a direct reminiscence of Boehme, who uses this expression several times, e.g. "the soul stands in the jaws of death and hell, encompassed by evil spirits" (*Epistle* 1.35).

Page 15, note 7. Jacob Boehme, following Luther and others, lays immense emphasis on the need of a vital faith, which feeds on Christ and is far more than a mere "fides historica." See page 117 and *WDK* 221 ff; and cp Boehme, *Incarnation* I. 11.8; "Faith is not historical; but it is a taking out of God's nature, the eating of God's nature, the introducing of God's nature by the imagination into the fire of one's own soul, to appease its hunger thereby; and thus putting on God's nature, not as a garment, but as a body of the soul."

Page 16, note 8. As to how this wrath of the soul is also in a subordinate sense God's wrath, see Study 24: *The Wrath of God*. Boehme often writes of the blood of Christ, which is the water of eternal life (see Study 8: *Fire and Water*), "quenching," i.e. restoring to a harmonious co-operation the fire or wrath which is the foundation of nature, human and divine. Cp. his *Signatura Rerum*, XI. 48: "When the wrath of God is drowned in the blood of Christ, so that it changes might into love, then Paradise is again open."

Page 18, note 9. See Study 18: *The Seed of Christ*. This doctrine of the Seed was a central one with George Fox

and the early Quakers. Cp. Fox's *Journal* (ii, p. 344) "And therefore in the Seed of life live, which bruiseth the seed of death."

Page 19, note 10. According to the long established psychological tradition, men and women were classified as possessing one or other of the four "complexions" or temperaments, in virtue of the predominance in their body of one of the four "humours" or bodily fluids, which produced a sanguine, choleric, melancholic, or phlegmatic complexion respectively (cp. *Regeneration* 175 "sanguine" and *Letter* xxiv). Boehme wrote a little book on the *Four Complexions*, which (in the words of Martensen, underlined by Whyte) "displays a most profound knowledge of the human heart." And Whyte goes on to say that in the *Regeneration* William Law shows how excellently in this respect he has assimilated and is able to interpret his master's teaching (*Thirteen Appreciations: Jacob Behmen*, pp. 54-5).

Page 19, note 11. See Study 12: *Mystical Analogy*.

Page 20, note 12. See Study 14: *Natural and Spiritual*; also note (4) above for the four cardinal sins.

Page 22, note 13. See Study 7: *Fervour in Religion*; also pages 112-115.

Page 24, note 14. Here Law has added a footnote, "Frere Laurent." The reference is evidently to the First Conversation in Brother Lawrence's golden little book on *The Practice of the Presence of God*. But its writer was converted by seeing not a withered, but a leafless tree in winter, and by considering the miracle of its spring resurrection.

William Law's love of this book was perhaps learnt from John Heylin, whose curate he seems to have been for a time. (See Heylin's *Devotional Tracts from the French*, 1724.) (See also *SP*, note 8.)

Page 25, note 15. See *Appeal*, note 22.

Page 26, note 16. Cp. Bonaventura, *Itin. Mentis*, 5, "God's centre is everywhere, His circumference nowhere."

I. An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's *Discourse of the Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous Overmuch* (1740: Vol. VI)

II. Some Animadversions upon Dr. Trapp's late *Reply* (1740: Vol. VI)

Readers of the *Christian Perfection* and the *Serious Call* will readily understand how a fashionable London Rector, who was also an Oxford Professor of Poetry and had published not only secular poems but even a stage play, might cross swords with their author in a book of his own with the title given in the first of the two tracts named above. The second or *Animadversions* tract was Law's defence against a further attack made upon him for what seemed to Trapp his mystical absurdities and errors; he had it printed at the end of the volume containing his *Appeal* treatise.

In 1749 John Wesley reprinted a large part of the *Earnest and Serious Answer* (including, most surprisingly, the peculiarly Behmenist portions). Wesley's biographer, L. Tyerman, calls the *Answer* "as grand a piece of writing as can be found in the English language." But perhaps even finer is the magnificent plea in Law's second answer to Trapp for a truly Catholic attitude which "unites in heart and spirit with all that is good and holy" in every "divided part" of the Church, be it called Papist or Quaker or by any other name. There has not been space to include this passage, which is mainly not mystical. I have for convenience grouped together my short extracts from the two *Trapp* discourses.

Page 28, note 1. See Study 15: *The New Birth*, and cp. pages 80 and 104 (*SP*).

Dr. Trapp in his *Reply* to Law's *Answer* utterly condemned the passage of which this sentence is the heart, as being unworthy of any Christian save some benighted Quaker—"could George Fox himself have outdone it?" Law defends his bold words as being perfectly in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament Epistles and protests in impassioned eloquence against the Doctor's "appeal to vulgar prejudice" (see *Trapp* 179-88).

Page 30, note 2. This beautiful image is reminiscent of the medieval idea of the harmony of the starry spheres, Milton's "sphery chime." (Cp. *Regeneration* 172.) Cp. also Boehme (*Way to Christ*, III. 50) "The soul continues as an instrument of God's harmony, a tuned instrument of divine joy for the Spirit to strike on." Law was very fond of music and had an organ put into his house at King's Cliffe.

Page 31, note 3. The words "enthusiasm" and "enthusiasts" were much used as terms of abuse by seventeenth and eighteenth century divines to mean (as the etymology suggested) a false and sinful pretence to direct inspiration from God, especially in the presentation of the Christian faith. The words were freely thrown at William Law and indeed at mystical writers generally. Law vigorously maintained that the love of poetry, of the classics, of archæology, etc., so common among his fellow clergy, was as much "enthusiasm" as the religious enthusiasm which they reprobated and a far worse form of it.

John Byrom published in 1751 some verses entitled "Enthusiasm: a Poetical Essay, in a Letter to a Friend in Town." They run to over four hundred lines ending

> "In this enthusiasm, advanc'd thus high
> 'Tis a true Christian's wish to live and die."

Sir Adolphus Ward ranks them high among Byrom's poems, and in his edition (II, Part I, p. 181) writes at great length on "enthusiasm." The verses are in fact a clever paraphrase of the passage from which my extract is taken. Law told his friend in May, 1743, at King's Cliffe that the verses (then in manuscript) were "very good ones" (see Byrom's *Journal*).

Page 33, note 4. Of the writers selected for praise in this paragraph St. John Cassian (*c.* 400 A.D.) is not usually classed as mystical, though many of the hermits and monks of whom he wrote had such experiences. The works of Dionysius gained their authority in the middle ages (and doubtless also with William Law) because they were ascribed to the Athenian disciple of St. Paul (Acts 17.34); they are now recognised as having been written about 500 A.D. by a nameless philosopher, probably a Syrian monk, by whom the teachings of Plotinus were thus strangely introduced into the very heart of the Catholic tradition. St. John of the Cross (1542-91), first persecuted, then canonised by the Church, was a Spaniard, a poet, and a friend of the equally great St. Teresa. All but the last of the other mystics mentioned here fall into two definite groups; Ruysbroek, Tauler, Suso and Harphius were medieval monks belonging to the German school of the great Dominican Meister Eckhart; Archbishop Fénelon with his friend, the persecuted Madame Guyon, and Bertot, her religious director, are usually classed as French quietists and were contemporaries of Law's youth. There remains J. B., as Law playfully describes Jacob Behmen, the anglicised version of the name of the great mystic of Silesia, the "Teutonic theosopher" Jacob Boehme, who was coming at this time to exercise such a magic influence upon him. Of Behmen we shall hear much more in the *Way to Divine Knowledge*. For somewhat more on the relations of these "mystical divines," see Study 23: *William Law's Sources*; and cp. also Study 13: *Mystical Experience*.

An Appeal to all who Doubt or Disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel Whether they be Deists, Arians, Socinians or Nominal Christians (1740: Vol. VI).

This great book, although it does not go so fully as do later works into some of Boehme's fundamental conceptions, may be regarded as the best all-round statement of William Law's mystical theology and cosmology. Both A. Whyte and C. F. E. Spurgeon consider it as, from this standpoint, the most important of his writings. Law himself in his later works frequently refers to passages in it as authoritative (e.g. page 150 and *SP* 80-3). Its conspicuous defect is that it does not, as do the later books, look forward to the final overcoming of hell and the redemption of all spirits, "till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature" (page 224).

Moreover the literary beauties of the *Appeal* are quite superlative. The second of its three chapters, as has been well said, "rolls on and on, like some great three-voiced organ fugue on the triple theme of Fire, Light and Spirit." The argument of the latter half of this chapter I have endeavoured to give as consecutively as possible, together with that of all the final chapter treating of the incarnation and the atonement of Christ.

Page 35, note 1. Law especially refers to Genesis 2.7 as his authority for this statement. Spirit (*spiritus*) originally meant breath or else air or wind. All three of these have become symbolic of the third person of the Trinity. Cp. also *SP*, note 22.

Page 36, note 2. A reminiscence perhaps of Boehme's "thistle-children" (see Study 16: *Predestination*). Boehme

often contrasts the strife prevalent among men with the peace that appears to reign among "the flowers of the field" (e.g. *Epistle* xii. 36 and *Aurora* 11.65, "Doth one flower grudge the beauteous form of another?").

Page 36, note 3. This is an admirable statement of what may be called the Christian form of creative emanation (see Study 3: *Eternal Nature* and cp. *Appeal* 83).

Page 37, note 4. That is, the sky from which the sunlight reaches us.

Page 37, note 5. The spark (*scintilla animae*) is the term used by many mystics, from St. Bernard and even earlier, to describe the point of contact of the soul with God, where it catches fire from the flame of His love. (See also Study 11: *God's Temple in the Soul.*)

I have found no other instance of "ray" being used for this or for the human soul itself. The word is used (e.g. by Dionysius and Ruysbroek) of Christ or of God's love.

Page 37, note 6. See Study 21: *Universal Redemption.*

Page 40, note 7. This paragraph gives almost exactly the sense of ch. 23 of Dionysius' work, *On the Divine Names*; and it is remarkable that this old mystic mentions desire and wrath as not wholly or essentially evil, these being precisely the qualities which, as indicated here, are to William Law and to Boehme the necessary "fiery" foundation of all goodness. See also Study 10: *God as Substance.*

Page 41, note 8. These paragraphs have been somewhat boldly extracted from a long passage rendered obscure, and more difficult than necessary, by the introduction of some of Boehme's terms for his first three natural "properties" (see Study 19: *The Seven Properties*). But I hope, as they stand here, they will give the reader some perception of Law's and Boehme's explanation of "the true origin of all evil in the creation"; not only as embodied in what may be described as the true "myth" of the angelic fall, but as analysed philosophically into the conception of a harmony of complementary qualities; dark, fierce fire forming the necessary basis for the gentleness of light and love, a harmony of contraries, never designed by God to be divorced, which has been broken up by the selfwill and rebellion of free spirits in whom it inhered—the inevitable result being that

the tough, fierce, basic element becomes unlawfully exposed and liberated and, having no complementary force to moderate its fire, it spreads disorder and destruction far and wide. See further Studies 4 and 24 on the *Fall of the Angels* and on the *Wrath of God.*

Law illustrates the conception of the soul's harmonised tension more than once by the simile of a ripened fruit, in which the original "sourness, biting bitterness," and "stinging motion," while by themselves they would be poisonous, become the real cause of all the rich spirit, taste, and virtue of the fruit. This is taken from Boehme, who used the words "like a sour and bitter green apple ripened by the sun" (*Aurora*).

Page 41, note 9. The able school of writers known in the eighteenth century as Deists, while claiming to be Christians, maintained, generally speaking, that the true character of God and man and their mutual relationship could be discovered by the human reason studying "nature" (or science, as we should call it) and history, and that the so-called "revelation" in the Bible was far from being any unique proof of God's existence and providence, while in many things, e.g. as regards the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, it was actually misleading. There is, they said, a "natural religion" independent of "revelation" and discoverable by reason, which is sufficient for all human purposes. Most of the many orthodox opponents of the Deists replied by exalting the revelation contained in the Bible, as superior to the claims of reason when it seemed to conflict with them, and proclaimed the insufficiency of the "religion of nature."

In dealing with deism William Law took a somewhat different and a much bolder line. He fearlessly claimed "natural religion" and "nature" as belonging to Christ and to Christianity, but insisted that, far from conflicting with the revelation of Scripture, nature could only be interpreted by the contents of that revelation as mystically understood. This understanding was by no means to be obtained by that very fallible instrument, the reason, "the idol of modern Deism," but by the intuition of the heart, the sixth sense of the "light within." There was indeed a true "natural religion," not at all the self-sufficient, rationalistic religion exalted by the Deists, but that nurtured by the

"Light which lighteth every man," when humble, obedient attention is paid to it. (See pages 3-4.)

This exaltation of nature and the equation of the supernatural with the natural, not in the deist but in the Catholic, mystical sense was almost unique in the eighteenth century, and puts Law in a class by himself. No wonder that this apostle of the religion of nature was misunderstood and neglected by his contemporaries and by the more orthodox ones in particular.

The reference in line 2 of this paragraph to "federal rites" must have in view Daniel Waterland's wellknown *Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, recently published (1737); one chapter of this work is entitled, "The Eucharist considered as a federal rite," i.e. an act which "covenants anew" or confirms the promise made to God at baptism.

Page 42, note 10. Compare the words quoted from Boehme on page 126 and also *Address*, note 3. Law, like Boehme, is constantly impressing upon us that this condition of soul is an absolute pre-requisite for him who would be a "divine philosopher," i.e. who would gain any real knowledge of the inner nature of God and the universe.

Page 43, note 11. The reference is to Job 38.7, familiar through Blake's wonderful illustration. I am reminded here of that "ancient sage," the great Roman poet Lucretius, the man who "denied divinely the divine," one of his most often repeated reasons being that this world "tantâ stat praedita culpâ", i.e. is, in Law's words, in too "sickly, defiled a state" for it to have been ever the creation of God. For this and what follows, cp. Genesis 3.17-8 and see Studies 4 and 5 on the *Fall of the Angels* and *of Man*.

Page 46, note 12. See Study 3: *Eternal Nature*. The Scripture referred to shortly before is Psalm 104.2.

Page 46, note 13. This phrase from 2 Peter 1.4 is of its kind unique in the Bible and one likely to be often in the mind of a mystical philosopher. It was probably owing to this text more than to any other that Athanasius could dare to say, "He was made man that we might be made God." Law quotes it perhaps twenty times (e.g. *Address*, first extract). In the central chapters of the *Theologia Germanica* the words become almost a recurring refrain, occurring eight times or more (cp. especially ch. 41).

Page 47, note 14. See Studies 4 and 5 on the *Fall of the Angels* and *of Man*. The traditional Catholic idea, which Boehme and Law (see *WDK* 172) followed, was that the fall of both Lucifer and Adam must have taken place very soon after their respective creations "through the first use of their untried powers," because otherwise in a very short time they would certainly have become "absolutely fixed in their first created glory" and incapable of falling, as the good angels very soon became. But one likes to think at any rate of Adam enjoying Paradise for a good long time before his fall! For Satan's early fall, cp. Dante, *Paradiso*, xxix, 49.

Page 50, note 15. See Study 20: *The Soul as Fire*; also Studies 10 and 24 on *God as Substance* and on *Wrath*.

Page 52, note 16. The analogy between material and spiritual fire is, from Plato onwards, often emphasised by the mystics. Thus Plotinus, "What fire could be a nobler reflection of the fire of the intelligible world than the fire which we know here?" (*Ennead* ii.9).

In assuming, as Law did, that the substance of fire inheres in material objects, he was in harmony with the best scientific thought of his day, which, in its hypothesis of *phlogiston* as the substance which is the cause of fire in all combustible objects, expressed in a new form the very ancient idea of fire as one of the four elements of the material world.

Page 53, note 17. This trinity of faculties (cp. also the next paragraph and *Trapp* 197) unlike the traditional "understanding, will, memory" (*SP*, note 4) is directly derived from Boehme and forms the basis of his psychology. To him desire represents the untrammelled, impersonal, blind and aimless forces that lie at the basis of all that is. (Cp. *Appeal* 72, "Will or desire in the Deity. . .") These forces produce nevertheless their contrary in the form of an image-shaping energy, and positive and negative together become embodied in a personal will, which is the centre and germ and driving force of all life.

The creative force of imagination, the process by which the primeval will or desire passes over from "nothing" to "something" is important to Boehme, and he loved to personify it as the Virgin *Sophia*, the divine Wisdom. Law does not seem to have been able to appreciate this side of Boehme's thought and he ignores it.

We may compare the supreme place which William Blake gives to the imagination. It is to him "human existence itself", "the divine vision", "the real and eternal world", and "the divine body of Jesus", of which we are the members. Indeed Blake may have learnt something from Boehme, a few of whose writings he appears to have read carefully.

Incidentally, when Blake wrote those wonderful lines of his

> "And we are put on earth a little space
> That we may learn to bear the beams of love,"

had he in his mind a memory of Boehme's *Way to Christ* (*Regeneration*, 100), "the pearl of the divine wisdom darteth *its beams of love* very often into the soul, whereby the soul receiveth light"?

For the next sentence we may compare *Theologia Germanica* 51, "Now man is set between heaven and hell and may turn himself (i.e. his will) towards which he chooses." For the central position of the will see Study 22: *The Will* and 19 (2): *The Seven Properties.*

Page 55, note 18. A very favourite text of William Law's (cp. page 164) and one which was in the forefront of the thought of Irenaeus, whose "recapitulation" explanation of the atonement of Christ was closely akin to that of Law.

Page 56, note 19. If we compare this passage with that written nine years before in the *Case of Reason*, p. 72 ("a prince and his rebels", etc.), we can judge how far Law's mysticism has altered his views of the atonement since he began to read Jacob Behmen. For the whole question see Study 1: *The Atonement.*

Page 58, note 20. See Study 1: *The Atonement and Unity of all in Christ.*

Page 58, note 21. See Study 6: *The Fatherhood of Christ.*

Page 59, note 22. "Gate" (*Pforte*) is a Behmenist (or at least a German) expression for a crisis or phase in the life of the soul (cp. Boehme, *True Repentance* (1622), p. 87). "Process" just above is a word specially applied by Boehme to the stages of Christ's redemptive work (e.g. *Epistles* 12.3 and 13.19 and constantly).

Page 61, note 23. With the description of Christ's dereliction, His lonely agony, which follows this, we may compare L. Scupoli, *The Spiritual Combat* (1672, p. 245), where the writer bids us penetrate in thought to those deeper than physical sufferings that afflicted our Lord, and "among those sufferings for His creatures, that was the most bitter which the Lord tasted for all the sins of the damned, who not being ever able to be re-united to Him, were to suffer incomparable torments for eternity". Compare St. John of the Cross, *Mount Carmel* (II, vii, 8) "On the cross Jesus was annihilated in His soul without any relief or consolation, since His Father left Him in the most intense aridity, according to the lower part of His nature". Both the works quoted were in Law's library. R. C. Moberly writes that the Lord "could not have endured damnation of sin", but "the counterpart on earth of damnation, that is, the extreme possibility of contradiction and destruction of the self." (*Lux Mundi.*) All this, whatever its extent, was done, as William Law writes, to enable us to face such terrific experiences, if need be, and come through them victoriously. How far it is wholesome for any particular person to dwell in thought on such agony is however open to question.

Page 66, note 24. See Study 17: *The Sacrament.*

The Spirit of Prayer;

or,

The Soul rising out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity (1749 and 1750: Vol. VII)

Part I.

The second of the two chapters of this work is given here in full; it preserves a high level of beauty throughout and does not include any of Law's more difficult or fanciful doctrines. Up to 1773 this Part I had gone into seven editions, and it has been several times reprinted by members of the Quaker body, with whom it was a special favourite for its insistence on the light within, the hidden seed of Christ, and the need of inward silence (cp. *Trapp.* 183).

Part the Second.

In several Dialogues between *Academicus*, *Rusticus*, and *Theophilus*,

At which *Humanus* was present.

Law here uses with great success a variant to the dramatic method of character studies introduced into the *Serious Call.* Whyte writes of these dialogues and those of the two next works as "productions of nothing less than a Platonic depth and beauty."

Of the *Spirit of Prayer* as a whole C. F. E. Spurgeon writes that, while preserving its author's familiar qualities of

pungency and vigorous controversy, it has "a tolerance, a tender charm, an imaginative quality, and a melody of rhythm rarely found in his early work", while its subject-matter has "a strength and beauty which Plotinus himself has rarely surpassed" (*Cambridge History English Literature*, IX. 323). This work was written after eight years of literary silence and freedom from controversy. The studies and meditations of that quiet period bore a rich harvest in the remainder of Law's writings. The final form of his mystical and Behmenist system and outlook has now become fixed with but little variation up to the end in 1761 (see my *William Law and Quakerism*, pp. 282-3).

Page 71, note 1. Here and elsewhere (e.g. page 17 and *Appeal* 128) Law indicates that he accepts the orthodox Catholic view that God in Himself does not suffer in or for man, but has only the deepest, tenderest feeling for and understanding of his unhappy state. Christ indeed suffers, but as man not as God. Nothing must be allowed to dim the perfect joy of the pure Godhead. Very clear statements of this doctrine will be found in *Theologia Germanica*, chapters 7 and 37. Many, however, if not most Protestant theologians hold the contrary view that God suffers in and with His creatures, and that it is impossible to divide thus the human and divine nature in Christ.

We shall see that Law regards God's pity, patience, and mercy as expressions of His love and not as involving pain and suffering in the ordinary human sense of the words.

Page 73, note 2. In laying down this rule (to which however he does not consistently adhere, but compare pages 5 and 65) Law was following closely the principle observed by St. Thomas Aquinas and the medieval theologians generally that, while figurative and allegorical meanings could and indeed should be found in almost every verse of the Bible, yet the literal meaning of the verse must be regarded as having the right to supreme control over all other legitimate interpretations ("salvâ literae circumstantiâ". See St. Thomas, *De Potentia Dei*, Qu. IV, Art. I. 8; and cp. *SP* 72).

Page 80, note 3. See Study: The *New Birth* and *Trapp* 25, note 1.

Page 81, note 4. These are the three faculties which, according to many mystics, form "the image of God impressed on the soul" (Albertus Magnus) by the Holy Trinity. See Study 9: *God and Man as Trinity*. Boehme does not, I think, mention them thus (see *Appeal*, note 17).

Page 82, note 5. See Study 11: *God's Temple in the Soul.*

Page 82, note 6. This is of course a (mixed) reference to the two parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price (Matt. 13, 44-6) to which Law also alludes near the beginning of this extract and elsewhere. The figure was one beloved by many mystics though I have not come across Law's "pearl of eternity" elsewhere. Boehme often writes of the "noble pearl of wisdom."

Page 87, note 7. In his recognition of the unconscious Christianity of wise and good pagans (cp. *SP* 103 "the heaven-born Epictetus") Law is in line with such early Christian Fathers as Justin Martyr (quoted *Trapp.* 191) who (*Apologia*, II) wrote of Socrates, that "he had some knowledge of Christ, for Christ is the personal revelation of the Word (*Logos*) which dwells in every man." But to many mystics charity was eclipsed by false tradition, so that even Dante's great love of Virgil did not prevent him from condemning the poet to perpetual exclusion from Heaven.

Incidentally, *Overton* (p. 412) is wrong in thinking that Law never mentions Plato. There are at least three mentions, *WDK* 152 (with Zoroaster) and *Serious Call* 181 and 270, where he is warmly commended along with Marcus (Aurelius) Antoninus.

Page 88, note 8. As part of his reaction against the contemporary exaltation of "reason" William Law was always especially attracted to simple unlettered persons who gave evidence of a deep mystical sense of God—Brother Lawrence, the cook, for example, of whom he wrote (MS Book I. i. 38) that "he was a living example of the divine life, and did not, like most of the scholastic mystics, divide and subordinate it into various invented rules and gradations." (Cp. also *Letters*, 233.) Another mystic whom he rated very highly was the obscure Flemish mechanic who went under the name of *Hiel*; and he was in the habit at one time of giving away a little book containing the life of

"the good Armelle" Nicolas, a French peasant girl, whose life was devoted to God. Jacob Boehme he describes as "in his natural capacity and outward condition of life as mean and illiterate as anyone that our Lord called to be an apostle" (*Appeal* 205), and he doubtless read with delight such a passage as that in his *Epistles* (22.6) where the shoemaker describes himself as "a lay, illiterate, unexercised man", who "at home fared very meanly and soberly" and (when visiting his wealthy patrons) disliked wine and rich food, because "they hide the pearl's ground." (See also page 127.)

Page 89, note 9. This beautiful passage was interpreted by Wesley (*Letter to Mr. Law*, pp. 93-4) as meaning that there is no need to go to Church or to Holy Communion; and certainly it has been welcomed by Quakers as an endorsement of their disuse of the outward ritual of the Sacraments. (Cp. *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism*, p. 295.) Nevertheless it must be remembered that Law was, to the best of our information, quite regular in his Church attendances. And compare the words of Tauler, monk and ecclesiastic, who in a Sermon (No. 36) preached at the dedication of a Church said, "a pure, clean heart is the temple of God, where the eternal God ever dwelleth in truth, when all that is unlike Him has been driven out" (Matt. 16.13, cp. *Letter* 10, note 6).

The drama of the Passion in the soul, the correspondence between the human life of Jesus and the inner life of the individual, was first written of by St. Paul and has always been one of the most natural forms of expression for the Christian mystic.

Page 92, note 10. The identification of all sin with self-will, especially in the form of pride (cp. page 220) is a truth constantly emphasised by Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica*. Cp. with this passage e.g. *Theologia Germanica*, ch. 49, "There is nothing else in hell, but self-will; and if there were no self-will, there would be no devil and no hell"; also ch. 43, "Whenever we speak of the Adam, and disobedience and the old man, of self-will . . . of the I, the Me, the Mine, nature, falsehood, the devil, sin, it is all one and the same thing. These are all contrary to God."

Page 94, note 11. This counsel (and cp. page 91)

brings William Law into line with the teaching and practice of the Quakers and of quietists like Fénelon and Madame Guyon. Similar directions may be found in Eckhart and in Tauler, as well as in Boehme (cp. especially his *Supersensual Life*). Thus Tauler in his *Sermon* 24 (pp. 213-4) bids men "be silent and rest in that essential peace which is God's dwelling-place." Wesley quotes this passage of Law's and points out with some measure of truth the danger of opening the heart to the workings of the imagination. See also Study 23: *William Law's Sources.*

Page 95, note 12. It is impossible to follow Law completely here, any more than in his explanation a little later on of the command to love one's neighbour as oneself. It seems clear in the first place that the words of Jesus (Luke 14.26) as to "*hating* one's father and mother . . . and one's own life also" were not intended to be taken literally. "Hating" here is Oriental exaggeration and Matthew's (10.37) version of the saying ("He that *loveth* father or mother *more* than me") represents the meaning better to our ears, namely that the Christian must be prepared, if God so bid him, to a more or less complete renunciation of family ties for the sake of his vocation and the Truth. Law's explanation of hating one's own life (which is in effect that of many other mystics and saints) seems to make nonsense of the other word of Jesus to love and not to hate one's enemy. But he is right in saying that there is a *selfish* love of kindred which must in a sense be hated.

When he proceeds to deal here with the love of one's neighbour he is on sounder lines and is in effect criticising and correcting the more extreme, ascetic pronouncements of many of his favourite mystics, when they condemned, apparently without qualification, the love of "the creatures", this word generally including other human beings as well as food and all material things that give pleasure to sense or imagination. Thus St. John of the Cross wrote "all the affections which the soul has for the creatures are pure darkness before God" (*Mount Carmel*, I, iv, 1); and Tauler (*Sermon* VI), preaching apparently to a lay congregation, bade his hearer not to "set his heart on any other person to such a degree that he is absorbed in him"; the author of the *Imitation* (1.9) wrote, "desire to be familiar with God alone and His angels, and avoid the acquaintance of men." Such

exaggerated statements fortunately did not always correspond with the affectionate bearing of the writers.

It seems clear that to the thought of our Lord there is a self-love that is a good thing, because it is the reverence for our higher, truer self which is on its way to identification with Himself and with God. The "unchangeable rule of love" (page 97) that "God alone is to be loved for Himself, and all other beings in Him and for Him" is just another way of describing this love of the true self whether in one's own person or in that of one's fellow man or woman. Here Law is following the traditional Catholic teaching, e.g. that of St. Augustine, which may be expressed thus: "We love God first of all and for Himself, and we love our neighbour next for God's sake, as created in His image and as a part of the mystical body of Christ, who is God". (Cp. P. Pourrat, *La Spiritualité Chrétienne*, II, p. 308.)

Page 96, note 13. Here we have the spirit of true Christian Socialism or Communism. Alas! this "draught" or small scale model has not born lasting fruit except perhaps in a few monastic communities. Cp. *Theologia Germanica*, ch. 111, "Man's fall was because of his claiming something for his own, and because of his I, Mine, Me, and the like"; also ch. 51, "Were there no self-will, there would be no ownership. In heaven there is no ownership. . . . The more a man hath of ownership, the more he hath of hell and misery."

Page 100, note 14. In Tauler, Sermon 33 there is a similar condemnation of self-discipline and mortifications, as practised by monks more especially. These do harm instead of good, because men trust in them, in outward works, rather than in "the good work of the heart." As modern psychologists have pointed out, we may inflict pain and privation upon ourselves as a selfish means to gain moral authority over others.

Page 104, note 15. This simile is one that might be found in earlier mystics, but it is probably a reminiscence of Boehme, who writes (*Threefold Life*, 3.31) "The Son of God must be born in you, otherwise you are in a dark stable and go about groping." For the main idea of this holy birth and the extension of it in the next paragraph, see Study 15: *The New Birth*, and cp. *Trapp*, note 1. The simile of the loadstone is repeated from page 1.

Page 104, note 16. We are strangers here, because Heaven is our home and our native country, as often in the mystics, and in hymns too. Cp. St. Bernard (*De Consider. V.*i) "Men will return to their native land, from the country of the body to the region of the spirit, which is God Himself, the supreme Spirit and the supreme dwelling of blessed spirits." I have failed to trace Law's quotation here.

Page 104, note 17. In regard to Theophilus and the other three participants in these dialogues and in those of the *Way to Divine Knowledge* which follow, I cannot do better than quote the words of *Overton* (p. 313).

> "*Theophilus* represents Law's own views, and is completely master of the situation, as Law himself always was; he is an adept in the art of shutting-up, as Law also certainly was; but there is an earnestness, a tenderness, and a thorough reality about him which attract far more than his occasional asperity repels us, and in these respects he exactly resembles Law. *Academicus* is a professing and, according to his lights, a sincere Christian, but he is so hampered by his 'letter learning', that he finds many obstacles to the reception of Christianity according to Behmen. He is, therefore, continually laying himself open to severe snubs from *Theophilus*; and is still more often being set right by *Rusticus*, who, being unable to read or write, is in a far better position to receive the truth in its fulness and simplicity. *Humanus* is a learned unbeliever, a friend and neighbour of *Academicus*, who is admitted into the company only on the express condition that he is never to open his mouth—a condition which he strictly fulfils in the first two dialogues."

It may be added that when Law makes Academicus (e.g. *SP* 192-3) and Humanus (e.g. *SP* 148, 153) describe their past history, he has almost certainly introduced some autobiographical features. I regret that I have been able to introduce but little of the actual dialogue or of any speaker besides Theophilus.

Page 106, note 18. This sentence is what may be called a "nutshell" passage, epitomising the whole course of human history. "The meekness of the Lamb" is, however, an expression which unfortunately rings but feebly to many

modern ears. As we have emphasised elsewhere, meekness means the opposite to wrath, just gentleness, courtesy, kindness in the face of every possible provocation. The application to Christ of the title "Lamb of God," so much used in Catholic worship, presents considerable difficulties. It is doubtful however whether its traditional interpretation as the divine sacrificial victim, introducing the idea of penal substitution, is an original or correct one. In any case William Law could certainly not have used it in that sense. It may have meant to New Testament writers the divine leader of the flock of the true Israel, who conquers not by war or violence but by gentleness and non-resisting love even unto death, and this would be in complete harmony with Law's thought (see W. E. Wilson, *The Problem of the Cross*, pp. 166-7, 178-84).

Page 107, note 19. Cp. St. Bernard (*De Gratia*, xii. 41) "The free will of man holds a place midway between the divine Spirit and the inordinate desires of the body."

Page 108, note 20. For pride, as the sin of the fallen angels, see Study 4; for humility, see page 190 ff. and *SL*, note 24.

Page 109, note 21. For Humanus see note (17) above. With the magnificent Hymn to Love that follows here we may compare (besides the companion one on pages 139 ff.) that of Boehme in the *Supersensual Life* (pp. 26-34) where however Boehme dares to put Love in a certain sense above God. To the fishing metaphor here (based no doubt on Matt. 4.19) there is a remarkable parallel in Eckhart (*Sermon* IV), which however Law could not have read (as Eckhart's writings were not then printed), "God lies in wait for us with love. For love is like the fisherman's hook. . . . Once it takes the hook the fish is sure to be caught by the fisherman."

Page 110, note 22. These words from Psalm civ. 3 are quoted by Boehme (*Incarnation* 1.3.17) as justification for representing the Holy Spirit by the air. It is perhaps significant that the verse occurs between two others which associate God with light and with fire respectively, i.e. the other two terms in Boehme's and Law's Trinity (see Study 9: *God and Man*).

Page 112, note 23. The spiritual bee simile is found in Jacob Boehme, in Ruysbroek, and doubtless elsewhere.

Page 112, note 24. See Study 7: *Fervour in Religion.* Wesley objects strongly to this paragraph, insisting that Christians ought to expect to retain the sense of "assurance", of fervour, and of the divine love—coldness being a sign that we have grieved God. In referring to darkness at the end of the paragraph, Law doubtless had in mind the condition so powerfully described by St. John of the Cross and other mystics whom he loved, as "the dark night of the soul", an experience which they regarded as a necessary stage in the upward path to God. Thus St. Catharine of Siena hears God saying to her, "In order to raise the soul from imperfection, I withdraw myself from her feeling, depriving her of former consolations . . . so as to humble her and cause her to seek me in truth and to prove her faith" (*Dialogue*, c. 63). Law is almost completely silent as to his own mystical experiences, and it does not seem likely that he went through such a "dark night" in any prolonged or agonising form.

Page 115, note 25. See pages 22-23 and Study 7: *Fervour and Visions.*

The Way to Divine Knowledge,

being several Dialogues,

As preparatory to a new Edition of the Works of Jacob Behmen;

and the right use of them (1752: Vol. VII)

These three Dialogues are in fact a continuation by the same speakers (see *SP*, note 17) of the third Dialogue in the *Spirit of Prayer*. There are many digressions, especially as to the disadvantages of much study of learned books, and it is only gradually and towards the end that the declared object of the work is discussed. As to this, Whyte considers that we have "such an exposition of Behmen's doctrines and services as would have proved a worthy introduction to an adequate new edition." I have had printed here the key passages of this exposition (with the exception of the theory of the seven properties, for which see Study 19); it will be seen that it only deals with a somewhat limited, though supremely important aspect of Boehme's writings.

William Law learnt to read Boehme (*anglicè* Behmen) in his original German (the 1715 quarto edition, still on the shelves at King's Cliffe), but unfortunately he did not live to translate or to edit any of his works. The so-called Law edition of Boehme, the fine four volume quarto of 1764-81, is substantially and with slight alterations a somewhat incomplete reprint (made by Law's friends as a pious offering to his memory) of the translations by John Sparrow, Ellistone, and Blunden in the seventeenth century. The beautiful translation of Boehme's *Supersensual Life* (attributed to Law by Whyte and others) is, as Walton indicated, by Law's fellow non-juror, the learned Francis Lee. (For Law's design to translate Boehme, see Study 2.)

The reference on page 117 to "that Dialogue" is to the second Part of the *Spirit of Prayer*.

Page 119, note 1. Rusticus, who cannot read or write and yet talks like an accomplished scholar, is, as Overton remarks, an impossible rustic. It is, however, permissible to believe that a few such characters as that of old John the Shepherd, so charmingly sketched here, who delighted to read the pages of Jacob Behmen (and of William Law), did in fact exist in eighteenth century England. Some evidence of this is afforded by the long letter quoted by C. Walton (*Notes and materials*, pp. 595-6) by a certain artisan, known to John Wesley as a devotee of "mystic divinity." The writer names no less than six persons who were in 1775 readers of Behmen's and also of Law's books, including (in Lancashire) a farmer and three "poor people who love Jacob Behmen". John Byrom also records in his *Journal* (April, 1761) the case of six men (probably humble Methodists) who had been expelled from Wesley's society for reading (and perhaps preaching) Jacob Behmen and Mr. Law.

Page 122, note 2. This passage from the Book of Revelation, ch. 4, seems to have been regarded by Boehme as his chief scriptural authority for the doctrine of the *Seven Properties of Nature* (see Study 19); and no doubt Law introduces it here for this reason, perhaps without himself wishing to vouch for its authority in this respect.

Page 123, note 3. The use of "Babylon the great" in Revelation, meaning Imperial Rome as the great oppressor of the people of Christ, was transferred by the early Protestants to the persecuting Roman Church. Boehme often uses the expression to signify as well the un-Christian spirit among the authorities of the established Protestant Churches and the spirit of worldly Christianity in general. So also Law. Cp. *WDK* 188, 215.

Page 123, note 4. Boehme tells us that, when beginning to write his book, he "sought only after the heart of God, to hide himself therein from the wrath of the devil" (*Epistle* 3.3) or alternatively that he "sought after the heart of Jesus Christ, to hide himself therein from the wrath of God" (*Ep.* 2.6).

Page 125, note 5. This passage is, it must be admitted, too mild and temperate to be at all representative of William Law's frequent declamations against the pursuit of learning and the trust in "reason" on the part of his contemporary

Christians. The beauty of his later writings is indeed somewhat marred by the violent crusade that he carries on in places against scholarship and learning, particularly among the clergy. He was evidently greatly distressed by the way in which they wasted in intellectual pursuits those energies, which ought to have been given to the care of souls and the worship of God, too often making a kind of God out of reason, that "vain idol of modern Deism and modern Christianity" (*WDK* 168). The eighteenth century was of course the "Age of Reason" and of the tendency to a Deism which, while accepting, at least nominally, God as the sublime Creator and ruler of the universe, denied or belittled His immanence in it and in the human spirit. In the chapter of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Vol. IX, ch. 13) dealing with antiquarian research we find the names of many clergy and of at least three Bishops who appear to have made this pursuit the main task of their lives, often, no doubt, to the sad neglect of their religious duties. In this matter Law, though himself in many respects a learned man, may be considered a spiritual descendant of the seventeenth century Quakers, Baptists, and others who cried out against learning as useless or mischievous and laid all the stress on the religion of the heart. There can be no doubt that the remarkable absence of any but the most elementary education and book learning which he found in the poor shoemaker Jacob Boehme was one of the chief reasons for the fascination that great mystic exerted over Law. (See *SP*, note 8.)

We may compare *Theologia Germanica* (ch. 20), where the life of the self and the Me and nature is said to be clung to and embraced most of all, "where there are high, natural gifts of reason; for reason soareth up in its own light and by its own power, till at last it cometh to think itself the true eternal Light." This is precisely what Law says in other words, when he writes that natural reason, when attempting to judge or rule in matters of religion, is the very Antichrist (e.g. page 227).

The following passage from the chapter dealing with Wyclif in the *Cambridge Hist. Eng. Lit.* (II, p. 66) appears to be relevant here.

"For Wyclif had an intense reverence for the incarnate Christ, *communis homo, unicus homo*. His realist mind made

him unite Christ, as the type, with all Christian men. A like belief, worked out in practice, had been the strength of the early Franciscans, and hence had come Wyclif's original sympathy with them. In his later years . . . the same belief was the real basis of his popular appeal, and it was also connected with another characteristic of his last phase, when he came to undervalue learning; the simple "lewd" man, if a follower of Christ, could do all the educated man might do. This side of his teaching . . . had a real theological basis in his intense desire to see the Christ in every man."

Although Wyclif was the first to make the Scriptures accessible to the common people of England in their native tongue, Law would probably not have had much sympathy with him. Still I think the above trait in Wyclif may indicate rightly a similar connection in Law's mind between his central thought of Christ as the representative and inclusive type of man and his extraordinary aversion to learning.

Page 126, note 6. *Ternarius Sanctus* or holy Ternary (triad) was the name Boehme gave to "the holy manifestation of the triune God in the properties of nature" (*SL* 20), the kingdom of Heaven in the perfection of "Eternal Nature", or in more Scriptural language the uncreated glory of God. (See Study 3, *Eternal Nature.*)

Page 126, note 7. The first of these quotations is from Boehme's *Way to Christ* (of True Repentance, p. 32). The warning is doubtless given in view of the great use made in this beautiful little book of the symbolism of the ardent love of Christ and the espoused soul. The second quotation is from the *Three Principles* (4. 43), omitting the words, "if you love and favour your tender, delicate flesh still, do not read my book".

Page 128, note 8. The references here are: Boehme's *Epistles* 12, 5; 12, 7-8; 17, 10; 16, 8. The quotations follow Ellistone's 1649 translation, with a few slight differences, which probably indicate that Law consulted his German edition (the 1715 quarto).

By the "mystery" Law means "the deep and true ground of all things", that is the "workings" of God in His universe from the "beginning" onwards, or, in other words, the processes of creative fashioning by the divine Word of the

primal and spiritual substance of nature. One of Boehme's greatest books is called the *Mysterium Magnum*, being a marvellous kind of commentary on Genesis.

By "astral reason" Boehme means the human intelligence so far as it comes under "the dominion of the stars and elements" (cp. astrology and page 132), that is, under material and not divine influences.

Page 128, note 9. Jacob Boehme composed no less than thirty-three separate works between 1612 and his death in 1624, which were mostly circulated in manuscript but, with one exception, not printed or published during his life-time. The second and third of his *Epistles* contain brief characterisations of some of his principal books; but I can discover no trace here or elsewhere of any expressed "wish that they were all reduced into one." He does indeed say that his later writings are both deeper and clearer than the earlier ones, especially than the *Aurora*, his first effort; this is certainly true, and there are striking changes and development of doctrine, as Brinton and Koyré have well shown. Nevertheless Law gives the right impression as to Boehme's general religious outlook, and the way in which nearly all his books centre round a few fundamental but highly complex conceptions, to which they return again and again.

Page 129, note 10. The word "ground" has a secondary reference to the "Seelengrund" the divine foundation of the soul in God (cp. Study 11, *God's Temple*); Boehme inherited both the word and the idea from Eckhart and Tauler. Cp. the passage quoted from his *Epistles* 12, 5 (see note 8 above).

Page 129, note 11. *Fiat Lux*, "let there be light" (Genesis 1.3, *Vulgate*). The word is much used by Boehme to express the creative act of God.

Page 130, note 12. *The Way to Christ* (1622) was the only work of Boehme's printed and published during his lifetime; it was thereby the cause to himself of persecution by the Lutheran authorities. It is a beautiful treatise, much less obscure and more entirely devotional in language than most of his writings; it can still be had in the reprint of the old translation published by John M. Watkins in 1927 (price 4s. 6d.).

The *De Incarnatione Verbi or Of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ*

(1620) is one of the most mature and sublime books that Boehme wrote and, as we might expect, deals with everything from before the creation to after the last judgment.

The importance of Boehme's two long and comprehensive books, the *Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (1619) and the *Threefold Life of Man* (1620), may be gauged somewhat by the fact that Koyré devotes to each of them a long section of his great book, taking them as representative respectively of the second and third of the four stages of Boehme's philosophy. Of their devotional value Law's testimony here is sufficient.

Page 130, note 13. See Study 2: *Boehme, How to read his works.*

Page 131, note 14. Quoted from the *Way to Christ* (*Regeneration* 162). Compare the fragment of Law's writing printed in my *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism* (p. 287) beginning "The many janglings about religion and the variety of sects . . ."

Page 132, note 15. *Microcosm* is a common term in the writings of the nature-mystics (see Study 12: *Mystical Analogy*), signifying the human being as a living mirror or epitome of the great universe (macrocosm) both being built according to the same divine plan. Cp. *Confutation of Warburton* 186.

Page 134, note 16. It was, I think, not uncommon for medieval mystics to speak of man as having an "angelical nature". Boehme writes of man as "angelical" or as growing in an angelic world. For Law's justification of the word's application to man see *WDK* 154-6.

The last line of John Byrom's beautiful Christmas hymn, "Christians, awake, salute the happy morn", runs, as he wrote it, "Of angels and of angel-men the King"; the quaint expression being no doubt a reminiscence of the poet's study of Boehme.

Page 135, note 17. See Study 22: *The Will*, and compare with this sentence Boehme, *Way to Christ* (*Resignation*, III, 20), "The centre of the mind is come out of eternity, out of God's omnipotence, it can bring itself into what it will, and whither it will."

Page 135, note 18. This statement is clearly a version

of the traditional description of God as the "prime mover", the "first cause" at the head of the chain of causation, which we can only imagine as a "working will".

Page 136, note 19. *Centrum naturae* in Boehme means the element or universe of basic, fiery energy which pervades all existence. In God and all that obeys His will it remains "in its place of hiddenness," that is, in harmonious subordination. There is in *Martensen* (pp. 76-92) an illuminating exposition of this "centre" or "wheel" of nature, regarded as an ever-circling tension of contraries, and its possible scriptural basis in the "wheel of becoming" ("course of nature", R.V.) of James 3.6 and the fiery "whirling wheels" of Ezekiel, chs. 1 and 10.

Page 136, note 20. Compare *Theologia Germanica* (46), "We may not [as neither did Christ] withstand any creature or thing by force of war, either in will or works." This passage is one of a number of indications (cp. too pages 146 as to Caesar, 114 l.4, and *WDK* 251 as to loving enemies) preparing us for Law's long and magnificent denunciation of war in his *Address to the Clergy* 82-93 (cp. pages 223-7), which brought Law into line with the Quakers. Boehme used his principle of the uncovering of wrath in God to condemn war most effectively, but he is nevertheless not a consistent pacifist. That he had the makings of one and also of a wise critic of the Old Testament is indicated by the following striking passage:

> "Dost thou suppose that all the prophets have spoken from the pleasant, kind love of God, from the heart of God, when they said to the kings of Israel: 'Enter into battle, thou shalt overcome, God shall give you victory?' From God indeed they spake, but from His fierce wrath against sins, through the spirit of the great world, which would devour again what it hath made, because the love was extinguished.
>
> "Or dost thou suppose that God sent Moses to slay the kings of the heathen in the promised land and that He is so well pleased with murderings? No, friend, look under the veil of Moses, and thou shalt find it quite otherwise.
>
> "Why did God keep Israel forty years in the wilderness and feed them with heavenly bread? *In order that they*

should be a people full of love, such as love one another, and should depend on God in one bond of love; and therefore He gave their laws brightness, to see if they could live in the love of the Father and *then* He would have sent them among the heathen, to convert them with their wonders, as was done at the time of the apostles. . . . But because they were wicked, they could not, armed with the brightness of Moses and with miracles wrought in the lustre of the Father, enter in to convert the heathen; but Moses and his miracles had to stay in the wilderness, and the whole people was consumed and devoured in the wrath; and Joshua must war with the heathen, and destroy them. For one wrath devoured the other." (Boehme, *The Three Principles*, 20, 20 ff.)

The Spirit of Love

Part the First: In a Letter to a Friend

(1752: Vol. VIII)

Part the Second: In three Dialogues

(1754: Vol. VIII)

The *Spirit of Love* was written in two Parts, on similar lines to those of the *Spirit of Prayer*. The First Part is an essay in which William Law unfolds his own faith in the Divine Love as the motive power of all that is good and beautiful in nature and in man and sets forth the wonderful analogy between the material and the spiritual worlds; while in the Second Part Law, by means of the dialogue form, introduces actual and possible objections to his teachings concerning the love and the wrath of God, and has moreover as a rule sufficient artistic sense and honesty to allow these objections to be stated with some force.

The Second Dialogue contains his most comprehensive explanation of the nature and meaning of the atonement—of the atoning life and death of our Lord. This Dialogue is here given in full, with the exception of two minor digressions chiefly on the relationship of the natural and the supernatural. Of the three speakers, Theophilus, already known to us, is the only one of importance.

W. R. Inge has written of this work as William Law's masterpiece. So also has Whyte, and his enthusiastic words are worthy of quotation.

> "Law's truly heavenly treatise, *The Spirit of Love*, is, itself, besides all else, a perfect triumph of that same divine spirit. For that fine work was called forth by the

persistent objections that both his friends and his enemies had made to many things in his later writings. And while gathering up into an ordered and systematic whole all the best and most characteristic things in his later books, Law gives them over again here with a fulness and a finish that make *The Spirit of Love* the copestone and crown of all his compositions. And, better than all that, he illustrates and adorns this most delightful book with a wisdom and a meekness, and with a display of that all-embracing love of which William Law was, of all our modern men, surely the chosen apostle. While the most humble and simply believing and the least rationalistic of theologians, at the same time, Law sets out in *The Spirit of Love* to give a profound and complete rationale of the origin and the nature of sin. . . . Like his master Jacob Behmen, Law moves deep down among the primitive and unfrequented roots of things. He sees the unseen roots of things with his own eyes, and he tells what he sees in his own words, till it may safely be said that no man of a sufficiently open and sufficiently serious mind can read Law on these awful and unfathomable subjects without having his seriousness immensely deepened and his love to God and man for all his days fed to a seraphic flame."

Page 142, note 1. See *Regeneration*, note 4. The "Schools" or Schoolmen are here the medieval theologians.

Page 144, note 2. This is the doctrine of universal redemption deduced from Romans 8.21-2. As to purgatory see Study 21: *Universal Redemption.*

Page 146, note 3. Law no doubt has in mind Addison's famous (though ponderous) tragedy of Cato, produced on the London stage in 1713. In his *Case of Reason* 134 there is another critical reference to the suicide of Cato. What he felt about the "glorious murder" of war is developed in the *Address to the Clergy* 82 ff. (pages 223-7, cp. "the glory of His Majesty's arms", p. 89).

Page 150, note 4. See Study 8: *Fire and Water.*

Page 152, note 5. See Study 24: *The Wrath of God.*

Page 152, note 6. Whatever may be thought as to the interpretation of this text (Rom. 12.19) as intended by St.

Paul, Law's argument here appears to be convincing. It has been well said that "Man, after all, is instinctively godly. He can never whole-heartedly seek to be what he does not believe that God is. . . . Jesus couples with the command to exercise a universal, generous benevolence, involving complete forgiveness of all injury, the reiterated statement that this is the very glory or "perfection" of God. . . . No man has the true inward disposition to forgive his enemies, to do good to them who do ill to him, to bless them that are a curse to him, unless he is quite sure that God forgives freely and blesses without thought of desert or hope of reward. To forgive because God is trusted to avenge is a psychological impossibility." (*The Lord of Thought*, pp. 149, 195, Lily Dougall and C. W. Emmet, 1922.) The thought here is of God as personal—not in His cosmic function, as responsible for the pitiless laws of consequence; in this sphere we ought not to try to imitate Him, any more than Jesus did.

Page 153, note 7. The end of this first Dialogue deals with the question of God's overruling providence in the sphere of natural calamities and in other external evils which fall upon man. The ground is largely covered by what follows in my extracts from the second Dialogue in regard to the "chastisement" of sinners, etc. William Law does not appear to me to be on right lines here or indeed consistent with his own idea of "wrath". But the problem is perhaps ultimately insoluble (see Study 24: *The Wrath of God*).

Page 153, note 8. This is really the theory of "innate ideas", which has been widely held by philosophers since its enunciation by Plato. It was much discussed in the eighteenth century, for the philosopher John Locke had created a storm by denying it, maintaining that the human mind at birth is like a clean sheet of paper and that ideas of right and wrong, of truth and opinion, are impressed upon it from the outside through the senses and through experience. Law refers specifically and indignantly to this theory and to Locke himself in *Confutation of Warburton* 186-7 (and cp. *SL* 15-6 for Descartes and Locke).

Page 155, note 9. The word "ground" is the old mystical term for the place in the soul which has special contact

with God. (See Study 11: *God's Temple*, and cp. "smothered spark of heaven" in my next extract here.) The juxtaposition of "treasure" and "ground" suggests a reminiscence of the parable of the treasure hid in a field (Matt. 13.44).

Page 156, note 10. This is a reference to Law's doctrine of Predestination. See Study 16 *in re.*

Page 158, note 11. Wesley expressed strong objection to what he considers Law's incorrect use of the verb "atone" without "for" in such cases as this. But the Oxford dictionary gives other instances of it (e.g. in Barrow's *Sermons*, of which Law possessed the 1714 edition) as meaning "make expiation or amends for", and so practically "blot out." Law always has at the back of his mind its etymological significance of making (God and man) "at one".

Page 161, note 12. If we compare this with the passage in *The Case of Reason* 72-3, we can measure the extent to which Law has moved during twenty-two years in his thought about the atonement of Christ. The words "folly of debtor and creditor" later on in this *Dialogue* (page 176) furnish the text for *Letter* IV (p. 136).

Page 166, note 13. This explanation of what is meant by the satisfaction of the divine righteousness or justice and by the taking away or expiation of human sin is one of the most splendid achievements of William Law's thought. It regards the idea of a persisting guilt as an evil fiction, when once the sinner's life has been radically changed by his reunion with the divine life; and it indicates that true justice looks not at all to retribution and the events of the evil past but to restoration and the new, overcoming life of the future. I well remember the impression that the reading of this passage made upon a Welsh friend of mine, a fine man brought up in the traditions of Calvinistic Methodism, shortly before his death some years ago; and in countless good people the truth declared here might prove nothing less than revolutionary.

Page 167, note 14. This involves the truth of the original creation of man in the image of God. See Study 5: *The Fall of Man*, and the opening extracts from the *Appeal* (pages 35 ff.).

Page 170, note 15. The simile of the wise physician who employs "bitterness or heat" (the exact words of *SL* 67) to cure his patient is used in just the same way by Origen (*De Principiis*, II. 5 and 6) in regard to the fire of "God's vengeance, which is profitable for the purgation of souls." Origen quotes Jer. 25. 15-16; Isa. 4. 4; 47. 14-15; 10. 17; Mal. 3.3, and says that if the virulence of a bodily disease requires a painful drug, or even the amputating knife, or in the last resort the burning out of the evil by fire, "how much more is it to be understood that God, our Physician, desiring to remove the defects of our souls, contracted from different sins and crimes, should employ penal measures of this sort and should even apply in addition the punishment of fire to those who have lost their soundness of mind!" This fire, he writes, will effect the restoration of the soul into a firmer structure. (The same image of the physician is used at length in *De Princ.* III. 1. 13 and 17.)

The Scriptural references to the wrath of God do not, in Origen's view, imply any passion in Him but "something assured with a view to the discipline [teaching] through sterner measures of those who have sinned often and grievously."

Allowing for certain apparent inconsistencies Origen holds that God's mercy represents His justice and that all His punishments, even that of hell-fire, are redemptive and remedial.

Moreover he comes still nearer to the thought of Boehme and Law, when he goes on to say in effect that punishment is just the inevitable consequence of sin and that God's consuming fire is in ourselves. Thus (*De Princip.* II. 10. 4) "We find in the prophet Isaiah that the fire with which each one is punished is described as his own; for he says, 'Walk ye in the light of your own fire, and in the flame which ye have kindled' (Is. 50. ii). By these words it seems to be indicated that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire and is not plunged [by God] into some fire already kindled by another. Of this fire the fuel and food are our sins" (comparing 1 Cor. 3.12). Just as a bad diet, Origen proceeds, collects poison in the body which breeds diseases, so, when the soul has gathered a mass of evil works, it all "boils up in punishment and is set on fire to chastisements." Such tortures are indeed produced around the substance of the soul by the hurtful affections of the sins themselves.

Though, in his writings as they have come down to us (somewhat edited), Origen's own words imply uncertainty, other ancient writers assert generally that he taught the universal restoration of the devils also to God through the fires of purgatory. In all this the similarity of thought is so great, that it is reasonable to believe that Law (in spite of his depreciatory reference to "the great Origen" at an earlier date, see *Letters* 233) was impressed by his views.

Page 172, note 16. By the "scholastic Divines" whose doctrines are discussed in this passage, the writer here evidently means not so much (as elsewhere) the medieval schoolmen, but chiefly the theologians of the Reformation and the Anglican Divines up to his own day. Luther and Calvin taught the penal and substitutionary view of the Atonement in a considerably harsher way than the medieval Church generally. The Church of England on the whole followed Calvin's view but in a modified and milder form. We may compare the second of its *Thirty Nine Articles*, still nominally in force, ("Christ suffered . . . to reconcile His Father to us . . ."); so too Hooker and Pearson.

"Our great Bishop Stillingfleet" (see *Trapp* 183), who from his see of Worcester wrote about 1697 *Two Discourses concerning Christ's Satisfaction* directed mainly against the Socinians, appears to be a typical example. The great Dutch jurist *Grotius* (1583-1645) produced a modified theory, known as "governmental," which influenced many of the Anglican divines of Law's time, though many others and many dissenting ministers were strong Calvinists.

The Italian Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) was the chief founder of modern Unitarianism. In spite of his defective theology he and other "Socinians" did real service by showing the unreasonableness and immorality of the penal theories of the atonement. (See, for the above, L. W. Grensted, *Doctrine of the Atonement.*)

Page 174, note 17. That is, "had He been deficient in any aspect of His nature or actions." For Christ as the Father of restored mankind, see Study 6 and pages 58-60.

Page 177, note 18. For the religion of nature see pages 1-4 and *Appeal*, note 9. Here and at *SL* 83 I have, from consideration of space, had to omit two passages in which Law takes the Deists on their own ground and asserts

the truly "natural" character of the redemption of man by Christ.

Page 178, note 19. This is the old doctrine of "seminal identity" based on Hebrews 7.9-10, which was taught by St. Augustine and Catholic theology in general. Adam represents universal human nature and thus includes all particular men descended from him. Compare the quaint expression, "Adam, created at first a human angel, with an host of angels in his loins" (*SP* 91).

Page 184, note 20. Similar declarations that Christ and not the Bible is the living Word of God are to be found in the works of other Protestant mystics, who lived among people who constantly proclaimed the infallibility of the written Word. (Cp., e.g., the Quaker Isaac Penington, *Naked Truth*, vi, and the Anabaptist, Hans Denck, quoted by Rufus Jones, op. cit. p. 386.) And cp. *The Imitation* XI, III, ii, with its exaltation of the inward word of Christ over the word of Moses and the prophets.

Page 187, note 21. Darkness is, as is absolutely clear elsewhere, an equivalent of fire, that is of the smouldering heat which in itself gives no light; and this fire is the divine "substance" of the soul. Cp. Studies 10 and 20.

Wesley only showed his want of understanding, when he wrote in his *Letter to Mr. Law* of this and other similar passages, "Truly, Sir, you say very handsome things of darkness and seem to be much in love with it. I have seldom met with a greater friend to it, except the "illuminated" Jacob Behmen. . . . And to him you have done an irreparable injury by pouring light upon his venerable darkness!"

Page 187, note 22. This doubtless refers to the corpuscular theory of light maintained by Law's much admired Newton, whose treatise on *Optics* is still in his library. It is interesting that a modern physicist such as Einstein can say that "light is as material as paper" and that no complete explanation of its nature exists.

Page 188, note. 23. From St. John the evangelist onwards there is a long line of Christian mystics in whose symbolism light is central. Augustine, Dionysius, Bonaventura, Dante, Teresa, Boehme and Law are outstanding examples. Indeed the supernatural light is to them more

reality than symbol and appears to have been really felt and perceived by them, not as a visualisation in sensory terms, but by a mode of knowledge so vivid that it has an analogy to sight. (This applies generally also to the vision of God and of spiritual essences.)

Jacob Boehme's first great illumination had come to him after a kind of trance induced by prolonged gazing into the sunlight reflected from the dark surface of a polished pewter vessel. From that day the need of darkness for the manifestation of light became perhaps the most characteristic form of his central doctrine of the nature of God, of His love and of His wrath. We find it expressed somewhat differently by Dionysius when he wrote, "Intangible and invisible darkness we attribute to that Light (i.e. God), because It so far exceeds the visible light" (*Div. Nomin.* vii. 2). Such Scriptural phrases as "light shining out of darkness" (2 Cor. 4.6) and the "treasures of darkness" (Isaiah 45.3) thus led up to a conception of darkness as something which is only evil when torn from its rightful position in the universe of spirit.

Most appropriately indeed has the designer of the portrait of William Law which is in one of the chapel windows at Emmanuel College put in his hands a scroll bearing the words "Credite in lucem, ut filii lucis sitis" (John 12.36, see *Appendix One* (ii), *Biographical*).

Page 190, note 24. It should be noticed that the four somewhat passive virtues so much emphasised in what follows here (though perhaps an indication of a certain tendency towards "quietism" in Law) are described not as the crowning fruits of the Christian life, but as the *foundation* virtues that open the way from self to Christ. Meekness (a word which has now acquired unhappy associations) is the contrary of anger and means gentleness, courtesy especially under provocation (see *SL*, 128).

I cannot find elsewhere the exact collocation of these four, but compare *Theologia Germanica* (ch. 23) "He who would be obedient, *resigned* and submissive *to God*, must and ought to be resigned and submissive to all things . . . and take them in *silence*, resting on the hidden foundations of his soul and having a secret, inward *patience* . . . in a loving, sincere *humility*." So also Ruysbroek (like many others, from Augustine and Bonaventura to Tennyson) describes *humility* as the foundation of all the Christian virtues; from it there

springs first the *renunciation of self-will*, then *patience*, then *meekness*, and finally the more active virtues, love, zeal, and so on (*Spiritual Marriage* I. xii ff.). For the four characteristic vices named on these pages, see *Regeneration*, note 4.

Page 195, note 25. This is perhaps the most explicit of the very few references in William Law's writings to the marriage of the soul and God. See Study 15: *The New Birth.*

Page 196, note 26. This passage taken with two previous references in this extract to the purification of the soul after death is additional evidence of Law's universalist faith at this date. Wesley is indignant with him for teaching here the false doctrine of purgatory and deluding unconverted sinners with the idea that they will escape the inevitable hell.

A Collection of Letters

on the most important and interesting subjects

(1760: Vol. IX)

About a year before William Law died, twenty-five letters, of which the dates, so far as given, range between 1750 and 1757, were published by two of his most intimate friends, George Ward and Thomas Langcake. These gentlemen state that the letters "have been experimentally found of great private benefit"; we know that the contents of some of them were somewhat altered with the consent of the author, though this appears to have been skilfully done. Of most of the persons to whom they were written, including even Messrs. Ward of the Hackney Road and Langcake, who was a bank clerk, little or nothing is known for certain. Several are addressed to anonymous clergymen. The first letter from which I quote will not be found in the 1893 reprint, as it was not included in the first edition of the *Letters*, but only in the second (1769). It was addressed in 1757 to Sherlock, the Bishop of London, and I give it as additional evidence of Law's considered opinion of Boehme's services to divine truth.

Page 200, note 1. This letter was written, as its opening lines state, "in answer to a scruple concerning the words, "the folly of debtor and creditor," in the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love*" (page 176), i.e. the folly of that doctrine of the atonement, which "makes God a creditor, whose vindictive wrath against His debtor will not be appeased, till full payment is made to it." John Wesley in his *Letter to Mr. Law* had made a powerful and indignant attack on this part of the *Spirit of Love* as a denial of Holy Scripture, and Law's *Letter* IV was probably intended largely as a reply to Wesley's attack (cp. especially p. 143 with Wesley's *Letter*). The whole of this fine letter should be read in full, although most of its

substance has been already given in the extracts in this book from the *Appeal* and the *Spirit of Love.* The similarity of Law's doctrine with that of Irenaeus comes out particularly here, e.g. in the key-sentence, "nothing but the incarnate life of His eternal Son, passing through all the miserable states of lost man, could regenerate his first divine life in him."

Page 202, note 2. This passage is interesting as perhaps Law's only reference to the *via negativa*, the famous traditional method employed by many of the great mystics, from the time of Plotinus and Dionysius onwards, to discover God by divesting one's thought of all distinction of qualities and attributes, of all images and symbols of our own framing. God is the ineffable One and therefore beyond any power of description by us, except by negatives. This method, though used by great minds like Tauler and St. John of the Cross, is clearly open to abuse. Boehme shows traces of it in his doctrines of the *Ungrund*, but in the main the *via negativa* argument was quite alien to his spirit and thought, which delighted in emphasising the immensely positive richness of God's nature, with its unending contrasts of light and darkness, love and wrath, and so on. Something of the same consideration probably influenced William Law in not making use of it, except here and for the special purpose of refuting the "dividers of the divine nature" who set up a false opposition between God's righteousness or justice and God's love.

Page 202, note 3. This is a reference to 2 Peter, 2.2, a very significant text in relation to Boehme's doctrine of the fire-wrath-darkness basis of the soul, disastrously laid bare by human sin. Cp. Boehme, *Supersensual Life* (p. 9), "Thy self-will binds thee in thine own chains, keeps thee in thine own dark prison, which thou makest for thyself." For the hunger and eating of faith see my quotation from Boehme in note 7, *Regeneration.* In the passage which follows as to the multiplicity of wills, Law has doubtless in mind the text, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Page 205, note 4. Compare William Law's words, written about seven years later near the close of his life, to his Moravian admirer, Francis Okely, who wished to visit him to listen to his "instructive conversation on the spiritual

life." He tells his correspondent that the whole drift of his writings is "to call all Christians to a God and Christ within them; . . . I invite all people to the marriage of the Lamb, but no-one to myself." (*Overton*, p. 372.)

Page 207, note 5. This must be a reference to the passage in Bishop Warburton's Sermons in which he will only allow an "occasional assistance of the faithful" by the Holy Spirit, whose "constant abode" is in the New Testament and not in the heart of man. See *Address* 36 ff., where Law shows brilliantly the error of this view.

Page 209, note 6. Cp. Tauler (*Sermon* 36), "Man is a holy temple of God. But all traders must first be driven out of this temple of God, that is all the fancies and imaginations which are not really of Him, and also all delight in our own will." Cp. also Matt. 21. 12-13.

Page 212, note 7. As to "sensible fervour" see Study 7: *Fervour in Religion* and pages 112 f. I think this is the only passage in which Law uses the word "abyss" (i.e. depth to which no bottom can be found, often applied to God, e.g. *SL* 60 and page 45, "abyssal") of the human soul, which is made in His image. See Study 11: *God's Temple in the Soul.* The expression "the abyss of the heart" occurs in a Sermon dating from 1632. Bacon wrote of God as "an abyss of goodness."

Page 216, note 8. This letter "to a clergyman of Westmoreland" sets out to explain how such difficult texts as "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh" can be "affirmed of a God, all love and goodness to His creatures." Law might have followed the suggestive words of Origen (*de Principiis* III, 1. 7-14) that "God's providence as regards Pharaoh was not terminated by his drowning"; and it cannot be said that he is here conspicuously successful in applying in this field Boehme's fruitful conception of wrath as the necessary but hidden foundation of the divine life. Still the portions of the letter reproduced here illustrate well Law's view of God's love in action, and to some extent they anticipate the findings of modern criticism in regard to the progressive revelation of God in the two Testaments.

An Humble, Earnest and Affectionate Address to the Clergy (1761: Vol. IX)

In this, the last of William Law's books, he "sums up", in the words of Whyte, "the authorship of his long and fruitful life and brings it all to bear with an overpowering impressiveness on the younger clergy of the Church of England." Its central theme, again and again emphasised, is that the immediate and continual inspiration of God's Spirit is essential to the life of the Christian, and that it is the absence of any desire for this and of any faith in its possibility, together with the pursuit of profane learning, that is responsible for most of the ills afflicting the Christian world, including the greatest of all, the curse of war. Despite a certain diffuseness of style, the book is written with an amazing vigour for a man of seventy-four who was about to die a natural death.

The manuscript fragment printed on p. 287-8 of my *William Law and 18th-Century Quakerism* was almost certainly written by Law as a draft preface to this *Address.*

Page 218, note 1. The inner Light was of course the central doctrine of George Fox and the Quakers and was by them identified with Jesus Christ. (Cp. *Trapp* 183.) Law was also doubtless familiar with the words of Tauler, who frequently writes of certain persons, known as "Friends of God", as possessing an "inward divine light" which raises them into union with God.

As to enthusiasm, the constant bugbear of the orthodox eighteenth-century divines, see *Trapp*, note 3.

Page 220, note 2. For this identification of Satan or, as elsewhere in Law, Antichrist with the spirit of self-exaltation, cp. Boehme, "the killing of Antichrist in ourselves . . . the true Antichrist is the self or selfwill, i.e. the serpent's will in the soul" (*Epistle* 10). Cp. also *Theologia*

Germanica (ch. 34), "nothing burns in hell but self-will." It is noteworthy that, although Law dwells frequently upon the fall of Satan and his rebel angels as the original cause of the entrance of sin and disorder into the universe, yet the devil as a personal tempter of the individual enters hardly or not at all into his moral teaching. As he wrote in one of his *Letters* (p. 157), "Satan is nowhere to be resisted, but as a working spirit within you; therefore to resist the devil is to turn from the evil thoughts and motives that arise within you." Cp. also *WDK* 232-3.

Page 222, note 3. This is really an extension of the text, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" to cover the things of God as revealed in the universe of spirit and nature. Cp. *WDK* 207 (page 132), "Would you, therefore, be a divine philosopher, you must be a true Christian"; and numberless passages both in Boehme (e.g. *Supersensual Life, Dialogue* 2) and in other mystics. Compare especially *Theologia Germanica*, where we read (e.g. chs. 8, 41, 42) how the "true light" must be guided by the "true love"; and thus alone, and not by the "false light" and the "kind of learning which is not knowledge" can the soul "reach so high as to cast a glance into eternity."

Page 224, note 4. "The universe is a *chaos* wherein all things are couched and wrapped up." (Boehme, *Epistles*, 2.9). In several passages (e.g. *SP*, 9, 10) Law seems to have in mind this suggestive use of the word borrowed by Boehme from Paracelsus, according to which *chaos* is not merely confusion and indistinction, but fruitful matter in which everything subsequently evolved is present in germ.

Page 225, note 5. For this passage as the culmination of William Law's gradually developing beliefs as to the future destiny of all men, see Study 21: *Universal Redemption.* I have not been able to give in full the magnificent and downright denunciation of the spirit and practice of "warring Christendom" in the midst of which it occurs, a denunciation all the more remarkable when we consider (see next note) that it was written when England was resounding with admiration for the glorious victories of "His Majesty's Arms" recently won over the French in Canada and India, victories which laid the foundation for the British Empire as we know it. The one blot on Law's presentation of his

theme is his excessive emphasis on the thought that death in battle inevitably "compels nameless numbers of unconverted sinners to fall, murdering and murdered, among flashes of fire", directly into something very like hell, most of these wretched men not having been "suffered to stay in this world till age and experience . . . have helped them to know the inward voice of God's Spirit and the evil, curse, and sting of sin." It is impossible fully to accept such a belief, even though its crudity is a healthy antidote to the usual view which conveniently combines patriotism with Christianity by comparing the death of the soldier to that of Christ and promising him a sure and certain hope of Heaven. Such a belief is Mohammedan rather than Christian. The change which we call death is a solemn and wonderful thing, and God meant that there should be adequate preparation for it. It is well known that such a preparation is not normally afforded by the state of mind of those who are occupied in trying to kill their fellow men by the most devilish means available. Even the Litany of the National Church bids us pray to be delivered from "battle, murder, and sudden death."

Page 226, note 6. This paragraph was written in the winter of 1760-1. The conquest of Canada, secured by Wolfe's victory of Quebec, had been completed in the previous autumn. The battle of Plassey, which paved the way for the eventual subjugation of India, had been fought and won in 1757. As T. H. Green says of 1759, "it was a year of [British military] triumphs in every quarter of the world."

When Law wrote these words, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (founded in 1701) maintained in America about 70 missionaries who ministered in part to coloured people; otherwise there was no organised British missionary work for Christ among the heathen of either Indies, whose spoils were being plundered by so-called Christians.

Page 228, note 7. This characteristic text forms the concluding passage of the *Address to the Clergy* and is said to have been written a few days before its author died, indeed on the last occasion when his hand was capable of holding a pen.

TWENTY-FOUR SHORT STUDIES
OF
SUBJECTS TREATED
IN
WILLIAM LAW'S MYSTICAL WRITINGS

STUDY 1 : THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST AND THE UNITY OF ALL MEN IN HIM

(See pages 54-63, 157-182, and 199-202.)

It was William Law's teaching on this supreme and mysterious subject, together with his related doctrine of the wrath of God, that was chiefly instrumental in drawing the present writer to the study of his works. His exposition by no means covers the whole ground or exhausts more than a fraction of the significance of this central fact of our religion, but even by itself it seems to me to impart to it a sufficiency of glorious meaning to render it acceptable both to heart and head.

It is really unnecessary to cover much space here in summarising Law's teaching on the Atonement. Its main lines will be clear enough to the careful and sympathetic reader of the last chapter of the *Appeal*, the second dialogue of Part II of the *Spirit of Love*, and No. 4 in the *Letters*. I have reprinted, I think, everything essential in these passages on the pages noted above. There is a certain amount of repetition, but no serious inconsistency in his three treatments of the subject, and the somewhat varying presentations add impressiveness to his main thesis.

The starting point of William Law's doctrine was the truth that man wilfully separated himself from God and from the very possibility of goodness; and that God then at once took steps to raise him back into union with Himself. For the divine method here his key thought is perhaps best expressed in the sentence, "Nothing but the incarnate life of God's eternal Son, passing [victoriously] through all the miserable states of lost man, could regenerate his first divine life in him" (page 200). This great task could only be accomplished by a being who was both "God in Himself and a seed of God in all men" (page 174) and at the same

time supremely man, in some mysterious way inclusive and representative of the whole race—"a man raised by God according to the riches of His love out of the loins of Adam, in whose mysterious person the whole humanity and the Word of God were personally united" (pages 57-8).

That Christ, that is, God on His human side, should *include* all the millions of human spirits, make Himself one with them, and so be able to act for them in the fullest sense, may indeed seem a strange and impossible idea; and yet it need not really be so. Historically speaking, as a Christian conception, the belief has sprung from the intense experience of the primitive Church, moulded by the thought of the great mystical writers of the New Testament and of the Apostle Paul in particular. The first disciples felt that in a marvellous way their common love and worship of Jesus had broken down the barriers between their personality and His and between each member of their spirit-filled community. No longer were they freeman and slave, Greek and barbarian and Jew, but all "one person" in Christ Jesus. In Him, in God, they felt themselves united, as the branches in the vine, as the members in the body, and corporately as the bride to her husband. In the prayer of contemplation the mystical soul often rose to an assurance of union, almost of identity with God in Christ. The goal of all believers was and is to possess this experience; and it follows that finally and therefore potentially they are all one in the Divine Christ. They are at least moving towards a perfect fellowship of suffering and of joy, a perfect unity of the Church in Him, however much it may be temporarily marred by individual weaknesses.

Moreover potentially, and as universalist Christians believe, finally *all* men and women must become believers and win some form of the Christian experience. The same solidarity extends therefore to the whole race; our goal is a perfect intercommunion of spirits, an indwelling of all spirits in one another and in God.

There is assuredly a profound and insoluble mystery here; but then there is a similar mystery in the relations of all true lovers. And many lines of thought and experience

converge to give support to this conception of the inclusion of all men in God. There is the conviction of many mystics, both inside and outside Christianity: for instance, that of the Indian *Vedanta*, that there is a self common to all; of Plotinus, that all souls are one; of Meister Eckhart, "all creatures that have flowed out from God must become united into one Man," who is Christ; of Jacob Boehme, "all the children of God are but one in Christ, which one is Christ in all, . . . the tree of life and love"*; of the Quaker, John Woolman, who seemed to lose name and identity in union with suffering humanity. There is the unity of all consciousness or of all wills in such idealist systems of philosophy as those of Spinoza, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. There is the modern psychology of overlapping personality in the subconscious mind. In all this testimony, however varying or pantheistic in its presentation, the Christian may legitimately find support for his faith that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in a very real sense represents and includes all men.

Let us now revert to the use William Law made of this truth. This Son of God is primarily for man the captain of his restored salvation, the pioneer, the pathfinder, who by His example, His inspiration, and ultimately through man's response and identification with Himself, liberates him completely from the domination of wrath and hell and reunites him with the full life of the Godhead and of the divinely ordered universe. "You must," as Boehme writes, "go out of Sodom, and enter into the footsteps of Christ . . . and the true pioneer will come into your soul" (*Epistle* 11. 17,20).

The "process" of this restoration, as Law (here closely following Boehme) constantly emphasises (e.g. pages 175-7), is for Christ to undergo and overcome triumphantly every possible kind of temptation, suffering, and evil to which man is liable, meeting everything in a spirit of perfect humility, patience, and forgiving love. And this he did equally in His life, passion, death, and resurrection—the last two being jointly the climax of the whole process (cp. page 59-60).

**Supersensual Life*, ch. 1.

"Not an evil in flesh and blood, not a misery of life, not a chain of death, not a power of hell and darkness but were thus all baffled, broken, and overcome." In this way did Jesus make it possible for all men to "inherit His conquering nature and follow Him through all these passages to eternal life."

Several points may be briefly noted here in relation to other well-known doctrines of the Atonement.

First, the substitutionary idea ("Christ died in our stead") is not rejected entirely; it is in effect swallowed up in the new birth of Christ in us (cp. page 163).

Secondly, though the word "sacrifice" is occasionally used of His death (e.g. page 176), it does not appear to be used in the traditional propitiatory, priestly sense, in relation to the removal of guilt, but only as referring to His sufferings, as inherent in His identification with suffering mankind.

Thirdly, in Law's main atonement passages (though by no means elsewhere) the function of Christ as our great example and incentive to the good life appears to be somewhat overlooked. But this is only in appearance; for he certainly means to assert that the whole process or career of Jesus shews us precisely what are God's methods of overcoming evil, and what must be our way also, that is, not by ascetic mortification or by anger, force and punishment, but by forgiving love, patience, meekness, and by spiritual not physical resistance. (Hence logically followed Law's rejection of *all* war.)

That the influence of this divine example will sooner or later draw both ourselves and all men and women to God is guaranteed by the ultimate fact that we are essentially one with Him, potential members of His mystical body. And, if we can thoroughly grasp this truth, it is bound to act as a powerful stimulus to each of us to strive earnestly towards the perfect realisation of that reunion of all in Him and in God.

John Wesley vigorously attacked William Law's teaching on the Atonement on the ground that it ignored the need of "justification," of the washing away of the guilt and stain of past sin, the need of removing the righteous anger of God,

which could only be done by the objective shedding of Christ's blood by the "sacrifice" of the Cross, and the appropriation of its benefits by faith.

To Wesley, as to Augustine, to Luther, to the Puritans, and to the central tradition of the Catholic Church, forgiveness, atonement meant primarily this removal of past guilt, including that of "original sin." To those who still move in this circle of ideas—guilt, righteous anger, retributive punishment, compensatory justice, sacrificial death, Law's teaching on the Atonement will probably seem unsatisfactory. For to him (as also to Boehme and to the Quaker, George Fox) atonement is first and always at-one-ment, the recreating of the new sinless life in the soul and its reunion with God. Justification is swallowed up in sanctification; past guilt, as distinct from present tendency to sin now victoriously overcome in Christ, is a harmful fiction that ought not to detain us. Forgiveness of the sinful man "is nothing else in its whole nature but God's making him righteous again."

The two splendid expressions of this, the true conception of justice, are better dealt with under the head of the *Wrath of God* (see pages 165-6, 201 and Study 24).

No writer on William Law has, I think, touched on the great similarity between his view of the atoning work of Christ and that of the early Greek Fathers and of Irenaeus, (c. 180 A.D.) in particular. (Four volumes of this author still stand on the shelves of his library at King's Cliffe.) Like Law, Greek theology emphasised primarily the saving power of the Incarnation, of which the climax was the atoning death completed by the resurrection of the Lord. Irenaeus developed this line of thought by his theory, suggested by the language of St. Paul, of the "recapitulation" (*anakephalaiosis*) of all things in Christ. He has a clear apprehension of the solidarity of mankind, whose units are all bound together in Christ's victory as in Adam's sin. Christ is the great representative of the race in whom are summed up all its ripe experiences as they are contained in germ in Adam. The effect of Adam's sinful acts extended to the whole company of his descendants and the effect of

Christ's acts is equally coextensive with the whole race, which really acts in each case in its representative. Christ's obedience unto death can become, if we appropriate it by faith our obedience also. It is, so Irenaeus taught, by that obedience, as shown particularly by Christ's victorious resistance to the devil's temptations rather than merely by His death considered as suffering or penalty, that man is restored to union with God and to the incorruptible and immortal body and soul lost at his fall (cp. page 63). It is the present destruction of sinfulness that matters rather than the removal of past guilt. Jesus Christ was made what we are in order that we may become what He is, that is, divine. "He was God recapitulating in us the ancient creation, in order that He might slay sin and destroy the power of death and give life to men . . . Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life restoring to all communion with God" . . . (See Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, iii, 18 and 19; v. 16 and 21. Other parallel passages might be quoted.)

The close relation of much of this to Law's expositions of the Atonement will be clear to the careful reader. It is true that Irenaeus sometimes uses a physical terminology that is unsatisfying and fantastic; yet to him as to Law redemption is a profoundly ethical and personal process that calls forth the deepest instincts of the heart.

In the Roman Catholic Church, owing to the influence of Augustine, Anselm, and others, the usual tendency was to regard Christ as having suffered to satisfy the justice or majesty of God offended by the sins of men, or even as a victim substituted for men on whom were poured forth the punishments of an angry God. These deplorable ideas, the reflection of the evil human instinct for retribution and vengeance, were generally adopted by the Fathers of the Reformation, though side by side with them we find, e.g. in Luther, the thought of Christ as the divine conqueror, who has overcome the oppressors of mankind, sin and death, the devil and hell.

With Jacob Boehme this last conception is uppermost, combined with an intense realisation of the unity of the believer with the conquering Christ, the whole being

expressed in his own peculiar framework of light and darkness, fire and wrath. There is too a constant parallelism (similar to that of Irenaeus and of Law) between Adam, the natural father of the race and Christ the second Adam and its spiritual father. The following short extract is typical.

"The tree Jesus Christ in the light-world, who has revealed Himself in our soul, will have our soul as His branches. He has come in Adam's place, who caused us to decay and perish; He has become Adam in the new birth. Adam brought our soul into the world, into the death of fierce wrathfulness; and Christ brought our soul out of death through the fire of God, and rekindled it in fire, so that it obtained again the shining light; otherwise it would have had to remain in the dark death, in the source of anguish. It depends only on our own acceptance that we follow the same path that Christ has made." (*Incarnation*, II.6.10.)

Boehme is unfortunately sometimes careless in the way he writes of the wrath of God as if it were according to the personal will of the Father; but we must read such passages in the light of his insistence that wrath, like darkness and destructive fire, is only, so to speak, the impersonal, basic element in a God, who is as a Person nothing but the perfect love, which is expressed in Christ.

Both to Boehme and to Irenaeus William Law undoubtedly owes a considerable debt in his presentation of the Atonement doctrine; yet it bears throughout the characteristic impress of his own original mind.

In my note 16 to *SL*, page 172, I have written briefly as to the prevailing thought on the Atonement within the Anglican Church, up to the period when William Law was writing. Since then, and till quite recently, English theological literature has shown that, in spite of a wholesome tendency to revert to the mystical solution, to the self-identification of the believer and of all believers in Christ, penal and expiatory views, modified yet akin to those which Law strove to controvert, are still held and preached. This is only to be expected, so long as retributive punishment, and not

loving restoration to the good life is regarded as the proper treatment of the offender.*

*Cp. also such a hymn as No. 496 *Ancient and Modern* ("So just the wrath of Heaven"). For the above and also for Irenaeus see H. Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, L. W. Grensted, *Doctrine of the Atonement*, and G. Aulen, *Christus Victor*. For an admirable treatment of the doctrine in the New Testament see William E. Wilson's *Problem of the Cross* (1929).

STUDY 2: BOEHME, HOW TO READ HIS WORKS

(See pages 125-130.)

I am afraid that few modern readers can be recommended to read much of Boehme, except one or two of his simplest writings, such as the *Way to Christ*, without some kind of commentary or introductory volume. *Jacob Boehme* by the Danish Bishop H. L. Martensen (translated in 1885) is to my mind an admirable introduction or, to the more philosophically minded, Howard H. Brinton's *The Mystic Will* (1930) and still more the truly magnificent *Philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (1929) by Alexandre Koyré. There are of course many German works about him. Alex. Whyte's enthusiastic *Jacob Behmen* (1894) and the relevant chapters in Rufus M. Jones' *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (1914) supply short but inspiring introductions to the old seventeenth century mystic.

Apart from the complexity and originality of Boehme's theological and mystical system, every reader is bound to be more or less perplexed and offended by his want of logical and analytical training in setting out his points orderly and intelligently and still more by the strange and barbaric words which he often uses. The worst of these come from the pursuit of alchemy and astrology, the chemistry and astronomy of his day, in which true science and true philosophy and religion were inextricably mingled with much fanciful nonsense. Other expressions were reproduced from the Latin, sometimes misunderstood, of Boehme's learned friends, and a few, such as the very expressive *Ungrund*, were apparently invented by himself. In spite of all these drawbacks he is now widely regarded as one of the chief founders of German idealist philosophy.

The unlearned reader at least, indeed most readers, must therefore, in studying this author, be content to pass over

long passages, as all but unintelligible save perhaps for a few flashes of mysterious beauty, for the sake of those other passages in which Boehme reveals himself as poet, saint, penitent, a man of a child-like heart and of an intense love for his fellows, who aspired to feel the utmost depths of God's love and to penetrate some way into His purposes for His creation. A disciple wrote of him that more than other mortals he lived in the heart of God as his "element", and hence chiefly springs the strange charm and fascination which his writings have for kindred minds who are not deterred by his glaring defects.

As Martensen writes, "amid his diffuse explanations and descriptions the reader of Boehme gains only too frequently the impression of a vast, wind-swept and roaring forest, wherein he can neither understand nor hear a word." Yet, if we listen attentively, we shall hear through all the stormy confusion celestial voices which touch our heart by their quiet beauty, we shall see the eternal stars shining through the blinding dazzle of the lightning flash, we shall become aware amid the rocks and stagnant pools of a stream that brings living water from the eternal hills.

It is for reasons such as these that it is possible, up to a certain point (if we will put ourselves, as Law urges, in the state of mind of the lost son) to get profit and enjoyment out of Jacob Boehme without the use of an introductory volume —possible also that a too analytical introduction may indeed, as Law asserts, hinder his true message from reaching our hearts.

It seems worth while to extract and reproduce here from the microscopic print of Christopher Walton's huge volume (see *Notes and Materials*, p. 45) the following undated letter of William Law's. Apart from its interest generally in connection with the 1764-81 English edition of Boehme's works, it shows that Law need not be taken too seriously in proclaiming the uselessness (and worse) of a commentary upon them.

> "I have several times had the same designs in my mind which you recommend to me; but have never yet been enough moved to enter upon them. . . . I taught myself

the High Dutch language, on purpose to know the original words of the blessed Jacob. . . . The edition I have is in quarto, carefully printed from Gichtel's edition in the year 1715. The translators of J.B., Ellistone and Sparrow, are much to be honoured for their work; they had great piety and great abilities, and well apprehended their author, especially Ellistone; but the translation is too much loaded with words, and in many places the sense is mistaken.

"A new translator of J.B. is not to have it in intention to make his author more intelligible by softening or refining his language. His style is what it is, strange and uncommon; not because he wanted learning and skill in words, but because what he saw and conceived was quite new and strange, never seen or spoken of before; and therefore if he was to put it down in writing, words must be used to signify that which they had never done before.

"If it shall please God that I undertake this work, I shall only endeavour to make J.B. speak as he would have spoken had he wrote in English. Secondly, [I shall endeavour] to guard the reader at certain places from wrong apprehensions of his meaning, by adding here and there a note, as occasion requires; thirdly, and chiefly, by Prefaces or Introductions to prepare and direct the reader in the true use of these writings. The last is most of all necessary, and yet would be entirely needless, if the reader would but observe J.B.'s own directions. For there is not an error, defect, or wrong turn which the reader can fall into, in the use of these books, but is most plainly set before him by J.B."

While many great Christians have, like John Wesley, found in Boehme's difficult works little but a stone of offence, other men of profound insight, Blake and Coleridge and Emerson, Novalis and Schlegel, Schelling and Schopenhauer, Bishop Martensen and Alexander Whyte have acknowledged the greatness of their spiritual debt to him. Dr. Whyte indeed believed with his characteristic optimism (*Life*, p. 344) that the old mystic might have a message for "any reading apprentice-boy."

Lovers of Jacob Boehme's writings appear to be exceed-

ingly rare in this country. One, however, I know, no great scholar, who has found in him (as well as in William Law), without the aid of any commentary or the like, an insight into the mind of Christ, an encouragement to aspire to a continual living in Christ, together with a glimpse of the eternal purpose of God in His created universe, which she has failed to find in other Christian books or teachers. "With old John the shepherd," she writes, "I will testify that Boehme's writings, like the Scriptures, fill me with the love of God and of every form of goodness." Another Boehme lover of long standing, a devoted parish priest, has sent me his testimony as follows: "It is not easy to say exactly what it is in Boehme that makes a study of him so helpful for the ordinary parson, for he has many sides which will appeal differently to different men. I think the thing which first attracted me to the study of his writings was his doctrine of the new man in Christ, which appears so often in Charles Wesley's hymns, and which is of course absolutely scriptural; but Boehme presents it in a way that specially appealed to me. Then too his doctrine of "Throne-Angels" fell in with some thoughts of mine at the time on the subject of the unity of mankind in Christ as described in Ephesians 1. 10; and this same doctrine is also suggestive for a doctrine of the Fall. But in reading Boehme one is continually brought up against ideas which help to an understanding of orthodox Christian doctrine. I know no man who has influenced my thought more than he."*

On one side of the statue erected (in the style of the inspired shoemaker) by the admirers of Jacob Boehme, at a crossroads in his town of Görlitz in German Silesia for his tercentenary in 1924, have been inscribed the words: *Liebe und Demut unser Schwert* ("Love and humility is our sword"; see his *Incarnation*, II, VII, 10, where he adds, "under Christ's crown of thorns"). What a searching commentary indeed upon the swords in which the nations (including our own) put their trust to-day!†

*Some useful, untechnical advice may be found in a little book by C. J. Barker, *Pre-requisites to the Study of Jacob Boehme* (1920, John Watkins, 1s. od.).

†I saw the inscription at a most interesting visit paid to Görlitz in 1931. S. H.

STUDY 3: ETERNAL NATURE, CREATION, AND EMANATION

(See pages 45-6.)

'The conception of the Kingdom of Heaven as Eternal Nature plays an important part in Law's teaching and even more in Boehme's. It is impossible here to go into the still more fundamental idea that lies behind it, that of the *Ungrund*, the fathomless abyss of freedom or "indifference", which is at the root, so to speak, of God and of all existence (a conception which Schelling, Berdyaev and others have shown to be most valuable as justifying faith in the freedom of the human will and in the human right to freedom in social life); impossible to more than mention the idea of the mighty but blind force of Desire that arises out of this abyss and by means of imagination shapes itself into a purposeful Will, which is the heart of the divine Personality. These things are central to Boehme, though Law only touches on them in one or two passages (*WDK* 213, 237, *SL* 11, 60 f.; *Appeal* 72-3).

The Church teaches that one God reveals Himself in the three centres of being, which it calls the Trinity. Boehme and his school of theosophy maintained that with them there has always been a fourth element, an infinite periphery or halo, as it were, the glory of God, the uncreated Heaven, the Light unapproachable, in which the Father dwells (1 Tim. 6. 16), the external manifestation of the inapprehensible essence of the Deity. This conception has affinities with the Platonic doctrine of the heaven of eternal forms or ideas and also with the teaching of the Jewish *Kabbala*, but it does not appear to have been developed by any of the great Catholic theologians. The "heaven of heavens" of Psalm 115. 16, as conceived by Augustine, comes perhaps closest to it. Nevertheless it has real value for the following reasons at least.

(1) It gives a content to many passages of Scripture that centre around light and glory (*Shekinah*, *doxa*) in relation to God and Christ.

(2) It helps us to understand something of what it means to say that God was full of active love before the creation of the material universe, dwelling as he does in His uncreated heaven. It justifies the Christian doctrine that God is not dependent upon man and on our own universe as an object and field for the display of His love.

(3) It enables us to conceive how God can be perfect Beauty. As Martensen says, it is difficult to find beauty in God, conceived of merely as thinking, willing and loving; we shall only find it when we regard Him also as imagining, image-forming—an unthinkable idea unless in some sense there be nature in God, as a visible, corporeal element belonging to His inward life of manifestation. This is God's garment of light which He eternally produces and in which He arrays Himself, a unity of myriad existences, in one perfect harmony of interaction.

It may be added that it is important to remember that when Law writes of "nature" he sometimes means this eternal nature, but more often its "out-birth," i.e. temporal nature in its present state of disorder, unsatisfied desire, and separation from God. Thus "nature" appears sometimes as a manifestation of God and sometimes in opposition to Him, though even then dependent upon Him. Cp. Studies 4 and 24. (See Martensen's *Boehme* (pp. 99-170) for an admirable treatment of the relation of nature to God.)

Granted that there is this eternal, uncreated nature, how did the created universe, with its angelic and human inhabitants, come into existence? The traditional Catholic answer to this, based on a few texts of Scripture (Gen. 1.1, Rom. 4.17, Heb. 11.3, 2nd Macc. 7.28), is that God created our world out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. But the texts are not conclusive (Law appeals to others—Gen. 2.7, Rom. 1.20, 1 Cor. 8.6 and 11.12 against them) and even within the Catholic tradition another view has found a foothold. This is a variant of the neoplatonist doctrine of *emanation*, that the world was a spontaneous effluence or flowing forth from

God Himself. Law does not scruple to use the word (e.g. *Appeal* 71 and 83). The one view that is unanimously rejected as not Christian is that of creation from a formless matter that was independent of God; for this posits an ultimate dualism inconsistent with His sovereignty.

The recent volume of *Doctrine in the Church of England* states that the belief that the world proceeds by emanation from the divine nature, instead of by creative activity is not Christian. This seems an unfortunate assertion, that is, as regards the more reasonable form of the emanation doctrine with which we are dealing; for it is allowable to hold these two beliefs in combination, as has been done by Dionysius and Erigena, by Dante, by Tauler, Suso, and others of the Eckhart school and even in some degree apparently by Thomas Aquinas. Thus Tauler (Sermon XI), "man existed in God from all eternity. . . . We first came forth out of God . . . the source from which we spring"; similarly Suso, *Liber Veritatis*, III. This was the teaching of Boehme and of William Law. To them the creation of a soul is the bringing of its powers out of this eternal state in God into distinct and self-conscious life (cp. especially page 36).

The chief objection to emanation seems to have been that it is necessary and so limits the free, active will of God in creating out of pure love; but this does not apply to the form in which Law and Boehme taught it. Another objection is that of Augustine (*Confessions* 12.7) that if God had created Heaven and earth out of Himself, they would have been equal to His only-begotten Son. This hardly seems sound reasoning, and, since Law and Boehme maintain that creation does not proceed from the pure Deity but from His manifestation in eternal nature, no comparison of the procession of Christ from the Father is tenable. On the other hand most of those who know the use Law makes of creation out of God in the *Appeal* will probably agree as to the great value of the thought in bringing home to us the essential dignity of our natures and the tremendous summons to good living that it involves.

STUDY 4: THE FALL OF THE ANGELS AND THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE

(See, e.g., pages 43-4.)

The idea of the fall of the angels and its responsibility for the first appearance of evil and sin in God's universe is a very ancient theme that has its origin in pre-Christian Jewish or Semitic tradition. It became fixed in orthodox Christian theology, because it was considered to be required by the Genesis story which tells of sin entering into man from an outside agency, by the need to justify the co-existence of a good Creator and discarnate evil spirits, and by a few isolated texts, viz. Isaiah 14.12, Luke 10.18, 2 Peter 1.4 and 2.4, and Rev. 12.

We find in Catholic theology a general assumption that the sin of Lucifer, that is, of the devil and his angels, was one of pride or self-will, a desire on the part of spirits endowed with perfect freedom of choice to be independent of or equal with God; and as such his sin is usefully typical of the worst human sin (*Ecclesiasticus*, 10.12 f.). This is for instance the burden of Augustine's discussion on the theme in the *City of God* (XI, vi), in Tauler (*Sermon* 31) and *Theologia Germanica* (chs. 2 and 49). Compare page 107.

But in the form of the theory which Boehme and Law adopted there was an important development. According to this, the material "chaos" or shapeless, germinant protoplasm, out of which our present solar system was constructed, was the immediate result of the angels' fall, which brought strife and cruelty and ugliness into one region of the divine universe of perfect, harmonious essences and intelligences. The creation described in *Genesis* is therefore not the first original creation but a reconstruction of the ruins caused by this catastrophe, to which the "waste and void" (*Tohu Vabohu*) and the "darkness" of chapter 1, 2

have reference (see *SP* 9, 63, 72, and Boehme, *Mysterium Magnum*, chs. 10-12. (Cp. *Martensen* 213 f.).

Suggestions of a theory of this kind are to be found in the writings of the great Origen of Alexandria and in those of Scotus Erigena, the ninth-century translator of Dionysius. But in their thoughts the fall of the angels into varying degrees of "matter" is combined with a pre-natal fall of the whole of mankind. The works of Origen in question were regarded as heretical during the middle ages, but they were studied by Erasmus and other Renaissance scholars and it is likely that Boehme had been informed by his learned friends of his version of the fall of Satan.

Martensen (pp. 27-8, 123) and A. Koyré (*Jacob Boehme*, see notes to pp. 126, 185, 277, 427) consider it likely that the idea of the spoiling of the original creation by the angelic sin was suggested, like other ideas, to Boehme by its occurrence in the ancient tradition of the Jewish *Kabbala*. The *Kabbala* had become known in early Protestant circles through the Latin writings of Reuchlin and of other humanists, and Boehme's friends may well have told him about them. But even to modern readers the study of the *Kabbala* presents great difficulties, and after considerable research I have been unable to trace in it any doctrine of the materialisation of a portion of the universe through the fall of angels, even though the creation described in *Genesis* is not regarded as the first one and evil spirits are described as imbedded in matter as good spirits are not. (Cp., e.g., C. D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah*, pp. 107-8.) An examination of the literature of the early Gnostics would probably reveal traces of the angelic myth in question. At any rate it is impossible to believe that the seventeenth century mystic of Silesia can have been the first to imagine a myth of so profound and suggestive a value.

As to William Law, on the whole it is probable that he took over the theory on the authority of Boehme, though he doubtless received confirmation in his mind by reading Origen and perhaps also Erigena (in the Oxford edition of 1681) and some other obscure works of Gnostic or Kabbalistic tendencies.

At any rate he produced the marvellous fantasies of the second (*Genesis*) creation and the disasters preceding it (the "true origin of matter . . . no older than sin" *SL* 13), as described in such passages as *SP* 9 and *WDK* 242 ff. (Contrast with all this *Letters* 233, written just before his mystical illumination.)

The more usual Jewish and Christian tradition, basing itself on Genesis 3.18 ("Cursed is the ground for thy [Adam's] sake"), attributed the disorder in nature, the noxious plants and beasts and the physical disasters, either wholly or chiefly to the fall of Adam. So Luther could write: "What are thorns, thistles, floods, conflagrations, caterpillars, flies, fleas, lice, bugs, etc., but just the messengers who preach to us of the sin [of man] and the wrath of God?" (Quoted by H. Bornkamm, *Luther und Boehme*.) Law seems at first to lean to this idea (*Regeneration* 138-9), but afterwards, following Boehme (who is generally consistent here), he attributes evil in the natural world entirely to the fallen spirits and their sins (page 43 and *Appeal* 111), except in so far as sinful man was responsible for the frailty and mortality of his own body (cp. Rom. 5. 12-17). Man at his creation was given an "angelical" body and placed by God in the heavenly environment of Paradise; he fell by allowing his desire to enter into the spirit of this fallen world, reformed as it had been to some extent by God; and thereby he fell out of his heavenly body into an animal body, and out of Paradise, which, as Boehme says, "vanished" from about him into a secret mystery, "although, if a man be born again of God, entering into God's love, he dwells indeed by the outer man in this world, but in the inner man in Paradise" (*Incarnation*, I. 3.13 and 6.17). (See also Study 5.) It should be remembered that the evils occasioned by "the two falls of the two orders of creatures" are not at all "arbitrary punishments inflicted by a wrath raised in God" but merely the natural consequences of their own action (*Appeal* 127; *SP* 14-5).

The story of Lucifer's fall may seem to most moderns a fantastic fairy-tale, but to some of us, with all its mythological embroidery, it appears as a profoundly true "myth", a revelation, in the form perhaps of a dim race memory, of a

momentous catastrophe, a pre-mundane rebellion, which has shed its unhappy influence over the whole history of our planet. When combined with Boehme's doctrine of the unlawful unveiling of the hidden centre of wrath and darkness in the Godhead, it goes a long way to account for the strain of evil that runs through all the creation of the God, who is Love. But even without that doctrine we find it appealing to acute minds of our own generation as a probable explanation of the cruelty and ugliness in nature and of the emergence of similar defects in the soul of man. (The scriptural attribution of the corruption in nature to the fall of Adam rather than to that of the angels, except in so far as it illustrates the tendency of all spirit to influence matter, cannot be easily fitted into the scheme of evolution.)

Among modern writers who accept the doctrine of a pre-mundane or pre-human fall, or think it at least a reasonable hypothesis, are Dr. N. P. Williams, Dr. E. J. Bicknell, Canon Peter Green, Dr. H. P. Newsholme, Rev. C. W. Formby, and the distinguished Russian philosophers, Professors N. O. Lossky and N. Berdyaev; and even Bishop Barnes and the late Bishop Gore, who express doubt or disbelief, have to admit the appearance of some kind of rebellion of or in nature against God. The most convincing presentation of the case for this pre-mundane fall known to me, from the standpoint of one who accepts the theory of evolution, is to be found in the 1924 Bampton lectures of Dr. N. P. Williams. "If we can assume," Dr. Williams writes, "a precosmic vitiation of the whole life-force, when it was still one and simple, at a point of time prior to its bifurcation and ramification into a manifold of distinct individuals, we shall be in possession of a conception which should explain . . . the continuity and homogeneity of evil throughout all ranks of organised life, from the bacillus up to man." This would be the ultimate fall, which would in some measure represent the extra-terrestrial fall imagined either, as Origen and his disciple Gregory of Nyssa suggest, as an extra-temporal fall of the race-soul from a transcendental Paradise or as a rebellion of individual spirits as with St. Paul, who seems to have had "an intuition of the truths

that man is organic to nature and that the evil in man is homogeneous with and inseparable from the evil in the world at large." On this half-vitiated world Christ has been from the beginning at work, leading it slowly back to its original harmony, to the ultimate and complete reconciliation of nature with God. (See *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, pp. 158 f., 452, 522-4.)

The following summary of the views of a distinguished living philosopher might almost be a description of Boehme's account of the "Kingdom of Enmity" (Lossky's phrase) as modified by William Law's universalism. "The central position of Professor Lossky's metaphysic is that he ascribes to the Absolute first the creation of a perfect realm of Ideal Being, and, secondarily, the permissive creation of a psycho-physical and imperfect kingdom of disharmony—the latter being mediately caused by secessions from the former due to immoderate self-assertion, and being teleologically assured, by reason of the control of the Absolute immanent as Spirit, of ultimate return to the Kingdom of Perfection." (Quoted from the review in the *Times Literary Supplement* of June 14, 1936, of *The World as an Organic Whole* by N. O. Lossky, translated from the Russian.)

I will end this Study with some general considerations for which I am in the main indebted to a philosophic German from Kant's university of Königsberg, a man who possessed (our talk was some twelve years ago) an exceptional insight into Jacob Boehme's cosmology.

We owe a great debt to nature-mystics like Boehme and Law for emphasising what may be called the cosmic significance of sin. The sin of the individual is not merely an ugly, comparatively trifling disturbance of an insignificant portion of the universe, it is a tremendous fact which profoundly shakes the whole creation. Because of it, "all the foundations of the world are out of course." An individual, first Lucifer, then Adam, falls, that is, directs his desires away from their true centre, and, behold, the whole relationship of the Deity to His creation is distorted! God's fiery essence is uncovered, His Light and Love vanish out of sight. The creation crumbles into chaos, the harmony of

starry systems is shattered, the earth falls under a curse, and the whole balance of an entirely beneficent system of natural forces is put out of gear. Boundless tracts of lurid fiery darkness, of ceaselessly whirling anguish, are revealed, and every soul that gives way to selfishness opens a gate through which the deluge of hell pours in.

All this is very terrible; and it is only true, only of value, if we remember that it is but a partial expression of reality. From another standpoint it is equally true that sin and its consequences are passing illusions, and that the tender reproaches and pleadings of a loving Father will in the end avail to cure us of it; that the perfect trust and joy of the divine Christ live on undimmed through all the agony of the Cross and the desolation of the tomb. It is a weakness of Boehme and of Law that the Gospel message of the loving Fatherhood of God is driven almost out of sight, and that the name of the Father appears to stand predominantly for the awful essence of fire, darkness and chaos, which underlies all existing things. In reading their works therefore we must never forget that this metaphysical idea is in no sense a substitute for the Gospel Fatherhood, but is concurrent with it. We cannot doubt that Boehme and Law were well aware of this; but it is justifiable to criticise them for creating somewhat of a false impression. William Law however in the final stage of his life, redeems this stern conception of God by his growing belief in the ultimate restoration of all creatures to the Divine embrace.

STUDY 5: THE FALL OF MAN FROM THE DIVINE LIFE

(See, e.g., pages 11 and 47.)

One of the quite essential truths of human existence for our author was the fall of man from an original moral, even "angelic" perfection (in Adam) into a condition of sin, of failure and unhappiness ending in hell, from which Christ alone can enable him to recover. The "greatness" of our fall and of our redemption are "the two great pillars of the Christian religion" (*Regeneration* 161). The germs of this idea of original perfection are to be found in St. Paul (Rom. 5.12) and it was firmly implanted in theology in a much more definite form by St. Augustine.

It is probably here that most readers of Law's mystical works to-day find their greatest stumbling-block. This can only be overcome by an intuitive penetration behind the actual antiquated form in which the idea is presented into the life-giving truths which it can be shown to represent. Historically it cannot be true, if we accept, as seems necessary to-day, the general theory of the gradual evolution of man from sub-human life. It seems impossible, as Tennant* has shown, to fit into the moral side of this development any idea of an epoch-making fall from a state of complete goodness or undeveloped innocence. There is nowhere any great breach and on the whole for the human race corporately it seems to be an unfolding upwards rather than downwards.

But beneath the appearances of visible, historical life spiritual forces have been at work which must be otherwise interpreted (cp. *WDK* 164, "the Fall is not an historical matter."). The truest philosophy and the truest religion combine to tell us that our soul, now so prone to sin and failure, had once its origin and home in God and possessed

*F. R. Tennant, *The Fall and Original Sin*.

through Him a perfection of goodness and being. (Cp. pages 35-8 above.) If our goal, our destiny is re-union with God and a sharing of the human perfections of Christ—godlikeness, even "deification" in some degree, then in the deepest sense we are here in order to fill up the original idea of our being, our "telos", as we have existed in God from all eternity. If perhaps not a temporal, there is an ideal antecedence. "Nothing can rise higher than its first created nature" (*SP* 87), an Aristotelian axiom which Law no doubt got from Aquinas (cp. *Summa* II, Q.109.3).

Our future is contained in our past and to God's eye past and future are seen as one. It appears indeed to be probable that far back in the history of the material universe there has been a fall, a partial vitiation of the life-forces controlling it, and that the human species has shared in this fall (see Study 4). Thus in the myth of the first Adam and the conception of the divine Christ as restoring to us Adam's lost angelic perfection each of us can read the true story of our pilgrimage from God to God, our age-long wanderings (though lit with gleams of heaven) "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent" to that rediscovered homeland "loved long since and lost awhile".

STUDY 6: THE FATHERHOOD OF CHRIST AND OF GOD

(See pages 58-60.)

In this and other passages (cp. *Trapp* 25, and page 174) Christ, in virtue of His being "the second Adam" (Rom. 15.45) and the regenerator of human nature, is spoken of by Law as the natural father of (heavenly) life to all men, in as true a sense as Adam was their first father.

The attribution of fatherhood to our Lord is exceptional in Christian literature, for the obvious reason that it may be liable to create confusion with the ordinary use of the word for the Creator; and it is not found in the New Testament. Now Law, when he speaks of God, either means the whole Trinity, whose predominant quality is love, or, if he only means the First Person, he conceives of Him nearly always in His capacity of substance, desire, of fiery energy which forms the ineradicable core of the soul and of all things. So, except when actually quoting or paraphrasing a Scripture text, or using the Trinitarian formula, he only rarely speaks of God as Father and hardly ever ascribes love to Him in virtue of His fatherhood.

This will be felt by most Christians to be a distinct weakness in his theology, as it is also in that of Boehme and of other theologians who stress the metaphysical truth of God as substance.

To Law then and to Boehme more than to most mystics, Christ tends to engross all the Father's love, He is the Love of God, and the Johannine text is strictly true that "no man cometh to the Father but by me." (We may compare St. Teresa's vision of the Trinity within the soul, where the Father was pure transcendent Being and Source of all, love being centred in the Son.)

I think the above facts explain why Law likes to call Christ the Father of men. (One must remember that he very rarely speaks of Him as Bridegroom or Husband. See Study 15: *The New Birth.*) Apart from Boehme (e.g. *Incarnation*, I.11.6), this appellation seems to be most uncommon. Its scriptural basis is apparently the occurrence of the words "everlasting Father" in Isaiah 9.5, a verse which was always applied to Christ (made familiar to us in Caswall's hymn "To Christ the Prince of Peace . . . the Father of the world to come"). This in the sense of "Creator and guardian of our eternal life" comes very near to Law's use. Irenaeus in one passage calls the Word, i.e. Christ, "the Father of all", probably because of His share in the original creation (John 1.10, Col. 1.16). According to Catholic theology, the whole Trinity is the agent in every act of each of the three Persons.

The nearest parallel to Law is perhaps the long passage in the *Revelations* of Juliana of Norwich (chs. 57-63, especially ch. 58) in which she constantly writes of Christ as *Mother*, e.g., "our very Mother Jesus, who bears us to joy and to endless living", in whom "we have our reforming and our restoring, in whom our parts be oned and all made perfect man;" while in the Almighty Father we have our substance, our keeping, and our bliss.

STUDY 7: FERVOUR IN RELIGION. VISIONS

(See pages 22-26.)

In these pages the writer clearly has in view features of the Methodist revival of Wesley and Whitfield at that time in progress. The emphasis on sudden conversion (page 24) and on the "absolute assurance of your salvation" (*Regeneration* 173-7, and cp. pages 113-4) was characteristic of this revival, as well as the expectation of "delightful sensations" dealt with in my last two extracts from *SP*, where "fervours" and "coldness" in devotion are discussed. Wesley in his *Letter to Mr. Law* sharply criticises this last passage, citing St. Paul as a witness that we ought to expect fervent joy in the Holy Spirit.

To Wesley's own doctrine of "assurance" Law's criticisms do not indeed altogether apply. Cp. e.g. Wesley's *Journal* for Oct. 6, 1738, "We speak of an assurance of our present pardon, not of our final perseverance" [i.e. salvation]. And cp. his *Letters*, vol. V, p. 358.

Law doubtless meant to include visions and voices, in their various grades, in his general warning on page 22. He could appeal to his favourite mystic divines, from St. John of the Cross to Madame Guyon (the "illuminated Guion," *Trapp* 204) and others, who are all but unanimous in warning against the danger of attributing importance to voices and visions. The test of their reality must be their life-enhancing quality. Thus Tauler says (*Sermon* XXXI) that the reason of God's withholding of sensible delight from holy persons is that our spiritual fruitfulness and highest blessing do not lie therein, but rather in our inward trusting and clinging to God, in our not seeking ourselves either in sorrow or joy. ". . . When we desire such inward fervours and sweet peace (which are His gifts and not our deserts) more for their own sakes than for the Giver Himself, we fall into spiritual wantonness and black disloyalty."

Even Boehme was not strictly a visionary or ecstatic. His inward hearing of "Thus saith the Lord," his inward seeing of the mysteries of the Godhead was much more akin to the intuitive imagination of the poet than to the ecstatic experiences of a St. Teresa or a St. Francis of Assisi. As to William Law, he said of himself that he was "a stranger to divine illumination." (Byrom, *Journal*, ii, p. 558, 1735.)

STUDY 8: FIRE AND WATER SYMBOLISM

(See pages 150-1.)

This is one of a number of passages in which the twofold state both of the soul and of external nature is described as a conflict between life and death, fire and water (*SL* 57-60; *Appeal* 98-9, 109). In spite of the order of the words, it is quite clear that water corresponds to life and fire to death (*SL* 60; *Appeal* 99).

The choice between life and death is familiar in the Bible (e.g. Deut. 30, Jer. 21). And one passage in the Apocrypha —*Ecclesiasticus*, 15.16-17 (A.V.) tells us that God "hath set before thee fire and water, stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him". These verses from one of the Books of divine Wisdom impressed themselves on Law's mind—he gives a brief version of them in *Appeal* 98. The idea of nature divorced from Christ as being the fire of destruction is central to Law, as to Boehme. The conception of the water of life is familiar in the Fourth Gospel; and Law, following Boehme, not infrequently uses it as a symbol of Christ and our life in Him. It represents ultimately the "heavenly materiality" of which the spiritual body is made, the "glassy sea" of unity and purity in which "the Deity dwelleth as His throne". (*SP* 6, 10, 76; *SL* 9-16. The expression "sea of glass mingled with fire" (Rev. 15.2) would seem especially significant.) The text of John 3.5, which the Church has always taken as referring to baptism, is also interpreted as meaning this "heavenly materiality" (*SP* 6). The heavenly water or (as often in Boehme) the immortal blood of Christ quenches or harmonises the wrathful fire of the soul (page 16 and *SL* 170, *SP* 74). "Water is the proper atonement of the rage of fire" (page 159).

The original conception had a very ancient history, going back to Rabbinic, Hermetic, and Gnostic mysticism. Water there was also sometimes "the celestial generating principle" akin to the seed, or sometimes it equals the divine Wisdom (see Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*). Whether the author of *Ecclesiasticus* intended fire and water to be interpreted in any symbolic or mystic sense, is doubtful; he may simply have been giving a homely illustration of man's power of choice. Nevertheless the mystical meaning was in harmony with the traditional method of interpreting allegorically even the most commonplace words of Holy Scripture.

Keble's well-known hymn, "A living stream as crystal clear" (based on Revelation 22.1), uses water-symbolism in a similar way.

STUDY 9: GOD AND MAN AS TRINITY

(See, e.g., pages 11 and 46.)

Most of the older theologians maintained that Genesis 1.26 proves that God created man in the image of His Holy Trinity, though they were not agreed as to the exact form of this human trinity. Augustine discovers more than one such in man, the most important of which consists in memory, understanding, and will or love (cp. *de Trinitate* 12.6 and 15.23, *Confessions* 13.11). SS. Bernard, Bonaventura, John of the Cross, and other writers follow this analysis, which Law himself gives occasionally (see *SP*, note 4). His usual explanation of the Trinity is however as follows.

The Father represents the underlying essence or substance of the universe, essential Life, usually described as fire, as expressing its restless energy (see Studies 10 and 20). The Son is the Light, expressing the illumination of the love which ever flows forth from the divine essence, especially as it kindles the soul in the "new birth" and as it became incarnate in Jesus. (See also Study 6: *The Fatherhood of Christ.*)

The distinct function of the Holy Spirit in our writer is, as in Christian theology generally, more difficult to grasp clearly. It tends to be merged in the love-light of the Christ within; the tension between fire and light, whether in harmony or in conflict, being the governing feature of existence. As in Catholic theology, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is the bond of love which unites them. He "amiably" moves or inspires men to good living and preserves them in it, He sanctifies and makes complete or perfect (*holy* signifying whole); He gives unified body or substantiality both to the individual and to all believers in their communion with and in Christ. Through His continual and direct inspiration or indwelling Father and Son "come forth in their own highest power of redeem-

ing love in the soul" (*Address* 21). As fire (or heat) and light represent Father and Son, so the Spirit is represented on the material plane by air. The analogy here is not very clear, but it seems to lie in the need of the atmosphere to give us breath and to preserve our bodies, as well as in the activity and power resident in it as wind. The analogy is thought to be proved by such Scripture texts as Genesis 1.2 and 2.7, Psalm 104.3 and Acts 2.2 (see especially *Appeal* 77-9 and *SP*, note 22).

So man's personality is conceived, somewhat obscurely, it is true, as a compound of fire, light, and air. Occasionally for light and air, by a different image, water is substituted—water, "the proper atonement of the rage of fire" (page 159); and the fourth element of earth is introduced to add a passive fuel to the energising fire. How sin disintegrates the trinity in man, depriving him of the Holy Spirit and the light of Christ but not of the fire-substance of his Creator, is sufficiently apparent from our selections (e.g. those from the *Regeneration*). In all this Law is following Boehme fairly closely. Compare e.g. *Incarnation* I, 3, 16-25 and *Three Principles* 22, 35 and 61.)

Law specifically tells us (*Trapp* 202-3) that his description of "the Holy Trinity of God in man stands not in that form of expression anywhere I know of", but, "for the true ground and certainty of it" he could have referred to Behmen and many other good authorities. The passage he quotes from the *Clementine Recognitions* is not indeed very relevant. In it St. Peter is represented as teaching a trinity somewhat similar to that of Augustine. Apart from Boehme, Ruysbroek is, so far as I can discover, the nearest to Law, when he describes (but not consistently) the Father as naked essence, the Son as mirror-like brightness, and the Spirit as the kindling spark which is the soul's motive force (see *The Mirror*, ch. viii; and cp. his *De Gradibus Amoris*, xiv, for God as fire).

STUDY 10: GOD AS SUBSTANCE

(See Pages 39 and 50)

According to St. Thomas Aquinas and other medieval theologians, following Augustine and the whole neoplatonist tradition, every created thing "from an angel (or a devil) to a stone" can only continue to exist at all through the supporting presence in it, as its *substantia*, of God's essence and power. If God (which is impossible) withdrew even for an instant this essential presence of His, all existence would crumble into nothingness. So we find Tauler and others saying that even the souls in hell possess eternally the divine root of their being (cp. *Appeal*, note 7); and (*Theologia Germanica*, ch. 36), "An evil spirit is altogether of God, for God is the being of all that are." Milton was doubtless referring to this truth, when he makes Satan exclaim,

> "All is not lost, . . . since, by fate, the strength of gods
> And this empyreal substance cannot fail !"

As to the fire nature of this divine substance, see Study 20: *The Soul as Fire*. It is remarkable that Bishop Newton, Milton's commentator (1749) on this passage, interprets *empyreal* as fiery, quoting Psalm 104.4.

Nevertheless it must never be forgotten that God is revealed far more in some things—those that are more like Him—than in others; "more in an angel," as Spinoza said, "than in a mouse."

Spinoza was regarded by eighteenth-century Christians as teaching an abominable atheistic pantheism, "a gross confounding of God and nature" (*Letter* 23, p. 202), according to which he "declared trees and stones and animals to be parts of God" (*Case of Reason*, 134). William Law was indeed accused of such "Spinozism", and he rejected the charge with some indignation, maintaining that his own writings demonstrated "the essential, eternal, and absolute distinction between God and nature" (*Letter* 23).

STUDY 11: GOD'S TEMPLE IN THE SOUL

(See pages 81-2.)

The place of contact within the soul between it and God, the dwelling place of the divine seed or pearl or spark, is described by various spatial symbols in the mystics. It is either the apex, the part nearest Heaven (so Augustine following Aristotle), or the centre, i.e. the essence (Plotinus), or perhaps most frequently the foundation (fund), the root, or the ground (so Dionysius and Tauler); or again it is a bottomless depth or abyss (profundum) akin to the infinite abyss of the Godhead (e.g. Augustine, *Confessions* IV, xiv, and cp. page 211). For this last conception Boehme coined the very expressive word *Ungrund*, which represents to him the unshakable basis of free will, the undifferentiated freedom on which the nature of God and man and all existence is built.

In Law's favourite Tauler (Sermon XI, pp. 97 f., which he doubtless read) there is a marvellous description of this fathomless abyss of the soul, God's temple, beyond time and space. "It can be filled by no creature, God only can fill it with His infinity. For this abyss belongs only to the Divine Abyss, of which it is written: *Abyssus abyssum invocat*" (Psalm 42, 7, *Vulgate*). Ruysbroek uses this quotation in exactly the same way.

The heavenly seed of Christ, the pearl of eternity that is found in this depth, is, as these and many mystics have emphasised, the part of the soul which is immortal and divine. Law uses the doctrine to support his faith that all men will eventually be awakened and come to God. To Wesley on the other hand, who quotes from this passage, it is immoral as "tending to keep a man asleep in sin" and to include even Jews and Turks in the Church.

STUDY 12: MYSTICAL ANALOGY

(See page 19)

When William Law writes here "the outward world is but a glass or representation of the inward . . .", he is expressing the cardinal law of analogy, central to all mystics, at least those to whom nature symbolism means anything. We may compare Bonaventura, "the whole world is but a glass, full of lights representing the divine wisdom." (*In Hexaem.* 2.27.) Beginning with St. John and St. Paul (cp. especially Rom. 1.20) and the Epistle to the Hebrews, together with Plato's doctrine of archetypal forms or ideas, the tradition finds its leading exponents in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and Dionysius, in Bonaventura and other leaders of the Augustinian and Neoplatonist school, down to the "spiritual alchemists", such as Paracelsus and Boehme.

It must be remembered that to the mystic and idealist the primary form of the law is "as above, so below." It is the earthly things which are "out-births" (*Appeal* 110), more or less faint copies of the heavenly; human fatherhood is a partial analogy of divine fatherhood (cp. Ephesians 3.15) and so on. (See also Study 15: *The New Birth.*) To Boehme and Law it is "eternal nature" which supplies the archetypes (see Study 3).

I add an extract from a beautiful passage in Gregory of Nyssa (*c.* 380 A.D., *Works* (1893) p. 379) with which William Law was most probably acquainted. "Travelling through the creation, the virtuous man is led to the apprehension of a Master of the creation; . . when he observes the beauty of this material sunlight, he grasps by analogy the beauty of the real sunlight; . . . . look at an ear of corn, a bunch of grapes, at the growing grass, . . at the springs of water, the rivers, and the sea, and suchlike sights, and how can the

eye of reason fail to find in them, all that our education for the *true* realities requires?" And compare this from the *Select Discourses* (1660) of John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist (whose figure stands beside that of Law in the Emmanuel Chapel window), "There is a twofold meaning in every creature, a literal and a mystical, and the one is but the ground of the other."

STUDY 13: MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AND MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY

(See pages 33-34.)

Few words have been so much and so sadly abused as *mystical* and *mysticism*. *Mystical* means indeed to the majority not much more than inexplicable, *mysterious*, or even *misty*; and *mysticism* is constantly applied to the thought or practice of those who seek to discover and to use supernatural, awe-inspiring forces and influences hidden in the processes of nature and of the human soul. The right word for this is *magic* or *occultism*, something not necessarily bad, but far removed from the true mysticism, which the Germans conveniently call *Mystik* as contrasted with *Mysticismus*.

True mysticism has to do entirely with the immediate contact between the human soul and the supreme God, the universal Spirit who sustains all things. In its Christian form this contact is conceived as being through the indwelling Christ; but all the great religions have their true mystics, and the language they talk tends to have a wonderful similarity. Mysticism is primarily a matter not of the head but of the heart, not of intellectual comprehension but of exalted feelings and love. "By love may God be gotten and holden, by thought never", as wrote a great mystic, the nameless author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; though naturally thought must do its part in forming a pure and high conception of God.

Every Christian, every religious person, in his or her moments of true prayer, worship, uplifting of heart to God, may in a sense be said to be mystical. But it is much clearer and better to reserve the word for those who let the passion to know and love God, and for progressive union with Him, absorb the chief part of their life. They may and more usually do respect the claims of the Scriptures and of the

Church, as well as the demands of their reason, but their supreme confidence and joy comes to be placed in the living experience of their own hearts. The natural expression and the goal of the mystic is the prayer of *contemplation* (as distinct from petition and from discursive, imaginative meditation) in which sensible images or pictures are for the most part dispensed with, and instead, the soul, forgetting itself, aspires eagerly to God and becomes gradually overshadowed by the spreading, silent sense of an awful presence, vague perhaps and dim in outline, yet supremely intimate, real, and loving, on which it remains steadfast and fixed in one simple gaze of answering, ardent love. So, in only slightly varying language, the great mystics tell us. We can only wonder, and endeavour to have increasing glimpses of such life-giving vision. In the history of Christianity, from Jesus Himself (who, however, in the first three Gospels hardly ever speaks in the characteristic language of mysticism), from St. John and St. Paul, there have been many great mystics whose thoughts and experiences have been in some small measure set down in writing. And we must never forget that there have been countless mystics who have not left behind them any written account of their characteristic experience.

Further, it is important to distinguish between mysticism, as a practical experience, and mystical theology or philosophy. The mystical philosopher (still less the writer on mysticism!) is not necessarily a true mystic. Nevertheless, most at any rate of the mystics who have left any record behind them have reflected on their experiences and produced a more or less coherent and comprehensive theology or philosophy, a mystical system, an interpretation of traditional religion in terms which seem to fit in with and illuminate their inner experience. When such a mystical system has attempted to go behind and beyond the traditional Catholic theology, it often took the name of *theosophy*, divine wisdom, in its old and rightful Christian sense. Theosophy, unlike philosophy as a rule, started from God, as the most certain and constant of all things, and endeavoured to explain and deduce the universe of phenomena and

of personal spirits from the play of forces within the Divine essence, revealed to the intuition of the mystic.

Jacob Boehme and William Law are prominent examples of theosophic mystical philosophers; and we can be certain, even though Law unlike Boehme consistently refrains from any autobiographical record, that in their experiences they were both among the great Christian mystics. They were also at least in their philosophy among that class, the nature-mystics, who found in the varied life and forces of the visible world symbols of the divine power and love, rather than among those of the great Neoplatonist tradition, who claimed to discover God in that "deep but dazzling darkness" which is reached by stripping off all distinctive attributes and qualities from our thought of Him.

But to discuss this and other aspects of mysticism adequately would need many pages and is besides beyond the powers of the present writer. Reference is invited to one or other of the books named in my bibliographical Appendix.

STUDY 14: NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL

(See, e.g., page 20.)

There are in Law's writings many passages where he appears to follow the traditional harsh, absolute opposition between the "natural" and "spiritual" man, between the life in nature and the life in God. The germs of this view are found in parts of the New Testament. Its predominance in the Christian tradition is largely due to St. Augustine with his emphasis on the absolute depravity of man since Adam's fall and his disastrous misinterpretation of such texts as the Pauline "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14.23, and cp. 1 Cor. 2.14). According to this view, even the best acts done by unbelievers or before the new birth in Christ have no abiding worth in God's sight. In passages reproduced in this volume and elsewhere we see Law gradually disentangling himself from the unlovely harshness of this absolute condemnation of the natural man. The principle adopted from Boehme according to which the hungry, restless life of nature is, when duly subordinated, a quite necessary foundation for the divine life no doubt contributed largely to this end.

Thus "natural religion" may be the first dawn which heralds the full light of morning (page 4); the smallest spark of goodness or stirring of conscience in the Jew or heathen is the divine seed in the heart (*Demonstration* 80; and *Conf. Warburton* 167) to be truly patient and humble is to worship Christ (pages 192-3); election and reprobation refer not to the man as a whole but to the two warring principles within the same man (*SL* 102); atheism is not doctrinal disbelief but renouncing the love of goodness (*WDK* 234); conversion and the new birth are not (as the Methodists mostly said) necessarily sudden and violent transformations but gradual processes and development

(see Study 15: *The New Birth*); the selfish instincts of the natural man often persist after our first conversion and need to be purified away (pages 21 and 25); "flesh may be flesh as long as we live, but every state of the flesh may help us to grow in the spirit" (*Letters* 204).

When we are actually grappling with moral problems, with a "higher" and a "lower" desire in conflict within us, we must often for the time assume the absolute opposition of natural and spiritual. But to make a rigid principle out of this, as Christians have so often done, is out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus and does violence to the instincts of justice. It is greatly to Law's credit that he came to see this clearly, in spite of his theological presuppositions and of considerable inconsistency in all but his latest works.

STUDY 15: THE NEW BIRTH OF CHRIST IN THE SOUL

(See pages 11-12.)

William Law's *Christian Regeneration* has as its alternative title *The New Birth*, and it may be well to sum up what meaning he gives to this expression. It is of course based on texts such as John 1.13 and 3.3, 1 Peter 1.3 and 23, and 1 John 3.9.

(1) The new birth is the uprising in our restless and bewildered souls of a beneficent, transforming force of spiritual and moral energy, which brings light and peace and power and is identified with Christ, the Divine light. "Hence we see the deep ground and absolute necessity of the Christian redemption by means of a birth from above of the light and spirit of God. . . . It is because all nature is in itself nothing but an hungry, wrathful fire of life, a tormenting darkness, unless the Light and Spirit of God kindles it into a Kingdom of Heaven" (*SP* 65).

(2) In accordance with the old doctrine of the *Protevangelium* (see Study 18: *The Seed of Christ*) in Genesis 3.15, the birth of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in a man is just the gradual expansion into flower and fruit of the seed or instincts of goodness which have been, from the birth of every son of Adam, "in the inmost spirit of his life . . . lying there as in a state of insensibility or death" (*SL* 48). The old self, self-will, must die completely to make way for the new birth, as the husk dies for the life of the grain (page 86 and John 12.24), and perfection can only be reached by the gradual development of the soul's "properties of life from one another," just as the plant "goes through various degrees of transmutation" till it produces at last "a beautiful, sweet-smelling flower" (page 145) and fruit. (Cp. *Theologia Germanica*, ch. 40, "The true Light is God's seed, and therefore it bringeth forth the fruits of God.")

(3) The divine Christ is not only the inward Saviour, the vitalising seed within, He is also the outward Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, whose "enlivening beams kindle and call forth this inward seed to the birth" (page 86 and cp. *SL* 23-4).

It may be observed here that the new birth is usually envisaged by Law either according to the analogy of plant life or to that of the kindling of heat into light, rather than to that of the human infant. This is no doubt partly due to his puritanic modesty which made him shrink from dwelling on the conception and birth of human beings, just as he very rarely uses the symbolism of sex-love and marriage so dear to many of the great mystics, and at times to his revered Boehme. (Exceptions are to be found on pages 195 and 205, and in *SL* 130 and *Letters* 187-8, where the reference is in each case to the "marriage feast of the Lamb", and cp. page 100 for the conception of Christ in us.) But it is also largely due to the fact that in human life the child, as it grows up, becomes progressively more independent of the parent on its way to flowering and fruitage, whereas in plant-life the flower and fruit continue to be nourished by sap from the parent root—an important consideration, which is doubtless responsible for the much more frequent appearance of the garden than of the nursery in the symbolic language of the mystics, as indeed is exemplified in the words of Jesus Himself. (See Mary Ewer, *A Survey of Mystical Symbolism*, p. 77.)

The new birth is also the birth of the Holy Spirit in the soul and therefore closely associated with the baptism of the Spirit at conversion. For this reason, infant-baptism, which has no such direct association, is, I think, to William Law only an analogy and premonition of the conversion birth (Cp. pages 12 and 42). In his later works (e.g. *SP* 6) he even gives to the "born of water" of John 3.5 a mystical significance which has no special connection with water-baptism, and he is attacked by Wesley for doing this.

It will be noticed that the birth is not so much one of self but of Christ. Law is right in claiming that the thought of the eternal Son being continually born again in the

regenerated souls of men and women is a true Catholic doctrine, deduced from such a text as Gal. 4.19. (In *Trapp* 180-1 he has a long and eloquent defence of the comparison of this birth with the birth in the Virgin Mary, and cp. pages 80 and 104.) In Roman Catholic practice the third Mass on Christmas Day is held to commemorate this birth through grace of Jesus in our soul (K. A. H. Kellner, *Heortology*, p. 156).

Except however in the supposedly heretical Eckhart, it is not easy to find actual precedents for Law's bold language. But he had doubtless read Tauler's *Sermon* XIX on the Nativity of the Virgin, of which the main subject is the eternal birth of God in us, described as the same birth as that which took place in Mary. Elsewhere Tauler writes, "The soul is a temple, where God begets his Son, a temple where God's presence is."

In Eckhart's Sermons (which Law could not have read) the requirement of this exalted birth is expressed similarly as a constant refrain, and he speaks of the birth or procession of the Holy Spirit also in the soul. For a similar passage in Boehme (who may possibly have known of Tauler's and of Eckhart's teaching) see page 104.

The idea of this heavenly birth in the soul is of course closely akin to that of the rebirth of the soul itself—indeed it is really one and the same process regarded from two standpoints: "I live and yet it is no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2.20; pages 100 and 194).

STUDY 16: PREDESTINATION, CAIN AND ABEL

(See page 156.)

The Bible stories of Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob had been constantly used by many theologians, Catholic as well as Protestant, who wished to emphasise the doctrine of predestination, as examples of the two classes, the goats and the sheep, into which mankind was divided—the majority of the "reprobated", the damned, who were on account of their evil natures and choices foreknown and predestined for hell, and the minority of the "elected", the saved, whom God would take unto Himself. To William Law as to the present generation this doctrine was utterly abhorrent, and he deals with it and its presumed Scriptural basis at considerable length in the *Spirit of Love*, pp. 100-4; and elsewhere (e.g. page 15 and in *Letters* 212-4) still more indignantly.

In Law's day the question was a very live issue, providing a frequent subject for debate among both Anglicans and dissenters, and more particularly in Methodist circles.

The interested reader should turn to the passage just mentioned. Law's view is, briefly, that the contrasted pairs of Scriptural characters are allegorical representations of the good and the evil principles, the love and the wrath, implanted in every man, and that it is not the individual who is reprobated or damned, but the fallen, earthly nature in him as ordained and predestined to be overcome by the indwelling Christ, the heavenly seed of life.

This explanation of a number of unlovely passages in Scripture does great credit to William Law's heart and ingenuity, in face of the age-long tradition then prevailing. How far was it his own independent interpretation?

He himself says (*SL* 104) that "the matter stands now in

open daylight notwithstanding that thickness of learned darkness under which it has been hidden from the time of St. Austin [Augustine] to this day." It seems to follow from this, firstly, that it was Boehme who gave him the key to the resolution of the difficulty, and secondly that he had found at the least some hints towards it in writings prior to Augustine.

The most likely such source was probably Philo (about whom Boehme also may have heard from his friends). His works had been held in esteem by theologians from the time of Jerome onwards, and William Law was probably acquainted with the edition published in London in 1742 by G. Innys (doubtless connected with W. Innys who published a work of his own in 1731).

It was the Jewish mystical philosopher Philo whose systematic use of the allegorical interpretation of every part of the Old Testament, a method worked out later on by Origen, set the example to Christian writers. A good specimen of this method is to be found in his short work *The Sacrifice of Abel and Cain* (chs. I and II) where he wrote that Abel figures "the God-loving principle," and Cain "the self-loving principle", both of which "lie in the womb of the single soul," just as the story of Rebecca and her twin sons, Jacob and Esau, shows how the soul "conceives the two natures of good and evil," and it is God who separates in us the evil nature from the good. This is an extraordinarily close parallel to William Law.

It seems likely that some early Church Father adopted Philo's interpretation here, but I have so far been unable to find such a passage. Some of the parables of Jesus have been interpreted by modern writers in a similar way; that is, as a description of the action of God, not on two classes of people, the chosen and the rejected, but on the good and bad elements of the human soul.

Boehme in general upheld vehemently the freedom of choice of the soul and the desire of God to bring salvation to all men, as against the predestination doctrines current in his day. He frequently interprets the antagonism of the three pairs of scriptural brothers already mentioned as

representing, in the same sense as Philo and Law, not the two classes of the damned and the saved, but the two contrary principles of the soul, the kingdoms of corrupt nature and of divine grace, of Antichrist and of Christ, which are present in every son of Adam. Nevertheless he often allows the harsh old ideas to intrude into his language, speaking for instance sometimes of individuals as "false apostate twigs" or "thistle-children" (*Distel-kinder*, an expression which he either adopted or invented on the basis of Matt. 7.16, cp. page 36 and note 2), that is, as persons who could hardly be saved from succumbing after death into their own inward hell (as distinguished from the "lily-twigs" destined for Heaven).

The use which Law makes of Boehme on this subject is a notable example of his wise modification of his master's teaching, by selecting its most generous elements and ignoring silently what was harsh or obscure. It will be noticed too that he skilfully uses this interpretation of the texts to confirm the doctrine of universal redemption (see *SL* 101-3 and Study 21).

STUDY 17: THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(See pages 63-66.)

In the *Demonstration* (1737, see pages 5-9) the author is mainly concerned to show that in the Holy Sacrament of the altar we must above all acknowledge Christ as "the atonement for our sins", through whom they are forgiven, and as "a real principle of life to us" by the spiritual communion we may have with Him. He does not however attempt to get behind these expressions and show more specifically what this atonement and this communion mean.

The concluding passage of the *Appeal* (1740) represents a further stage in Law's thought, indeed the high-water mark of his devotion to the Eucharist. It was written when long pondering over the symbolic and sacramental view of the material universe, to which he had been introduced by Boehme, had deepened his understanding of the mystical meaning of the greatest sacrament of all. In the last period of his life (1749-61), as his works and letters show, his increasing emphasis on the necessity of constant feeding on Christ by faith tended to become somewhat dissociated in his mind from the outward observance of the Church sacraments.

It is significant how in this passage of the *Appeal* the idea of Christ as the atonement for our sins becomes entirely merged in our receiving from Him the "heavenly, immortal flesh and blood", the spiritual body lost by sin, which was our original and rightful possession as children of God. I am informed by Anglican friends, and Overton confirms this, that this form of the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine as well as in the worshipper is in harmony with at least one influential school of Anglican thought. Law's repeated use of the word "veiled" at the end of the *Appeal* (e.g. page 64) seems however to suggest the idea of the consecrated elements as "a veil which hides

rather than as a sign which declares spiritual realities"; and this is perhaps more a Roman Catholic than an Anglican doctrine.

For many centuries and especially from the time of the Hussite wars the sacrament, which should have been the greatest bond of union between Christians, had become the cause of continuous and disastrous conflict. Law's words as to his desire to deliver it "from the tedious strife of words and the thickness of the darkness of contention" (page 65) indicate his longing to get back to the period (before about the ninth century A.D.) when eucharistic controversy was almost completely absent and nearly all Christians were agreed in a thankful recognition of the heavenly gift itself, without closely defining the mode of its transmission. And it is significant that just as his doctrine of the atonement was to a large extent a restatement of Irenaeus' recapitulation of humanity in Christ, so his view of the eucharist too has close affinities with that of Irenaeus (*c.* 180 A.D.) and other Greek Fathers from Ignatius onwards. To them it was primarily the "medecine of immortality" (cp. "food of immortality" page 7), the instrument of progressive "deification" (conceived indeed after a manner that, to the present writer at least, is alien to the spirit of Jesus). Thus to Gregory of Nyssa the restoration to the body of the incorruptibility forfeited by the fall can only come from actual absorption of the eucharistic elements, which are "the Word transmuted into body"; and John of Damascus sums up the general doctrine of the Greek Fathers by saying that the body of Christ passes into our "essence" and removes the causes of disease and death.

Boehme was deeply pained by the strife of which the sacrament was the cause and, like Law in his later days, he insisted that we can feed on the body and blood of Christ by faith apart from it. But he held a very similar view of the real presence and the supernatural benefits of the rite. (See especially his *Treatise on Christ's Testaments.*)

William Law's principal references (which are quite brief) to the sacrament of Holy Baptism will be found on pages 12, 18, 21, and 42 above; see *Regeneration*, note 3, and cp. page 73, ll. 1-10.

STUDY 18: THE SEED OF CHRIST

(See, e.g., page 18.)

The very frequent use in Christian literature of the metaphor of the *seed* for Christ as Redeemer, in whom we can experience a new birth, is based on a few texts, particularly Galatians 3.19, 1 Peter 1.23, 1 John 3.9, and the seed parables of Jesus. With these were associated from at least as early as Irenaeus (*c.* 170 A.D.) the words of Genesis 3.15, so often quoted by Law. This prophecy of Christ as the "seed of the woman" (primarily offspring, but transferred to Him as a principle of life in man) was known as the *Protevangelium* (i.e. original Gospel) and its occurrence at the Fall is for medieval theologians one of the fundamental events governing all the dealings of God with man throughout human history as covered by the Old Testament, in whose pages frequent revelations of Christ were to be found. It was by faith in this "incorruptible seed of the word" that the good Jews of the Old Testament (and, as some believed, even good pagans) would find full salvation. Boehme along with many of the early Protestants took over this doctrine. Thus Law's words as to the "serpent-bruiser" (or "serpent-crusher", as Catholics often translated it) can be almost exactly paralleled in the Quaker Isaac Penington, whose works we know he read with approval. Ill-grounded as the doctrine may be from the strictly historical standpoint, it represents a spiritual truth of great importance.

STUDY 19: SHE SEVEN NATURAL PROPERTIES

(See page 41, note 8.)

There are in William Law's works just a few passages which are certain to prove bewildering to the uninstructed reader, unless he makes an attempt to grapple with the difficult theory of the seven "Forms" or "Properties" of Nature (the *Quellgeister*), as constantly found in almost all the works of Boehme. This note is chiefly designed to show very briefly that if you are unprepared for this somewhat heroic effort, you will *not* miss anything serious in your understanding of Law's mystical writings. The passages in question, together with certain others relating to the mythology of the angels' fall from heaven and of Adam's fall from a first perfect and "androgynous" life, are no doubt chiefly responsible for the charges of obscurity and absurdity that have often been brought against our author.

William Law makes habitual use in all his mystical works of two distinct ways of describing the relationship of God to nature and man; it is first a *twofold* union (or disunion) of the fiery energy and restless desire which nature is in itself with the "eternal will to all goodness" of God; and it is also a *threefold* life or union of this same fiery substance with the light or love of Christ and the co-ordinating activities of the Spirit, a Trinity in unity in many forms. In each case the perfect life consists in a harmonious subordination, not a destruction or expulsion, of the tough basic factor; "God is manifested in nature." In a few passages only is existence described as a *sevenfold* life, a union of two trinities or ternaries of darkness and of light respectively with a seventh property (corresponding to the free will) as the connecting link (see *SL* 61). These passages are self-contained. They are *WDK* 237-247, 251-3 and *SL* 9-27; also, much more briefly, *SL* 61-2, 117-9, and 131-2. Besides these there are two portions of the *Appeal*, 65-72 and 85-95,

containing some of Boehme's terminology ("attraction, bitterness," etc.). But these *Appeal* passages can be read without considering the basic force of blind desire as broken up into the three constituents of attraction, repulsion, rotation and their counterparts.

My advice to the general reader of *WDK* and *SL* is that he should skip the passages in question. This will be in accordance with their author's own advice in regard to the particular theory or "mystery" described therein: "You have no reason to be troubled at it or to put your brain on the rack how to conceive it" (*WDK* 239). Most of the pages in question have but little spiritual value for devotion or for the better comprehension of the universe.

For the benefit of the student I will however summarize very briefly why this sevenfold scheme appears to me to represent an unnecessary and incongruous intrusion into the main body of Law's writing.

(1) It is only actually introduced as a somewhat mysterious and unessential afterthought in two of his later works, a mystery intended only for the select few; whereas, as Law maintained, all the essentials of the Christian faith should be simple and clear to the man whose heart is right.

(2) In Boehme's works the most usual descriptions of the seven properties are attraction, expulsion, and the wheel of whirling anguish, forming the dark fire ternary, with the "flash" or lightning as the will-link between it and the light-ternary of light or love, intelligible sound, and, as a final consummation, the Kingdom of Heaven, the all-embracing Reality. (See *Martensen*, pp. 66-76, for an illuminating exposition.)

Law's treatment of the properties is very one-sided, he goes with great detail into the mechanical and material aspects of the confused tension between the three first or fiery properties, whereas to the three highest ones he only refers once or twice scantily and vaguely (*WDK* 251-3, *SL* 19-20). He dwells at considerable length on the central (fourth) property, which has very great importance, for in it the will exercises its upward or downward choice. Unfortunately he describes this property without explanation

as fire, the word used in most of his later works for the principle or substance which comprises all the first three properties, and thus introduces an element of most perplexing confusion. (It would have been better if he had kept "flash" (page 52) for this fourth property, corresponding to Boehme's frequent appellation of *Blitz* or lightning-flash.) In truth there are two kinds of fire, a fire of wrath or darkness which can be "kindled" into a fire of light and love (*Appeal* 112). This unequal treatment makes it very difficult to extract any clear or helpful idea from the passages in question, in spite of the sublime beauty of occasional sentences.

(3) The sevenfold scheme is confusing, in that it cannot be made to fit in easily with Law's usual scheme of the Trinity in man and God. He is really, unlike Boehme, much more interested in man than in nature, and the luxuriant imagery of the seven forms is far better suited to the explanation of inanimate than of human nature.

(4) Law's elaboration, at the cost of more spiritual aspects, of the physical and dynamical side of the first three properties, "the attraction, resistance, and orbicular motion," was undoubtedly influenced by his enthusiastic belief that Newton, the paragon scientist of the age, venerated by many of his contemporaries (including in some degree Law himself) as man and as Christian, that "the illustrious Sir Isaac" was a secret disciple of Boehme and had learnt from him the theory of gravitation and the laws of celestial mechanics (see *Trapp*, 201-2).

I can only briefly refer here to my detailed examination of this question elsewhere.* Unfortunately it appears all but certain that Law's belief about Newton was based upon misleading information, and that, if Newton knew Jacob Boehme's writings at all, he only read them under the quite erroneous idea that they could supply him with alchemistic formulas for the transmutation of the baser metals into gold (cp. *WDK* 196).

* See my essay *Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme* in the international Journal *Philosophia* Vol. II (Belgrade, 1937). Separately bound copies of this have been deposited in the British Museum and in some of the chief University and other Libraries.

It seems to be quite likely that Newton's supposed acceptance and use of Boehme's natural properties furnished Law unconsciously with the decisive reason for introducing into his writings passages full of confused physical and mechanical terminology, such as nearly all of his readers must feel to be alien and unwelcome interruptions in the fine spiritual and devotional tenour of his thoughts. He was successful for the most part in his interpretation of Boehme in drawing the line between what was spiritually profitable and what was mainly fantastic or misleading, and he might have easily done so here, had it not been for his uncharacteristic yielding to the temptation to introduce Newton's illustrious name in support of his hero. Boehme's use of similar physical analogies was much more natural, for he lived in a mental environment in which theology and psychology were inextricably mingled with alchemy, astrology, and what at that period passed for natural science.

It may be added that Boehme was convinced that he had a scriptural basis for the seven properties, especially in the seven spirits mentioned in Revelation 1.4 and 4.5. Seven has been from time immemorial a sacred number, confirmed by the supposed number of the planets and perhaps by the fact that it can represent two trinities linked by a medial or pivotal unit (as Law points out in *SL* 61). For these reasons Boehme came to make existence a sevenfold diversity in unity, as soon as he became conscious of the immensely rich and complex multiplicity of forces that were present in tension both in his own soul and in the world of nature. Law was perhaps not so sure of the scriptural basis as was Boehme; but he does refer to the creation of the sun on the fourth day as signifying the fourth property of fire (*WDK* 246 and *SL* 20) and compare page 122 for Rev. 4.5.

STUDY 20: THE SOUL AS FIRE

(See, e.g., page 11.)

William Law's description of angels as "flames of love" (e.g. pages 14 and 101) is based partly on Psalm 104.4, which was taken as meaning that the angels are made of fire. Cp. Tauler, *Sermon* 24, "The burning Seraphim with their flames of love." The justification for the constant use (following Boehme) of fire for the substance both of God and of the angelic and human spirits made in his image is given in the *Appeal* (pages 50-3). Law has added there in a footnote a long quotation from the *Celestial Hierarchies* (15.2) of Dionysius, who wrote that Scripture prefers the representation of fire for the angels generally (with references to Ezekiel, ch. 1, and to Daniel), for "the similitude of fire denotes the very close likeness of the heavenly intelligences to God . . . they are depicted as fire, so as to show their godlikeness."

Definite statements of the basis of the human spirit as fire are difficult to find, but cp. Eckhart, *Sermon* 21, "Our doctors say the soul is called fire, because of the force and heat and light that is in her." This may be a reference primarily to the universal-fire doctrine of the early philosopher, Heracleitus, who was sometimes classed with Socrates as anticipating Christianity.

It is also not very easy to find in mystics or theologians descriptions of the essence or "substantia" of God (see Study 10 and also Study 9) as fire in the sense of William Law. Scripture indeed calls Him a consuming fire (Heb. 12.29, cp. page 48), either as the fire which destroys sinners or as the fire which purifies from the dross of sin (Malachi 3.3). Later references are usually to the fire of His love and connected rather with the Son than with the Father-Creator, as , e.g. Origen, *de Princ.* II.8, Bonaventura, *de Itin. Mentis* vii, "God is the fire which enflames all with the most

ardent love"; and Ruysbroek, *Sparkling Stone*, "The soul is burnt up and made one with God's eternal fire of love." In the *Paradiso* of Dante God appears as fire in which the souls of the saints dwell like glowing sparks or "sempiterne fiamme" (cp. xxx. 64 and Daniel 7.10).

STUDY 21: UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION, PURGATORY AND HELL

(See pages 195-6 and 225.)

In the eighteenth century the almost universal creed of all the Christian Churches, or at least of those who spoke for them, was in a hell of everlasting misery for a large portion, probably indeed for a large majority of mankind, i.e. for all who died without the beginning at least of true penitence and faith in Christ. The infallible Scriptures appeared to teach this; it would have been exceedingly difficult for even a somewhat independent Christian like the young William Law to disbelieve it. In fact for a long time he accepted the orthodox view, although (notwithstanding an unfair comment of the historian Gibbon) with remarkable reticence on the subject, and allowing full salvation to the good heathen (*Serious Call* 270).

His *Christian Perfection* ends with a beautiful description of the joys of heaven with no corresponding picture of hell. He definitely, though regretfully, rejected universalism, the belief in the ultimate salvation and happiness of all spirits, in 1731-2 (see *Letters*, 234 and 238, and his reference to Origen) and almost certainly until after he wrote the *Appeal* (1740, cp. pp. 91, 96).

The influence of Boehme at first only confirmed Law in this distressing view. Hell became indeed even more terrible, as a present reality, an inner state of the soul, and a state which, if we remain careless during life, would become permanent and irremediable. Boehme's doctrine of the eternity of hell was an unhappy and illogical blot upon his philosophy. For various reasons, of which the most potent was probably his all too human reaction to the persecution and cruelty of his day, his fundamental dualism, his sense of the absolute contrast between the love principle and the wrath principle, overshadowed his realisation of the

true and natural goal of his and indeed of all mystical theology, namely that all spirits, all existences should return to the divine harmony from which they had sprung. Existence begins with contrasts overcome in God's eternal nature, it ends, quite absurdly and illogically for Boehme, with one terrible contrast unharmonised.

It can only be said quite briefly here that Boehme and Law could by no means accept the solution of "conditional immortality", i.e. one which admits the possibility of some souls perishing out of existence with the evil to which they cling; for they held unshakably to the Platonic and Catholic tradition of the necessary and inherent immortality of every soul, which they regarded as a portion of the divine essence (pages 35-38).

After Law's nine years of silent reflection, it is delightful to see him emerging into the sunshine of universalism and tacitly ignoring the harsh inconsistencies of his German teacher as well as those of the New Testament text. The redemption of all men, as well as of the fallen spirits, is either implied as a happy probability or actually asserted in *SP* 62, *WDK* 172-6, pages 166-7 and 195-6 (*SL*), and *SL* 101-3. In this last passage it is the consequence of his allegorical interpretation of the predestination texts (see Study 16: *Predestination*). He now accepts purgatory after death as a substitute for hell and he expounds the conception in *Address* 85-8, pages 223-5, though unfortunately his reluctance to break from scriptural authority makes him require "long *ages* of fiery pain" as a necessity for many sinners before their ultimate redemption. Such a belief becomes excusable when we find, for example, John Wesley, in protesting his abhorrence of Law's doctrine of a purgatorial hell, exclaiming, "If there be no unquenchable fire, no everlasting burnings, there is no dependence on the Scriptures. No Hell, no Heaven, no revelation!" It must have required great courage to declare, as Law did (page 216, *Letter* 25) that such a view was only worthy of "verbal proficients", who give misguided reverence to the "outward letter", to "the threatenings of the law", now superseded by the Gospel of Love.

"As for the purification of all human nature either in this world or in some after-ages, I fully believe it" (*Letters* 191). This is Law's final position, and it is made more impressive by the fact that it formed the subject of his conversation in the beautiful account which Thomas Langcake gives of the final visit to his friend.

"With respect to this doctrine of universal redemption," he writes, "I very well remember Mr. Law's speaking of it, upon my making him the last visit at Easter, 1761, a few days before his death, for he died upon the 9th of April, and Easter day was on the 22nd of March that year. He said that not only the whole human race but even the fallen angels would all be delivered out of misery, but not until the last judgment day. He said that there would be *a chasm in the creation*, without the angels being taken into happiness. But that that could not be, until they saw the whole creation made happy before them. When they saw this, and felt the eternal fire fully operating upon them, it would produce the blessed effect of awakening that goodness which laid dormant in them. For though that goodness might be shut up in a sevenfold deeper or stronger compaction than fire is in a flint, yet as it was shut up and preserved in them, it would come forth, and so they also would be made happy, to the full display of God's love and goodness to all His creatures.

"This was really the substance of what Mr. Law said upon the occasion, and nearly in his own words, according to the best of my remembrance. . . . Mr. Law spoke upon the subject of his own accord, after we had heard the afternoon Easter Sunday's sermon and took a walk through the town of Kings Cliffe. He then opened a gate into a field; it was a rising ground, and then he began the discourse, and spoke like an angel upon this and other matters, as if he was ready and ripe for glory, just to be carried up into heaven and in the bosom of divine love be blessed to all eternity."*

It will be noticed that, although Law did not scruple to use the word *purgatory* (e.g. *SL* 8, page 144), so definitely associated with Roman Catholic beliefs, he used it with an infinitely wider application than was usual.

* C. Walton, *Notes and Materials*, etc. (pp. 601-2), Letter to Henry Brooke, 2.8.1790.

In the authoritative volume of *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938, p. 219) it is stated that "there must be room in the Church for those who hold that the love of God will at last win penitence and answering love from every soul that it has created"; and such universalism, as held tentatively by Origen, by his disciple St. Gregory of Nyssa, and by others whose works were known to Law, has, I believe, never been formally and explicitly condemned by the Roman Catholic Church. It is possible to present a good case for its having formed part of the teaching of the Apostle Paul (cp. 1 Cor. 15.28 and Col. 1.20). Remarkably enough, though the relevant writings of Origen were condemned as heretical, the more confident teaching of St. Gregory on this subject has apparently been allowed to pass unchallenged. Mention should also be made of the fine instinctive protest of Juliana of Norwich against the Church doctrine of hell. Her *Revelations* (*c.* 1373, cp. ch. 32) must have been known to William Law in de Cressy's edition of 1670.

STUDY 22: THE WILL, ITS SUPREME PLACE

(See pages 133-135.)

The tremendous emphasis on the will, that is, purposeful, directed desire, places William Law, like Boehme, in the line of the great voluntarist and Platonist tradition, which was voiced by Augustine and by medieval mystics, such as Tauler and Ruysbroek, as against the more Aristotelian intellectualism of St. Thomas Aquinas and his school. Compare the beginning of *SL* (Part II) page 148, where God is described as a "Will to all goodness." In *WDK* 218 the human will is the Word, the seed of Christ, the spark of God in the soul; every life (*WDK* 212 f.) is just a working will; and cp. page 53 and note 17; also *Warburton* 196-8. The proper activity of the will is love, as that of the intellect is knowledge. Thus the heart, which held the central place in Law's psychology at an earlier stage (cp. e.g., pages 1-3) is very closely related to the will.

Cp. *Theologia Germanica* (51), "The will in the creature, which we call a created will, is as truly God's as the eternal will and not of the creature." This sounds like Boehme or Law, but there is a real difference. In the *Theologia*, as for Augustine, Tauler, and Luther, the human will is totally corrupt, it must be given up and die so as to disappear into, to make place for God's will. But to Jacob Boehme, as to Law, the human will, however degraded, retains its divine origin, it can be redeemed by Christ, and is invited to co-operate with God, remaining distinct from Him.

Thus Boehme (*Incarnation* III, 1.4), "True faith casts its will into God's will . . . and in this way it finds itself in God and works with God." Contrast *Theologia Germanica* (27) "We ought to be altogether without will, so that the created will should flow out into the eternal will and be swallowed up and lost therein, and thus the eternal Will alone will do and leave undone in us."

STUDY 23: WILLIAM LAW'S SOURCES FOR HIS MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

The usual view of William Law's later writings is that their characteristic features were almost entirely derived from those of Jacob Boehme. Just before he died, the *Christian's Magazine* lamented "this venerable man's support of an airy system" and "the deviation of so pious and nervous a pen into the inextricable labyrinths of Behmenism." And the constant repetition of charges of this kind has no doubt deterred many readers from venturing upon the later works which flowed from the pen that had produced the great and moving classic of the *Serious Call.*

It is possible, however, to take a different view of the sources of Law's mysticism, namely, that well expressed by the Moravian writer, Francis Okely, who, though a great admirer of Boehme, describes Law as "a mystical bee . . . whose works are like so many honey-combs by him assiduously collected, formed, digested, and filled during a long life out of all the spiritual writers or mystic flowers, ancient and modern."*

If we seek to discover which of these two views is the more correct, we have several lines of evidence at hand, that is (1) Law's own definite statements in his published works, (2) similarities of doctrine, idea, or expression which seem difficult of explanation otherwise than as direct borrowing either from Boehme or from some other writer, (3) statements made by Law in unpublished letters or recorded in John Byrom's *Journal*, and (4) the six hundred odd books still standing on the shelves of his library at King's Cliffe, Northants, the presumption being that Law, who was an assiduous reader, had at least perused their contents.†

* F. Okely, *Memoirs of Behmen* (1780), p. xii.

† For an account of a visit to this library, see my article in *The Friend* for December 11, 1925. I understand that there has since that date been little or no change.

In the second of his *Answers to Dr. Trapp* Law names a number of "mystical divines" and strongly suggests, if he does not actually state, that he hardly ever "passed a day without reading something of what they have written" (page 34). He proceeds to make, as part of his apologia, the no doubt very well-considered pronouncement which we may read on page 33 ("For had he known anything of them . . . sufficiently prove it in my own way . . . but what, the first-rate saints of the Church are my vouchers for").

We read, too, in a passage preceding this (*Trapp* 202-3), in relation to his own much-emphasised variety of the doctrine of the Trinity of God in man, that "it stands not in that form of expression anywhere that I know of, though, for the true ground and certainty of it, I could have referred to many ancient and modern writers of the greatest name" besides Behmen (*i.e.* Boehme). Law would not have made assertions of this kind in a random way, and I think we may accept them as fully correct for the year in which they were written—1740.

But we know that in the long interval between that date and his next productive period, beginning in 1749 with the publication of the *Spirit of Prayer*, he was engaged in a careful study of the works of the "illuminated" shoemaker in the original German and in making transcripts from writings of at least two of his disciples, Andreas Freher and Francis Lee.

It seems to me quite certain that in this final period the influence of Boehme had much increased and deepened—that he could not then have claimed "the first-rate saints of the Church" as his vouchers for *some* of his characteristic doctrines and these were in effect borrowed from the German theosopher. We have indeed only to refer to the unique place he assigns to him as a "teacher of the true ground of the Christian religion," "a guide to the truth of all the mysteries of the kingdom of God," etc., and as "the strongest, the plainest, the most open, intelligible, awakening, convincing writer that ever was" (page 125); and compare similar strong statements on pages 199 (104), and 205 and in *Letter* 4, page 141, "not a book ancient and modern . . ." and 27 (see Whyte, *Characteristics*, page 221), "next to the

Scriptures my only book is the illuminated Behmen," etc. Significant, too, is the extraordinary fact that, although Law as a highly-cultured man must have been aware that the shoemaker prophet occasionally lapses into palpable absurdities, he consistently refrains from in any way expressing criticism of him—as he *is* ready to express strong dissent from others whom he regarded as great mystics, such as Augustine, Ruysbroeck, and Malebranche. The nearest approach to any criticism is in an undated letter (see Walton, *Notes and Materials*, page 217), where he refuses to discuss the superstitious statements in Boehme's 24th *Epistle* about the "sweating statue," with the words, "but the time will come, when such supposed mysteries in Jacob Boehme will no more lessen your opinion of that fountain of light which was opened in him, than the spots which are said to be discovered in the sun do make you suspect it not be a body of light."

Nevertheless, although Law refuses so completely all *explicit* dissent or criticism, of *implied* criticism and modification there is very much in his treatment of his hero—an important fact which hitherto never seems to have been recognised. I have alluded to this in connection with Boehme's doctrines of atonement, predestination, and hell (Studies 1, 16, and 21 above). There was doubtless much, too, in the profoundest aspects of Boehme's metaphysics, in his ideas of the *Ungrund* or abyss of indifference, and of the tension of negative and positive, of desire and will, of *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, which Law did not understand, and if he understood, would have disliked. Some of this teaching, however, he does modify and adapt most effectively in his doctrine of the wrath of God (see Study 24 below). Again the fine spirituality of Boehme's teaching is often wrapped up and obscured by the strange physico-chemical, medical, alchemistic, and astrological language which he often employed (such metaphorical terms, e.g., as Venus and Mars, salt, sulphur, and mercury, stinging bitterness, limbus and tincture and signature). Other occasional stumbling blocks would be his millenarian speculations, his amazing etymologies, and his romantic raptures over the heavenly virgin *Sophia*.

Law shows marvellous insight and feeling for spiritual truth, in being able to ignore and penetrate below these fantastic and sometimes offensive trappings. Only in a few cases, e.g. in the speculations about the life of the androgynous Adam before the fall and those relating to the construction of the material world out of the "properties" of nature (see Study 19) does he show a wrong judgment by partially adopting them into his own works. On the whole we can be full of admiration, if we remember that Law's object is practical religion and not metaphysical theory, for the way in which he silently corrects or ignores, selects and adapts, filters and clarifies the teachings of his master. His naturally logical and unromantic mind absorbs, too, some measure of Boehme's poetical feeling and prophetic fervour.

As to the great extent of Boehme's influence upon the form and expression of his teaching, a fair estimate can, I think, be formed by a glance through the many references and parallels adduced in the *Notes* and *Studies* of this volume. Both in quantity and in quality they are impressive, though they indicate, I think, sufficiently that Law at least made a valiant attempt to substantiate his claim advanced in 1740 (page 33) that he always sought to "prove sufficiently the truth of any subject in his own way without borrowed arguments."

When so much has been said about Boehme's preponderating influence upon Law, it still remains true that nearly all his disciples and critics have exaggerated the extent of that influence and have attributed to Boehme ideas and doctrines found in Law's works that may indeed be found there, but are in essence part of a great tradition which can be traced throughout most of the course of Christian theological and mystical literature. (The chief of these have been already discussed in earlier *Studies*. Leading instances are the "protevangelium" in Genesis, the heavenly "seed," the "spark" or place of divine contact in the soul, the divine "substance," mystical "analogy" in every realm of nature and spirit, and the fall of the angels through pride.)

This mistake is largely due to the fact that the Reformation

cut off the divines of the Anglican Church from the medieval tradition more completely than had been the case in the Calvinist and Lutheran communions.* Hence many of the doctrines maintained or assumed by William Law were new even to his theologically-trained readers and they therefore imagined them to be Behmenist, though Law's wider studies gave him the knowledge that they were vouched for by the Catholic tradition.

Jacob Boehme, though he was inevitably and indirectly a debtor to this tradition, was quite extraordinarily independent of any definitely literary sources, apart, that is, from his beloved Bible (in Luther's excellent translation). A few Protestant authors of mystical tendency he had apparently read, of whom Paracelsus is the only one of real importance for the expression of his thought. Certain remarkable similarities make it probable that he had also read the *Theologia Germanica* and some of Tauler's *Sermons*, in German printed versions. It is just possible that he had seen a few of Meister Eckhart's *Sermons* in a manuscript copy. But he mentions none of these writers by name, nor does he ever name any of the Roman Catholic mystics or theologians, whose writings, as he knew no Latin, he could not have read; he can only have known of them, if at all, fragmentarily through the conversation of his learned Protestant friends. Moreover (as Hamberger says) most of what this unique man may have received from other thinkers was transformed into a peculiar possession of his own through the fire of his genius, so that their ideas came to have quite new meanings in his highly original philosophic system.† Notwithstanding this, there is much, as I have indicated, that is common ground both for Boehme and for the great mystics of the Catholic Church, many of whose writings Law had studied before he began to read Boehme.

Now before enquiring which particular mystics and theologians, other than Jacob Boehme, influenced Law, some general considerations are essential. The true mystic,

* See A. L. Lilley, *Religion and Revelation*, e.g. p. 18.

† See Hamberger, *Die Lehre J. Böhme*, p. xiv (1844), also H. Bornkamm, *Luther und Böhme* (1925).

such as our two writers undoubtedly were, however deeply he is interested in mystical philosophy (for the distinction see my *Study* 13) does not choose his symbols and expressions ready-made merely on the authority of earlier writings, in order to conform to a tradition, but chooses them primarily for the very practical reason that the words in question best fit the facts of his own spiritual experience. He (or she) selects a symbol like darkness, fire, seed, drinking, shepherding, or marriage, because it corresponds to certain intrinsic requirements of his mind and heart, and so has special power to stimulate or express his own interior states.*

While this is true, there are certain broad lines of mystical doctrine of which nearly every mystic is aware, and from which he diverges, if at all, at the risk of losing hold of the golden thread of truth which is the background of all genuine mysticism—a risk which, however, must at times be taken; tradition has, in some things, e.g. in its doctrine of hell, gone grievously astray.† This common tradition bears particularly strongly upon mystics who belong to or are in touch with a branch of the Christian Church, both because of the continuity of the Church's history and because the imagery and doctrine of the Bible, embodied often in some isolated and allegorically-interpreted verse or expression, has naturally and inevitably fixed itself in the consciousness of the devout reader.

This last consideration is vastly important and it is only too easy to say, "Here is a clear case of this mystic borrowing from that one," when it is almost certain that both writers, having perhaps (though centuries apart in date) similar types of mind and similar mystical temperaments, have found the same scriptural text or symbolic word the most apt means for describing some aspect of God's commerce with their souls.

Indeed coincidence of language is a most unsafe guide in mystical literature. We are told, for instance, by Pollock

* I am indebted here particularly to von Hügel and Evelyn Underhill.

† Thus William Law broke consciously and decisively with Catholic tradition (as formed largely by the authority of St. Augustine) both in this doctrine and in those of predestination and of creation *ex nihilo* (see *WDK* 258-9, etc.).

that it would be easy to collect parallel passages from Spinoza and from Indian and Persian poets whom he could not possibly have read. A very similar case to this is that of William Law's and John Byrom's presumed borrowing from Meister Eckhart. Overton (pages 149-50) regards this as practically *proved by parallel expressions (and compare *SP*, note 21). This must be an error, for in fact it is almost impossible that Law or any contemporary Englishman can have read Eckhart's writings. Owing to their condemnation as pantheist and heretical by the Roman Church, they became practically unknown outside small circles in Germany and were never printed until Pfeiffer's edition in 1857. It is in the highest degree unlikely that one of the manuscripts of Eckhart ever came to England and was seen by Law.

Again it has been claimed by several writers on the ground of similarity of language that both Milton and George Fox (with some others of the early Quakers) must almost certainly have read Boehme in the English translations which began to appear about the year 1647. But the evidence is quite inconclusive, and it seems to be here a case of what Denis Saurat has called a "zone of ideas" in the mental atmosphere of particular periods, to which suitably attuned spirits are especially susceptible.

Bearing these warnings in mind, it was my desire to proceed to a detailed estimate of the comparative influence of particular writers, other than Boehme, upon Law in the latest stages of his career. Unfortunately, owing to want of time and to personal difficulties, not to mention want of space in this volume, I am unable to do this. I can only give some provisional opinions based on the limited extent of my own reading and make some brief attempt at a revision, so far as it is necessary, of the estimate made by Overton in 1881 of the chief literary influences bearing on Law's mysticism (see *Life*, pages 145-178).

Overton is, I think, certainly right when he says that the greatest attraction and influence on William Law next to that of Boehme was exercised by the group of mystics known as the fourteenth century German School, who were

associated with the movement directed by the mysterious "Friends of God" (to whom his use of those words in *SP* 53 doubtless indirectly refers). The chief names here are the founder of the School, Meister Eckhart, his disciples, John Tauler and Henry Seuse or Suso, the Fleming John of Ruysbroeck, and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica*. Eckhart's writings Law, as I have already explained, could not, in spite of some remarkable parallels, have known. Tauler, Suso, and Ruysbroeck are mentioned together with a note of admiration on page 33, and more than once in Byrom's accounts of conversations with Law (cp. *Overton*, page 70). The little book of the *Theologia Germanica*, beloved by Luther, Kingsley and many others, was the treatise so strongly upheld by Law against Wesley's attacks at the time of the unhappy breach between the two men.* The King's Cliffe library contains a copy of this book and of the complete works of Ruysbroeck together with Tauler's *Sermons* (all these in Latin) and three other volumes of Tauler. Wesley in his 1756 *Letter to Mr. Law* refers twice with pointed depreciation to the latter's admiration for Tauler (the only mystic besides Boehme whom he mentions), and this must surely be a reminiscence of the conversation of the two men.

The *Notes* and *Studies* in this volume supply instances of about sixteen parallels with Tauler, about fifteen with the *Theologica Germanica*, and seven with Ruysbroeck; others might be found by an examination of Suso. While in many points, notably in their extreme monastic asceticism and their positive thirst for suffering and solitude; in their exaggerated quietism or passivity; in the use of the *via negativa*, that is, the stripping off of all mental images, as the essential means of attaining to mystical union with the Divine; and in the practical dissolution of the human will in such union, these writers differ widely from our author, yet in other respects there is a marked kinship of thought. Examples of this are the use made of the Christian form of

* The full correspondence on this occasion has for the first time been printed together in the recent Standard Edition of Wesley's *Journal and Letters*.

the emanation doctrine; in the ultimate return of the soul of all things to the divine unity; the ideas of the ineradicable divine substance, of the ground or *fund* (page 81) where God and man meet and where Christ is born again; in the vital importance of suppressing self and self-will, the essence of every form of sin; and in the doctrine of hell as not a place of punishment created by an avenging God, but a self-imposed state of the impenitent creature.*

Referring again to the *Notes* and *Studies*, it is found that together with the very numerous parallel quotations from Jacob Boehme and with those just mentioned from the German School, the mystics to whom references are most largely made are St. Augustine (14), Dionysius the Areopagite (10), Origen (8), and Irenaeus (7). (See *Index*.) These figures are indeed conditioned by too inadequate reading, but taking other things into consideration, they probably indicate rightly (i) the substantial influence upon Law of the writings of the school of Eckhart; (ii) that, apart from special stumbling-blocks (e.g. as regards the method of creation and hell) Law accepted generally the central theological and mystical teaching of the Catholic tradition, which had been in large measure shaped by St. Augustine and the neoplatonist pseudo-Dionysius, who is constantly quoted as authoritative (partly in view of his supposed "apostolic" standing) even by Aristotelians like St. Thomas; and (iii) that among individual mystics and in relation to particular doctrines (the atonement, divine punishment, the fall of the angels) the influence of Irenaeus and Origen is apparent (also probably that of Philo, as regards predestination). Law's library still contains four volumes of Irenaeus and two editions of Dionysius.

For the rest of this study I must confine myself in the main to some brief notes on Overton's estimate (on pages 145-178) to which I have already referred, adding, where possible, in

* See, for these mystics, Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, and P. Pourrat, *La Spiritualité Chrétienne*, vol. II, pp. 319-378; cp. pp. 342-3 for an account of Harphius mentioned by Law (p. 33), whose *Theologia Mystica* is in his library. I am grateful to the Rev. Father John Simcox of St. Edmund's College, Ware, for the loan of Pourrat's great work.

square brackets, a mention of the volumes of each author still standing on the shelves at King's Cliffe, a library which is the remnant of a much larger one collected by Law.

(1) Macarius of Egypt [*Homilies*]. Having read this volume which is rich in striking similes, I cannot notice any special points of contact with Law.

(2) St. Augustine [*Epistles*]. Far and away the largest single influence upon the medieval mystics was that of the African saint, who was himself to a great extent indebted to Plato and Plotinus. Outstanding characteristics of this school of thought are the comprehensive doctrine of mystical analogy and the great emphasis laid, especially in regard to the attainment of the *unio mystica*, on the will and its virtues of humility and love, leaving the intellect more in the background. Both Law and Boehme shared this outlook.

(3) St. Bernard. The same type of teaching was enforced in the twelfth century by the great authority of Bernard of Clairvaux. As Overton says, it is surprising that there are in Law's writings no direct indications of admiration for him (save one mention in *Trapp* 186). Law would, however, be doubtless repelled by the ardent use which Bernard constantly makes of sex imagery drawn chiefly from the *Song of Songs*.

(4) St. Bonaventura [*Speculum*] represented the same trend, as against the rising Aristotelian philosophy of Albertus and Aquinas, with its reinstatement of the intellect illuminated by the Spirit, as the means of knowing God. (For this reason and because Aquinas tended to regard the material universe as inherently good, and evil itself as having essentially no real existence, the great author of the *Summa Theologiae* would doubtless make but little appeal to Law.) Bonaventura's extraordinary use of mystical analogy, together with his great stress on the symbolism of light, would naturally make us look for parallels with Law. A perusal of E. Gilson's great book on this mystic has not enabled me to detect anything material. (Law's remark in *Appeal* 86 as to those who seek to "discover the image of the Trinity in the creation" might well apply to Bonaventura.)

(5) The *Imitation of Christ*, of which Law appears to have

enjoyed collecting various versions and translations [nine or ten, including selections] is mentioned particularly in *Trapp* 51.

(6) St. Teresa [*Theologie Mystique*], St. John of the Cross [*Opera Mystica*], and St. Francis de Sales [*Vie Devote*] are named with admiration by Law in *Trapp* 186 and on page 33. In the writings of all three of these he would certainly find many points of contact. We may, however, suppose that in the case of the first he would be somewhat doubtful as to her frequent visions; that he would be distressed by the self-inflicted tortures of the Spanish saint; and that the rather sentimental and feminine tone of the French saint would be uncongenial to him. Some readings in John of the Cross have supplied me with only a very few suggestions of special resemblance.

(7) Archbishop Fénelon [eleven volumes], Madame Guyon [seven volumes], her director, M. Bertot (see page 33 and *Spirit of Prayer* 53), with whom may be associated Molinos [*Manducatio Spiritualis*], La Combe [*Oratio Mentalis*], Malaval [*Théologie Mystique*], and also Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection [*Presence of God* (Heylin) and see page 24, note 14], all belong to the seventeenth-century school of "quietists" so harshly condemned by the Roman Church.* Whether Law was materially influenced by these writers, whose works he certainly studied (cp. page 33 and *SP* 53), is a problem. Overton's treatment of the question appears to me to be a wise one. It must be remarked that their characteristic doctrines of disinterested love and of the prayer of passivity and silence were essentially more intense restatements of the teachings of earlier mystics, such as those of the school of Eckhart, and were akin to those of Jacob Boehme.

(8) Malebranche's influence [two volumes], though apparently of vital importance to Law's early development, was, owing to his adherence to Descartes' philosophy, probably unimportant in his later years. The fine thought in

* For an orthodox and probably considerably biassed though most interesting account of these seven mystics see P. Pourrat, op. cit., vol. IV, pp. 162-318. Cp. also W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 231-243.

Trapp (page 31), "he that seeks God in everything is sure to find God in everything," is perhaps a reminiscence of Malebranche's "we see everything in God" (*Overton*, page 65).

(9) The works of the four great English fourteenth-century mystics, Rolle, Hilton, Juliana, and the unknown genius who wrote the *Cloud of Unknowing*, were, with the exception of Juliana, not readily procurable and probably unknown to Law. For Juliana, whose *Revelations* he doubtless knew, see Studies 6 and 21 above.

(10) Turning to mystical writers professing the Protestant form of Christianity, we have Law's words, as reported by the usually accurate Langcake, that after Jacob Boehme "*Hiel* [*Send-Briefen*] was the next in excellency, and in the third place the Quakers [one volume: H. Turford]—I believe he alluded in particular to Isaac Penington." As to the obscure Fleming who wrote under the name of "Hiel" and as to Law's contact with the Quakers, I can only refer here to my *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism* (especially pages 244-51).

(11) A more direct influence on the shaping of Law's thought is to be found in the works of the Protestant quietist, Pierre Poiret [eight volumes], and in the manuscripts of Andreas Freher, because they were both in varying degree assiduous students and interpreters of Boehme and as such studied by Law. Here again I can only refer for Poiret to my *Fides et Ratio* (*Journal of Theological Studies*, October, 1936, Section II, and see *Appendix One* below) and for Freher to C. Walton, *Notes and Materials*, pages 678-88.

(12) I am inclined to think that (contrary to the opinion of *Overton*, pages 414-17) there was a considerable affinity between Law and his predecessors, the Cambridge Platonists, Henry More, John Smith, Cudworth, Whichcote, and Norris. Seven of their books are still in his library. In the doctrines of the divine seed and the new birth, of mystical analogy, of hell as a "temper" rather than as a place, as consequence rather than punishment, Law is very near to them, and the "reason" which was to them "the candle of the Lord" is really more akin to the intuition of the heart

than to the discursive intellect. Henry More, moreover, whom Law much admired as a man, although a keen critic of Boehme, was by no means altogether hostile to him. (See my *Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme*, page 50.)

(13) Finally, it is suggested that John Heylin (1685-1759) may well have contributed to shape William Law's mystical teaching. He was an almost exact contemporary of Law at Cambridge and it is likely that Law acted for about two years as his curate (see *Appendix One* (iii), II (b)). The copy of his chief work now at King's Cliffe was presented to Law by "the author." Heylin "was styled by some the mystic doctor" and was "deeply read in the mystic divines," and his *Select Discourses* (which are still quite readable) have in places distinct affinities with Law.*

An apology is due to the reader for the fragmentary nature of the preceding Study. It is, however, offered as a basis for further investigation by any future student of this great writer.

* In reference to (10) on page 366 it is suggested that, when in the *Address to the Clergy* (p. 97) the Christian who asserts that "no man on earth can be raised to a freedom from sinning" is called a "pleader for imperfection," this may well be a reminiscence of the *Journal* of George Fox, who was fond of using this expression in a very similar sense. We know that Law was at least offered by "Friend Hinde" of "the Quaker bookshop" a folio volume of Fox not many months before he wrote these words (*op. cit.*, p. 248).

STUDY 24: THE WRATH OF GOD, AS HIDDEN AND REVEALED

(See, e.g., pages 38-41.)

When William Blake wrote of the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and insisted that "without contraries there is no progression," and when Hegel made the resolution of two contradictions in a larger synthesis of unity the key-stone of his philosophy, they were reviving what had been taught by Jacob Boehme two centuries before; and indeed both poet and philosopher had probably learnt something from the Silesian seer. This doctrine of the wrath of God is indeed the most characteristic and fundamental feature of Boehme's view of the universe, of his ethic as well as of his theology; by it he has been widely acclaimed in Germany as the father of modern idealist philosophy, and by it, as modified by his disciple William Law, it seems possible that he will in the future be recognised as having laid the foundation of a Christian metaphysic such as will add confirmation to the pacifist interpretation of the Gospel which has dawned upon modern thought, without sacrificing a due recognition of the harsh reality of sin.

Boehme appears to have gained his conviction of the function of the "everlasting No" through meditating on the phenomena of his own consciousness and experience—his first great period of illumination was in some measure shaped by the fascination of sunlight reflected from a dark metal dish—and he then proceeded to apply the principle thus suggested to the interpretation of the Bible and the theology of Christian tradition. Law on the other hand began with an overwhelming conviction of the "ungodly" nature of anger or "wrath"—"God is all Love," and "from eternity to eternity no spark of wrath ever was or ever will be in the holy triune God" (page 70), but he was confronted by the immense difficulty of harmonising his intuition with

the numberless references in Scripture to the wrath and vengeance of God. He dealt with this partly by the conception of the fiery substance of the Godhead as inherent in every created thing (see Study 10 and, e.g., pages 50-1) borrowed primarily from the neoplatonism of Dionysius. But Boehme's more comprehensive doctrine shed a flood of light upon his Biblical difficulties, and it was probably this more than anything else that attracted him to the old mystic from that day of his first reading in a London bookshop of one of John Sparrow's translated volumes, which "put him into a perfect sweat." The wonder is that he was not repelled by the metaphysical boldness which led Boehme frequently to use expressions which might seem to enthrone evil in the heart of God. In any case, while the profound philosophy of the earlier thinker was beyond Law's reach, we owe a large debt to him that he has softened and modified Boehme's doctrine, so as to make it more readily acceptable to believers in the central truths of Catholic theology. We should recognise, however, that the Lutheran Boehme's two most gifted disciples in Germany, Angelus Silesius and Franz von Baader, were devout Roman Catholics.

The reader may do well to look back to some of what is written on pages 12-16, 38-41, 48-57, 69-71, 106-8, 136, 148-53, 157-60, 167-170, 185-90 of this book and to *Appeal*, notes 8 and 17, *SL*, note 6, and Study 3: *The Fall of the Angels*. He may then ponder over the following statements of Jacob Boehme. (I have neglected for the most part his more extreme and unguarded expressions, such, for instance, as *seem* to support the evil theory that Jesus died on the cross to appease the wrath of an angry Father. Moreover Boehme's ideas develop and fluctuate considerably in the course of his many writings. Both Law and Boehme attempt somewhat unsuccessfully to fit their dualism of fire and light into the Christian Trinity of three Persons. It is better to conceive of it as operating in an anterior region (so to speak) of the Godhead.)

"The wrath and the anger, together with the abyss of hell, stand in the centre of the Father."

"God is angry and destructive according to His eternal fire-ground, not according to what He is in Himself."

"Unless there were a *contrarium* in God, there would be no form or distinction . . . For every divine, good power has in the foundation of hell, that is, in the *No*, a contrarium or opposite [? contrast], in order that the *Yes* or truth may be made known."

"In *Ja* und *Nein* bestehen alle Dinge." [In *Yes* and *No* all things consist.]

"And here the two strong kingdoms of the eternity are to be seen, which have been in strife with one another and are always so; and *the strife continueth to eternity, for it is also from eternity*, between the fierceness and the meekness. If the fierceness were not, there could be no mobility . . . The fierceness [or wrath] is the root of all things . . . without it there could be no enmity, but all would be a nothing . . . all things would be one thing, and all merely God . . . in a sweet meekness. But where would be the mobility, the Kingdom, the power, and the glory? Therefore we have often said, 'The anger is the root of life, and if it be without the light, then it is not God, but hell fire; but if the light shines therein, it becomes paradise and fulness of joy.' "

"In der Ueberwindung ist Freude." [In the overcoming is Joy.]

"O ye men, observe this. Understand then the right foundation. In God there is no anger, there is pure love alone. But in the foundation, through which the love becomes mobile, there is the fire of anger, though in God it is a cause of joy and of power. On the other hand, in the centre of the wrath-fire it is the greatest and most terrible darkness, pain, and torment. These two are in one another like day and night, where neither can take hold upon the other, but one dwells in the other. And they make two principles, as two eternal beginnings . . . the kingdom of God in love (which is pure *Yes*) and the kingdom of God's wrath or the foundation of hell (which is pure *No*)."

"God calls Himself a consuming Fire, and also a God

of love; and his name GOD has its original in the love . . . We all in the originality of our life have the source of the anger and of the fierceness, or else we should not be alive; but we must go out of it, with God, and generate the love in us."

"For God is nothing but kindness and willeth not the evil: He warneth man beforehand, that he should still the wrath, by turning round and going out from the anger: but when this is not done, then He suffereth that to come which man hath *awakened*, that is, wars, famine and pestilence: man hath *awakened* them, and they devour him: for thereby God's anger is sharpened and getteth a longing to devour: for men awaken it in their wickedness and malice, and *kindle* it, whereas otherwise it would be at rest."*

"God casts no soul away, unless it cast itself away. Every soul is its own judgment. . . . God is not a God of evil who desires revenge or torment for the wicked."

"His love and anger are indeed both called God; but in so far as He is the eternal good, He is not anger; the anger has another principle."

"In the holy name of God or in the centre of the light, there is no wrath-will, but pure Love only and this is God Himself . . . the pure Deity, who is unchangeable and in eternity is nothing else but good, and is not Nature."†

The more ethical aspect of the above impressive array of quotations is neatly summed up in the following stanza of Baader's,

"Licht und Liebe sich entzünden
Wo sich Streng' und Milde finden;
Zorn und Finsterniss entbrennen
Wo sich Streng' und Milde trennen,"

and in John Byrom's rhyme on the *Origin of Evil*

"Evil, if rightly understood,
Is but the skeleton of Good
Divested of its flesh and blood.

* Cp. the passage quoted in note 20 to *WDK* (page 136).

† The above quotations are taken from *The Three Principles, The Threefold Life, The 40 Questions, The 177 Questions,* and the *Mysterium magnum.*

"While it remains without divorce
Within its hidden, secret source,
It is the Good's own strength and force;

"As bone has the supporting share
In human form divinely fair
Although an evil, if laid bare;

"As light and air are fed by fire
A shining good, while all conspire,
But separate—dark, raging ire;

"Or any instance thought upon
In which the Evil can be none
Till unity of Good is gone.

"So by abuse of thought and skill
The greatest Good, to wit, free-will,
Becomes the origin of Ill."*

It is not easy to give a comprehensive account of this fundamental principle of Jacob Boehme. Manifestation, real life, creative activity, is only possible for God, through an opposition that is harmonised and reconciled in the very instant of its appearance. Light (whether natural or supernatural) is only itself against a background of darkness. Purposive good-will implies a basis of blind, aimless, infinite desire and want. Spirit needs nature in which to reveal itself. Love and self-giving life cannot exist without the resisting power of egoism. Hence all contraries have been in the Godhead potentially from the "beginning," arising out of the "abyss" (*ungrund*) of indifference—this expression representing the absolute freedom of the Divine will and being. Latent in God is a "centre" or region of potential darkness, wrath, consuming fire, unbounded energy and power; but this dark centre normally remains in perfect harmony and subordination, as a complement and foundation to the higher centre of the Divine nature, the gentleness, the love and light, and the ordered will to all goodness.

When God has formed out of His own nature independent organs of life and will, those self-conscious spirits whom we

* *Poems* (Chetham Society, vol. 35).

call angels and men, the same foundation of darkness and fiery energy is necessary to the perfect functioning of their life of loving activity. "The first wrathful, self-tormenting properties of nature are and must be the ground of every natural life—darkness, rage, and torment, till the light of God breaking in upon them [from within] changes all [once more] into the strongest sensibilities of love, joy, and triumph of the divine life." "If life, in its first root, was not this depth of strife, this strength of hunger, and sensibility of want, the fullness of heavenly joy could not be manifested in it." (See pages 145-147.)

To use another image familiar to William Law and Boehme, the bitter juice of the acid, unripe fruit is poison to the eater, until these same juices have been tempered and mellowed by the rays of the summer sun. The wholesome essences of every life are poisonous if wrongfully laid bare.

Evil first appears when the created will turns away from its divine origin, seeks its own puny separate good and so sheds off the harmonising light and love, uncovering the hidden basis of darkness and fire, pain and wrath. Thus evil, whether that of the human soul or as shown in the destructive, degenerative forces of nature is essentially a *perversion*, a *dislocation* of harmonised elements. It follows that the forces or qualities which appear to cause it are not meant to be eradicated or destroyed, but to be controlled, re-harmonised, "overcome by Heaven" and "again in their place of hiddenness" (page 136) from which they should never have issued.

In the psychological field, the animal passions and instincts of pugnacity, sex, acquisitiveness, ambition, and fear are not implanted in us by God to be rooted out, but to be moulded and sublimated into the highest virtues of the soul. Evil has indeed in practical issues to be fought and hated as an implacable foe, but it is essentially a misplaced good; and the best way of fighting it may be the way of non-resistance. It carries in itself the seeds of its own decay and death, and any attempt to retaliate upon evil-doers, to punish them from without, merely increases the dislocation

and adds fuel to the "wrath." The misery and loss which overtake the creature through sin are not inflicted by the personal will of the God of love, but are awakened, quite contrary to that will, in the creature, through its own perverse turning away from the only source of love and joy.

It is as well to interject here that Jacob Boehme, and occasionally William Law also, delights to find the same principle of existences maintaining themselves at a lower level by a tension of opposing forces, by the polarity of negative and positive, at work in the outward world, which is but an out-birth of the invisible world (pages 131-2). I have dealt with this at some length in my *Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme* (see Study 19: *The Seven Natural Properties*). Boehme often calls this never resting wrath the "wheel of nature" or the "wheel of anguish," and the "wheel of birth" in James 3. 6 is supposed to mean the same thing; also the fiery wheels in Ezekiel, chs. 1 and 10.

Martensen has given us a most illuminating and sympathetic discussion of the character and attendant difficulties of the idea of the dark nature-principle in God (see pp. 76-94 and 126-150, *op. cit.*), especially in relation to Catholic theology, which demands a deity who is unchanging and indissoluble Life, self-produced, self-determined, and ultimately independent of nature. In particular, though we can imagine God as infinitely rich in *contrasts*, the contrasts which form His eternal harmonies, we cannot, he thinks, imagine these contrasts as *hostile*, and admit into Him *conflict* and *contradiction*. This is what Boehme appears to do, even though in God, considered by Himself, the conflict is continually resolved, is only latent or potential. His darkness should be rather as the "dim and yearning night which longs for the morning dawn and eagerly desires to conceive the light." Martensen, disagreeing from other expositors, e.g. Baader and Hamberger, holds that Boehme's theory has value as interpreting the constitution of nature and the human soul rather than that of the deity. Space forbids any enlargement on this fascinating theme.

It is indeed quite beyond my powers, at any rate here and now, to indicate the great potentialities for fruitful and

constructive thought which appear to lie in this doctrine of the wrath of God. I only hope that the present volume may attract to the subject the attention of others better able to draw out its theological and philosophical implications. The theory seems likely, if carefully used, to throw, for a certain type of mind at least, a flood of light upon some of the ultimate mysteries, the origin of evil, the spiritual basis of the natural world, the nature of free-will, the methods of Providence in the overruling of mundane events; and it should give an intellectual support to our pacifist faith in a loving instead of a violent response to the sin or aggression of every type of offender. It means certainly that we have to make a distinction in thought between God as Personality, as loving will ever seeking the good of each one of His creatures, and God as the inexorable law of consequence, of moral "accumulation," the fountain of enhanced vitality to the good will and of inevitable deterioration and disaster to the evil or cowardly will. But the relationship between these two aspects of God must probably always remain an insoluble problem. The Christian cannot allow them to fall apart into a hostile dualism, but must just recognise the distinction, as Jesus Himself may be said to have done, when He enthroned in some of His parables the Judge-King representing the stern law of inevitable consequence, so different a being from the loving Father otherwise revealed by Him in word and deed. The apostle Paul too, who seems to have carefully avoided ever making God the subject of the verb "to be angry" describes "the wrath of God" or just "the wrath" in a remarkably impersonal way, not at all as an emotion but rather as an awful process of deterioration controlled by an inflexible moral law.* Attention may be drawn here to an admirable expression of William Law's (*Confutation of Warburton*, p. 181) when after quoting the words of doom in Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25), he says they are only "a divine, awakening

* Cp., e.g. Romans 1.18 ff., 5.19, and 9.22; I Thess. 2.16 and 5.9. See also C. H. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for To-day*, pp. 62-4, and W. E. Wilson, *The Problem of the Cross*, chapters XII to XV; also C. H. Dodd, *Commentary on Romans* (Moffatt N.T.), chapter I.

assurance" of what must be the consequence of an ill-chosen way of life. Law, as a Christian writing in the eighteenth century, was under the necessity of justifying every word of Scripture, and we may smile at the ingenuity by which he attempted (to the great indignation of such a man as John Wesley) to prove that the Bible never means to say that God felt and exercised wrath in any personal sense. Nevertheless his plea that the Scriptures rightly describe wrath as in some sense God's, though it is only felt and displayed in the sinful creature, harmonises with the conception of potential wrath as the foundation of all good life, yes, even of Heaven itself.

Significant as I believe this great theory to be, certainly much more important for the future of our human society is the conviction proclaimed by William Law with such splendid assurance that in God, as personal will, there is not one spark of anger, however "righteous," or of desire to punish retributively, for sufficient retribution for the very worst offender is to be found in the "unravelling of the awful consequences of his sin"* or "the universal necessity by which the whole of an evil action appears sooner or later, whenever a part of it appears."† The wages of sin is death, but Christ, directly or by the hands of His children, intervenes to save the sinner from the otherwise inevitable doom. (This truth may of course be held quite independently of the dualist view of existence which we have been considering, though it fits in naturally with that view.)

"Righteous" anger against the sinner is, in William Law's view and our own, by no means a virtue. The ideal which Christ has set before us is a spirit of unbroken love, patience, and forgiveness for the sinner, an attitude which can and should, however, be combined with a deep hatred of and indignation against his wrong-doing, felt in proportion to its viciousness.‡

It follows that the system of retributive justice is a human

* The expression is Lily Dougall's.

† Emerson, Essay on *Compensation.*

‡ For a justification of this conviction, see L. Dougall and C. W. Emmet, *The Lord of Thought*, and G. H. C. Macgregor, the *New Testament Basis of Pacifism.*

invention of evil origin, quite alien to the will of God. There is no such thing as a *just* amount of suffering needed to compensate for sin and satisfy the demands of eternal righteousness. Since sin carries its own painful consequences in itself, God's will is solely that these should be tempered and used in such a way as to educate and heal. True justice, whether divine or human, looks not to the unhappy past, to the individual's sin and guilt, but to the bright future, to his restored life as a reconciled member of the holy family of God. In two great passages (see pages 165-6 and 201) Law insists upon this truth, the understanding of which in its various forms of application is to-day more than ever an absolutely vital need in our social and international life.

APPENDICES

ONE : BIOGRAPHICAL

TWO : BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

APPENDIX ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL

(i) The Book which introduced Jacob Boehme to William Law.

This book, *Fides et Ratio*, described by Overton as "either Mittenach's or Poiret's", had apparently never been identified or examined until 1935, when the present writer had the good fortune to be put into the way of doing so. The following paragraphs are a very brief summary of a long study reprinted by permission from the *Journal of Theological Studies* for October, 1936. (Separately bound copies of this article are in the possession of the British Museum and of a number of University and public Libraries.)

Fides et Ratio Collatae, with three long appendices, is a volume published at Amsterdam in 1708 by Pierre Poiret, a liberal-minded Protestant theologian of the "quietist" school, who rendered great services by translating and reprinting many mystical writings, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, including the collected works of Madame Guyon. (Poiret's own principal work, *L'Oeconomie Divine* in four volumes, had, I believe, some influence on William Law's thought. It awaits examination by some future student.) The main body of the book, which is in the form of "Animadversions" against the philosopher Locke, is a careful attempt to differentiate true faith, the divine intuition which brings the soul into immediate contact with God and Christ, from the judgments of the discursive reason, which are concerned with purely "historical" beliefs. The only reference to Jacob Boehme is in the last section of the *Animadversions*, when he is named along with other mystical authors of lesser repute as having produced writings which are a gift from Heaven "to excite and encourage us to pursue our journey with unwearied diligence, until at last we arrive at the centre of eternal rest." An English transla-

tion of the work (*Faith and Reason Compared*) was published in 1713 (reprinted 1787).

Law told Langcake in 1759 that the author of *Fides et Ratio* was "Mittenach, a German Count", and this name has been passed on by Law's biographers. We now know that it was a mistake for the name of Baron Wolf de Metternich who was a friend of the famous Jacobite peer Alexander Forbes of Pitsligo, with whom another Scot, Law's friend Dr. George Cheyne, a popular London physician, was acquainted. It was Cheyne who introduced Law to the book in question. Except for Poiret's preface the book is anonymous or pseudonymous. In my study I have given what appear to be conclusive reasons for attributing to Baron de Metternich both the *Animadversions* and two if not three of the long appendices. The writer of one of these is styled *Alethophilus*, a nom de plume adopted by Metternich.

Wolf von Metternich (*c.* 1660-1731) was an interesting and somewhat mysterious character. The chief facts of his life have recently become accessible in Dr. Max Wieser's volume, *Der Sentimentaler Mensch in 18ten Jahrhundert.* By profession a statesman and diplomat, his supreme interest was in mystical religion, about which he published some twenty little books, mostly over the pseudonym of *Alethophilus.* He is chiefly remembered to-day, if at all, as the admiring correspondent of the sorely persecuted Madame Guyon—the "illuminated Guion" as William Law twice calls her. In spite of his aristocratic birth and environment the Baron's evident attempt to follow a consistently devout life and his evangelical esteem for the poor and simple, as well as for such mystical writers as Guyon and Boehme, would doubtless have endeared him, if they had ever chanced to meet, to the author of the *Serious Call* and the *Spirit of Prayer.*

I will end this note on Wolf von Metternich and his book by quoting one of a number of extracts from his letters to Madame Guyon preserved in Paris (as mentioned on page 365 of my study referred to above) which have (since its publication) kindly been made by Miss Ursula Hobhouse. It is quite in William Law's spirit and happens to include

references to two "spiritual books" which we know William Law loved.

"Je vous assure, ma très chère mère, que la vie intérieure trouve beaucoup plus d'entrée parmi les Protestants, que parmi les Catholiques; ils sont trop gênés et trop craintifs de tombeı dans la censure de Quietisme ou autre. Ils n'osent pas même approuver publiquement des livres imprimés en France, avec quantité d'approbations et qu'on a traduit en allemand, comme la *Vie de la bonne Armelle.** . . . C'est ce qui met tout le monde en appréhension à l'égard des livres spirituels, et fait qu'ils n'en veulent pas lire . . . je sais même ici un exemple, qu'un confesseur a ôté l'*Imitation* de Kempis† à un de ses enfants spirituels, sous prétexte que ce livre était trop haut pour luy, non obstant qu'il le lisait avec beaucoup d'édification.

". . . La foy chrétienne, si simple et si proportionnée aux plus petites capacités, comment la pourrais-je trouver dans toute une armée d'articles de foy, rangés et ajustés avec tant d'art et de science humaine et scholastique? Cela n'est pas pour moi. . . . Je me sers bonnement des persuasions particulières qui me paraissent vrayes, pour m'approcher de plus en plus, par le pur amour, de la Verité Substantielle et Eternelle, . . . et je suis plainement convaincu, que tout ce qui me sert effectivement à m'approcher de cette fin n'en peut pas m'éloigner et par conséquent ne peut nuire à mon salut."

(ii) William Law's Portrait
(See *Overton*, pp. 236 and 239, note 1.)

There is no authentic likeness of William Law, and we may trust the tradition that his modesty made him always refuse to allow even any sketch of himself to be drawn. In the chapel of his old College, Emmanuel, Cambridge, there is a stained glass representation of Law erected under the supervision of the great scholar Dr. Fenton Hort, in 1883-4. He is there figured full-length as a serene and dignified

* See *SP*, note 8, above. † See *Trapp* 51.

personage, broad-shouldered and benign, in the usual black gown, bands, and wig of an eighteenth-century cleric. He bears in one hand a scroll appropriately inscribed with the Latin version of the text, "Believe on the Light, that ye may become sons of Light." (Cp. pages 187-8.)

By 1930 the record of the precise origin of this window-portrait had been lost, but the present writer was fortunate enough to make the following discovery. The portrait referred to by *Overton* (p. 239) as supposed to resemble William Law was (in accordance with a very probable tradition) that of his great nephew and heir mentioned on the same page. It is a miniature, which was between the years 1904 and 1930 in the possession of Mr. Robert Knight of Oundle, a friend of Miss Sarah Law, the last representative of the family in their native village of Kings Cliffe, near Peterborough. It is a painting in water colours upon ivory of a somewhat worldly-looking layman, which was dated by an expert as approximately 1780-85. Two cartoons still in the possession of the firm who executed the work for the Emmanuel College windows proved conclusively that their artist took this miniature as the basis for his glass portrait, idealising it, but retaining the main lines of facial pose and head contour. How far any true family resemblance is reflected in it, it is impossible to say. The two buildings shown in the background of the window are proved by photographs (which had been obtained by Dr. Hort) to represent the parish Churches of the native village and town (Görlitz in Silesia) of William Law and of his mystical teacher, Jacob Boehme.

Christopher Walton refers to a Glasgow edition of the *Serious Call* (which ran into four editions about 1830) as containing an engraved frontispiece portrait of William Law. Some years ago this engraving was reproduced by an enthusiastic Scottish admirer of the great mystic, and has thus unfortunately found its way into some collections. It depicts a most unimpressive individual, and is clearly fictitious, in line with the absurd imaginary portraits which it was once the fashion to place at the beginning of the works of such persons as Milton, Defoe, and Chatterton.

The upshot is, that Law's desire has been fulfilled and that we must be content to remember the mystic not by any likeness of his outward man but by the thoughts of his mind as recorded in the products of his pen.

(For some fuller details see the article and letter by Stephen Hobhouse in the *Times Literary Supplement* for October 10, 1929, and October 2, 1930.)

(iii) *Corrigenda et Addenda*

(See the Table of Dates following the Selected Passages.)

I. I will take this opportunity of correcting some errors in my 1927 volume *William Law and Eighteenth Century Quakerism*. I am indebted to Canon C. H. Lambert for pointing these out to me.

It was *not* John Wesley (as stated on pp. 312 and 262 of my book) but his brother Charles, the hymn-writer, who objected to Law's statement at the beginning of the *Serious Call* that "there is not one command in all the Gospel for public worship." (However it is clear from what John Wesley wrote later on (cp. *SP* note 9) that he also might well have made the same objection.)

In my Chapter V I illustrated the remarkable change of emphasis between Law's first brilliant work, the *Bangorian Letters* (1717), which dealt with the ecclesiastical and ceremonial ordinances of the Catholic Church, and the series of writings culminating in the *Serious Call* (1729), which drove home the tremendous ethical and spiritual requirements of the Gospel of Christ. (I might have mentioned that Law's political and Tory sermon of 1713 and his Jacobite sympathies indicate that he had in his earlier years other strong interests besides the practice of an evangelical life.) I wrote of "something of the nature of a conversion" and mentioned the remark made by a friend of John Byrom about Law's "gay" life before 1720. I am now ready to agree with Canon Lambert that this last statement is entirely misleading and has probably no connection with what Overton

calls the deepening of his serious impressions about this date; and also that the word "conversion" is too strong, even though it be used in Law's sense of a "certain process, a gradual release, consisting of several stages and degrees" in putting off the "old man." (*Regeneration*, p. 180.)

Moreover, it appears that Law's interests in Church ritual were maintained throughout this period of his life. At that time he was an active member of the Nonjuror section of the Anglican Church which held *inter alia* what we should now call strong Anglo-Catholic views about the administration of the Holy Communion. Canon Lambert has taken much trouble to discover and summarize the records, which show the leading part taken by Law in the unhappy disputes which divided the Nonjuror communion as regards the precise forms of the eucharistic rite and particularly as to whether the wine should be mixed with water. It is clear from this fact that Law was much occupied with such matters at any rate up to the year 1732. It therefore follows that his exposition, on high mystical grounds, of the necessity of the worthy reception of the sacraments in the course of his works of the period 1736-40 (culminating in the *Appeal*) was not a "reversion" to anything like the extent that I erroneously suggested in Chapter VI of my book. There remains, however, the fact of the remarkable want of emphasis on the Church sacraments (amounting indeed almost to an absence of mention) and on the duty of Church attendances in the pages of the *Serious Call*, e.g., in the beautiful sketch of the life of *Ouranius*, the ideal parish priest.*

As regards the rest of Law's life, after a careful reconsideration of all the evidence available, I see no reason for departing from the conclusions set out in my 1927 volume. Existing records show that after 1732 Law's interest in the Nonjurors and in the details of Church ritual gradually diminished. Thus there is a letter of the Nonjuror Bishop Brett dated

* Incidentally, it has not, I think, before been noticed that Law's library contains a 1646 edition of extracts from the *Comedies* of Plautus, a fact which gives point to his description of *Ouranius*, in his unregenerate days, as "writing notes upon Homer and Plautus" (*Serious Call*, p. 230; and cp. page 32, where Law owns to a youthful fondness for Terence, the other great Roman comedian).

1741-2 which expresses sorrow "to find so much difference between the Mr. Law, who wrote so judiciously against the Bishop of Bangor twenty years ago, and the Mr. Law that writes now".* He was disillusioned, perhaps even disgusted, by what seemed to him the pettiness of the precise differences concerning ritual (cp. *WDK* 193 and *Letters* 116-8); and the great enthusiasm of his life was now for the teachings of the Lutheran seer, the "illuminated" and "divinely-inspired" Behmen.

In his subsequent writings, and especially in those appearing after his long and fruitful silence of 1740-49, Law shows himself essentially super-confessional (to use Whyte's word), and we know that he grew to be friendly with much in the standpoint of the anti-clerical Quakers, against whom he had once written so vigorously. Still, as I wrote in 1927, there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the loyalty and regularity of his attendances at the Holy Communion and the other services of his parish Church in any way declined up to the end of his long life.

II. Since the late Canon J. H. Overton published in the year 1881 his (in many ways) admirable volume, *The Life and Opinions of the Rev. William Law*, a number of fresh facts and probabilities relating to his subject have come to light. In anticipation of that "adequate biographer," whom Christopher Walton tried in vain to discover, I am collecting here the most important of these items (in addition to others which may be found in my *William Law and 18th Century Quakerism.*) For the second and third of these I am in large part indebted to research undertaken by my friend, the Rev. Philip Hopkinson of Cambridge. The first is reprinted (slightly abbreviated) by permission from my article in the *Times Literary Supplement* of October 10, 1929. And I must acknowledge some assistance in this section from Miss Mary D. Long, a fellow-student of Law's life and writings. I give in each case the relevant passage in Overton's *Life.*

(*a*) *Overton*, pp. 6-7. The very characteristic "Rules for my Future Conduct" drawn up by the young William

* H. Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors*, p. 217.

Law were originally printed by Christopher Walton and have been reprinted in other accounts of Law. The autograph of the 18 rules is a fragile and frayed sheet of paper, unsigned but in Law's unmistakable handwriting, in the Walton Collection at Dr. Williams' Library. Walton's reproduction is unfortunately misleading in three respects. (1) The heading reads ". . . further Rules for the good conduct of my life". (2) Of Rule VIII only the letters ". . .ll excess in e. . ." are legible. Walton's "To avoid all excess in eating and drinking" is a good guess, but one might possibly read it "excess in every thing". (3) Rule XVII was given by Walton as "To keep from as much as I can, without offence". In the autograph the blank is represented by the two words "public houses". Walton's extraordinary omission (which gives a most unfortunate impression) was apparently due to his unimaginative enthusiasm for total abstinence, and to his ignorance of the fact that in Law's time a "public house" was not a wine- or beer-tavern, but a coffee-house. Incidentally one may mention that in an unpublished letter to Hester Gibbon written when he was past fifty, Law records that he has "ordered cheese cakes to be made by way of rejoicing."

(*b*) *Overton*, pp. 18-19. The tradition was that Law was for a time, after leaving Emmanuel in 1716, a curate in the London parish of St. Mary-le-Strand with John Heylin (1685-1759) for his rector. Heylin was a popular preacher and is described as an earnest Christian scholar "deeply read in the mystic divines." But we now know that this tradition must be incorrect; for Heylin did not become incumbent of St. Mary's until 1723; and by that date Law had almost certainly (see below) become tutor to young Gibbon at Putney and Cambridge. The register of St. Mary-le-Strand has recently been examined and there is no trace of his name in it.

Heylin was however from 1714 to 1719 Vicar of Haslingfield, a village close to Cambridge, and it was doubtless there that, before 1717, the young Law, drawn by kindred interests, made friends with him. We know that in 1713

Law preached at this place his one extant sermon. It is therefore quite likely that his traditional curacy was held at Haslingfield, before he became a Non-juror. A somewhat cursory examination of the Haslingfield parish register seems to show that some entries (between 1711 and 1713) are in Law's characteristic handwriting; but further inspection and comparison is needed before this can be cited as decisive evidence.

(*c*) *Overton*, pp. 50-3. The entries in the *Steward's Book* of Emmanuel College (kindly examined by the College Bursar, Mr. R. Gardner, in July, 1938) prove conclusively that William Law's pupil, Edward Gibbon, was in residence at Emmanuel from October, 1723, without a break to June, 1725, as a "pensioner"; and that after a two years' interval he resumed his residence (this time apparently as a "fellow-commoner") in July, 1727, and remained there almost continuously till May, 1734. (The interval may possibly have been due to financial straits of the young man's highly speculative parent.) This 1723 date is confirmed by J. A. Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses* and the *Old Westminsters School Record*, Vol. I, p. 371.

E. Gibbon's son, the historian, writes of his father that "he was removed from Westminster to Cambridge under the tuition of William Law." It appears therefore to be now definitely ascertained that Law's employment in the Gibbon family began at least as early as 1723, instead of 1727, as it has hitherto been stated.

The important result is that the period of complete obscurity through which, as far as any record is concerned, Law passed in his thirties is reduced from ten to six years, i.e. from 1717 to 1723.

(*d*) *Overton*, page 19. The most recent biographer of Gibbon, Mr. D. M. Low (*Edward Gibbon*, 1737-1794), appears to be the first writer to have discovered that, when Law's old pupil, the historian's father (born 1707), was married on June 3rd, 1736, in the Church of St. Christopher-le-Stocks (in Cheapside, London) it was William Law who actually performed the ceremony; and moreover that he had conducted a similar service for a relative, one Barbara Gibbon, in 1734 in the same Church.

This is a most interesting discovery. For we should not otherwise have supposed that the Nonjuror, that is, the man who since 1717 had always consistently refused the oaths to the Hanoverian king, would have officiated on so important an occasion in a London parish Church.

(*e*) *Overton*, pp. 77-8. It appears to have been the belief of the author of the article on William Law in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that during the years 1737-1740 he had lodgings in *Somerset Gardens*, between the Strand and the river Thames; and Overton says that he "continually met" his friend Byrom there. In point of fact the entries in Byrom's *Journal* show that all these meetings took place merely between July 26th and September 5th, 1739, the riverside Gardens being a favourite meeting place for friends (cp. the *Journal* for June, 1725). After that date Byrom records nothing relating to Law and we know nothing otherwise of his movements, until he returned to his native village towards the close of 1740 (*Overton*, p. 222). Nor do we know exactly when he left Putney after old Mr. Gibbon's death at the beginning of 1737. His London lodgings may have been at the "Milliner's" in Arundel Street, close to the Gardens; for several letters preserved in Dr. Williams' Library, dating from 1739 and 1740, are directed to him at this address.

It may be added that the future biographer will find in the Christopher Walton Collection in this Library numerous letters of considerable interest in Law's autograph or in MS. copies, which have not yet been printed.

(*f*) Any reader of my *William Law and 18th Century Quakerism* who is interested in the fortunes of Law's young correspondent Fanny Henshaw, *alias* Frances Dodshon, will find further facts about her in the pages of the Friends Historical Society's *Journals* for 1929 (p. 84), 1930 (p. 14), and 1931 (pp. 42-3).

(*g*) For an examination of the grounds of Law's special interest in Sir Isaac Newton, reference is invited to my Study *Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme* (see Study 19: *The Seven Natural Properties* (*A*) above).

APPENDIX TWO

SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTE.—For books on Jacob Boehme's writings see *Study* 2 (pages 303-306). Of this author's works, *The Way to Christ*, *The Supersensual Life*, *The Epistles*, *The Threefold Life*, *The Three Principles*, and *The Incarnation* (mentioned on pages 270-272) and some others can all be read in modern English editions. The following short list consists principally of other books which have been helpful in the preparation of the present volume. Compare also Caroline Spurgeon's comprehensive bibliography (for the mystical school of Boehme and Law) appended to her chapter XII of vol. IX of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (the full edition) and (for Christian mystics generally) that included in Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* (revised to 1926).

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INDEX OF NAMES

(chiefly mystical writers)

Albertus Magnus, 259, 364.
Aristotle, 207, 317, 327, 354, 363 f.
Augustine, St., 262, 281 f., 299 f., 307, 309 f., 316, 324 ff., 333, 339, 354, 357, 360, 363 f.
Aurelius, Marcus, 259.
Athanasius, 252.

Baader, Franz von, 369, 371, 374.
Bernard, St., 250, 263 f., 324, 364.
Berdyaev, N., 313.
Bertot, 33, 247, 365.
Blake, William, 252, 254, 305, 368.
Bonaventura, St., 244, 281 f., 324, 328, 348, 364.
Byrom, John, 246, 268, 272, 371.

Calvin, John, 156, 280.
Cassian, St. John, 33, 247.
Catherine of Siena, St., 265.
Cloud of Unknowing, 330, 366.

Dante, 253, 259, 281, 309, 349.
Descartes, 277, 365.
Dionysius the Areopagite, 33, 247, 250, 281 f., 286, 309, 311, 327 f., 348, 363, 369.

ckhart, Meister, 247, 261, 264, 271, 297, 309, 337, 348, 359, 361 ff., 365.
Epictetus, 259.
Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 282, 329, *Appendix* I (ii), I (iii).
Erigena, John Scotus, 309, 311.

Fénelon, 33, 247, 261, 365.
Fox, George, 243 f., 246, 289, 299, 361, 367.
Francis de Sales, St., 365.
Francis of Assisi, St., 321.
Friends of God, 289, 362.

Gregory of Nyssa, St., 313, 328, 342, 353.
Guyon, Madame, 33, 247, 261, 320, 365, *Appendix* I (i).
Görlitz, Silesia, 233, 306, *Appendix* I (ii).

Harphius, 33, 247.
Hegel, 297, 368.
Heracleitus, 348.
Hiel, 259, 366.
Heylyn, John, 244, 365, 367.

Imitation of Christ, 261, 281, 364.
Irenaeus, 254, 299 ff., 319, 342 f., 363.

Jerome, St., 240, 339.
John, St., 281, 328, 331.
John of the Cross, St., 33, 247, 255, 261, 265, 286, 320, 324, 365.
Juliana of Norwich, 319, 353, 366.
Justin Martyr, 259.

Kabbala, Jewish, 307, 311.
Keble, John, 321.
King's Cliffe, Northants, 231 f., 246, 267, 352, 355, 364, *Appendix* I (ii).

Lawrence, Brother, 244, 259, 365.
Lee, Francis, 267.
Locke, John, 277.
Lucretius, 252.
Luther, 156, 280, 299 f., 312, 354, 362.

Macarius of Egypt, 364.
Malaval, 365.
Malebranche, 242, 357, 365.
Metternich, Wolf von, *Appendix* I (i).
Milton, John, 32, 246, 326, 361.
More, Henry, 366.
Molinos, 365.

Neoplatonists, 328, 332, 369.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 281, 346 f., *Appendix* I (iii).
Nonjurors, 231, *Appendix* I (iii).
Novalis, 305.

Okely, Francis, 286, 355.
Origen, 279 f., 287, 311, 313, 328, 339, 348, 353, 363.

Paracelsus, 290, 328, 359.
Paul, St., 247, 260, 277, 296, 299, 313, 316, 320, 328, 331, 353.
Philo, 339 f., 363.
Plato, 253, 259, 277, 364.
Penington, Isaac, 281, 343, 366.
Poiret, Pierre, 366, *Appendix* I (i).
Plotinus, 247, 253, 258, 286, 327, 364.

Quakers, 218, 232, 240 ff., 244ff., 257, 260 f., 269, 273, 289, 297, 366.
Quietists, 261, 282, 365, *Appendix* I (i).

Reuchlin, 311.
Ruysbroeck, 33, 247, 250, 265, 282, 325, 327, 349, 354, 357, 362.

Schelling, 305, 307.
Schopenhauer, 297, 305.
Scupoli, L., 255.
Smith, John, 329, 366.
Spinoza, 297, 326, 361.
Sparrow, John, 267, 305, 369.
Socinians, 249, 280.
Suso, 33, 242, 247, 309, 362.

Tauler, 33, 247, 260 ff., 271, 286 f., 309 f., 320, 326 ff., 337, 348, 354, 359, 362.
Taylor, Jeremy, 239.
Teresa, St., 247, 281, 318, 321, 365.
Theologica Germanica, 33, 252, 254, 258, 260, 269, 273, 282, 290, 310, 326, 335, 354, 359, 362.
Thomas Aquinas, St., 258, 309, 317, 326, 354, 363 f.

Vedanta, Hindu, 297.

Wesley, John, 231 ff., 245, 261, 265, 268, 278, 281, 283, 285, 298 f., 305, 320, 327, 351, 362, 376.
Whyte, Alexander, 239, 257, 275, 289, 305.
Woolman, John, 297.
Wyclif, John, 269 f.

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