

**THE WORKS OF THE REVEREND
WILLIAM LAW, M.A. SOMETIME
FELLOW OF EMMANUEL
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. VOL. V**

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WILLIAM LAW

**THE WORKS OF THE REVEREND
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A DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
ERRORS OF A LATE BOOK.

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THE
WORKS
Of the REVEREND
WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel*
College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume V.

- I. 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, &c.*
- II. The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration.

LONDON: Printed for J. RICHARDSON, 1762.
Privately Reprinted for G. MORETON, *Setley,*
Brockenhurst, New Forest, Hampshire. 1893.

Prefatory Advertisement.

A Demonstration of the Errors of a late Book, &c.

BETWEEN the publication of the 'Serious Call' and this Demonstration, WILLIAM LAW wrote his Reply to DR. TINDAL'S 'Case of Reason,' which appears in the second volume of this re-issue of Law's Works. He also wrote, during the years 1731-2, three Letters to a Lady inclined to enter into the Romish Communion. These Letters were not published until after his decease, nor with the collected edition of his Works, but separately: they will be found in the last Volume of this Edition.

The Demonstration was published in the year 1737, when William Law had left the *Gibbon* family; and was living in his late father's house at *King's Cliffe*. It was written—after WILLIAM LAW had become greatly influenced by the writings of JACOB BEHMEN—in repudiation of 'A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper' of which BISHOP HOADLY is supposed to have been the Author. The Demonstration, like all WILLIAM LAW'S works, contains many excellent and deeply instructive passages—that upon the Names or Titles given to the Sacrament being capable of very general application:

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

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' 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 express-
' ing 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 of these Ex-
' pressions.'

To those who require Evidence of the Truth of the Gospel the following passage is commended :

' **B**UT it may be you will say, you would believe the Gospel
' if you could, but that its Evidence cannot have that
' Effect upon your Mind. You may say also, the Gospel
' is a Matter of Fact; you must examine into the
' Truth of it, as you do into the Truth of other Matters of
' History; and as both the internal and external Evidence of the
' Gospel is much defended and opposed by learned Men, its Evi-
' dence is so perplexed, and made a Matter of such laborious
' and intricate Enquiry, that your Mind cannot come at any
' Certainty of what you ought to believe concerning the Truth
' of it. I will therefore propose to you the *shortest*, and at the
' same time the *surest* of all Methods. . . . I don't recommend
' to you to lay aside Prejudice, and begin again the Controversy
' from the Bottom, and read all on both Sides with all the Im-
' partiality that you can. I would as soon send you on a *Pil-
' grimage*, to be a *Penitent*, as propose to you this Travel to be
' a Christian. The Truth of the Gospel lies much nearer to us
' than we imagine, and we only dispute and wrangle ourselves
' into a Distance from it. Do you think that you need many
' Books to show you that you are a *Sinner*, that you have the
' Disorder of almost all the *Beasts* within you; that you have
' besides this, such Passions and Tempers of Pride, Envy, Selfish-

'ness and Malice, as would make you shun the Sight of other
'People, if they could see all that passes within you? Need any
'Learning instruct you, that at the same time that you have all
'these Disorders, both of the Beasts and evil Spirits within you,
'you have a great Desire to seem to be without them, and are
'affecting continually to have, and appear in those very Virtues
'which you feel the Want of? When you are full of Hatred
'and Envy, you affect to be thought good and good-natured,
'when proud, to appear as humble. Now I desire you to know
'no Books, but *this Book* of your own Heart, nor to be well read
'in any Controversy but in that which passes *within you*, in order
'to know the Gospel to be the greatest of all Truths, and the
'infallible Voice of God speaking the Way of Salvation to you.'

II. *The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration.*

THIS remarkable Treatise, written by WILLIAM LAW and published in the year 1739, is based upon the teaching or revelation of JACOB BEHMEN. The influence of JACOB BEHMEN'S writings with WILLIAM LAW has proved fatal to *Law's* reputation as a Religious Teacher with many persons; and a great stumbling-block to those to whom the 'Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call' have been most convincing and productive of eternal benefit.

The general and erroneous supposition, that WILLIAM LAW, after leading from his youth upwards, not only an irreproachable, but a sanctified life; and having written such books as the 'Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call'—the most perfect religious guides, considered merely as such, that have ever appeared and a world-enduring honour to poor aspiring human nature—and after having displayed so strong and penetrating an understanding, free from any kind of error, in the detection and exposure of such fallacies as are set forth in the 'Bangorian Letters': 'Fable of the Bees': 'Case of Reason,' &c., should—with all his deep insight, intellectual power, and life's-devotion to the Truth—have become the victim of a delusion in adopting the ideas of Jacob Behmen, is a supposition which is perfectly incredible* to, and to be rejected by, an earnest Reader, who is possessed of any 'divine idea.'

* This appears to be the silent conviction of so able an Authority as the Rev. Dr. WHYTE upon this portion of WILLIAM LAW'S life.

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'The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration' represents WILLIAM LAW'S earliest exposition and elucidation of JACOB BEHMEN'S ideas; and as an Introduction to the exalted sphere of thought and devotion upon which WILLIAM LAW was then entering, it is admirable.

Perhaps the most impressive idea that WILLIAM LAW sets before us in these new Studies, is that in which he approaches the subject of 'Universalism' and doctrine of 'Free Will.' BISHOP BUTLER has demonstrated almost to a certainty that we are 'Free Agents'; but WILLIAM LAW goes further and deepens that tremendous responsibility in a truly awful manner in the following passage:

I WILL grant you all *that* you can suppose, of the Goodness of God and that no Creature will be finally lost, but what *Infinite Love* cannot save. But still, here is no *Shadow of Security for Infidelity*; and your *refusing* to be saved through the *Son* of God, whilst the Soul is in the *redeemable State* of this Life, may at the Separation of the Body, for aught you know, leave it in *such* a Hell, as the infinite Love of God cannot deliver it from. For, *first*, you have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that your Soul is not that *dark, self-tormenting, anguishing and imperishable Fire*, above-mentioned, which has lost its *own proper* Light, and is only comforted by the Light of the *Sun*, till its Redemption be effected. *Secondly*, You have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that God himself can redeem, or save, or enlighten this *dark Fire-Soul*, any other Way than, as the Gospel proposes, by the *Birth* of the Son of God in it. Therefore your own Hearts must tell you, that for aught you know, *Infidelity*, or the *refusing* of this Birth of the Son of God, may, at the End of Life, leave you in *such* a State of *Self-torment*, as the infinite Love of God can no way deliver you from.'

G. B. M.

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, &c.*

Wherein also the Nature and Extent of the
Redemption of all Mankind by JESUS CHRIST
is stated and explained; and the Pre-
tences of the *Deists*, for a Religion of
Natural Reason instead of it, are
examined to the Bottom. The
whole humbly, earnestly, and affec-
tionately addressed to all Orders
of Men, and more especially
to all the Younger CLERGY.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

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R. MANBY and J. S. COX. 1737.