

**THE WORKS OF THE REVEREND  
WILLIAM LAW, M.A., SOMETIME  
FELLOW OF EMMANUEL  
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. IN NINE  
VOLUMES. VOLUME VIII**

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

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*In Nine Volumes.*

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Volume VIII.

- I. The Spirit of Love.
- II. A Short Confutation of Dr.  
Warburton's Defence.
- III. Of Justification by Faith and  
Works.

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THE  
SPIRIT  
OF  
LOVE.  
PART the FIRST.

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*In a LETTER to a Friend.*

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By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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## THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

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*My Dear Friend,*

**Y**OU had no Occasion to make any Apology for the Manner of your Letter to me ; for though you very well know, that I have as utter an Aversion to waste my Time and Thoughts in Matters of Theological Debate, as in any Contentions merely of a worldly Nature, as knowing that the former are generally as much, if not more hurtful to the Heart of Man, than the latter, yet as your Objections rather tend to stir up the Powers of Love, than the Wrangle of a rational Debate, I consider them only as Motives and Occasions of edifying both you and myself with the Truth, the Power, and Divine Blessedness of the *Spirit of Love*.

You say, ' There is nothing in all my Writings that has more affected you than that Spirit of Love that breathes in them ; and that you wish for nothing so much, as to have a *living Sensibility* of the Power, Life, and Religion of Love. But you have these two Objections often rising in your Mind : *First*, That this Doctrine of pure and universal Love may be too refined and imaginary, because you find, that however you like it, yet you cannot attain to it, or overcome all That in your Nature which is contrary to it, do what you can ; and so are only able to be an Admirer of that Love which you cannot lay hold of. *Secondly*, Because you find so much said in Scripture of a *Righteousness and Justice*, a *Wrath and Vengeance* of God, that must be *atoned and satisfied*, &c., that though you are in Love with that Description of the Deity which I have given, as a Being that is *all Love*, yet you have some Doubt whether the Scripture will allow of it.'

Thus stand your Objections, which will fall into nothing as soon as you look at them from a right Point of View : Which will then be, as soon as you have found the true Ground of the Nature, Power, and Necessity of the blessed Spirit of Love.

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 any-

thing 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 Blessor 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

\* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part, page 177.