

**THE WORKS OF THE
REVEREND WILLIAM
LAW, M. A., IN
NINE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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The works of the Reverend William Law, M. A., In Nine Volumes, Vol. II by William Law

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WILLIAM LAW

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REVEREND WILLIAM
LAW, M. A., IN
NINE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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

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

In Nine Volumes.

Volume II.

- I. Remarks upon a late Book, entitled,
'The Fable of the Bees,' &c. *Page 3.*
- II. The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, fairly and fully stated, &c. *Page 55.*
- III. The absolute Unlawfulness of Stage-Entertainments fully demonstrated. *Page 139.*

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Prefatory Advertisement.

I. Remarks upon *'The Fable of the Bees.'*

WILLIAM LAW'S second publication was, like his first, of a controversial nature, although his opponent was a very different personage from Doctor *Hoadly*, Bishop of *Bangor*; of whom a few very general particulars should have been given in the previous volume; which omission is now supplied, by way of brief digression, here. *Benjamin Hoadly* was born in the year 1676; educated at *Catherine College, Cambridge*; Bishop of *Bangor* in 1715, which See he held at the breaking out of the *Bangorian Controversy*, to which *William Law's* three Letters—written between the years 1717-1719, when he was about thirty-one years of age—are considered to have been the most important contribution. His Lordship was translated successively to the Sees of *Hereford, Salisbury* and *Winchester*; and of the last See he was Diocesan for above twenty-six years. He died in the year 1761, aged 85 years, and was buried in *Winchester Cathedral*.

BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE, who was *William Law's* second opponent, was of Dutch extraction, a Native of *Holland* and an Author of a very temporary and unenviable kind of celebrity. Having graduated in Medicine at one of the Continental Universities he came to *London*, where he practised his profession; but does not appear to have been held in much repute by medical men. He therefore wrote a Satire upon them, which appears to have passed unnoticed. In the year 1714, when he was about forty-four years of age, he published a Poem entitled '*The Grumbling Hive; or Knaves turned Honest*,' setting forth a Hive of Bees who having by dishonest practices acquired wealth and luxury agreed to abandon them and to 'turn honest,' which reduced them to poverty; and occasioned their grumbling—in prose and verse of a very lame and doggerel kind. In this effusion, *Mandeville* not only ridicules the expediency of being *Honest* as the best Policy—a treatment perhaps which that time-honoured but most worldly-wise maxim well merits—but

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entirely rejects 'virtue' and 'reason,' affirming that man like the brutes, is governed by mere instincts and passions. He enlarged and republished this work in the year 1723, with the Title of 'The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices, Public 'Benefits'—when it achieved the notoriety of being 'presented' by the Grand Jury of *Middlesex*, as dangerous to Religion and Order. *William Law* also 'presented' the book in a very masterly manner in his 'Remarks' upon it; which he wrote the same year and published early in the year 1724. *Maunder* attempted to vindicate his 'philosophy' in the *London Journal* in *August*, 1723; when *William Law* had written, ready for the press, as far as page 45 of this volume; and this 'Vindication' occasioned further strictures from that Writer.

Of *Maunder's* later life, little is known. He is said to have resided in obscure lodgings; and to have written in the *London Journal* as a Medical Man, in favour of the use of spirituous liquors—for which he was well paid by the Distillers. He died in *January*, 1733, aged 63 years.

The French Writer, *PIERRE BAYLE*, upon whose works *William Law* in a Postscript makes 'an Observation or two,' is probably known to some readers as the Compiler of the 'Critical Dictionary' and otherwise, as a voluminous and rather unedifying writer. He died 'of a decay of the lungs, after he had been 'writing the greatest part of the day'—wrote himself to death, poor man!—in the year 1706.

The 'Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees' is *Law's* earliest work which has been republished in later times. This was done in the year 1844 under the Editorship of MR. MAURICE upon the suggestion of JOHN STERLING, who described *Law's* 'Remarks' as one of the most remarkable philosophical Essays he had ever seen in English: of which the first Section 'has all the 'highest beauty of' *Law's* 'polemical compositions, and a weight 'of pithy right reason such as fills one's heart with joy. I have 'never seen in our language the elementary ground of a rational 'ideal philosophy as opposed to empiricism, stated in nearly the 'same clearness, simplicity and force.' In MR. MAURICE'S re-issue *Maunder's* Fable is also partly included—a course almost as impracticable here, as it would be to recite all the arguments of the Bangorian Controversy. Readers of *William Law's* Works scarcely need to be reminded that he always renders full justice to his opponents; and generally quotes whole paragraphs from their writings, so that both sides of the question are fairly and comprehensively stated; which is of great assistance to the modern reader. At the time of writing the 'Remarks,' *William Law* was about 37 years of age.

II. *The Case of Reason ; or
Natural Religion fairly and fully
stated.*

ALTHOUGH 'The Case of Reason' appears as *William Law's* third publication in the collected edition of his works issued after his decease, and is here, for convenience, so retained ; yet it is not the third, but the sixth, in the order of publication. It was not published until the year 1731, after the excellent Pamphlet respecting the 'Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment'; the 'Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call' had appeared ; and when *William Law* was forty-five years of age and well known.

The Case of Reason was written in reply to DR. TINDAL, 'the Christian Deist's' work entitled 'Christianity as old as the Creation'; which was published in the year 1730 and excited much controversy at the time.

WILLIAM LAW had a curious variety of opponents to contend with. BISHOP HOADLY with his Invisible Church, disregard for outward and visible Ordinances, and Salvation by Sincerity ; BERNARD MANDEVILLE with his rejection of anything of the moral nature beyond mere brute instinct ; and DR. TINDAL with his supreme dependence upon Reason or Natural Religion : against each of whom *William Law* most effectually turned their own weapons.

MATTHEW TINDAL is said to have been born in the year 1657. He was a Doctor of Laws and wrote various books of which the most important was that replied to by *William Law*. His 'Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church'—incorrectly reprinted as 'Rites' in the Bangorian Letters—was burnt by Order of the House of Commons. His other works, of a nature sufficiently indicated by the subjects of which they treat, 'Jacobitism, Perjury, Popery, Law of Nations, Rights of Sovereigns,' &c., appear to have long since passed with their Author—who died in the year 1733—into Oblivion.

III. *The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment fully demonstrated.*

THIS Pamphlet is WILLIAM LAW'S third work in the order of publication; published in the year 1726, when he was about forty years of age. It has been severely censured by *Law's* so-called Admirers; and a late writer describes it as written with greater zeal than knowledge of the facts—a description which is more epigrammatic than just. Even CANON OVERTON gravely considers it his duty as 'a faithful Biographer not to shrink from 'admitting the weaknesses of his Subject'—very gratuitously and unnecessarily we think in this case; which reveals to us how little real insight he had into the *life of William Law*. JOHN DENNIS a kind of 'Critic' and an ex-Playwright, replied to it in 'The Stage Defended from Scripture, Reason, Experience and the Common Sense of Mankind for 2,000 years'—by which he is usually misrepresented as having completely vanquished poor *Law*. Two thousand years ago takes him back to classical times—and he naturally refers to the Grecian stage; as if the London Play-house of *Law's* time, could possibly be compared with the Athenian or Corinthian stages. His Scriptural Authorities, according to CANON OVERTON, appear to be quite negative—*e.g.*, *St. Paul* did not condemn the Athenian stage of his time. From Reason no less than from Experience, *William Law* sufficiently condemns such Entertainments; and the 'Common Sense of Mankind for the last 2,000 years' can scarcely be received as an authority upon any important subject. Disregarding all Criticism: is it possible for any truly pious-minded man to answer the following interrogatory respecting the Stage-Entertainment, which *William Law* puts at page 156, in the affirmative?

'Is it conformable to that Heavenly Affection, that Love of God, that Purity of Heart, that Wisdom of Mind, that Perfection of Holiness, that Contempt of the World, that Watchfulness and Self-denial, that Humility and Fear of Sin, which Religion requires?'

G. B. M.

REMARKS upon
'The Fable of the Bees.'

