

**THE WORKS OF THE
REVEREND WILLIAM
LAW, M.A.; IN NINE
VOLUMES. VOLUME VII**

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WILLIAM LAW

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VOLUMES. VOLUME VII**

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

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

In Nine Volumes.

Volume VII.

- I. The Spirit of Prayer; or, the Soul
Rising out of the Vanity of Time,
into the Riches of Eternity. In
Two Parts.
- II. The Way to Divine Knowledge;
being several Dialogues between
Humanus, Academicus, Rus-
ticus, and Theophilus.

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Street, *Canterbury*. 1893.



THE
SPIRIT of PRAYER;

OR,

The SOUL rising out of the

VANITY of TIME,

INTO THE

RICHES of ETERNITY.

In TWO PARTS.

PART I.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

LONDON:

Printed for M. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-*
Row. 1749.



THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

Chapter I.

Treating of some Matters preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer.

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 any Thing 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. Every Thing 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 any Thing 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.*

* *Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., page 61.

The Spirit of Prayer. 5

Adam had all that Divine Nature, both as to an heavenly *Spirit*, and heavenly *Body*, which the Angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a Lord and Ruler of a new World, created out of the *Chaos* or *Ruins* of the Kingdom of fallen Angels; so it was necessary that he should also have the Nature of this new created World in himself, both as to its *Spirit* and *Materiality*. Hence it was, that he had a *Body* taken from this new created Earth, not such dead Earth as we now make *Bricks* of, but the *blessed* Earth of Paradise, that had the Powers of Heaven in it, out of which the *Tree of Life* itself could grow. Into the Nostrils of this outward *Body*, was the Breath or *Spirit* of this World breathed; and in this *Spirit* and *Body* of this World, did the inward celestial *Spirit* and *Body* of *Adam* dwell: It was the *Medium* or *Means* through which he was to have Commerce with this World, become visible to its Creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus stood our first Father; an Angel both as to *Body* and *Spirit* (as he will be again after the Resurrection) yet dwelling in a *Body* and *Spirit* taken from this new created World, which however was as inferior to him, as subject to him, as the Earth and all its Creatures were. It was no more alive in him, no more brought forth its Nature within him, than *Satan* and the Serpent were alive in him at his first Creation. And herein lay the Ground of *Adam's* Ignorance of Good and Evil; it was because his outward *Body*, and the outward World (in which alone was Good and Evil) could not discover their own Nature, or open their own Life within him, but were kept inactive by the Power and Life of the celestial Man within it. And this was Man's first and great Trial; a Trial, not imposed upon him by the mere Will of God, or by Way of Experiment; but a Trial necessarily implied in the Nature of his State: He was created an Angel, both as to *Body* and *Spirit*; and this Angel stood in an outward *Body*, of the Nature of the outward World; and therefore, by the Nature of his State, he had his Trial, or *Power* of choosing, whether he would live as an Angel, using only his outward *Body* as a Means of opening the Wonders of the outward World to the Glory of his Creator; or whether he would turn his Desire to the opening of the bestial Life of the outward Worldling himself, for the Sake of *knowing the Good and Evil* that was in it. The Fact is certain, that he lusted after the Knowledge of this Good and Evil, and made use of the Means to obtain it. No sooner had he got this Knowledge, by the opening the bestial Life and Sensibility within him, but in that Day, nay, in that Instant, *he died*; that is, his heavenly *Spirit* with its heavenly *Body* were both extinguished in him; but his Soul, an