

~Other Speakers G-L: William Law:

Chapter I .

Treating of Some Matters preparatory to the Spirit of PRAYER

[Pyr-1.1-1] 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 justly be 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.

[Pyr-1.1-2] 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.

[Pyr-1.1-3] 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 World in 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 of 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 immortal Fire that could not die, became a poor Slave in Prison of bestial Flesh and Blood. See here the Nature and Necessity of our Redemption; it is to redeem the first Angelic Nature that departed from Adam; it is to make that heavenly Spirit and Body which Adam lost, to be alive again in all the human Nature; and this is called Regeneration. See also the true Reason why only the Son, or eternal Word of God, could be our Redeemer; it is because he alone, by whom all Things were at first made, could be able to bring to Life again that celestial Spirit and Body which had departed from Adam. See also why our blessed Redeemer said, "Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He must be born again of the Spirit, because Adam's first heavenly Spirit was lost: he must be born again of Water, because that heavenly Body which Adam lost, was formed out of the heavenly Materiality, which is called Water. Thus in the Revelation of St. John, the heavenly Materiality, out of which the Bodies of Angels and also of Adam were formed, is called a glassy Sea, as being the nearest and truest Representation of it that can be made to our Minds. The Necessity of our regaining our first heavenly Body, is the Necessity of our eating the Body and Blood of Christ. The Necessity of having again our first heavenly Spirit, is declared by the Necessity of our being Baptized by the Holy Ghost. Our Fall is nothing else, but the Falling of our Soul from this celestial Body and Spirit into a bestial Body and Spirit of this World. Our rising out of our fallen State, or Redemption, is nothing else but the regaining our first angelic Spirit and Body, which in Scripture is called our inward, or new Man, created again in Christ Jesus. See here, lastly, the true Ground of all the Mortifications of Flesh and Blood, required in the Gospel; it is because this bestial Life of this outward World should not have been opened in Man; it is his Separation from God, and Death to the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore, all its Workings, Appetites, and Desires, are to be restrained and kept under, that the first heavenly Life, to which Adam died, may have Room to rise up in us.

[Pyr-1.1-4] But to return. That Adam was thus an Angel at his first Creation, dwelling in an outward Body and outward World, incapable of receiving any Impressions from them, and able to rule them at his Pleasure; that all outward Nature was a State of Life below him, in Subjection to him; that neither Sun, nor Stars, nor Fire, nor Water, nor Earth, nor Stones, could act upon him, or hurt him, is undeniably plain from hence; because his first and great Sin, which cost him his angelic Life, and took from him his Crown of Glory, consisted in this, that he lusted to know, and took the Means of knowing, what Good and Evil are in the bestial Life of this World: For this plainly demonstrates, that before his Sin, whilst he stood in the first State of his Creation, that he was an Angel in Nature and Power, that neither his own outward Body, nor any Part of outward Nature, had any Power in him or upon him; for had his own outward Body, or any Element of outward Nature, had any Power to act upon him, to make any Impressions, or raise any Sensations in him, he could not have been ignorant of Good and Evil in this World. Therefore, seeing that his eating of the forbidden Tree, was that alone which opened this Knowledge in him, it is a Demonstration, that in his first State he was in this World as an Angel, that was put into the Possession of it only to rule as a superior Being over it; that he was to have no Share of its Life and Nature, no Feeling of Good or Evil from it, but to act in it as a heavenly Artist, that had Power and Skill to open the Wonders of God in every Power of outward Nature. An Angel, we read, used at a certain Time to come down into a Pool at Jerusalem; the Water stirred by the Angel gave forth its Virtues, but the Angel felt no Impressions of Weight, or Cold from the Water. This is an Image of Adam's first Freedom from, and Power over all outward

Nature. He could wherever he went, do as this Angel did, make every Element, and elementary Thing, discover all the Riches of God that were hidden in it, without feeling any Impressions of any kind from it. This was to have been the Work both of Adam and his Offspring, to make all the Creation show forth the Glory of God, to spread Paradise over all the Earth, till the Time came, that all the Good in this World was to be called back to its first State, and all the Evil in every Part left to be possessed by the Devil and his Angels. But since He fell from this first State into an Animal of this World, his Work is changed, and he must now labour with Sweat to till the cursed Earth, both for Himself and the Beasts upon it.

[Pryr-1.1-5] Let us now consider some plain and important Truths, that follow from what has been said above.

[Pryr-1.1-6] First, it is plain that the Sin and Fall of Adam did not consist in this, viz., that he had only committed a single Act of Disobedience, and so might have been just as He was before, if God had pleased to overlook this single Act of Disobedience, and not to have brought a Curse upon him and his Posterity for it. — Nothing of this is the Truth of the Matter, either on the Part of God, or on the Part of Man.

[Pryr-1.1-7] Secondly, it is plain also, that the Command of God, not to lust after, and eat of the forbidden Tree, was not an arbitrary Command of God, given at Pleasure, or as a mere Trial of Man's Obedience; but was a most kind and loving Information given by the God of Love to his new-born Offspring, concerning the State He was in, with Regard to the outward World: Warning him to withdraw all Desire of entering into a Sensibility of its Good and Evil; because such Sensibility could not be had, without his immediate dying to that Divine and heavenly Life which he then enjoyed. "Eat not," says the God of Love, "of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the Day thou eatest thereof you will surely die."

[Pryr-1.1-8] As if it had been said, "I have brought Thee into this Paradise, with such a Nature as the Angels have in Heaven. By the Order and Dignity of thy Creation, every Thing that lives and moves in this World is made subject to Thee, as to their Ruler. I have made Thee in thy outward Body of this World, to be for a Time a little lower than the Angels, till Thou hast brought forth a numerous Offspring, fit for that Kingdom which They have lost. The World around Thee, and the Life which is newly awakened in it, is much lower than Thou art; of a Nature quite inferior to thine. It is a gross, corruptible State of Things, that cannot stand long before me; but must for a while bear the Marks of those Creatures, which first made Evil to be known in the Creation. The Angels, that first inhabited this Region, where Thou art to bring forth a new Order of Beings, were great and powerful Spirits, highly endowed with the Riches and Powers of their Creator. Whilst they stood (as the Order of Creation requires) in Meekness and Resignation, under their Creator, nothing was impossible to them; there was no End of their glorious Powers throughout their whole Kingdom. Perpetual Scenes of Light, and Glory, and Beauty, were rising and changing through all the Height and Depth of their glassy Sea, merely at their Will and Pleasure. But finding what Wonders of Light and Glory they could perpetually bring forth; how all the Powers of Eternity, treasured up in their glassy Sea, unfolded themselves, and broke forth in ravishing Forms of Wonder and Delight, merely in Obedience to their Call; they began to admire and even adore themselves, and to fancy that there was some Infinity of Power hidden in themselves, which they supposed was kept under, and suppressed, by that Meekness, and Subjection to God, under which they acted. Fired and intoxicated with this proud Imagination, they boldly resolved, with all their eternal Energy and Strength, to take their Kingdom, with all its Glories, to themselves, by eternally abjuring all Meekness and Submission to God. No sooner did their eternal potent Desires fly in this Direction of a Revolt from God, but in the Swiftness of a Thought Heaven was lost; and they found themselves dark Spirits, stripped of all their Light and Glory. Instead of Rising up above God (as they hoped) by breaking off from Him, there was no End of their eternal Sinking into new Depths of Slavery, under their own self-tormenting Natures. As a Wheel going down a Mountain, that has no bottom, must continually keep on its Turning, so are they whirled down by the Impetuosity of their own wrong turned Wills, in a continual Descent from the Fountain of all Glory, into the bottomless Depths of their own dark, fiery, working Powers. In no Hell, but what their own natural Strength had awakened; bound in no Chains, but their own unbending, hardened Spirits; made such, by their renouncing, with all their eternal Strength, all Meekness, and Subjection to God. In that Moment, the beautiful Materiality of their Kingdom, their glassy Sea in which they dwelt, was by the wrathful rebellious Workings of these apostate Spirits broken all into Pieces, and became a black Lake, a horrible Chaos of Fire and Wrath, Thickness and Darkness, a Height and Depth of the confused, divided, fighting Properties of Nature. My creating Fiat stopped the Workings of these rebellious Spirits, by dividing the Ruins of their wasted Kingdom, into an Earth, a Sun, Stars, and separated Elements. Had not this Revolt of Angels brought forth that disordered Chaos, no such Materiality as this outward World is made of had ever been known. Gross compacted Earth, Stones, Rocks, wrathful Fire here, dead Water there, fighting Elements, with all their gross Vegetables and Animals, are Things not known in Eternity, and will be only seen in Time, till the great Designs are finished, for which Thou art brought forth in Paradise. And then, as a Fire awakened by the rebel Creature, began all the Disorders of Nature, and turned that glassy Sea into a Chaos, so a last Fire, kindled at my Word, shall thoroughly purge the Floor of this World. In those purifying Flames, the

Sun, the Stars, the Air, the Earth and Water, shall part with all their Dross, Deadness, and Division, and all become again that first, heavenly Materiality, a glassy Sea of everlasting Light and Glory, in which Thou and thy Offspring shall sing Hallelujahs to all Eternity. Look not therefore, thou Child of Paradise, thou Son of Eternity, look not with a longing Eye after any Thing in this outward World. There are the Remains of the fallen Angels in it; Thou hast nothing to do in it, but as a Ruler over it. It stands before Thee, as a Mystery big with Wonders; and Thou, whilst an Angel in Paradise, hast Power to open and display them all. It stands not in thy Sphere of Existence; it is, as it were, but a Picture, and transitory Figure of Things; for all that is not Eternal, is but as an Image in a Glass, that seems to have a Reality, which it has not. The Life which springs up in this Figure of a World, in such an infinite Variety of Kinds and Degrees, is but as a Shadow; it is a Life of such Days and Years, as in Eternity have no Distinction from a Moment. It is a life of such Animals and Insects, as are without any Divine Sense, Capacity, or Feeling. Their Natures have nothing in them, but what I commanded this new modelled Chaos, this Order of Stars and fighting Elements, to bring forth.

[Pryr-1.1-9] "Now Adam, observe, I will open to Thee a great Mystery. The heavenly Materiality of the Angels' Kingdom before their Revolt was a glassy Sea, a Mirror of beauteous Forms, Figures, Virtues, Powers, Colours, and Sounds, which were perpetually springing up, appearing and changing in an infinite Variety, to the Manifestation of the Wonders of the Divine Nature, and to the Joy of all the Angelical Kingdom. This heavenly Materiality had its Fruits and Vegetables, much more real than any that grow in Time, but as different from the Grossness of the Fruits of this World, as the heavenly Body of an Angel is different from the Body of the grossest Beast upon Earth. In this angelical Kingdom, the one Element (which is now in four Parts) was then a fruitful Mother of Wonders, continually bringing forth new Forms and Figures of Life; not Animals, Beasts, or Insects, but beautiful Figures, and ideal Forms of the endless Divisibility, and Degrees of Life, which only broke forth as delightful Wonders of the Depth of the Riches of the Divine Nature, and to tune the Voices of Angels with Songs of Praise to the infinite Source of Life. And hence, O Adam, is that endless infinite Variety both of the Animal and Vegetable Life in this perishable World. For no Fruits or Vegetables could have sprung up in the divided Elements, but because they are the divided Parts of that one heavenly Materiality, or glassy Sea, in which angelical Fruits had formerly grown forth. No animal Life could have arose from Stars, Air, and Water, but because they are all of them the gross Remains of that one Element, in which the Figures and Images of Life had once risen up in such an infinite Variety of Degrees and Kinds. Hence it was, that when my creating Fiat spoke to these new ranged Stars, and Elements, and bid Life awake in them all according to its Kind, they all obeyed my Word, and every Property of Nature strove to bring forth, after the Kind and Manner as it had done in the Region of Eternity. This, my Son, is the Source and Original of all that infinite Variety, and Degrees of Life, both of Animals and Vegetables, in this World. It is because all outward Nature, being fallen from Heaven, must yet, as well as it can, do and work as it had done in Heaven.

[Pryr-1.1-10] "In Heaven, all Births and Growths, all Figures and spiritual Forms of Life, though infinite in Variety, are yet all of a heavenly Kind, and only so many Manifestations of the Goodness, Wisdom, Beauty, and Riches of the Divine Nature. But in this new modelled Chaos, where the Disorders that were raised by Lucifer are not wholly removed, but Evil and Good must stand in Strife, till the last purifying Fire, here every Kind and Degree of Life, like the World from whence it springs, is a Mixture of Good and Evil in its Birth.

[Pryr-1.1-11] "Therefore, my Son, be content with thy angelical Nature, be content, as an Angel in Paradise, to eat Angels' Food, and to rule over this mixed, imperfect, and perishing World, without partaking of its corruptible, impure, and perishing Nature. Lust not to know how the Animals feel the Evil and Good which this Life affords them; for if Thou couldst feel what they feel, Thou must be as they are; Thou canst not have their Sensibility, unless Thou hast their Nature: thou canst not at once be an Angel and an earthly Animal. If the bestial Life is raised up in Thee, the same Instant the heavenly Birth of thy Nature must die in Thee. Therefore turn away thy Lust and Imagination from a Tree, that can only help Thee to the Knowledge of such Good and Evil, as belongs only to the Animals of this outward World; for nothing but the bestial Nature can receive Good or Evil from the Stars and Elements; they have no Power, but over that Life which proceeds from them. Eat therefore only the Food of Paradise; be content with Angels' Bread; for if Thou eatest of this Tree, it will unavoidably awaken and open the bestial Life within Thee; and in that Moment, all that is heavenly must die, and cease to have any Power in thee. And Thou must fall into a Slavery for Life, under the divided fighting Powers of Stars and Elements. Stripped of thy angelical Garment, that hid thy outward Body under its Glory, Thou wilt become more naked than any Beast upon Earth, be forced to seek from Beasts a Covering, to hide thee from the Sight of thine own Eyes. A shameful, fearful, sickly, wanting, suffering, and distressed Heir of the same speedy Death in the Dust of the Earth, as the poor Beasts, whom Thou wilt thus have made to be thy Brethren."

[Pryr-1.1-12] This Paraphrase I leave to the Reflection of the Reader, and proceed to show,

[Pryr-1.1-13] Thirdly, that 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.

[Pryr-1.1-14] 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 Offense, 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?

[Pryr-1.1-15] 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 the 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.

[Pryr-1.1-16] From this short, yet plain and true Account of this Matter, we are at once delivered from a Load of Difficulties that have been raised about the Fall of Man, and Original Sin. It has been a great Question, How the Goodness of God could punish so small and single an Act of Disobedience in Adam, with so great a Punishment? Here the Sovereignty of God has been appealed to, and has set the Matter right; and from this Sovereignty, thus asserted, came forth the Systems of absolute Election, and absolute Reprobation. But for our Comfort it appears, that the Question here put concerns neither God nor Man, that it relates not at all to the Matter, and has no Existence, but in the Brains of those that formed it. For the Action in which Adam's Sin consisted, was such an Act, as in itself implied all that miserable Change that came upon him, and so was not a small, or single Act of Disobedience, nor had the least Punishment, of any kind, inflicted by God upon it. All that God did on this Transgression was mere Love, Compassion, and Relief administered to it. All the Sovereignty that God here showed, was a Sovereignty of Love to the fallen Creature. So that all the Volumes on this Question may be laid aside, as quite beside the Point. Another, and the greatest Question of all, and which Divines of all Sorts have been ever solving, and yet never have solved, is this: How it can consist with the Goodness of God, to impute the Sin of Adam to all his Posterity? But here, to our Comfort again, it may be said, that this Question is equally a vain Fiction with the other, and has nothing to do with the Procedure of God towards Mankind. For there is no Imputation of the Sin of Adam to his Posterity, and so no Foundation for a Dispute upon it. How absurd would it be to say, that God imputes the Nature, or the Body and Soul of Adam to his Posterity? for have they not the Nature of Adam by a natural Birth from him, and not by Imputation from God? Now this is all the Sin that Adam's Posterity have from him, they have only their Flesh and Blood, their Body and Soul from him, by a Birth from him, and not imputed to them from God. Instead therefore of the former Question, which is quite beside the Matter, it should have been asked thus, How it was consistent with the Goodness of God, that Adam could not generate Children of a Nature and Kind quite superior to himself? This is the only Question that can be asked with relation to God; and yet it is a Question whose Absurdity confutes itself. For the only Reason why Sin is found in all the Sons of Adam, is this, it is because Adam of earthly Flesh and Blood, cannot bring forth a holy Angel out of himself, but must beget children of the same

Nature and Condition with himself. And therefore here again it may be truly said, that all the laborious Volumes on God's imputing Adam's Sin to his Posterity, ought to be considered as waste Paper. {See Appeal to all that Doubt, &c., page 198. Letter to the Bishop of London, page 70.}

[Pryr-1.1-17] 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. 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 every Thing 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 every Thing that is capable of them, and according to its Capacity to receive them.

[Pryr-1.1-18] 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 communicate 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 every Thing 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.

[Pryr-1.1-19] But to return, and consider further the Nature of Adam's Fall, We have seen that it consisted of no arbitrary Punishment inflicted on him by a Wrath raised in God, but was only such a State of Misery, as his own Action necessarily brought upon him. Let us now see what happened to his Soul, a little more distinctly, and how it differed from what it was before his Fall, in its heavenly State.

[Pryr-1.1-20] The Angels that kept their State, and those that fell from it, were at first of one and the same Nature; the Angels that fell, did not lose all their Nature, for then they must have fallen into nothing; they only lost the heavenly and Divine Part of it, and therefore there is something still remaining in them, that is also in the holy Angels, and which is common to both of them. Now this which they did not lose, because it cannot be lost, is a certain Root of Life, or Ground of their Existence, which when once in Being, cannot be broken, and in which the unceasing Eternity, or Immortality of their Nature consists, a Root or first Ground of Life, equally capable of a Heavenly Birth, or of a Birth and Growth into Hell. Now that there is this Root of Life in Angels, and that it is something quite distinct from their heavenly Nature, is very plain from hence, that the Devils have lost their heavenly, and yet have kept their eternal and immortal Nature; therefore that in which their Eternity and Immortality consists, must be something entirely distinct from their heavenly Nature, and must be also the same with that, in which the Eternity and Immortality of the holy Angels consists. For the fallen Angels have no

other eternal Root in them, but that which they had before their Fall, and which they brought from Heaven; and therefore that which is, and must be eternal and undying in their Nature, is the same eternal Root of Life, which is in the Angels that kept their State. And consequently, the only Difference betwixt an Angel and a Devil, is this, that in the Angel its eternal Root of Life generates a Birth of the Light and holy Spirit of God in it; and in a Devil, this eternal Root of Life has lost this Birth, and the Power of bringing it forth again. Now here is to be truly seen the real Difference betwixt the Soul of Adam before, and after his Fall. Before his Fall, it had the Nature of an Angel of God, in which the Divine Birth of the Light and holy Spirit of God sprung up, but when contrary to the Will, and Command of God, a bestial Life was awakened in him, the heavenly Life was necessarily extinguished. The Soul therefore having lost that heavenly Birth which made it like an Angel of God, had nothing remaining in it, but that eternal and immortal Root of Life, which is the very Essence of a fallen Angel. But here we must observe a great and happy Difference, betwixt the Soul of Adam, though dead to all that was heavenly, and the Soul of a Devil. The Angels that extinguished the Birth of Heaven in themselves, fell directly into the horrible Depths of their own strong self-tormenting Nature, or their own Hell, and that for these two Reasons.

[Pyr-1.1-21] First, because there was nowhere else for them to fall into, but into this tormenting Sensibility of their own fiery, wrathful, darkened Nature.

[Pyr-1.1-22] Secondly, because their Revolt from God was an Attempt, and Intent to be higher and greater by awakening, and trusting to their own natural Powers, than they had hitherto been by Submission to God. They would have a Greatness that sprung only from themselves, and therefore they found That which they sought, they found themselves left to all the Greatness that was in themselves, and that was their Hell, viz., a fiery Strength of a self-tormenting Nature, because separate from the one Source of Light and Love, of Peace and Joy.

[Pyr-1.1-23] But Adam, though his Soul was as entirely dead to Heaven, as the Souls of the Devils were, yet fell not into their Hell, for these two Reasons.

[Pyr-1.1-24] First, because his Angelical Man dwelt in a Body taken from this outward World, which Body did not die at his Transgression, therefore his Soul that had lost its Heavenly Light, did not fall directly into the Devil's Hell, but it fell into a Body of Earthly Flesh and Blood, which being capable of the Enjoyments and Satisfactions of this Life, could, whilst it lasted, keep the Soul insensible of its own fallen State, and hellish Condition.

[Pyr-1.1-25] Secondly, because Adam not aspiring to be above, or without God by his own proud Strength, but only lusting to enter in a Sensibility of the Good and Evil of the bestial Life of this World, he found only That which he sought, and fell into no other State or Misery, than that bestial Life, which his own Actions and Desires had opened in him. And therefore this outward World stood him in great Stead, it prevented his immediate Falling into the State of Fallen Angels.

[Pyr-1.1-26] But then, as there was nothing that kept him out of the Hell of Fallen Angels, but his Body of Earthly Flesh and Blood, and as this was now as mortal in him, as it was in the Beasts, and lay at the Mercy of a thousand Accidents, that could every Moment take it from him, so he was in his fallen State, standing as it were on the Brinks of Hell, liable every Moment to be pushed into it.

[Pyr-1.1-27] 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.

[Pyr-1.1-28] If thou hast nothing of this Birth when thy Body dies, then thou hast only that Root of Life in Thee, which the Devils have, thou art as far from Heaven, and as incapable of it, as they are; thy Nature is their Nature, and therefore their Habitation must be thine. For nothing can possibly hinder thy Union with Fallen Angels, when thou diest, but a Birth of That in thy Soul, which the Fallen Angels have lost.

[Pyr-1.1-29] 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 the Terms of Union, or by copying

his Ways and Manners, may, by a Figure of Speech, be said to be born again of him.

[Pryr-1.1-30] 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. 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 Critics therefore, who, in this Matter, leave the literal Meaning of the Words, and have Recourse to a figurative Sense, are without Excuse, and have nothing they can urge as a Reason for so doing, but their own Skill in Words. But it may be further added as a just Charge against these Critics, that their fixing these Passages to a figurative Meaning, is not only without any Ground, or Reason for so doing, but is also a bad Meaning, impossible to be true, and utterly inconsistent with the most plain, and fundamental Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is the Case here, may in Part be seen by the following Instance.

[Pryr-1.1-31] Let it be supposed, that a human Body had lost the Light, and Air of this World, and was in a State of Death, because both these were quite extinguished in it. Must it not be said, that this human Body cannot see, or enter again into the Life of this World, unless the Light and Air of this World get again a new Birth in it: Is there here any Occasion, or any Room to form a Doubt, how these Words are to be understood, or any Possibility to mistake the Meaning of them? What a Philosopher would he be, who for fear of being called an Enthusiast, should here deny the literal Meaning of a new Birth of Light and Air, and think himself sufficiently justified in flying from it, because in his great Reading, he had seen the Words, Birth, Light and Air, sometimes, and upon some Occasions, used only in a figurative Sense?

[Pryr-1.1-32] Now this is exactly, and to a Tittle the Case of the Soul, as fallen, and lying in the same State of Death to the Kingdom of God, till a new Birth of the Light and Spirit of God be again brought forth in it. And therefore the Necessity of understanding these Words in their literal Meaning, the Absurdity of flying to a figurative Sense of the new Birth, and the Impossibility of that being the true one, is equally plain, and certain in both these Cases.

[Pryr-1.1-33] Now that the Soul, as fallen, is in this real State of Death, is a Doctrine not only plain from the whole Tenor of Scripture, but affirmed in all Systems of Divinity. For all hold, and teach, that Man unredeemed, must at the Death of his Body have fallen into a State of Misery, like that of the fallen Angels. But how can this be true, unless it be true, that the Life of Heaven was extinguished in the Soul, and that Man had really lost that Light, and Spirit of God, which alone can make any Being capable of living in Heaven? All therefore that I have here, and elsewhere said, concerning the Death of the Soul by its Fall, and its wanting a real new Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God in it, in order to its Salvation, cannot be denied, but by giving up this great, fundamental Doctrine, namely, "That Man in his fallen State, and unredeemed, must have been eternally lost." For it cannot be true, that the Fall of Man unredeemed, would have kept him forever out of Heaven, but because his Fall had absolutely put an End to the Life of Heaven in his Soul.

[Pryr-1.1-34] On the other Hand, it cannot be true that Jesus Christ is his Redeemer, and does deliver him from his fallen State, unless it be true, that Jesus Christ helps him to a new Birth of that Light and Spirit of God, which was extinguished by his Fall. For nothing could possibly be the Redemption, or Recovery of Man, but Regeneration alone. His Misery was his having lost the Life and Light of Heaven from his Soul, and therefore nothing in all the Universe of Nature, but a new Birth of that which he had lost, could be his Deliverance from his fallen State.

[Pryr-1.1-35] And therefore if Angels after Angels had come down from Heaven to assure him, that God had no Anger at him, he would still have been in the same helpless State; nay, had they told him, that God had Pity and Compassion towards him, he had yet been unhelped; because in the Nature of the Thing, nothing could make so much as a Beginning of his Deliverance, but that which made a Beginning of a new Birth in him, and nothing could fully effect his Recovery, but which perfectly finished the new Birth of all that heavenly Life which he had lost.

[Pryr-1.1-36] 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.

[Pryr-1.1-37] 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. When Adam lay in his Death Wounds to the Kingdom of God, had the highest Order of Archangels, or Seraphims come by that Way, they could only have done as the Priest and Levite did, go on the other Side; or if they had come up to him, and done all they could for him, it could only have been such a Good or Relief to him, as by a Figure of Speech might be so called.

[Pryr-1.1-38] 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.

[Pryr-1.1-39] One would wonder how any Persons, that believe the great Mystery of our Redemption, who adore the Depths of the Divine Goodness, in that the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, became a Man himself, in order to make it possible for Man by a Birth from him to enter again into the Kingdom of God, should yet seek to, and contend for, not a real, but a figurative Sense of a new Birth in Jesus Christ. Is there any Thing more inconsistent than this? Or can any Thing strike more directly at the Heart of the whole Nature of our Redemption? God became Man, took upon him a Birth from the fallen Nature. But why was this done? Or wherein lies the adorable Depth of this Mystery? How does all this manifest the Infinity of the Divine Love towards Man? It is because nothing less than this mysterious Incarnation (which astonishes Angels) could open a Way, or begin a Possibility, for fallen Man to be born again from above, and made again a Partaker of the Divine Nature. It was because Man was become so Dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, that there was no Help for him through all Nature. No Powers, no Abilities of the highest Order of Creatures, could kindle the least Spark of Life in him, or help him to the least Glimpse of that heavenly Light which he had lost. Now when all Nature and Creature stood round about Adam as unable to help him, as he was to help himself, and all of them unable to help him, for this Reason, because that which he had lost, was the Life and Light of Heaven, how glorious, how adorable is that Mystery, which enables us to say, that when Man laid thus incapable of any Relief from all the Powers and Possibilities of Nature, that then the Son, the Word of God, entered by a Birth into this fallen Nature, that by this mysterious Incarnation all the fallen Nature might be born again of him according to the Spirit, in the same Reality, as they were born of Adam according to the Flesh? Look at this Mystery in this true Light, in this plain Sense of Scripture, and then you must be forced to fall down before it, in Adoration of it. For all that is great and astonishing in the Goodness of God, all that is glorious and happy with regard to Man, is manifestly contained in it.

[Pryr-1.1-40] But tell me, I pray, what becomes of all this, what is there left in any Part of this Mystery, if this new Birth, for the Sake of which God became Man, is not really a new Birth in the Thing itself, is not, as the Scripture affirms, a real Birth of the Son and the Spirit of God in the Soul, but something or other, this or that, which the Critics say, may be called a new Birth, by a certain Figure of Speech? Is not this to give up all our Redemption at once, and a turning all the Mysteries of our Salvation into mere empty, unmeaning Terms of Speech? He that should deny the Reality of the Resurrection, upon Pretence, that by the Rules of Criticism, it needs not signify a real coming out of a State of Natural Death, might have more to say for himself both from Reason and Scripture, than he that denies the Reality of the new Birth in Jesus Christ. For this new Birth is not a Part, but the Whole of our Salvation. Every Thing in Religion, from the Beginning to the end of Time, is only for the Sake of it. Nothing does us any Good, but either as it helps forward our Regeneration, or as it is a true Fruit or Effect of it.

[Pryr-1.1-41] All the glad Tidings of the Gospel, all the Benefits of our Saviour, however variously expressed in Scripture, all center 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. Every Thing 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?

[Pryr-1.1-42] "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 Relation, 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.

[Pryr-1.1-43] 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 he 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 within 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.

[Pryr-1.1-44] 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?

[Pryr-1.1-45] 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 the outward Christ, whose History is recorded in the Gospel. No: It is with the utmost Fullness 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.

[Pryr-1.1-46] Was I to say, that a Plant or Vegetable must have the Sun within it, must have the Life, Light, and Virtues of the Sun incorporated in it, that it has no Benefit from the Sun, till the Sun is thus inwardly forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a Life of the Sun's Virtues in it, would this be setting up an inward Sun, in Opposition to the outward one? Could any Thing be more ridiculous than such a Charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward Sun in the Vegetable, so much said of a Power and Virtue derived from the Sun in the Firmament? So in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed, and generated in the Root of the Soul, is only so much said of an inward Life, brought forth by the Power and Efficacy of that Blessed Christ, that was born of the Virgin Mary.